Ed is back from Xeres and Mustang has a new set of orders for him. Teach at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry! Ed and Al go to England for Ed to teach Alchemy and Al to research magic in hopes of getting their original bodies back. During Order of the Phoenix and set in the BROTHERHOOD 2009 series/manga (around episodes 18-20)
Resembol and Mustang's plan hasn't happened yet. So long story short...Ed is back from seeing Ross in the ruins of Xerxes and this is before Mustang's team goes "fishing".

And I will be drawing upon some things (mostly personality traits) from the original 2003 Fullmetal Alchemist Anime, but we will cross that bridge when we get there :)

See the end of the work for more notes.
Edward Elric walked up the steps to Central Command. His brother, Alphonse Elric, walked beside him, this heavy armor clanking around.

"I can't believe Lieutenant Ross is alive" Al whispered to himself.

"Quiet Al. We can't let that little fact slip out" Ed muttered, keeping his golden eyes trained on the hall in front of him.

"Sorry Brother. But why do you think the Colonel called us here?" Al questioned.

"Probably to give me grief or something. I swear I can already hear his smug voice, Al" Ed growled, running his left hand through his blond bangs.

"But he has been good to us brother, giving us leads and not letting anyone know our secret and true purpose for looking for a Philosopher's Stone" Alphonse said.

"Whatever. Colonel Bastard still keeps us in the dark about too many things. And now we can't even use a stone if we find it" Ed complained and then sighing.

Alphonse looked down as well. He and his brother couldn't use a Philosopher's stone to get their original bodies back.

Not when it took countless human lives to make.

"But don't worry Al. I am sure we can still figure out a way to get you your body back" Ed said.

"And return your right arm and left leg!" Al added cheerily.

Ed smiled slightly at his brother's enthusiasm. Edward was determined to fix the mistakes he had made four years ago that cost his brother his entire body and Edward himself an arm and a leg.

The failed attempt at the taboo known as Human Transmutation. The young boys trying to bring back their dead mother as their father had left them years ago, leaving the two brothers alone.

"Sure Al. We just need to keep looking. I am sure we're close. I can feel it" Ed said smirking as he approached Mustang's office and pushing open the doors.

"Edward. I see your back" Lieutenant Riza Hawkeye said turning to see the Elric brothers entering the office.

"Hello Lieutenant." Edward asked, crossing his arms "And Colonel" he said eyeing the Colonel sitting at his desk with his hands folded in front of him with his elbows resting on his desk.

"Hey Chief. How was the East? Did your repairs go well?" 2nd Lieutenant Jean Havoc said.

"It was very nice. My repairs were okay" Edward said looking right at Colonel Mustang who only gave a slight smirk "Where's Falman?"

"On sick leave" Riza said quickly and Ed nodded.

"Are you two going to stay in Central?" Sgt. Fuery asked.
Before Edward could answer the Colonel spoke up at that moment.

"Actually I have a set of orders for you." Mustang said picking up a file and holding it out for the eldest Elric brother.

"What is it now? Another conspiracy? Or is it a drug bust?" Edward said grabbing the folder and opening the file and reading the sheet in front of him.

"What-what is this?" Edward questioned looking up from reading.

"Your orders" Mustang said, leaning back in his chair.

"There is no way in hell I am leaving the country!" Edward yelled.

"Chief's leaving? For how long?" Havoc asked, tapping out his cigarette in an ashtray.

"Brother!?" Al exclaimed "What's going on? Why are we leaving?"

"And this says I have to teach!?" Ed ranted, causing Fuery to wince slightly.

"Fullmetal? Teach? You've gotta be kidding me" Second Lieutenant Breda said running his hand through his hair.

"Those poor kids" Havoc said shaking his head.

"Fullmetal. Please calm yourself" Mustang said.

"I am calm!" Ed shouted.

"Edward." Hawkeye said sternly and Ed shut up fast. He was smart enough to know never to push the Lieutenant, especially when she used that tone.

"Fullmetal, I can explain all of this in a more private setting if you don't mind" Mustang said standing up and walking over to his own private study.

Ed grumbled as he and his brother followed the Flame Alchemist. Alphonse shut the door behind them and the Colonel stood looking out the window with his hands behind his back while Ed and Al sat down on the couch.

"What is the deal with this mission Mustang?" Ed said.

"There is a school in the nation of England that is in need of an Alchemy teacher" Mustang said.

"So why is Ametris sending me?" Ed questioned.

"They requested an alchemist that is...busy at the moment." Mustang said "So we're sending the young prodigy instead as to hope diplomatic relations don't deteriorate."

"Where is England might I ask?" Alphonse said softly.

"Its far north, past Drachma and across a sea" Mustang said.

"That far!?" Edward exclaimed "Then why the hell do we care about relations with them? They're too far to do anything!"

"The distance doesn't matter Fullmetal. Its the power this nation holds" Mustang said turning slightly
to look at the brothers.

"What power?" Ed said, intrigued by the thought of a mysterious power that could potentially be a lead to get his brother's body back.

"Supposedly there is a special ability a select few in this country have that surpass every scientific law we know... it is reported that this country is capable of magic" Mustang said, in a completely even voice while Ed was left with his mouth gaping like a fish.

"Magic?!" Ed and Al exclaimed together.

"Yes. Now the position you will be taking..."Mustang continued while Ed popped up out of his seat.

"You have got to be kidding me!" Ed yelled.

"Fullmetal sit back down." Mustang said.

"No! Magic isn't real! What the hell is this!" Ed roared.

"Brother!" Al said trying to calm his older brother.

"Fullmetal, though I cannot say I have witnessed this first hand, I can say multiple reports have confirmed that these...wizards hold a magical power that seem to ignore the Law of Equivalent Exchange." Mustang said.

"That's impossible dammit!" Ed yelled.

"I can assure you this is one hundred percent true Fullmetal." Mustang said now fully turned and facing Edward and Alphonse.

"What exactly is the mission then?" Alphonse asked while his brother was still trying to wrap his head around the idea of magic.

"Fullmetal will travel to England to teach Alchemy for one year." Mustang said.

"And do you think this...magic...can help us get our original bodies back?" Al asked softly.

"Perhaps...I don't know the limits of this magic or what it is exactly capable of, so I cannot say for certain. But since you and your brother have decided against using a Philosopher's Stone, if you should ever find it,. I see this as the best option for the both of you right now." the Flame Alchemist said.

"But-but-but it's not possible!" Ed yelled, gaining back his voice "And no way in hell am I going to teach some snot nosed brats!"

"Fullmetal. This is a direct order from your superior officer" Mustang said in a commanding voice "You will travel to England and be a respectful and polite representative of our country."

"And if I refuse?" Ed questioned.

"You will be Court-Martialed" Mustang said plainly.

"So I'm being forced to do this!" Ed said, throwing his hands in the air.

"Its only for a year Fullmetal, and you can use the time when you aren't teaching to research the limits of this magic and perhaps even find a way to use it to reach your goal of these past few years"
"Brother...if this can help us get our bodies back without having to use a stone then maybe we should look into it" Al said.

"And Al can join me and research with me?" Ed asked.

"It will be tricky, but I won't separate you two for a whole year." Mustang said "I highly doubt you would agree to this mission or take it seriously if I force you both to stay apart."

"Damn right" Ed muttered, crossing his arms.

"The wizarding school has said they will provide the transportation. A representative will be here in about three days to take you both to the school. August 31st to be exact." Mustang said.

"And we can't take a train or something?" Ed said.

"Its too far for a train. Furthermore, I don't want either of you attracting to much attention." Mustang said.

"Okay" Ed said.

"I also want you both to keep your secret as always" Mustang said "And I will journey to the school to conduct your yearly State Alchemist assessment in October Fullmetal, so you will need to take that day off."

"Fine, fine. I got it. Can we leave now?" Ed said waving the Colonel off.

Mustang rolled his eyes and left the study to return to his desk and Ed and Al did the same, leaving the office and Central Command all together.

The days flew by as Ed and Al waited in Central. Ed and Al walked into Central Command and into Mustang's office to see a weirdly dress man standing there and talking with the Colonel.

"I am sorry to inform you of this Dumbledore, but the Alchemist you requested is not with the military and we do not know his location. However, we have found a suitable replacement." Mustang said then seeing the Elric brothers entering his office.

The man was wearing a ridiculous outfit that looked like a brightly colored purple dress with a weird looking gold design. He was tall and thin, with silver hair and beard so long that they could be tucked into his belt.

"And here he is now" Mustang said "The Fullmetal Alchemist, Edward Elric and his brother Alphonse Elric." he said.

"I can see why you call him Fullmetal with the armor he is wearing." the man named Dumbledore said.

He had a very long and crooked nose that looked as if it had been broken at least twice. His eyes were a brilliant, soul-piercing shade of blue, twinkled with kindness and mischief.

Ed growled, his hands clenching into fists.

"I'M EDWARD YOU OLD MAN! I SWEAR TO TRUTH THE NEXT PERSON TO MAKE THAT MISTAKE IS GOING TO GET IT!" Ed roared as Al tried to reign in his older brother.
"Brother! Calm yourself" he said in a soft voice.

Dumbledore looked shocked for a minute but then started laughing, holding his stomach as he chuckled.

"That was quite interesting Edward, or do you prefer to be called Fullmetal?" he asked, the twinkle still in his eye.

"I don't care if you call me Ed, Edward, Elric, or Fullmetal old man." Ed said, crossing his arms.

"Fullmetal" Mustang said "This man is the Headmaster of the school you will be teaching at for the next year, so try to show you have manners."

"I have manners, I just chose not to use them sometimes" Ed said smirking while the Colonel sighed.

"I am not going to miss you, am I?" he said.

"I'm hurt Colonel" Ed said feigning pain and clutching his heart.

"You will have to admit there will be a lot less paperwork when the Chief is gone" Havoc said.

"I don't create that much paperwork" Ed said.

"You literally just created a mound of paperwork with the bust you did yesterday" Breda said.

"You what!?" Musntag exclaimed.

"I only beat up a couple punks who were trying to take advantage of this young girl" Ed said, waving the Colonel off.

"As I recall I think they were apart of a rather big drug dealing ring here in Central that the military has been trying to get for over five years." Havoc said.

"How was I supposed to know!" Ed exclaimed.

"Edward. I do believe you have other business right now" Hawkeye said.

"Allow me to formally introduce myself" Dumbledore said, looking at Ed and Al.

"I am Professor Albus Percival Wulfric Brian Dumbledore of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry." he said.

"Great" Ed said enthusiastically.

"If I might ask, why does he look so young?" Dumbledore asked Mustang.

"He became a State Alchemist at the age of twelve and has served under me for the past three years." Mustang said.

"You allow people to enter the military at such a young age?" Dumbledore questioned, though his tone was not of accusation but of curiosity.

"There is no age limit for the State Alchemist exam. The difficulty was thought to be enough to keep anyone young away from it, but Fullmetal was a prodigy and a genius and passed the exam with flying colors." Mustang said.
"I see. Well if he was skilled enough to become a State Alchemist, I see no problem letting him teach." Dumbledore said, then turning to Edward and Alphonse.

"Now, the Colonel has informed me of your brother tagging along and I do not have any problem with this." Dumbledore said "And if you are both packed and ready we can leave at once"

"How are we traveling exactly?" Alphonse said then quickly adding a "Umm sir?"

"We will apparate to Hogwarts.

"What is that ?" Alphonse asked.

"I simply can think of a destination and magically teleport us there." Dumbledore said.

"But how does that work?" Ed asked "I mean how does the object take you from one place to another?"

"By magic" Dumbledore said.

Ed groaned as he ran his hand over his face "But it defies all the laws of physics!"

"Fullmetal. You can complain all you want when you get to the school" Mustang said.

"Yes. I do believe we must be going" Dumbledore said "Are you both packed?"

"Yeah, yeah" Ed said lifting his suitcase, that was slightly heavier than usual since he and Al would be gone for a year.

"Only one suitcase? Are you sure you have everything you need?" he asked.

"Let's just get going old man" Ed grumbled and walked towards Dumbledore with Al beside him.

"Now, since you are in fact a muggle..."Dumbledore started to say.

"Woh, woh, woh...wait...what in the world is a muggle?" Edward asked.

"A muggle is a non magical human being." Dumbledore answered "And since your superior officer told me that you are not a wizard I will have to preform some enchantments on you to counteract the anti-muggle charms put around the school."

"Okay..."Edward said slightly suspicious.

Dumbledore took out something that resembled a stick and waved it saying a few weird words. Ed felt a weird feeling on the top of his head, like someone cracked an egg on top of it and he quickly checked to see there was no egg.

"Now simply hold onto my forearm and we will be off." Dumbledore said extending both of his arms which Ed and Al grabbed.

"See ya in a year Chief" Havoc said.

"Try to take care an not loose your temper so much Edward. Alphonse, I'm trusting you to keep your brother in line" Hawkeye said.

Before Ed could retort Dumbledore apparated leaving a slightly shocked Team Mustang, staring at the place the three people were standing only a second ago.
Ed felt like his whole body was being squeezed and stretched all at once, his ports crying out in pain from the feeling. In next second they stood, not in Mustang's office, but in a large grassy field. Edward didn't take in much more than that as he was then hunched over and throwing up the contents of his breakfast as soon as his feet touched the ground again.

"Brother!" Alphonse cried out as his elder brother was heaving with his hands on his knees.

"Don't worry Edward. Most people throw up the first time. I am surprised your brother didn't though" Dumbledore said.

Edward groaned as he stood up and wiped his mouth with the back of his white gloved hand "Could have warned us old man"

"I am sorry for that. If you still feel ill I can show you to the infirmary." Dumbledore said.

"Are you alright brother?" Alphonse asked.

"I'm fine." Ed said waving his worried brother off.

"Now, if you would be so kind as to follow me" Dumbledore said starting to walk towards the giant castle before the two alchemist. Ed and Al looked up at the massive structure and were in awe as they hadn't seen anything in Amestris that was quite that large. The Northern Wall of Briggs was said to be the largest thing in Amestris and was a sight to see.

Ed shook off the shock and grabbed his discarded luggage and ran after the Headmaster.

"How big is this place?" Ed asked looking around at the massive architecture.

Dumbledore chuckled a bit and said "Well I don't know the exact numbers but I would say rather large"

"Thanks for the observation" Ed said sarcastically.

"Now as you will be teaching here do I need to give you and your brother a translation spell?" Dumbledore asked.

"So you don't speak the same language as us?" Alphonse said.

"I put a translation spell on myself before travelling to retrieve you." Dumbledore said.

"Me and Al studied the language and have a basic understanding of it" Edward said "Mustang gave us a few books and I was able to get a good grasp on English"

"Amazing, he said you only had three days to prepare" Dumbledore said.

"It is somewhat similar to what we speak in Amestris, plus I didn't have anything else to do for those few days so I spent most of them studying" Edward said.

"Well then, if you need a translation spell please ask me or any of your fellow teachers." Dumbledore said with a smile.

"Sure, sure" Edward said. They continued walking through the castle, going through a few more corridors and ended up at a giant statue of a gargoyle.

"Acid Pops" Dumbledore said and the statue actually moved!
"How did you do that!" Ed exclaimed.

Dumbledore didn't reply, only a slight smile crossed his face as he then started walking up the stairs.

"Headmaster" an elder woman with a long green robe, black hat, and glasses said as they entered the office.

"Now, Minerva and Severus, I am sure you are both curious as to why I asked you here" Dumbledore said sitting at his desk. Ed and Al stood in front of Dumbledore with the woman and man standing beside him. Ed shifted the weight from his real leg to his automail one as he felt three sets of eyes bore into him and his brother.

"I would like to introduce you both to the new Alchemy teacher from Amestris, Edward Elric the Fullmetal Alchemist. And his brother, Alphonse Elric" he said with a sweep of his arm.

"Hello" Al said politely and waving.

"I can see the reason behind the name Fullmetal" McGonagall said.

Ed's eyebrow twitched as he set down his luggage and clenched his fists tight.

"I'M EDWARD ELRIC!" he shouted

McGonagall looked a little taken aback at Edward's explosion.

"Wait...this child is teaching at Hogwarts" a greasy-haired man in black robes said.

"Who are you calling a child!" Ed roared "I'm fifteen Goddammit!"

"Fifteen?" the man questioned, raising an eyebrow and his eyes traveling up and down Edward.

"Yes! I turn sixteen in February!" Ed yelled.

"Why did Amestris send a child to teach Dumbledore? Even more so, why did you bring him here?" the man said, ignoring Edward.

"Who the hell are you both anyway!" Ed yelled, getting fed up with people mistaking him for being younger than he actually was.

"I am Minerva McGonagall, Professor of Transfiguration." the woman said with a stern tone.

"And I am Severus Snape, the Potions Master" the greasy-haired man said.

"To answer your question Severus" Dumbledore said, gaining back control of the conversation "I brought Edward here to teach Alchemy. His brother joined him because they refused to be separated. And I had no problem with letting both of them stay together"

"But Headmaster...he is not even of age" McGonagall said.

"I am fully capable of teaching Alchemy, if that's what you're worried about" Edward said, crossing his arms.

"Really?" Snape said raising an eyebrow.

"Yes" Edward said, rolling his eyes "Didn't you here what I said? But if you can't seem to understand those simple words, here" he said pulling the silver State Alchemist pocket watch out and
holding it in the palm of his hand.
"So you do have the watch" Dumbledore said with a slight smile.
"Of course I do, old man. Every State Alchemist is giving this and a name once they pass the examination." Edward said then putting the pocket watch away.
"They allow children to become State Alchemists?" Snape said.
"No, actually there is no age rule. The test is so difficult they thought it would keep anyone young away." Edward said then smirking as he crossed his arms "But they didn't exactly account for an eleven yer old prodigy."
"You were eleven?" McGonagall said, shocked.
"Yes, and I've held my title for almost four years now" Edward said.
"Headmaster, what happened to the man Flamel spoke so highly of?" McGonagall said.
"He was not with the military State Alchemist program. In fact, they have no record of him." Dumbledore said.
Edward narrowed his eyes "Who did you ask for? The Colonel told us he was just busy."
"A man that came highly recommended by a friend who was a skilled Alchemist but recently passed away a few years back. The man Flamel told me was Van Hohenheim"
Ed stiffened at the name and Al gasped.
Dumbledore raised an eyebrow at their reactions "I take it you both know him?"
"Know him?" Ed said then giving a fake laugh "Please, I wish I had never known the bastard"
"Brother!" Al said.
"What Al? It's true! I know you feel differently but I will be very happy if I never have to lay eyes on that bastard ever again!"
"Brother! I know you don't like him, but-"Al said, as Ed cut him off.
"I don't care Al. That bastard left us! What am I supposed to feel!" he retorted.
"Excuse me, might I ask what in the world is going on?" McGonagall said.
Ed sighed "We know Van Hohenheim."
"That much we gathered" Snape said "But why do you hate him?"
Ed ground his teeth as Al answered "He's our father."
All the wizards gasped as Ed exclaimed "Biological father. And that's all he will ever be to me."
Dumbledore had a small look of confusion on his face "If you are his sons, then why is your last name Elric?" he asked.
"It was our mother's last name. Like I would take that bastard's name after what he did!"
"What he did?" Dumbledore said.

"He left us! Just packed up and left us and our mom! I was five and Al was four and he just left!" Ed yelled.

Dumbledore looked quite shocked at this revelation.

"I was told he was a good, kind hearted man." Dumbledore said.

"Well you heard wrong. He is a no good bastard that abandoned his wife and children!" Ed yelled, breathing heavy after his tirade.

The wizards all had a mix of expressions. McGonagall's looked like one of pity and empathy. Snape's cold expression had lightened a little. But Dumbledore's shown a mixture of understanding and nothing close to pity.

"Our...father...is a touchy subject. Can we please continue with the other conversation?" Al asked politely.

Dumbledore nodded slightly and continued "I believe Mr. Elric is fully capable of teaching here this year."

"Maybe a demonstration of his abilities?" Snape said.

Ed sighed and clapped his hands together, then kneeling down and touching the stone floor. Blue alchemical light sparked around the floor causing Snape and McGonagall to jump back while Dumbledore looked on with wonder.

The light disappeared as a small statue of Dumbledore formed, causing a slight indentation in the stone floor around it.

"How did you do that without a wand?" Snape said.

"It's Alchemy, there is no 'hocus-pocus' nonsense. Its a pure science." Edward said picking up the small statue and tossing it at Snape who caught it and examined it further.

"A science? Do you mean a muggle science?" McGonagall questioned.

Ed sighed "Yes. As I've told him Alchemy is a science that is based on the laws of physics. Ergo, no magic"

Snape looked at Edward, his eyes narrowing "You're a muggle, aren't you?"

"Yes" Edward said, glaring right back at Snape.

McGonagall gasped "Dumbledore!" she exclaimed.

"Now, now Minerva. Edward has been placed under orders to not reveal anything about the wizarding world to those that do know about it in the first place" Dumbeldore said.

"And how do we know he will follow these orders?" Snape countered.

"I will have to or I'll be Court-Martialed." Ed said, crossing his arms "And as much as I would love to not be a dog of the military, I can't quit. Not yet anyways."

"A dog of the military? Is that what they call the State Alchemists?" Snape said.
"That's their nicknames yes. But I prefer mine" Ed said smirking "In Amestris I'm also known as the 'Hero of the People' "

"And how did you come by that?" Snape said.

"Oh it was on sale at a lovely little store in Central" Ed said clasping his hands together in a mocking fashion then turning into an angry expression "What do you think? I went around the country and busted up crime rings, or exposed corrupted officials. I also would go and fix any damage done to people's homes and businesses sometimes."

"As Edward is a State Alchemist and the son of Van Hohenheim, I see him as fully qualified to teach at Hogwarts and wanted you both to help him as the year progresses." Dumbledore said to MvGonagall and Snape.

"Excuse me, umm...Mr. Dumbledore?" Al said "I was wondering about if we could research while we are here?"

"What would you like to research?" Dumbledore said, his tone was filled more with curiosity than suspicion.

"Me and my brother are always researching, trying to further our Alchemy. And once we heard about magic we were interested in looking into its properties and uses." Al said.

"You are both free to use the Hogwarts library at any time." Dumbledore said "Now, seeing as it is getting late you both should probably be off to your rooms."

"Late? We left early this morning" Edward said.

"But the time difference between here and Amestris is more than a few hours, so it is late in the evening if I am not mistaken" Dumbledore said.

"I can take them." McGonagall said walking past the brothers.

"Before I forget, here is your schedule. Classes start tomorrow." Dumbledore said holding out a piece of paper to Ed who took it and stuffed it in his red coat's pocket.

"Alright, alright" he said turning to pick up his suitcase and follow McGonagall out of the office. They moved through the corridors and up about a dozen stairs. The first time a staircase moved it caused Ed to grab on for dear life and Al to almost trip down the stairs.

"Could have warned us the stairs freaking move!" Ed cried out.

"I'm sorry about that" McGonagall said "But don't worry, your room is on this floor."

Ed grumbled something about wizards and their god damn magic before continuing to follow McGonagall through the castle. She stopped at a portrait of a smiling young girl playing the piano. The girl looked to be about twelve and had blonde curly hair that was pinned up. She was wearing a simple light blue dress. The shocking thing was, she was actually moving and playing the piano she was sitting at!

"Here we are" she said.

"Um...that's a portrait...and its...MOVING!" Edward said seeing the girl move.

"I'm Elizabeth. Nice to meet you" she said standing up and curtsying.
"You can set up a password with her and change it whenever you wish." McGonagall said.

"Um...how about... Three-Ten" Edward said, feeling his silver pocket watch get a little heavier as he mentioned the date his and his brother's lives changed forever.

Elizabeth smiled and the portrait swung open.

"I'll leave you then. Students will be arriving later on in the evening, and all teachers are expected to attend the feast" she said.

"Okay" Ed said stepping into the room and Al following behind him.

There was a simple bed in the corner and a large desk. There was also a window on the left side of the room overlooking the grounds and the lake.

"Oh, there is only one bed since we were not expecting two of you." McGonagall said as she looking into the room. She pulled out her wand and flicked her wrist, creating another bed on the opposite side of the room.

"Oh, thanks" Edward said. He hadn't been worried about it since Al couldn't sleep, but the reminder of it struck a cord within him.

"I will see you tomorrow. Edward, Alphonse, have a nice evening" she said and the portrait swung shut behind her.

Ed slung his suitcase onto the bed closest to him and sat down, pulling out his pocket watch and opening it. The carving Don't forget 3. Oct. 11 stared back at him as he sighed.

"Are you okay Al?" Ed asked.

"What do you mean brother?" Alphonse asked.

"I mean with...all this... do you really think magic can hold the key?" Edward asked.

"I believe there is a way. Be it in Alchemy, magic, or something else. I know we will find a way to get our bodies back" Al said.

"Alright." Ed said.

"Since you aren't really tired...can...can you.." Alphonse said looking at the ground.

"Don't worry Al, I'll stay up with you" Edward said smiling at his brother.

Al nodded and he began unpacking the suitcase while Ed stretched his automail arm and leg.
Ed stayed up through the night with his brother, talking, writing in his coded notebook and studying more of the English language. Once the sun began to peak back up though Ed yawned and stretched while grabbing his red coat from the chair.

"Well since it's now a decent time, maybe we should try out the library" Edward said, putting his white gloves over his flesh and automail hands.

"Sure! Dumbledore said the students arrive but classes don't exactly start today" Al said standing up to follow his brother out of the portrait hole.

"Hello Edward, Alphonse. Did you sleep well?" Elizabeth asked as she stopped playing her piano.

"Like a rock" Ed said "Do you know perhaps where the library is?" The concept of asking a painting for directions was an odd one but Elizabeth seemed nice for a portrait and since Ed and Al didn't really know anyone else nevermind actually finding them in the first place, the painting was one of their only options.

"I can show you, right now" she said standing up from her piano chair and walking out of her painting all together.

"Follow me!" she called from a painting to the right of them.

Ed and Al kept their eyes on the various painting Elizabeth walked through, moving through the corridors and different hallways until they reached the library.

"Here we are" Elizabeth said, the painting she was in now was a pretty one of a large field with wild flowers moving in the wind.

"Thanks" Ed said and Elizabeth curtsied and left the two brothers.

The library was large, but not as large as the one in Central had been before it burned down.

"Okay, lets try to see if we can find any alchemy books and go from there" Ed said, as he and Al walking further into the library. An elder woman walked around one of the bookshelves and saw the two brothers.

"Who are you?" she asked. Her skin was shrivelled and paper-like, and she had a hooked-nose. She was also very thin and irritable-looking.

"I'm Edward Elric" Ed said pointing at himself "And this is my brother Alphonse. I'm the new alchemy teacher"

"You can't possibly be a professor! You look no older than twelve" the woman said.

Ed's eye twitched as he screamed "I'M FIFTEEN DAMMIT! NOT TWELVE!"

"Ahh Edward, I'm glad I found you" a calm voice said as Dumbledore then turned the corner "Elizabeth said you both were in the library. And I see you have already met our librarian, Madame Pince."

"Headmaster, this boy just said he was-"Madame Pince said while Dumbledore held up his hand and stopped her "The new alchemy teacher, yes. I gave him and his younger brother permission to use
The woman huffed a bit before turning to Edward and Alphonse "What type of books are you interested in?"

"Alchemy for right now" Ed said "Just show us that section and we will take it from there"

"Very good, then Edward I just wanted to inform you of the welcoming feast we will be having tonight" Dumbledore said "Every teacher attends and I expect you will be there as well. The feast happens at 7:00 pm."

"Sure" Ed said shrugging.

"Very well, I'll leave you two to your research." Dumbledore said turning to leave the library. Madame Pince turned on her heels and started walking past the stacks of books as Ed and Al then followed her. She stopped at one section and glared at the boys "I expect every book to be put back in its place and in perfect condition."

"Alright, alright. We know the drill. We've been in more time in libraries than I care to remember" Ed said walking past Madame Pince to grab a book.

"Thank you" Alphonse said as Madame Pince left to tend whatever business she needed to do, leaving the brothers alone in the stacks.

"I'll start over here and read these if you start with those" Ed said pointing to the separate ends of the shelves.

"Okay brother" Alphonse said grabbing about ten books and sitting down, while opening the first book and beginning to read.

Ed flipped through the pages and scoffed at many of them "What is this?!" he cried out after reading the sixth book on Alchemy, talking about trying to create a Philosopher's stone.

"I thought we were trying to get away from using a stone! But all these books seem to praise it to high heaven!" Ed exclaimed as he tugged on his hair.

"Just be patient brother, I'm sure not all the books are like that" Alphonse said.

"Alright Al, I'm going to look over my own notes for a second though" Ed said pulling out his 'travel log'.

Right as he did Madame Pince returned and yelled with a mix of horror and anger "What did you two do!"

Ed and Al looked up at the enraged librarian and back to the scattered books surrounding them. Ed sighed "We're going to put them all back" he said rolling his eyes.

"Not correctly!" she yelled.

"Uh yeah we will." Ed countered, crossing his arms "I remember where all these books go so its not a big deal if they are scattered right now"

Madame Pince had a look of rage in her eyes and she huffed and walked away while Ed just turned back to his own notes.
"Maybe we should try and look into some more of the magic side of this alchemy" Al suggested.

"Maybe..." Ed said tapping his chin "But let's not give up on this section just yet. We still may be able to find something, even if it's only a hint or a clue it's still going to get us one step closer"

"Okay" Al said enthusiastically, before grabbing the eighth book in his stack while Ed shut his notes and picked up another book. Once he finished he sighed and rubbed his eyes, while his stomach let out a loud growl.

"Oh...I guess I forgot to eat this morning" Ed said, looking down at his stomach and then pulling out his silver pocket watch and seeing it was 7:00 pm.

"And lunch..." he said.

"Brother! Isn't there a feast tonight that you need to attend" Al said.

"Oh crap your right" Ed said popping up and quickly leaping over the stacks of books that surrounded them.

"Are you coming?" Ed asked, turning around to look at his brother.

"No, I'll be fine. And this way I can do some more research and put back all these books." Al said.

"Okay, I'll meet you back at the room" Ed said extending his fist to which his brother met with a fist bump.

Ed then took off, running out of the library and into the halls before realizing he had no earthly idea on how to get to the feast. He sighed as his shoulders slumped and he looked to some of the paintings. If Elizabeth was this helpful then maybe most of the other paintings were as well.

Ed saw a portrait of a old man with a weird looking hat and a long beard "Um...hello?" he said.

"Who are you?" the man replied.

"I'm Edward Elric. I'm an Alchemy professor here. Could you tell me how to get to the feast?" Ed asked.

"A professor? You are too young to be a professor boy" the man said.

"I'm fifteen old man." Ed gritted through his teeth "Now tell me how to get to the Great Hall!"

The man sighed "If you are a professor shouldn't you know how to get to the Great Hall?" he retorted.

"Well since I have only been here for about twenty-four hours...no" Ed said crossing his arms.

"It's down this hall, take a left and once you get to the staircases go down about three flights and take a right. The Great Hall are going to be the large doors are the left" a woman in the next portrait over said.

"Thank you" Ed said, then tearing off down the hall. He reached the stairs and was running down them as fast as he could taking about two or three at a time. Edward was standing in front of the large doors a few moments later.

"Freaking wizards and their large doors. Who do they expect? Giants!?!" Ed grumbled as he took a deep breath in and started to push opened the doors.
Dumbledore was going through his usual speech at the beginning of the year "And we have two new teachers this year" he said "And a new subject for study as well"

Many of the students perked up at this, curious at which new subject would be taught at Hogwarts this year.

"What do you think it is?" Ron asked.

"I don't know" Harry said.

"Do you think the woman in pink teaches it?" Ron said.

"Wait... Ron..she was at my hearing. She's with the Ministry!" Harry exclaimed his eyes going wide.

"The new subject is Alchemy. This will be open to students above the fifth year, as it is a difficult area of study." Dumbledore said "I expect you all to give him the utmost respect and welcome him to Hogwarts this year."

"Well that leaves her as being the new Defense Against the Dark Arts teacher" Ron said.

"I also expect you all to welcome our new Defense Against the Dark Arts teacher, Professor Umbridge." Dumbledore said gesturing to the woman in pink.

"But wait...there is no one else who is new at the table" Harry said "So who is the Alchemy teacher?"

Right as Harry said that the doors opened and a boy walked through. He was small, and wearing a long red coat with black pants and a shirt underneath. He had a medium length golden braid and his eyes were golden as well. He didn't look any older than about thirteen or so.

"Ahh and here he is. Please welcome Edward Elric." Dumbledore said as he extended his hand.

The hall erupted into chatter as the young professor walked up to the front table.

"He doesn't look any older than us!" some unknown student shouted.

Edward, who had one foot on the steps stopped and turned around yelling at the top of his lungs "I'M FIFTEEN DAMMIT! WHY DO ALL YOU WIZARDS THINK I'M SO YOUNG!"

McGongall stood up from her chair "Language Mr. Elric!" she scolded.

Edward who still looked mad mad his way up the stairs and looked at Dumbledore.

"Sorry I'm late old man, this castle is too damn big" Edward said causing many of the younger students to gasp. No one talked to Dumbledore that way, so what was this new professor thinking?

Dumbledore only laughed "It's quite alright. I'm sorry for not thinking about that before hand."

Before Edward could reply a small "Hem, hem" was heard as everyone turned to look at Umbridge.

"Thank you, Headmaster, for those kind words of welcome" Professor Umbridge simpered, But, I must question why a child of fifteen is teaching at this school."

Edward looked ready to explode but Dumbledore spoke before he could "I can address any concerns
They have at a later time, but this is not the time nor the place I would think." he said looking out upon the curious students.

"Very well" Umbridge said standing up and walking towards Dumbledore and Edward "I must say that it is lovely to be back at Hogwarts" She smiled "And to see such happy little faces looking back at me!"

Edward scoffed, rolling his eyes and walking to the only available seat and sitting down.

"I am sure we are going to become the best of friends" she said clasping her hands together while the students just looked on, trying to hide their laughter.

"The Ministry of Magic has always considered the education of young witches and wizards to be of vital importance. The treasure trove of magical knowledge amassed by our ancestors must be guarded, replenished, and polished by those who have been called to the noble profession of teaching. 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 will be stagnation and decay. There again, progress for progress's sake must be discouraged, for our tried and tested traditions often require no tinkering. A balance, then, between old and new, between permanence and change, between tradition and innovation. Let us move forward, then, into a new era of openness, effectiveness, and accountability, intent on preserving what ought to be preserved, perfecting what needs to be perfected, and pruning wherever we find practices that ought to be prohibited." she said then finishing with a small giggle and then sitting down.

Dumbledore then regained his composure and turned back to the students "Thank you very much Professor Umbridge... Now as I was saying the Quidditch tryouts will be held.." he continued.

"Well that was enlightening" Hermione whispered.

"What are you talking about?" Ron said causing Hermione to sigh.

" Didn't you hear what she said?!!" Hermione said.

"It sounded like a load of dragon dung to me" Ron said.

"Well it definitely said a lot...and it isn't good" Hermione said "The Ministry is interfering with Hogwarts."

"Do you think the new Alchemy professor is with her too?" Harry questioned.

"Maybe...I don't know. Harry, do you recognize him from the hearing?" Hermione asked.

"No.. I haven't seen him ever before." Harry replied.

Dumbledore soon finished his speech and the feast began, the food appearing in front of the students and teachers instantaneously. As the students began filling their plates and talking a loud shout came from the teachers table.

"HOLY TRUTH!" the new alchemy professor yelled as he looked shocked at the food in front of him.

"A strange one, that alchemy professor" Fred commented.

"Did you see the way he reacted when someone called him young?" George said.
"He definitely is peculiar" Hermione said.

"The way he spoke was weird too" Ron said "It sounded like an accent"

"He did sound like English was not his first language" Hermione said.

"So he is a foreign teacher?" Harry said.

"Well I'm just excited to take Alchemy this year, I mean we'll learn how to make gold!" Ron said, filling his plate up more and more.

Hermione nodded as she then moved to start eating as well.

Edward stared at the food in front of him. Nothing was wrong with it, except the fact it appeared out of no where!

"HOLY TRUTH!" he yelled, but was then shushed by McGonagall.

Ed groaned as the teacher beside him, a very, very, very large man with a long coat with lots of pockets and a large beard as well said " 'R yer okay?"

"I'm...fine" Ed said, slowly getting over the shock.

"I'm Rubeus Hagrid, Keeper 'o der keys, groundskeeper, and 'fessor of Care 'o Magical Creatures" he said with a smile.

"Edward Elric" Ed said extending his right hand and shaking the large man's hand.

"So, were ye from?" Hagrid asked as he filled up his plate.

"Umm Amestris" Edward said.

"Never heard of it" Hagrid said "Where is it?"

"Pretty far" Edward said feeling a slight twinge of homesickness.

"Well, welcome ter Hogwarts" Hagrid said with a cheerful smile.

"Thanks." Ed said as he started to dig into his dinner. Once he started eating he realized just about how hungry he really was. He finished his third helping of roast beef before Hagrid spoke up again.

"Really hungry aren't ye?" he said.

"Haven't eaten all day" Ed said taking another helping of a Shepard's pie and scarfing it down.

"Yer gonna give yerself a stomach-ache" he commented.

"I usually eat a lot." Ed said.

"Dear, you are going to be sick if you keep eating" a woman in what looked like a nurse's robe said.

"I'll be fine" Ed said waving her off, lifting the goblet in front of him to his lips before pausing.

"What is this?" he asked, looking down that the drink.
"Pumpkin juice" the woman said.

"Does it have milk?" Edward asked and the woman shook her head.

"Good." Ed said then taking a sip of the pumpkin juice and shrugging.

"Why did you ask if it has milk?" the woman asked.

"I hate milk" Ed grumbled.

"Well I should at least introduce myself. I'm Madame Pomfrey, the school nurse" she said.

"Edward Elric" Ed said introducing himself.

"Well welcome to Hogwarts. If you need any medical assistance please call upon me" she said with a small smile.

Ed nodded and turned back to his food, as the dinner then disappeared and dessert magically replaced it.

"Damn wizards, do they have to do everything with magic" Ed muttered underneath his breath before starting to eat his dessert, trying to avoid any cream or any milk product.

Once everyone in the Hall seemed to be full Dumbledore stood up and dismissed the students who began filling out of the Hall. Dumbledore walked over to Ed and said "Please follow me to my office."

"Sure thing old man. But I need to get my hands on a map or something. This place is too damn big" Ed said standing up.

Dumbledore only chuckled as he walked out of the Hall and to his office with Edward and Umbridge walking behind him. Once they were in his office, Dumbledore sat behind his desk and spoke "Now, Professor Umbridge, you had something you wanted to discuss?"

"I am curious why you did not inform the Ministry of Magic a child was to be teaching here" she said.

"I'm right here lady." Ed said, crossing his arms "And I'm not a child."

"He is underage" she said.

"Mr. Elric and his brother are both here for the year and here they will stay." Dumbledore said.

"Brother?" Umbridge said.

"Yeah, my younger brother Alphonse is here too" Ed said.

"Then why was he not at the feast?" Umbridge asked raising an eyebrow.

"Um, he wanted to research some more" Edward said, rubbing the back of his neck.

"Research? What kind of research?" Umbridge asked.

"Me and my brother try to further our alchemy whenever we can. We are mainly researchers." Edward said.
"And how did you get a job here at Hogwarts?" she asked.

"I wasn't exactly asked" Ed said "I'm not here because I want to be."

The woman furrowed her brows before speaking "If you don't wish to teach then why are you here?"

"I'm kind of under orders right now." Ed said.

"Orders? From who?" Umbridge asked.

"My superior officer." Ed said.

"Your in the military?" she said with wide eyes.

"Major Edward Elric at your service" Ed said saluting.

"Ma-Major" Umbridge stuttered.

"All State Alchemists have a rank equivalent to that of a major" Edward said.

"Dumbledore! The Minister will not be pleased that you have a child soldier teaching here at Hogwarts!" she said, turning to the Headmaster.

"Edward is full qualified as a teacher. And technically he is not a soldier, he is a State Alchemist." Dumbledore said.

"He is still in the military, too young, and has not been properly checked by the Ministry." she said "Where is the acclaimed alchemist Flamel spoke of? Van Hohenheim?"

Ed ground his teeth as he clenched his fists, and Umbridge took notice of his reaction.

"I take it you know this alchemist?" she said.

"He's my biological father" Ed gritted through his teeth.

"Father?" Umbridge said looking a little shocked.

"As you can see, Edward is the son of the alchemist Van Hohenheim, who was unavailable when I traveled to Amestris to retrieve him. Edward here was volunteered as he is a prodigy and the youngest State Alchemist in history" Dumbledore said.

"Prodigy?" Umbridge said, looking unconvinced.

"Yeah, I'm a freaking prodigy. Not every eleven year old can pass the State Alchemist exam. Men and women who have been studying their whole lives still have trouble with it. I passed and was given the title Fullmetal Alchemist" Edward said.

"Why Fullmetal?" she asked.

"Alchemist can specialize in a field of study" Ed explained "Like water, fire, or iron. I specialize in transmutations with metal and the earth."

Umbridge still looked like someone had spit in her coffee.

"I cannot allow a child to teach here at Hogwarts" she said.
"Well you can't, but I can. Seeing as I am the Headmaster, I am in charge of appointing all the teachers here." Dumbledore said.

"We will see about that" Umbridge said turning to leave the office.

"Well seeing as that's done, I'll be going now" Edward said "And if you could give me a map or something, this castle is way to damn big."

Dumbledore only laughed a bit before pulling out a sheet of parchment and saying some weird words, causing a map to appear on the previously blank sheet of paper.

"Thanks" Ed said grabbing the map "And do you have a phone or something here?"

"A phone?" Dumbledore said, sounding a little confused.

"You know, a phone? That you call people with?" Ed said.

"Ahh yes, the muggle invention. No, Hogwarts does not have any elek-troniks here" Dumbledore said "They actually don't even work"

Ed groaned and palmed his own forehead muttering about wizards and their damn magic.

"Well I need a way to contact my superior officer" Ed said.

"You can use an owl to send letters" Dumbledore said "We have a few you can borrow from the school unless you wish to buy your own?"

"I'll just use whatever you have." Ed said.

"Very well, once you have your letter simply go to the Owlery, give the letter to any of the school's owls and tell them where you need it delivered and to whom." Dumbledore said.

"So they can deliver to Amestris?" Ed asked.

"Yes" Dumbledore said.

"Okay, thanks old man" Ed said turning to walk out of the office. He looked over the map and saw the path he would need to take to get back to his room. Walking through the corridors he reached his room quickly and said the password to Elizabeth, and she opened.

Ed stepped inside and saw Al reading on one of the beds.

"Brother!" he said, looking up to see his older brother enter the room.

"Hey Al, find anything?" Ed asked.

"Not yet, but I think I am close" Al said "How was the feast?"

"It was good" Ed said shrugging "One of the teachers isn't so happy about me teaching here but I really don't care"

"Try not to make any of the other teacher mad at you brother, I think the Colonel wanted you to come here so you could make some new friends." Al said.

Ed rolled his eyes, taking off his red coat and white gloves "Whatever, classes are tomorrow so I'll be gone for parts of the day. Do you want to join me for some of my classes?"
"I think it would be nice to see you teach brother. I'll just be in the back reading though" Al said, gesturing to the pile of books he brought from the library.

"Fine by me." Ed said, slipping out of his clothes and into a white shirt and leaving his boxers on. His automail leg and arm fully exposed as he stretched.

"How do you think tomorrow will go?" his brother asked.

"With teaching?" Ed said "I can't say those kids will have it easy, they're too soft. They've had magic doing everything for them their whole lives. I mean they just made the food appear with a flick of their wrists!"

"It does sound convenient" Al commented.

"These brats wouldn't last one minute with Teacher." Ed said.

"Not many people can...handle...Teacher" Al said.

"True, but these kids are in for a rude awakening tomorrow" Ed said laying on his bed.

"Do you want me to stay up with you?" Ed asked his brother.

"I'll be fine. I have a few books and Elizabeth is outside. She was really nice, she came to the library to help me find the way back" Al said.

"That's nice...well I guess for a painting...man this school is weird" Ed said.

"It is very different from Amestris" Al said.

"And they don't even have phones here!" Ed said.

"Then how are we going to contact everyone?" Al said.

"They use owls, if you can believe it" Ed said "The old man said I could use one whenever I needed to. So I'll send the Colonel a letter tomorrow" he said then laughing "Man I wish I could see his face when the owl does get there! Priceless!"

Al nodded and continued to read his book.

"Goodnight Al. Wake me if you really want company" Edward said, turning to his side to face his brother.

"Okay, goodnight brother" Al said.

"Night" Ed said with a yawn and closed his eyes.
"Brother? You have to get up."

Those were the words that pulled Ed out of his slumber. He groaned, rolling to the side and rubbing his eyes with his left hand. He leaned over to grab the silver pocket watch and flipped it open.

"Crap, breakfast is in ten minutes!" Ed said, leaping out of bed and pulling on his black tank top, jacket, and pants.

"Here are your gloves brother," Al said, handing his brother the white gloves as Ed slipped on his red coat.

"Thanks Al."

"And here is your class schedule, and the room number, and your map," Al said, handing the stack of papers to his brother who was now slipping on his gloves and boots.

"Do you want to come to breakfast?"

"No, I think I'll just read and meet you in your classroom for your first lesson."

"Okay, I'll see you then," Ed said as he braided his golden hair back and turned to his brother. The two brothers bumped fists and Ed rushed out the door.

"In a rush today, Edward?" Elizabeth asked as her portrait opened and Ed hurried out.

"'Bout to be late." Ed replied hurriedly.

"I can show you a shortcut to the Great Hall!" she said excitedly.

"Really?" Ed said. "That would be awesome!"

"Follow me, and try to keep up," she said, standing up from her piano and running through the adjacent paintings. Ed followed the blonde girl as she ran through the paintings and ducked and dodged the other inhabitants. They reached the Great Hall in only a few moments and Ed was slightly panting from running so fast through the corridors of the giant castle.

"Here you are!" Elizabeth said, a touch of pride in her voice.

"You are the best," Ed said as she curtsied and started to walk back to her painting.

Ed pushed open the doors and walked through them.

Many of the students were already sitting down and eating as Ed strolled up to the teacher's table and sat down next to Hagrid.

"Ready fer yer first day Edward?" Hagrid asked as Ed started filling up his plate.

Ed only replied with a shrug as he started cutting up his sausages and popping them in his mouth.

"Well, good luck," Hagrid said with a cheery smile.
Ed nodded and replied with a "Thanks, Hagrid."

"No problem. I know how it feels to be new teacher," Hagrid said, eating some of his breakfast.

"Any words of advice?" Ed asked.

"Don't worry 'bout it. Just go with yer gut and try to do yer best," Hagrid said.

"Thanks," Ed said.

"So I heard from Dumbledore ye got yerself a younger brother here with ye," Hagrid said.

Ed smiled softly at the mentioning of his younger brother. "Yeah, Alphonse is here with me."

"Haven't see him, is he shy?" Hagrid asked. "Cause he wasn't at the feast and he ain't here now."

"Um... yeah! Yeah, he is a little shy," Ed said, trying to cover up the real reason his brother didn't join him. They would have to figure out a way to keep their secret and not arouse any suspicion with these wizards.

"Well I can't wait te meet him!" Hagrid said.

"Hagrid, breakfast is almost over," Madame Pomfrey said. "And if I am not mistaken, you both have classes soon."

Ed flipped open his silver State Alchemist pocket watch and pulled out the class schedule Dumbledore had given him, then cursed under his breath.

"Crap, you're right. I got to go," Ed said, pulling out the map of the castle.

"I have to go as well. Your classroom is on the way to the Hospital Wing so I can escort you there," Madame Pomfrey said.

"See ye later Edward, and I can't wait to meet that brother o' yers." Hagrid said, standing up and waving goodbye as he left.

"We should leave as well," Madame Pomfrey said, and Ed nodded. Both of them stood up and started walking out of the Great Hall and up the stairs.

"How do you like Hogwarts so far, Edward?" Madame Pomfrey asked.

"It seems… alright," Ed said, unsure how to answer.

"Well, I know most of us want to make you and your brother feel at home," she replied.

"Most?"

"I believe you have already met one of the faculty members who would wish that you had stayed in your own country."

"Umbridge. Yeah, we had a real nice talk last night" Ed grumbled.

"Dumbledore will do his best to try and… control her."

"Yeah, but from what I gathered his hands are tied in a lot of places. The best option for him is to just smile while working behind the scenes to make sure she doesn't do anything too bad."
"You are rather intuitive, Edward," she commented.

"Well, being in the military for three years makes you pick up a lot of things." Ed replied.

"So it is true, you are a part of the military."

"Yes, but not probably the way you are thinking," Ed said, stuffing his hands in his pockets. "I'm a State Alchemist, and that is a branch of the military. But my main objective is to research and further my alchemy. Some State Alchemists are on the career path of the military, but some just need the funding for their research."

"So, you are not a soldier?"

"Not really. I usually will go around the country to research. But I do sometime have to do military work, usually that means I investigate and uncover corruption," Ed said while pulling out his silver pocket watch.

"That's a lovely watch," Madame Pomfrey commented.

"It's the watch they give every State Alchemist, that and a title usually geared to the specification of that Alchemist."

"So what is your title?"

"I'm the Fullmetal Alchemist."

"Why the title Fullmetal? Is it because you work with metal?"

"Yes, that and the earth."

"Do alchemist chose their specialization?"

"Yes. There are many fields of alchemy that one person could choose to study."

"That sounds fascinating," Madame Pomfrey said as she stopped right in front of a classroom. "Well, here we are."

"Thanks for walking me here," Ed said.

"It was no trouble. And good luck on your first day," she said before turning to walk away.

Ed sighed as he pushed open the classroom door to see Al sitting against a wall, beside a large desk. There were rows of desks for the students, all facing the main teacher's desk that was next to a chalkboard. There was also a small table on the other wall that was stacked with textbooks.

"Brother!" Al said, once he looked up from the book he was reading.

"Hey Al," Ed said, walking towards his brother.

"How was breakfast?"

"Okay," Ed said, shrugging "Find anything?"

"I think I'm close. This book talks a lot about the Philosopher's Stone, but it has some information that we can use as a starting point," Al said, pointing to a certain passage as Ed looked over his shoulder.
"The Philosopher's Stone is the main goal of pursuing alchemy. The promise of a never ending supply of gold is enticing, and the ability to live forever is a wish that many want to see realized. The ability of the Elixir of Life is rooted in medical study..." Ed read out loud.

"See! Medical! Maybe this can lead us to some more medical alchemy, and then maybe we can find something to help us get our original bodies back!" Al said enthusiastically.

"Okay, we should try and look into this," Ed replied.

"Great!" Al said with his usual cheery tone.

The door opened and students began filing into the classroom. They looked to be about fifteen. Some had red and gold ties and some others had green and silver ties. Once everyone had taken a seat, Ed sighed as he walked over to the chalkboard and wrote on it:

EDWARD ELRIC
ALCHEMY YEAR 5

"I'm Edward Elric, I'll be your teacher for this class," he said, turning to face the students. A girl with frizzy brown hair who was wearing a red and gold tie raised her hand, and Edward nodded.

"Professor, are those our textbooks?" she asked, pointing to the stack of textbooks.

"I guess, everyone go and grab one," Ed stated, shrugging.

Everyone looked a little shocked or confused, Ed really couldn't tell. But they all slowly got up and grabbed their textbooks. Once everyone got one Ed grabbed one of the textbooks himself and looked over the cover: Alchemy for Beginners by Nicholas Flamel.

"Huh, so he wrote a textbook too?" Ed muttered to himself.

"Sir?" another student asked. This one had red hair and was sitting beside a student with messy raven colored hair and glasses.

"Yes?" Ed said.

"Um… who is that?" he asked, pointing at Al.

"Hello," Al said, looking up from his book "I'm Alphonse."

"Why are you wearing that strange armor?" another student asked.

"Ohh, it's a hobby of his..." Ed said, rubbing the back of his neck before clearing his throat. "He's my younger brother if any of you are wondering."

"Younger?" one of the other students said.

"But he's so much bigger than you," another said.

Ed clenched his hands into tight fists before he exploded. "WHO ARE YOU CALLING SO SHORT YOU NEED A MICROSCOPE JUST TO SEE!" he roared.

"We never said that," the the first student said, looking rather confused at his professor's outburst.

Ed's eyebrow twitched, and he looked ready to leap across the classroom and punch someone right
in the face before Alphonse stood up and held his older brother back.

"It's okay, brother. They didn't say anything about your height," he said.

Ed grumbled a bit before walking to stand behind his desk. "Alright, now Alchemy is the the science of understanding, deconstructing, and reconstructing matter," he said, putting his hands on the desk. "Now, how many of you heard that alchemy was used to obtain immortality or create gold?" he asked, and many of the students raised their hands.

"Well, I can tell you what's wrong with that idea," Ed said as one red haired student raised his hand.

"Yes Mr..." Ed said.

"Ron Weasley," he said. "So are you saying we won't be making gold?"

"Look, there are three main rules State Alchemists live by. One, do not make gold," Ed stated, and he saw the disappointment cross the faces of many students.

"Looks like this class can't help your family Weasley," a boy with slick blond hair said, eliciting a few snickers from the green and silver side of the room and an enraged look on Ron's face.

"Don't look so high and mighty. I could see the disappointment on your face as well," Ed said, glaring at the blond boy.

"The reason for this is it would completely ruin the economy if the market was flooded with gold," Ed said. "The second rule, that won't necessarily apply to you, although it does for me, is obey authority. For you all, that will mean me. For myself, it means the military."

"Wait! Are you saying you're in the military!" one of the students exclaimed.

"Yes, now," Ed continued, before he was interrupted again.

"But wait, you said you were fifteen... Then how can you be in the military?" the girl with frizzy brown hair said.

"I am in the military, but I am a State Alchemist, Ms..." Ed said.

"Granger, Hermione Granger," she said.

"Well, Ms. Granger, I took the State Alchemist exam and passed," Ed stated. "That's how I got the title Fullmetal Alchemist."

"Where are you from, then?" Ron asked.

"Amestris," Ed answered.

"Where is that?" a girl on the green and silver side asked.

"Far, far away," Ed spoke, rolling his eyes "Now, as I was saying..."

"But why did you come here?" the same girl asked.

"That is my business," Ed dictated.

"You're our age, you said so at the feast," another girl on the silver and green side said. "What makes you qualified to be our teacher?"
"I am a fully certified State Alchemist," Ed said, crossing his arms. "And known as a prodigy in my own country."

"You're a prodigy?" Hermione questioned, then quickly backtracked. "I-I mean, it's not that you don't look like one or-I mean-"

Ed put his hand up to stop her. "It's alright. I understand what you are saying. But to answer your sort-of-question, it's because I was able to pass the exam when I was twelve."

"You were twelve?!" many of the students exclaimed.

"Yes, that's why they call me a prodigy. I was the youngest to ever pass it," Ed said.

"The exam must be joke if he could pass it," Malfoy whispered to a dense looking boy beside him.

Ed glared at the boy and said "Well, seeing how many and women there are who have studied their whole lives almost and still can't pass the exam, demonstrates its legitimacy."

Malfoy looked rather shocked that Ed had heard him and glared at the alchemist. This didn't bother Ed, who had received way more intimidating glares from Teacher and Lieutenant Hawkeye.

"Now, continuing what I was saying. The last rule… is a taboo among alchemists, it is a transmutation that is absolutely forbidden," Ed said, turning serious.

"And what might that be?" one of the braver students asked.

Edward sighed as he took a deep breath "It is called…human transmutation."

"What exactly it that professor?" Hermione asked, curiously.

"I'm not going to explain it to you all since you will never perform it," Ed snapped.

"Brother…it's alright." Al spoke calmly. The effect on Edward was evident. His tense shoulder went slack and his expression became a calmer one.

"Those are the three rules, but you all it will be a little different, but I will get to that. Now alchemy, at its base, is a science."

"A science?" a girl said, looking extremely confused.

"Physics, chemistry, and biology are all important in the study of Alchemy, but chemistry is probably the most important," Ed said.

"Excuse me… are you trying to say this is a muggle science class?" the student with slick blond hair said.

"Alchemy is not based on doing any hocus-pocus, so put those sticks away now," Ed said, walking back to the board and flipping it over to the other side, then turning around to face the students.

"We are going to have our first test right now," he said, resulting in an uproar from the students.

"Professor! You haven't taught us anything yet!" a few called out.

"This isn't some multiple choice test or some freaking essay so calm yourselves," Ed said, rolling his eyes. "You can't study to pass this test, either you know the answer or you don't."
"Sir, I have to object to this. First you tell us that we aren't doing magic, then that we are supposed to be learning muggle science, and now you are giving us a test?" the boy with slick blond hair said. "My father will not be pleased about this."

"Well, good for you, but I really don't care about that," Ed said, turning back to the board.

"I don't think you understand," Malfoy continued. "I'm Malfoy, Draco Malfoy. And my father is Lucius Malfoy," he said, sounding rather smug.

"Again, I reiterate, I. Don't. Care." Ed said, accentuating each word. He picked up the chalk in his left hand and began to write in big letters:

ONE IS ALL, ALL IS ONE

He turned back to his students and said, "This is your test. You all have one month to answer this riddle."

"And if we don't?" one student asked.

"Then you can't perform any transmutations in my class. But seeing as you all know nothing of alchemy, I'll be nice. You can try as many times as you want to answer this riddle before or after the deadline, and once you do you can join the other students that have answered the riddle as well. Only then can you actually start to perform alchemy."

"So when the deadline comes..." Ron asked.

"We will start at least the basic elements of transmutation." Ed stated.

"So what happens if we can't solve it?" the student with raven hair beside Ron said.

"Then you can't perform alchemy," Ed said with a shrug.

"What does this have to do with alchemy?" Malfoy said.

Ed only smirked. "If you have to ask that, then you have no chance of answering that riddle correctly."

"So if we figure out the riddle..." Hermione said.

"Then simply come up to me and I can tell you if you are wrong or right," Ed said.

"Can't you give us any hints?" one student asked.

"Sorry, I didn't get any hints so neither will any of you. And besides, you guys are getting off easy, me and my brother had it much worse," Ed stated.

"What do you mean, 'worse'?" the student with black hair and glasses asked.

"Well, we were stranded on a deserted island for a month and told to survive and answer the riddle," Ed said. "Isn't that right Al? he asked, looking back at his brother, who was reading quietly.

"We only had a small knife and the clothes on our backs," Al added, looking up from his book.

"You were abandoned on a deserted island!" one of the girls exclaimed.

"Yeah, so be thankful," Ed said. "Teacher had to do the same, but in the freezing Briggs Mountain
"That's awful! Who would just leave two boys out on an island for a month!?!" another girl exclaimed.

"Let's just get one thing clear," Ed said, glaring at his class which remained silent. "I chose to study under Teacher, she was an amazing person and my ability in alchemy would be limited if I hadn't figured out that riddle. So, you all are going to do the same. Isn't that right Al?"

"If it wasn't for her… we couldn't have learned even half of the stuff we know now," Al commented, looking up from his book.

"Look," Ed said, sighing. "If you don't answer the riddle, then you don't get permission to transmute anything. You can still probably pass this class, but it won't be as high as the kids who figured it all out. Does that make it better?"

A few of the kids nodded and some shrugged.

"Good, now class dismissed. Your only assignment for right now is to think about that riddle. You can't help each other. You have to figure it out on your own," Ed said.

The students gathered their things and slowly made their way out of the classroom, all talking while Ed sat in his desk and cracked his knuckles.

"That was interesting..." Al commented, setting the book he had been reading aside.

"Would have been better if I could have done what Teacher did to us."

"I think leaving these kids on a deserted island would be a little extreme..."

"They're older than we were."

"I know some of them will figure it out."

"But they practically live off the idea that equivalent exchange isn't needed!" Ed groaned while gripping the side of his head.

"Well, perhaps you should touch on that in the next lesson," Al said.

"Okay...so while I was trying to herd cats, what did you find?" Ed asked, turning around and smiling at his brother.

Harry

"That was interesting," Harry said as he, Hermione, and Ron walked to their next class.

"That's an understatement," Ron said.

"Professor Elric is a bit… peculiar" Hermione commented.

"Peculiar? He's raving mad, that's what he is," Ron said.

"He isn't mad," Harry said. "A bit extreme, but he doesn't seem crazy."

"That mess with the riddle doesn't hit you as odd? Or the fact he is our age but has been in the
military for years? Or that his brother is in that strange suit of armor?" Ron said.

"It does seem a bit odd" Hermione said, tapping her chin.

"But he is from another country, maybe that is just how people from Amestris are?" Harry said.

"Then the whole country has got to be stark raving mad," Ron said. "I mean, who lets a twelve year old fight?"

"Harry battled the basilisk when he was twelve, Ronald," Hermione said.

"But he-I mean- it was because Ginny was in danger and the Chamber was opened!" Ron said.

"I don't think we should use any of my past experiences to justify anything..." Harry said, looking down.

"I'm sorry Harry. I-I didn't mean-" Ron said, seeing Harry's downtrodden expression.

"Whatever, it's alright," Harry said, then looked at Hermione. "But have you figured out that riddle?"

"No... I am sure I can find something in the library, though. We may have a month, but I'll feel better once I figure it out," Hermione said.

"Well, since that's settled..." Ron said before Hermione interrupted him.

"You aren't even going to try, are you!" she cried out.

"You're gonna tell us when you figure it out anyway..." Ron said.

"No I won't! You two will have to figure it out yourselves. You heard Professor Elric!" Hermione said.

"Fine! I'll try and figure the bloody thing out," Ron said, putting his hands up.

"Good," Hermione said with a nod. "Now hurry up, we have to get to Defense Against the Dark Arts next," Hermione said.

"Great..." Ron said, sounding anything but enthusiastic as they walked down the halls to the DADA room.
Beryllium

Edward

Edward was writing in his notebook when a large growl was emitted from his stomach.

"Hungry, Brother?" Al asked.

"I'm fine," Ed grumbled, turning back to his Alchemy notes.

"You really should eat."

"I'm fine. Besides, I have a class in less than five minutes."

"But-" Al tried to argue, before he was cut off by students entering the classroom.

These students were older than the previous class by about two years or so.

"Everyone grab the books off the table and we can get started," Ed said, standing up and pushing his chair back.

As everyone grabbed their books and took their seats Ed noted that there was a mix between the red and gold students and blue and silver this time.

"I am Edward Elric, also known as the Fullmetal Alchemist. You can call me or Professor, whatever floats your boat." Ed said, shrugging his shoulders. "And before any of you start asking questions, the person in the suit of armor is my brother, Alphonse."

"Hello," Al said in a cheery voice, waving to the students.

"This is Year Seven Alchemy if I am correct, so many of you will not be able to master the material I am going to try and teach you." Ed continued until one of the blue and silver student's hands shot up and Ed nodded in her direction.

"Is it true that you are going to give us a test today?" she asked.

"Yes, now as I was saying-"

The room then exploded into an uproar. The blue and silver students were the most distressed ones while many of the red and gold students just groaned.

"Calm down!" Ed shouted, putting his hands up. "If you would listen to me, you would know that this test is something you couldn't have studied for. But is essential for understanding and performing Alchemy."

"And what might that be?" the same student who asked the first question said.

"This," Ed said as he flipped the board to show the riddle 'One is All, All is One'.

"Figure this riddle out within the month and you can start performing transmutations with me."

"But what happens if we can't figure it out?" one of the red and gold students asked.

"Then this will pretty much become a study hall while the ones who figured out the riddle will be
performing Alchemy," Ed stated, crossing his arms.

"What is the point of all this, Professor?" another student asked.

"It is the root of all Alchemy. I had to go through the same thing. I was taught this way and therefore so will you all," Ed said.

"How did you learn?" a red and gold student asked. He had red hair and was sitting next to a boy that looked exactly like him.

"Me and my brother," Ed said, gesturing to Al, "were stranded on an island for a month with a knife and told to figure out this riddle."

"How old were you?" the other red head asked.

"I was ten and Al was nine," Ed answered.

Many of the students looked absolutely shocked.

"So how did you end up joining the military?" the first red head asked.

"I joined because it was something I felt I had to do Mr..." Ed answered, narrowing his eyes at the pair.

"Weasley. I'm Fred and he is George," the boy said, gesturing to his twin.

"Why did you feel you had to?" George then asked.

"That is a personal question, Mr. Weasley." Ed snapped. "And one I do not have to answer."

Both twins looked a little shocked, along with most of the class.

"Now, as I was saying. The definition of Alchemy is the art of understanding, deconstructing and reconstructing matter. Not to obtain immortality or create gold as I realize many of you were taught to think. The rules I have are simple. You can never attempt to create gold, as that would destroy the economy if you were successful," Ed said, before adding "Which I highly doubt."

"You must listen to me, and none of you can perform any alchemy without my permission or without my presence. And the last rule is a taboo that none of you will even think of trying to attempt."

"What might that be, Professor?" Fred asked.

"Human Transmutation," Ed answered gravely.

"What is-" one of the other students tried to ask before Ed cut him off.

"That is none of your concern, since I will never teach you enough to even begin to conceive the possibility of your attempt," Ed snapped. He then calmed himself by taking a deep breath.

"That's all for today. Once any of you think you've solved the riddle, come to me and I'll tell you if you're right or wrong," Ed said.

Many of the students then packed up and left while Ed returned to his desk and continued writing his notes.

"Professor?" Ed heard as he looked up to see the twins standing in front of him.
"Yes?" Ed said.

"We think we've figured out the riddle," Fred said.

"Oh really?" Ed said, leaning back in his chair. "Well then, go on. What do you think 'One is All, and All is One' means?"

"Well, it's simple, really," George said.

"It's like the saying All for One and One for All," Fred said.

Ed only smirked. They may be a little close but he had a feeling these twins wouldn't get the riddle, at least not today.

"Everyone needs to work towards a common goal," George said.

"So we theorize that the riddle you gave us means about the same thing, only in alchemical terms," Fred continued.

"Everything needs to work together to get a correct finished product," George finished.

"Good guess, but you both are wrong," Ed said.

Both boys frowned before shrugging it off.

"Ahh, don't worry Georgey. We've got a whole month to bother the shorty," Fred said with a smirk.

"I'M NOT SHORT!" Ed roared, his face turning red as he screamed.

"Calm down Professor," Fred said.

"It isn't very becoming of you," George said with a wink before the twins left the classroom.

"Those damn twins are going to be the death of me this year. I can already feel it," Ed grumbled as he slouched in his chair.

"They seem nice," Al stated, trying to calm his older brother.

"Yeah, well now I feel like punching something," Ed mumbled.

"We can spar later if you want," Al suggested.

"Sure," Ed agreed, a small smile on his face.

"You should go to the Hall and get some food, though," Al said. "I looked at the schedule and you only have one more class today, and it's in a few hours."

"Alright, alright, I'll go," Ed grumbled as he stood up. "But you might have to join me soon, people will get suspicious if they never see you at meals."

"Perhaps we could talk to the nice Headmaster Dumbledore?" Alphonse said.

"No, that means we will have to tell him that the reason you don't go to meals is because...because..." Edward said, trailing off at the end.

"Because I don't have a body?" Al finished.
"Yeah," Ed said solemnly.

"Don't worry about me, brother. I'm sure we can figure out a way to keep people from figuring out. Maybe we can still talk to Dumbledore without telling him the whole truth."

Ed tapped his chin. "Maybe...I think I have an idea of what we can tell him without letting him know our secret."

"Okay, maybe when you go to lunch you can tell him then!" Al said enthusiastically.

"And are you okay about staying here? Or do you want to join me?" his brother asked.

"I'll be fine. I want to get some more books anyway. And don't worry about me whenever I decide to join you at meals. Anything I see that I might want to try will just go on the list. Maybe when we get our original bodies back Colonel Mustang will allow us to visit Hogwarts!"

"If you want to Al, but as far as I'm concerned as soon as this year is over I'm leaving this place behind."

"You don't think you'll like it here?"

"This place is too insane Al, the Law of Equivalent Exchange seems to be null and void here. That isn't normal."

"Since when have we ever liked normal?" Al challenged.

"Good point. Now come on, let's head down to the Hall," Ed said, walking out of the classroom with his brother. They walked together until they reached the third floor where the library was.

"You'll be fine on your own?" Edward asked.

"Sure! I'll see you back at the classroom, unless you want to join me later,"

"Okay, see you soon, Bro," The brothers bumped fists and parted ways.

Ed strolled down the corridors, but as he turned the corner, he ran into someone.

"What the hell!" he exclaimed, stumbling back as the other person did the same.

"Professor Elric?" Harry said, looking at the young Alchemy teacher.

"Harry Potter? Shouldn't you be in class or something?" he said.

"I was, until Professor Umbridge called me a liar and sent me out of class. Now I have to see Professor McGonagall," Harry said, the anger apparent on his face.

"You mean the toad lady in pink?" Ed asked. "Why did she throw you out of class?"

"Why do I need to tell you?" Harry snapped.

Ed groaned as he massaged his temples. "Look, I can see you are angry and for some reason I've decided to help you, so just tell me why she threw you out of class."

"I spoke the truth! And since she is apart of the Ministry, she's made it her job to discredit me!" Harry exclaimed.
"Woah, woah, calm down. Tell me what happened," Ed said, putting his hands up.

"She wouldn't let us practice magic! In Defense Against the Dark Arts, too! We need to learn how to defend ourselves."

"Why?" Ed asked, raising an eyebrow.

"Lord Voldemort is back and we're all in danger!" Harry

"Lord Moldy-what?" Edward said.

"He is the most powerful dark wizard in existence. I fought him last year! But the Ministry is covering it all up!" Harry yelled.

Ed didn't know who the Voldy guy was, but based off Harry's attitude at the moment Ed grasped that his return wasn't a reason to throw a party. He made a mental note to talk to Dumbledore and get some answers.

"Look, I may not know the whole situation, but I don't think getting kicked out of a class is going to help you any."

"But she is only going to make the situation worse!"

"Look, I want to punch that woman in the face probably as much as you do. But she is in a position of power over you. You may not like it, but that is the truth. You can try and fight her, but it may not end well for you."

"So you are saying I should give up!?"

"No, you should never give up. But pick your battles wisely. It won't do you any good if you try to fight her like this."

"You're in the military, shouldn't you be encouraging me to fight?"

"No. I may be in the military, but that doesn't mean I go around picking fights just for the heck of it. So take a deep breath and go see Professor McGonagall."

Harry took a deep breath and murmured a thanks and left.

Ed sighed as he stuck his hands into his pockets and walked down the corridors to get to the Hall. Once he entered, he saw a few students eating, and more entering as they were let out of class. Ed made his way up to the teacher's table and sat down next to Hagrid and Madame Pomfrey.

"'Ello Ed," Hagrid said as he ate his lunch.

"Hey," Ed replied as he began to eat.

"How were yer first classes 'o te day?" he asked.

"Good. I already had two and they seemed to go alright," Ed said.

"I heard some of the students talking about a test?" Madame Pomfrey said.

"Oh yeah, I gave them a riddle to solve within a month," Ed replied.

"Why a riddle?" Hagrid asked.
"It is essential in the study of Alchemy. I wouldn't be able to teach any of them a thing if they didn't understand it," Ed said.

"But why a month?" Madame Pomfrey asked.

"It was the same amount of time me and my brother were given when we were learning Alchemy," Ed stated.

"Yer brother, Alphonse, right?" Hagrid said.

"Yeah," Ed replied.

"Where is he anyway?" Hagrid asked."He's free to join ye at meals."

"Oh he knows… he is just a little shy and well… he has his reasons," Ed mumbled as he stared down at his plate.

"Well, let him know he is welcome here," Madame Pomfrey said with a kind smile.

Ed nodded "I'll tell him that,"

As soon as lunch ended, Ed looked over to see Dumbledore stand up and walk out of the Hall. Ed bolted after him, and once he caught up tapped his shoulder.

"Um, Dumbledore?" Edward said.

"Ah, Edward. Is everything alright?" Dumbledore asked with a cheery smile.

"Can I talk with you?" Ed asked. Dumbledore nodded and Ed followed him to his office. As they stood in front of the gargoyle Dumbledore said the password, the gargoyle moved to the side and both then began to walk up the stairs.

"What would you like to discuss, Edward?" Dumbledore asked as he made his way back to his desk.

"Well, it's about my brother… Alphonse," Edward said.

"Is he alright?" Dumbledore asked, raising an eyebrow.

"No, he is fine. But I thought that I might inform you of something," Edward stated.

Dumbledore gestured for Edward to continue so he said "Well, you saw how he was in his armor, right? Well, that is apart of an Alchemy training that he is going through. He can't take it off and he isn't supposed to eat a lot either..."

"And this is a normal training technique?" Dumbledore asked.

"It is a little out of the norm, but he insisted on it. So I just wanted to tell you that, so you wouldn't worry if he didn't show up to a lot of meals or you didn't see him eat often."

"Very well. If this is an exercise that he wants to participate in then I feel no need to stop him. That is, unless this would put him in danger..."

"Oh! No! It is completely safe, don't worry. If it wasn't I wouldn't allow him to," Ed said, hastily.

"Very well, if that is all..."
"Actually… do you know of anywhere we could train?" Ed asked.

"Train?"

"Yes. Hand to hand combat to be specific. I would hate to have our skills waste away while we are here."

"So you and your brother would like to train while you are both at Hogwarts?" Dumbledore asked.

"Yes," Ed answered. "It is important for our bodies to be kept in shape."

"I see no problem with you or your brother maintaining your physical health during your stay here." Dumbledore said.

"Thank you," Ed said, turning to leave the office.

As Ed walked back to his classroom, he saw a few students whispering and pointing at him. He rolled his eyes as he was used to some of the attention, due to his fame as being a 'Hero of the People'.

As he reached his classroom, he didn't see Al anywhere and assumed he must still be in the library.

The students then started filing in. This group looked to be about the same age as the first, but had blue and silver ties and robes mixed with yellow and black ties and robes.

"Okay, now I'm Edward Elric, also known as the Fullmetal Alchemist," Ed began, repeating a lot of the same basic information the same way he had done twice before. There were far less questions from this group, however. Edward thought perhaps word had traveled around the school, allowing for most of the annoying questions to be answered.

"Now, just come to me whenever you think you can answer the riddle correctly. You have one month to answer it, and then you can perform transmutations. Any questions?" Ed asked and was met with only silence.

"Great, you're all dismissed," Ed said, waving them all off as he sat behind his desk, flipping through the student's Alchemy textbook. He heard the fifteen years old pack up and leave while he started reading a passage about transmutation arrays.

"Mr. Elric?" a soft and dreamy voice said. Edward looked up from his book and saw a pale, platinum blonde haired girl standing before him. She had radish earrings and blue and silver robes.

"Yes?" Ed replied.

"I'm Luna. Luna Lovegood," she said.

"And?" Ed asked.

"The riddle. It's quite simple really," she said.

"Really?" Ed questioned. If this student got it on the first day then Ed would be shocked beyond all belief.

"One is myself and All is the universe," Luna answered.

If Ed had been drinking something, he would have spat it out right then and there. But his mouth simply fell open, and he probably resembled a gaping fish at that moment.
"How in the hell did you answer it that quickly?!!" Ed exclaimed as he tried regaining his senses.

"The riddle itself is the answer. If One is All then that means one thing is everything else, and if All is One then everything else is that one thing," Luna said.

"That—that's correct," Ed said, trying to snap himself out of utter disbelief.

"I'll add your name to the list of students who answered correctly. I'll need you to start memorizing the Periodic Table of Elements. It's on page ten of your textbook," Ed stated while pulling out a piece of paper and writing 'Luna Lovegood' on it.

"Alright. Have a nice day Professor," Luna replied dreamily, as she turned to walk out of the classroom.

As she left, Al entered with a stack of books in his hands. "Hello, Brother."

"Hey, Al," Ed replied, standing up from his chair and stretching his arms and legs. His ports were starting to bug him more than normal and Ed just assumed it was the change in climate that caused the slight pain in his arm and leg.

"Are you alright? Is your automail acting up?" Al asked, the worry in his voice evident.

"My stumps are just a little sore, that's all," Ed said, waving his younger brother off.

"Alright," Al said, not sounding very convinced.

"How about a spar? I think getting my blood flowing will be good for my stumps," Ed said, a wicked grin on his face.

"Alright!"

"The old man said we could spar on the grounds, so let's go!" Ed said, racing out the door with his brother right behind him. They reached the large doors and raced outside to see a few students on the grounds as well.

"Come on, Al," Ed jested.

"I'm right here, brother!" Al replied.

Ed pulled off his red coat to reveal his black shirt, but left his white gloves on. He didn't want to reveal his automail and with his top clasp on his shirt buttoned, there was no metal peaking out anywhere. He and his brother stood about ten feet apart, far away from any of the students.

"Okay, on three," Ed said as he put his fists up.

"One," Al said.

"Two," Ed continued, sinking lower into his stance.

"Three!" Al shouted as he raised his fists.

Ed took off, leaping off the ground and extending his left leg out. Alphonse dodged the attack and raised his arms to try and grab Ed's leg. Ed realized this and tucked his leg in while extending his arms to push himself off Al's shoulder. Ed was launched into the air, and as he made contact with the ground he slid back, widening his stance to try and absorb the impact of the fall. Al moved to punch the ground where Ed was kneeling but Ed rolled to the side and popped up, then started to jab and
Alphonse was quicker though, dodging the punches and countering with his own. Ed then dropped to the ground in a crouch and swept his legs under Al's to try and catch him unbalanced. Al sidestepped to avoid Ed's attack and reached down to grab Ed's feet, lifting him up by his legs.

"Hey!" Ed exclaimed, trying to kick his feet free of Al's grip.

Al only replied by chucking Edward through the air, spinning.

"Al!" Ed yelled as he flew through the air. He landed on the ground with a thud, knocking all the air out of his lungs. He coughed, trying to get oxygen back in his system as his brother came over.

"Are you alright, brother?" he asked.

"I'm fine Al, though that new move definitely took it out of me," Ed chuckled as he sat up.

"You're getting better though."

"Hey! I've already beaten you once!"

"That fight didn't count. I was trying to apologize for snapping at you and you were fighting!"

"I still won! A win is a win and you know it!"

"What is going on here!" a shrill voice yelled.

Ed looked over to see the Umbridge woman fast walking over to where he and his brother were.

"What?" Ed asked, standing up and brushing the dirt off himself as his brother handed him his red coat.

"What is the meaning of this-this fight!" she yelled, her face turning the same awful shade of pink as her clothes.

"We were sparring," Ed replied with a shrug.

"And who is this man in the armor!?" she exclaimed, pointing at Alphonse.

"I'm Alphonse Elric," Al replied courteously.

"Your younger brother?" Umbridge questioned.

"Yes," Ed replied curtly. "We got permission from Dumbledore to spar, so here we are."

"Why on earth are you two sparring?" She questioned.

"We were taught that you need to train the body before you could train the mind. We need to keep up our physical fitness if we're going to be staying here for a whole year," Ed asserted, crossing his arms. "So if you could back the hell off, it would be appreciated."

"Then I will have to have a word with the Headmaster about this. I will not allow these-fights to continue!" she declared, turning on her heels and heading back into the castle.

"Well, she seems..." Al trailed off, unsure of what to say.

"She is a piece of work, that's what she is," Ed interjected.
"Do you think we won't be able to spar anymore?"

"No, even if they say we can't we will figure a way around their stupid ass rule," Ed assured his brother.

"I thought Mustang told you to behave."

"And when have I ever really listened to Colonel Bastard?" Ed countered.

"True," his brother commented.

"Come on, let's head inside and take a look at those books you got from the library," Ed said as he and his brother walked back inside.

Harry

"I can't believe she isn't going to teach us anything!" Harry complained as he rested in the Gryffindor common room.

"I know the Ministry was going to start interfering in Hogwarts, but this? How can we be prepared for our O. W. L.'s now!?" Hermione proclaimed.

"That's what you're worried about? Bloody O. W. L. scores? You-Know-Who is on the loose and you're worried about some silly tests!" Ron exclaimed.

"They aren't some silly tests Ronald. They are going to determine are whole futures," Hermione countered.

"If we even have any!" Harry shouted. "Voldemort is raising an army and we are studying theory!"

"Harry's right. You-Know-Who is out there and Umbridge isn't going to teach us anything," Hermione said.

Before she could continue, Dean Thomas burst into the room shouting "Professor Elric and his brother are fighting on the grounds!"

"What?!" Harry exclaimed as he, Ron and Hermione all stood up.

"Look out the window! They are fighting right now!" Dean shouted, and everyone in the common room started to crowd around the window.

Harry looked out to see Professor Elric and his brother fighting on the Hogwarts school grounds. And by the looks of it, Professor Elric was losing to his younger brother.

As the alchemy professor and his brother fought, all the students around Harry were talking about the strange new alchemy teacher and his brother who wore a weird suit of armor.

"Professor Elric is really getting his arse handed to him," Ron commented.

"Why do you think they are fighting?" Hermione questioned.

"Maybe they had a row?" Dean hypothesized.

"But he seemed really nice, the brother I mean," another student commented.
"Well, he is wearing that scary suit of armor for a reason, so he can't be all sunshine and butterflies," Dean said.

"Look!" another student shouted as everyone looked to see Professor Elric fly through the air.

"Oh my god!" A few students exclaimed.

"Do you think he is okay?" Hermione worried as the alchemy professor landed on the ground, hard. As he sat up a collective breath of relief surged through the room.

"He is sturdier than he looks," Dean stated.

"If he can survive a fight with that beast then Professor Elric is seriously tough," Seamus stated.

As many of the Gryffindors looked on, they saw a pink woman start to march over to where the brothers were.

"Oh, blimey. Now they are going to hear it from that toad Umbridge," Dean groaned.

"Glad I'm not them right now," a random student commented.

They saw the exchange between Umbridge and the two Elric brothers, but seeing as they were way too far away, they couldn't hear any of their conversation.

Dean shook his head. "I don't want to be them right now"

"Well, knowing Professor Elric, he won't stand for whatever she is going to say," Harry said.

As Umbridge stomped off and the Elric brothers then reentered the castle, many of the students dispersed from the windows.

"Wow, I can't believe Professor Elric got his arse handed to him by his younger brother," Ron said.

"Well, his younger brother is a lot bigger than Professor Elric," Harry added.

"Bigger? That man is a giant! He's about as big as Hagrid! How can those two be brothers!" Ron exclaimed.

"I don't know, Ron," Hermione said, shaking her head as she sat back down and started her Potions homework.

Harry looked out the window at the spot the two brothers fought one last time before sitting back down with Ron and Hermione.
Edward woke with an ache in his stumps. He groaned and rolled over in his bed, trying to massage the pain away.

"Brother? Are you alright?"

Ed sat up, still kneading his right shoulder. "I'm fine, Al. My automail ports are just a little sore. I think you threw me a bit too hard in that fight yesterday."

"Do you need to see the nurse lady you told me about? I think you said her name was Madame Pomfrey?"

"I'll be fine, Al." Edward stood up, stretching his legs and trying to get the blood flowing to ease some of the pain in his joints.

"Are you sure?" Al asked, his concern for his elder brother growing.

"I think it was the sudden change in climate, in coming here. Like how they always hurt when it rains." Ed suggested, putting on his regular black shirt and pants.

"Promise that you'll tell me if it gets too much."

Ed slipped on his red coat and white gloves. "I promise, Al."

Al stood up. "Good. Now you better hurry since breakfast will end soon and you have a class right after."

"Damn it," Ed cursed, looking at his pocket watch and seeing his brother was right.

"You'll make it in time," Al assured. "But just so you'll know, I'll be in the library today. I'll come by your classroom later."

"Okay. Bye Al!" Ed said rapidly, rushing out the door and waving goodbye to his younger brother. He sprinted through the halls and made it to the Hall in nearly record time. Breathing a little heavily, he walked through the doors and up to the faculty table, sliding into his usual seat.

"Hello Edward," Madame Pomfrey greeted.

"Hello," Ed replied, starting to devour his breakfast.

"Yeh got quite te appetite there, Ed," Hagrid commented, seeing the large amount of food on the young Alchemy professor's plate.

Ed didn't reply immediately, he was busy eating his fifth sausage. Once he swallowed, he turned to Hagrid. "You're one to talk."

Hagrid let out a hearty laugh at Edward's comeback. Ed smiled, but as he reached for his glass of pumpkin juice the pain in his shoulder flared. He grit his teeth and a small groan left his throat. Madame Pomfrey took notice and said "Edward, are you alright?"

"I'm fine, my shoulder is just acting up."
"Was it because of the fight you and your brother had yesterday? The whole school was talking about it," Madame Pomfrey said.

"No, it's fine. I deal with it all the time," Ed replied.

Madame Pomfrey looked unconvinced. "I would still like to look at it."

"I said I'm fine," Ed snapped. The nurse was taken aback at the harsh tone of the young alchemist.

"Well, come and see me if you need help," she said, standing up and leaving the Hall.

"Bit harsh, doncha think?" Hagrid said.

Ed sighed as he looked down at his plate.

"Yeh may be a little irritated or mad, but that's no reason teh take it out on someone."

"I get it, she was trying to help me and I snapped."

"Good," Hagrid said with a nod, pleased that Edward had seemed to understand his actions.

"I have a class soon. So I better go," Ed said, leaving the table and walking to his classroom. With his hands stuffed in his pockets, he took in the walls full of moving paintings. The scientific part of him was still trying to reason through how these images could move and have an intelligence of their very own.

Once he was at his classroom, he saw he was not alone. Fred and George were waiting for him, sitting on a pair of desks.

"Hello, Professor Ed!" Fred called, hopping of the desk, while his twin did the same.

"What are you two doing here? I have two classes of year six today."

"We decided to take another crack at the riddle!" George said.

"You said we could try every day until the end of the month!" Fred added.

Ed groaned as he rubbed his eyes, walking up to his desk. "Alright, what do you think the riddle All is One and One is All means?"

Ed sat down and watched at the twins cleared their throats.

"We were discussing the riddle last night," Fred began.

"And one of our dorm mates mentioned a holiday he took last summer to Surry," George continued.

"So it hit us!" Fred exclaimed.

"That every city is apart of the country and the country is made up of all these cities and towns," George said.

Ed put up his hand, stopping the red headed twins.

"I'm going to stop you right there. You both are way off, try again tomorrow."

Both boys looked a little deflated for a moment, before a grin crossed both their faces.
"We'll see you tomorrow, Professor!" they both said in unison, then left the classroom.

Ed groaned, realizing the two would not stop bothering him until they got the riddle. The group of student's for Ed's first class entered the room and took their seats.

Ed sighed as he stood up and began. "My name is Edward Elric..."

Harry

Harry looked over his potions essay and was utterly lost. It was like Snape made it his life's goal to confuse most of his class, the exception being Hermione, of course.

"Did you finish that Divination homework on palm reading?" Ron asked.

"No, I'm still stuck on trying to finish Snape's essay."

"Man, they really weren't kidding when they said Fifth year is a nightmare! I mean, we're barely into the year and they've already poured a load of homework on us!" Ron exclaimed.

"And Umbridge isn't making it any easier. None of that, theory is going to mean anything when Voldemort tries to attack," Harry sneered.

"Have you tried talking to Dumbledore?" Hermione asked.

"No! I've barely had any contact with him! Remember he told you two to keep me in the dark over the summer!" Harry yelled.

"We told you we were sorry about that," Ron said.

"I know, I just feel so angry..." Harry sighed, looking down.

"Don't worry, Harry. I'm sure Dumbledore has a plan and everything will work out," Hermione said, trying to cheer her friend up.

"You're right, Hermione," Harry said, looking up. "But I can't but help think about how Voldemort is out there planning and we're in here learning theory."

"I'm sure Dumbledore is planning as well. And remember, the Order is working to try and stop him as well," Hermione added.

"I wish we would know what was happening, though," Harry complained.

"We all do, mate," Ron replied. "But for now we're stuck in the dark. You know it's harder to get news while we're away from Headquarters."

"Maybe try writing Sirius, I'm sure he will tell you something," Hermione suggested.

Harry instantly perked up. "You're right! He'll tell us what's going on with the Order!"

Hermione smiled at Harry's improved mood and turned back to her homework while Ron began to complain again. "But for now we are stuck under this mound of homework, which only seems to be getting bigger! Please tell me you've gotten the Potions essay finished, Hermione."

"Honestly, Ronald, you've got to learn to manage your time better," Hermione said, rolling her eyes.
"Really, the only class right now not assigning a mound of homework is Alchemy," Ron stated. "All we've got is that weird riddle."

"You haven't even given the riddle a thought, have you Ron?" Hermione questioned.

"No!" Ron exclaimed. "I have no bloody clue what that riddle even has to do with Alchemy!"

"Is little Rony-kins having a bit of trouble?" Fred taunted, as he and George walked into the common room.

"Shut it," Ron retorted.

"Where were you two?" Hermione questioned, narrowing her eyes.

"Oh, just putting up a few posters about testing our products," George said.

"And annoying the little professor," Fred added.

"Professor Elric?" Harry asked.

"The very one!" Fred exclaimed.

"Took another crack at the riddle," George said.

"And did you get it?!" Ron exclaimed.

"Nope, but we are not the ones to give up so easily," Fred stated, and George added "We aren't like you, dear little brother."

"We plan on trying every day until the month is out!" Fred yelled determined.

"Now, if you'll excuse us, we have some Skiving Snackboxes to package and test," George finished, and they both left the trio.

"Professor Edward is going to murder them before the month is out… isn't he?" Harry questioned. Ron nodded while Hermione pondered for a moment before nodding in agreement as well.

Edward

Edward stretched at his desk. The pain was spreading and his whole leg and shoulder were on fire.

"Brother!" Al exclaimed as he walked into the door to see the grimace on his elder brother's face.

"I'm not going to the goddamn nurse, Al! I'm fine!" Ed yelled.

"Brother, I will take you to get help. It is your choice whether you are carried by me or walk on your own accord."

"I'm not going!"

"Okay, then you've made your choice." Al picked up his brother by the coat and Ed while Ed struggled and yelled.

"Put me down! Al! Put me down now!"

"No brother! You are going to get help!"
“Fine! I'll go! I'll go! Just put me down!” Ed roared.

"Promise?" Al questioned.

"Promise," Ed sighed.

Al set his older brother back down on the ground and Ed had a scowl on his face. "She'll find out about my automail."

"Do you really think we could last the whole year without someone finding out about your automail?"

"No… But I wanted to put it off as long as possible."

"Let's just go and take care of you."

"I'll go, you don't have to babysit me, Al."

"I don't mind," Al started to say before Edward cut him off. "Look, if she wants to check you out too we can't risk her finding out that you are bonded to a suit of armor."

Al pondered this for a moment and nodded. "Okay, if you think that would be for the best. But if I find out you didn't go..."

Ed waved his younger brother off. "I got it, I got it. Don't worry about me so much, Al."

"It's my job. If I don't worry about you, who will?"

Ed rolled his eyes as he headed for the door. "I'll be back soon. I don't have a class until after lunch."

"Okay, I'll see you soon, Brother!"

"Bye, Al," Ed called, as he shut the door behind him and started to make his way to the Hospital Wing. After studying, and memorizing, the map of Hogwarts Dumbledore had given him, Ed knew the layout the school pretty well and could easily find his way around.

As he walked up to the Hospital Wing, he say Madame Pomfrey at her desk, writing away. Ed cleared his throat and she looked up to see him standing in front of her.

"The arm bothering you?" she asked.

"Yes… and my brother almost dragged me here to get it looked at."

Madame Pomfrey stood up from her desk and opened the door to the wing. "Well, come on in, I'll take a look."

Ed followed her to see rows of beds. Madame Pomfrey gestured for him to sit on one of them.

"Now, what seems to be bothering you?"

"Um..." Ed said, unsure of where to start. "It will be better if I show you."

Madame Pomfrey looked shocked at first, but nodded. Ed slipped out of his red coat and unbuttoned the top part of his black jacket, slipping out of it and pulling off his white gloves.

Madame Pomfrey gasped, and took a few steps back as she saw Edward's automail arm.
"It's called automail. We have it in my country, though I haven't seen any of it here."

"W-what- I mean- how?" she stuttered, her hands shaking as she reached her arm out tentatively.

"There was an accident. I lost my right arm and my left leg."

"Your leg!?"

"Yes, here," Ed said, kicking off his boots and pulling down his pants. He only had on his black tank top and boxers at this point.

"Oh… So what exactly… I mean… with your aching how…"

"My stumps are aching, I'm used to a little bit of pain. But it's getting more and more intense."

Madame Pomfrey's hand was close to Ed's automail arm. "May I?"

"You can touch it," Ed shrugged.

Her hand touched the cool metal and was still shaking a bit. "I can give you a pain relief potion, to help with the aches and pains."

"I think it's the weather here," Ed commented.

"The weather? Why?" she asked.

"Well, for instance when it rains my ports hurt more," Ed explained. "So I think something with the change in climate is affecting it."

"It might be the fact you are at Hogwarts." Madame Pomfrey said.

"What are you talking about?" Ed asked.

"The school, technology doesn't work here. The magic interferes with muggle devices. if your… automail… works anything like that, then Hogwarts is probably interfering with it, causing you pain."

"Okay… So is there anything you can do?" Ed asked.

"Yes. I can cast a spell on your arm and leg, it may be able to lessen the effects the magic has on technology."

"How will it affect my automail?"

"I'm not sure," Madame Pomfrey said bluntly.

"Okay… do it," Ed said, then muttered "Winry's gonna kill me for this."

Madame Pomfrey then walked to a small cabinet and pulled a something out. She walked back and handed Ed a small blue vial of clear liquid. "Alright. Here is the pain relief potion. This will ease any of the aches and pains you may be having due to the climate change."

Ed swallowed the mixture quickly, but it left a sour taste in his mouth.

"Gah! It tastes about as bad as milk does!" he exclaimed.

Madame Pomfrey only huffed a response as she drew her wand. "Lay down on the bed, and I'll cast the spell. It will allow whatever technology in your arm and leg to function without magical
interference."

Ed did as she asked and Madame Pomfrey began waving her wand over him, saying weird words. There was a slight tingling sensation in his stumps.

"Do you feel better?" she asked. Ed sat up and got off the bed, stretching his arms and legs.

"Actually, yeah! It feels amazing!" He tried a couple jabs and kicks and clenched his fist a few times in front of his face.

"Come back if it begins to hurt again. I'll make sure to have extra pain relief potion ready for you."

"Thanks. And I want to ask you keep my condition a secret," Ed replied as he slipped back on his clothes. Madame Pomfrey nodded, but remained silent. As he put on his white gloves Madame Pomfrey finally spoke up.

"What exactly happened?"

"I told you, it was an accident. I was stupid and made a mistake, so I payed the price." Edward stood up and began to walk out of the wing before Madame Pomfrey said,

"And what exactly was that price, Edward? Because I am getting the feeling you are not talking about the loss of your limbs."

Ed stopped at the door and glanced over his shoulder.

"My childhood."

And Ed left, without another word.

As he walked through the halls he heard a few of the students talking as they walked to their classes. One trio was walking towards him, all three talking to one another. Ed recognized them from his previous class. He debated on acknowledging them, but remembered something his brother had talked to him about. Alphonse wanted to see Edward interact with more people his own age, excluding Winry and anyone they might be trying to catch while investigating. But the trio didn't let him decide as they stopped when they saw the Professor.

"Oh, hello Professor Elric," Hermione said.

Ed nodded and said hello as well, then focused on Ron. "Your last name is Weasley, right?"

"Yes, sir."

"And you have two older brothers?"

"Actually, I have five older brothers and one younger sister, sir."

Ed whistled. "Wow, that is a large family."

Ron muttered under his breath, "Tell me about it."

Clearing his throat, Ed spoke. "I have to say Fred and George are a persistent pair. I think they are going to keep trying to figure out that riddle every day until they get it."

"They're determined to solve it," Harry commented.
"Have any of you three gotten close to a guess at it?" Ed asked, stuffing his hands in his pockets.

"Um… I've got some theories..." Ron said, scratching his head.

Ed sighed, shaking his head. "You've got nothing, don't you?"

Ron nodded his head shamefully and Ed only chuckled. "Look, it took me and my brother the whole month to figure it out, so don't stress. Anyway, at the end either you know it or you don't. It's as simple as that."

"I'm just confused how it relates to Alchemy. Nothing in our textbook says anything like it." Hermione said.

Ed shook his head. "You won't find the answer in some dusty old book. It has to come from within."

"Within?" Harry questioned. "I'm not sure I understand, Professor."

Ed shrugged. "The answer will come to you when you understand the core of alchemy itself."

"Don't you think that it might be a little harsh to put the students through this?" Harry asked, quickly adding a "sir."

"It can't be that hard," Ed said. "I mean, someone has already figured it out."

"What!?" Harry shouted.

"Already!?!" Hermione exclaimed.

"Who?" Ron yelled.

"I won't tell you who it is, then you would just pester the poor person to death to try and get the answer," Ed said.

The trio deflated a bit at this.

"We still have till the first of October, right?" Ron asked.

"Yes. The deadline will not change because a few students guessed correctly," Ed replied.

"And we can try as many times as we like?" Hermione asked.

Ed rolled his eyes. "I think Ron's brothers have made that policy very clear."

"Thank you Professor. Now if you excuse us, we need to get to Transfiguration." Hermione said, realizing the time.

"I'll leave you, then," Ed said, walking past the trio. "Good luck," he called back to them. As Ed began to try and focus on the path he had to take to get back to his classroom, he overheard the conversation the three students were having.

Most of it was unintelligible noise, but the one thing that stuck out to Ed was the name "Voldemort."

He was quickly reminded of wanting to ask Dumbledore about this weirdly named figure who had apparently returned recently. Ed was able to make it back to his classroom and his brother quickly attacked him with questions.
"How do you feel? Do you feel better? How did she react? What did you tell her? What type of treatment did she give you? Was it magical? Did she use her wand?"

"Al! Hold up a bit! I'll tell you what happened if you let me!"

"Sorry," Al said sheepishly.

Ed sighed as he told his younger brother what happened in the Hospital Wing.

"So you feel better?"

"Much better. My arm and leg feel as good as new!"

"You better not tell Winry Madame Pomfrey did magic on your automail ports. She would-"

"Kill me," Ed finished. "So that's why she will never ever find out this happened."

Al nodded and Ed smiled at his younger brother.

"You have a class soon, I think it is the other sixth year class," Alphonse commented.

"Yeah, last one of the day." Ed said, cracking his knuckles before heading back to his desk. He was able to teach the sixth year students with ease, already having done the same spiel a few times already. Once the class was dismissed, Ed told his brother he wanted to talk to Dumbledore before dinner.

"What about?" Al asked as Ed walked to the door.

"Just about this person I have heard about. Weird name too, something like Voldy-wort or Modlymort or something," Ed said, snapping his fingers a few times.

"Voldemort?" Al suggested.

"Yeah, the one. Wait...how do you know that name?"

"I overheard some people talking in the library. They were saying really mean things about Harry Potter and Dumbledore."

"Well, I thought it would help us if we knew what has got most of the school either frightened or angry. So I'm asking the old man what the hell is going on."

"Okay, I want to join you."

"Sure, Al."

Both brothers walked out of the classroom and through the halls of Hogwarts. They reached the passageway to Dumbledore's office and Ed spoke the password. The gargoyle jumped out of the way and Ed and Al made their way up the stairs.

Ed knocked on the door and a voice from the inside said it was open. He turned the knob and opened the door to see Dumbledore sitting at his desk, writing something. Dumbledore looked up to see the Elric brothers enter his office.

"Edward, Alphonse. To what do I own the pleasure?"

Ed crossed his arms. "Who is Voldemort?"
Dumbledore was still for a few moments before standing up and walking out from behind his desk. "Lord Voldemort is a very powerful dark wizard."

"And what about his return has got the school going a little crazy? I mean, a student got kicked out of class for it," Ed stated.

"Yes, well, to understand the situation now, you need to understand what happened almost fifteen years ago."

Ed raised an eyebrow and Dumbledore continued.

"A little over fifteen years ago, the wizarding world was practically at war. Lord Voldemort was obsessed with power, he wanted to rule the wizarding world and wipe out every non magical person, including those wizards with muggle blood."

"Then how was he stopped? And why did he come back?" Ed asked.

"He was defeated by a young Harry Potter."

"Wait… Harry looks only fifteen or so, and you said this happened around fifteen years ago."

"Yes, well when Harry was only a year old, Voldemort attempted to kill him."

"Attempted? What went wrong?" Ed asked.

"The killing curse that was intended to end young Harry's life rebounded and hit Lord Voldemort. We all assumed he was gone, but he was able to return last summer."

"That's impossible," Ed gritted through his teeth.

"I can assure you, he is back."

"No. I mean if what you said about this-this killing curse hitting Voldy-what's his name, then he should have died. Therefore, he couldn't have returned."

"But he did" Dumbledore said.

"No, he couldn't have. If he was dead then he couldn't have came back," Ed hissed.

"No one can come back from the dead. It's impossible," Al said.

"Trust us, we know," Ed said solemnly.

Dumbledore's eyes sparkled with a hint of curiosity for a moment before becoming serious again. "I see. Well, I can tell that you I myself was not sure that he was dead to begin with."

Ed narrowed his eyes. "How is that possible?"

"I do not know how at the moment, but I am investigating it."

"Then why did this Voldemort guy come back? And why aren't people believing it?" Ed inquired.

"He was able to come back, using dark magic, and to try and realize his plans. But to answer your second question, people are afraid of accepting his return. Because if they do, they invite all the horrors of the last time he was at large back into their lives."
Ed nodded, taking all of this in.

Al then spoke up. "Might I ask how Harry survived?"

Dumbledore smiled. "A powerful act of love, on his mother's part saved his life that night. While Harry's father tried to stop Voldemort, he failed and was killed. Lily, Harry's mother, refused to give up her son's life to save her's. This embedded a powerful magic into Harry's skin, protecting him from Lord Voldemort's curse."

Dumbledore noted the look of sadness on the older Elric brother's face.

"Have I answered all of your questions?" Dumbledore asked kindly.

Ed's expression was a deadly serious one. "Just one more. What happens when Voldemort gains power and starts to try and realize his plans?"

"It will be a dark time for this country and its people. Many people will perish."

Ed nodded. "Thank you," he said, turning to leave the office. Alphonse followed him out, thanking Dumbledore as he shut the door behind him.
Carbon

Edward

Edward was thankful for the weekend. It meant no classes and no real responsibilities as a teacher. He and Al could relax and spend most of their time in the library. Al had gone through most of the Alchemy books, and selected the ones he felt would help their goal the most.

While surrounded by their mounds of books, a few students would pass by and whisper frantically about the odd Alchemy professor and his apparently younger brother. Ed and Al didn't pay it any mind, though. Even back in Amestris, they were given odd looks and were whispered about.

Ed would gladly spend the whole day like this, but his stomach wouldn't allow it.

"Brother, you really should get something to eat."

Ed rolled his eyes and sighed. "Okay, Al."

Standing up, Ed stretched out a bit.

"Are your joints hurting again? Maybe you should see the nurse lady again."

"No, just sitting like that for a long time made me a little stiff. I'll be fine once I start walking around."

Al nodded and looked back down at his book while Ed left the library to get some lunch. Only a few seconds after walking into the Great Hall was he ambushed by the Weasley twins again.

"'Ello Professor Eddie," George said cheerily.

Ed groaned as he rubbed his eyes. "Let's just get this thing over with."

"We've been thinking about your riddle," Fred began.

"And I think we've got it this time!" George exclaimed.

"On the first day, you said we and I quote 'had a good guess'," Fred continued.

"So we thought we might take another crack at it through that angle."

"Just get on with it!" Ed yelled.

Fred and George then cleared their throats and began.

"All is One and One is All," Fred began.

"So we think that all represents all of us, and to reach that goal we all must become one," George finished.

The twins eagerly looked at the alchemy professor, who remained silent.

"Wrong," he said curtly. "Now, if you excuse me, I am starving and want to eat in peace."

Ed pushed his way past the annoying red headed twins and made his way up to the faculty table. Sitting down he quickly ate his meal, hoping to get back to the library as soon as possible.
"Merlin's beard, Ed!" Hagrid exclaimed. "Yeh're eatin' more'n me!"

Ed shrugged. "Skipping breakfast will do that sometimes. Plus, I don't want to stay here long."

"Why's tha'?"

"Me and Al are spending the day doing research."

"Yeh two should visit me fer some tea. Yeh shouldn' work yehselves too hard. An' I'll bet yer brother will be int'rested in some of my creatures."

Ed pondered this for a moment.

"I'll think about it, and see what Al says."

Hagrid smiled brightly. "Jus' c'mon down ter me hut whenever ye two feel like it."

Ed nodded and stood up.

"I gotta go, see ya Hagrid," Ed said, waving goodbye to the Care of Magical Creatures Professor.

Exiting the Great Hall Ed paused before walking back up the stairs. His ports were still a little stiff so as he walked back up the stairs and to the library he decided maybe some fresh air will do them some good.

"Brother!" Al exclaimed when Ed returned to the library.

"Al, Hagrid invited us for some tea. I was thinking you would maybe want to go?"

"But won't he be suspicious if I can't eat?"

"They all think you are going through some alchemy training and you can't eat or drink as much."

Al thought about this for a few moments.

"And Hagrid said he would show us some of the creatures he works with," Ed added.

Al perked up at this and stood up. "Then what are we waiting for? Let's go!"

Ed laughed at his younger brother's actions, and left the library.

Walking out of the castle, Ed pointed down the hill towards the little hut. "Hagrid said he lived there."

Al nodded and the two brothers began walking down the grassy hill towards Hagrid's hut. The hut was a modest structure, and was surrounded by a garden of different plants and vegetables.

Ed knocked on the door and it soon swung open.

"Edward!" Hagrid boomed a big smile on his face. Hagrid then took notice of the large suit of armor standing behind the young Alchemy professor.

"An' is this yer younger brother?"

Ed nodded and Al introduced himself. "I'm Alphonse, Alphonse Elric. it is nice to meet you." Al extended his hand and Hagrid shook it.

"Great te meet ye, Alphonse!" Hagrid beamed. "Though I mus' say, yeh're a little bigger than I
"A lot of people say that," Al said sheepishly as he rubbed the back of his neck.

"Well, c'mon in!" Hagrid said as he invited the two brothers into his home.

It was a large room with hams and pheasants hanging from the ceiling. There was also a fireplace that had copper kettle on top of it, already steaming. In the corner stood a massive bed with a patchwork quilt over it. In another corner there was a pink umbrella and a crossbow.

"I hoped ye two would be comin'. I've already started a pot," Hagrid said as he walked over to the kettle, which was boiling and the small screeching noise filled the hut.

Ed and Al sat down at the table while Hagrid was pouring the tea.

"Um, Mr. Hagrid, you don't need to pour me a cup," Al said meekly.

"'Cause of his alchemy training," Ed explained after Hagrid looked at the brothers, a little confused.

Hagrid nodded and sat down with two cups of tea.

"Would ye like some milk with ye cuppa tea, Edward?" Hagrid asked.

Ed almost growled at the sound of his least favorite drink.

"No thank you. I'll just take some sugar," he said through gritted teeth. Hagrid didn't notice Ed's disdain for the white liquid and scooped two spoonfuls of sugar into the cup, before handing it to Edward.

Ed accepted the cup of tea with a small thank you.

"D'yeh two like Hogwarts so far?"

"It's...nice," Ed said, pausing for a moment.

"It's a lot different from home," Al added.

"Wha's yer home like?"

Ed took another sip of his tea before setting the cup down.

"Amestris is a lot different than here. Our government is more militaristic and we have a few large cities, but it is mainly rural."

"Did ye grow up inna city?"

"Our home...Resembool is a small rural community. But after he joined the military, me and brother traveled all around the country," Al answered.

"It's a great place, really quiet, not like the city or busy towns we travel to at all," Ed said softly.

"Why'd ya leave then?"

Ed looked away for a moment, the painful memories of the failed human transmutation running through his mind. Hagrid took notice of the pained expression of Ed's face.

"Sorry! Sorry! I didn' mean bring up bad memories, Edward."
Ed put his hand, turning back to Hagrid. "No, it's fine. We left because I joined the military, and I did that because there was something I had to do."

Hagrid's curiosity didn't go away, but he decided to leave the topic alone.

"So, uh," Hagrid cleared his throat. "How's yer research goin'?

"We've found a lot of useful materials in the library and we've gathered loads of information," Al answered.

"Good," Hagrid replied with a nod and taking another sip of his tea. "Well, if ye need anythin', jus' ask."

Ed finished his tea, setting the cup back down on the table. "I know Al is interested in some of the creatures you have here."

"Really, whadda like to see, Alphonse?" Hagrid said, setting his own cup down.

"I don't want to cause you any trouble, anything will be fine."

"Rubbish! I'll show ye somethin' real int'restin'. It's about time te feed 'em anyways," Hagrid said, standing up wand walking towards the door. Ed and Al followed, walking back outside into the crisp September air.

Before Ed could follow Hagrid any further he felt something large push him to the ground. He screamed, colliding with the ground with a hard thud.

"Brother!"

Ed felt a large weight on his chest and looked up to see a large black dog laying on top of him.

"What the hell!" Ed wheezed, squirming under the very heavy dog.

"Fang! Ge'off!" Hagrid shouted. The black dog stood up and got off Edward with that, and Ed's lungs were able to fill back up with oxygen.

"Sorry 'bout that, Edward. Fang's not s'pposed te do that."

Al walked over and helped his brother up. Ed brushed the dirt and grass off himself.

"Ye alright, Ed?"

"I'm fine," Ed said, waving him off.

"Sorry 'bout that, Ed," Hagrid apologized again as Fang lay down in the cabbage patch.

"So what did you want to show us?" Ed asked, wanting to change the subject.

"Ah! C'mon! I'll show ye somethin' great."

Hagrid then proceeded to walk over to a line of dead ferrets and grab a few. He started walking towards the forest a bit, but stayed on a path. Ed and Al followed him, and they soon came to a clearing filled with black, skeletal like horses.

"What are those things?" Ed asked.
"Ye see 'em?" Hagrid asked, throwing one of the ferrets to the creatures, which a few of them quickly ate.

"You don't?" Ed questioned, raising an eyebrow.

"Well, most don', ye see. They're Thestrals."

"A what?" Al asked.

"Thestral. They're known as horses o' death. Only those thata seen death can see 'em."

Ed and Al looked down for a bit.

Hagrid cleared his throat, trying to clear the air, throwing two more ferrets to the hungry creatures. "They're gentle creatures, mostly 'ave a bad reputation, 'cause the whole death thing."

"They look like they have wings, can they fly?" Al asked.

"Course they can!" Hagrid exclaimed.

"That's amazing. But how are they invisible to some people?" Edward wondered, the scientific part of his brain trying to figure out the science behind the Thestrals.

"Magic, o'course!"

Ed only shook his head at Hagrid's explanation.

"They're wonderful," Al said, in awe of the creatures.

"Ed told me ye like animals, Alphonse."

"I do," Al beamed. "Especially cats. But brother won't let me have one."

"It's not my fault Al, you know we couldn't properly take care of a pet while on the road or when getting chased by some corrupt bastard."

"Do yeh miss home, Ed?" Hagrid asked, tentatively.

"A little bit," Ed shrugged. "But this place does have it's advantages, like not having to see the Colonel all the time. Oh, but that reminds me, do you know where the… Owrelry is?"

"The Owrelry? 's up the hill," Hagrid answered.

"And I can send a letter from there?" Ed asked.

"Sure ye can! 'm sure Dumbledore wouldn' mind ye usin' one of teh school owls to contact home."

"Thanks again, Hagrid," Ed said as he waved goodbye.

"Stop by anytime, ye two!"

"We will!" Al called back. The two brothers walked back towards the castle. As they walked along the path Ed saw a large tower with birds flying around it.

"That must be the Owrelry," Alphonse commented.

"Yeah, I'll have to send a letter to the Colonel Bastard. Though he's probably happy we're gone; lot
"He will probably freak out over the fact you are sending a letter via owl."

Ed laughed at this. "Oh man, I can see the look on his face now!"

Al shook his head. "I don't see how you can take so much pleasure in that."

"Why shouldn't I? He's always pulling this type of crap on us! Calling me short, assigning me these crazy missions, yelling at me about paperwork and wasting military resources..."

"We do owe him a lot, though."

Ed scoffed at this as the two brothers arrived back at the library. Al began reading through the books again while Ed walked over to the librarian.

"Do you have any spare paper I could borrow?"

Madame Pince scoffed a little at this and pulled out a few sheets of parchment, handing it to Ed.

"Thank you," Ed walked back to one of the tables near Alphonse and sat down. He then began writing the letter to his superior. Using his own pen, because he would not even attempt to use one of those quills, Ed wrote away. After he finished he folded the paper and placed it in an envelope, sealing it.

"I'm going to go send this to the Colonel, then I'll be back."

"Okay! I think I'm going to start looking at some of the books concerning medicine with magical techniques."

"See you in a bit, Al."

Ed walked out of the library and out of the castle. Going towards the Owlery he began wondering how a bird could fly all the way to Amestris and know to give a letter to Colonel Mustang.

Deep in his thoughts, Ed straight into someone.

"Damn it!" Ed cursed as he fell right on his butt.

"Sorry!" the person apologized.

Ed rubbed his head and looked up to see one of his students. He was in his year five class and appeared to be in the house with the lion, which was apparently named Gryffindor for some odd reason.

"Oh! Professor! I'm so sorry! I-I wasn't-" he stuttered.

Ed stood up and brushed himself off. "Hey, I wasn't paying attention. Don't blame yourself."

"I'm still sorry sir," the student said.

"You're in my class, right?"

"Y-yes sir. I'm Neville Longbottom, sir." The student seemed nervous and was fiddling with his hands.
"I'm sorry I ran into you, I was thinking about the owls and wasn't really paying attention."

"The owls, sir?" he questioned.

"Well, I haven't used anything like them before and I was wondering how they, for lack of a better word, work."

"It's rather simple, sir. You simply give an owl a letter or package and tell them where and to whom they need to deliver."

"But how do they know?"

Neville only shrugged. "They just do."

Ed groaned as he rubbed his eyes with his flesh hand. "Sorry I ran into you, Neville. I'll see you in class, and good luck on the riddle."

Ed turned to leave but Neville spoke up. "Uh, Professor Elric?"

Ed stopped, looking back at his nervous student. "Yes, Neville?"

"Well I was, um, thinking about the riddle you gave us and..." Neville stuttered.

"Just spit it out, Neville," Ed groaned.

"I think I know the answer."

Ed blinked a few times, a little shocked. "Oh, okay..." He soon regained his composure, clearing his throat. "What do you think the riddle, All is One and One is All, means?"

"That we are one and all is everything else." Neville said, looking unsure of himself. "It's wrong, isn't it?"

"No, actually it's the opposite," Ed said, shocked this kid had figured it out so fast.

"Really!?" Neville exclaimed.

Ed rolled his eyes a bit. "Yes, you're correct. I'll put your name down on the list of students that can transmute at the beginning of the month."

"Who else has figured it out?" Neville asked, curiously.

"A girl named Luna Lovegood."

Neville didn't look shocked at this at all. "Hm... that sounds about right, she would be the first to answer it correctly."

"Wait a second, that reminds me, how did you figure the riddle out so fast?"

"Well, when you told us the riddle I thought I would never figure it out. Then I thought about it and when I was grooming one of my plants for Herbology, it hit me. That the plant could be one, and all was the universe. Everything is connected. The plant will grow, die, and then the next plant will grow."

Ed smiled. "You are right on target with that one, Neville."
"Thank you, sir."

"I'll need you to start studying the periodic table. It should be on page ten of your book."

"I'll do that sir!" Neville beamed.

Ed laughed slightly, walking towards the Owlery but not before turning back to see Neville. "You really should try and be more confident, Neville, it will do you some good later in life."

Neville nodded. "I'll keep that in mind, sir."

Ed nodded and waved a short goodbye, turning walking up the stairs to the tower. Ed pushed open the thick wooden door to see the entire thing filled with owls flying around or resting.

"Holy Truth," he muttered under his breath. Shaking off the shock, he walked up to a few owls resting in the area marked by the Hogwarts school crest.

He looked at a brown, medium sized owl with golden eyes. Ed pulled out the letter in his pocket and gave it to the bird, who took it in its beak.

"Can you take this to Colonel Mustang, in Amestris, Central City?"

The bird nodded and took off, flying out of the Owlery, letter in hand or rather beak.

Ed shook off the shock and slight confusion, walking out of the Owlery and back out into the grounds of Hogwarts.

Walking back to the castle, Ed was deep in his own thoughts once again. Not paying attention to his surroundings like he should have been, Ed wandered a little off course.

Hearing a few shouts Ed turned to see a couple students waving at him and shouting.

"What?" Ed yelled.

"The tree! You've gotta move!" the yelled.

Ed then saw a branch swinging towards him a high speed. Luckily, his instincts kicked in and he jumped up high, leaping above the hazardous branch.

"What the hell!" he shouted after he landed. A thinner branch then whipped around, trying to catch Ed off guard. Ed was fast, but apparently he wasn't fast enough. The branch slashed his left arm, cutting into the flesh. It tore a large hole in his red coat and blood began to drip from the wound.

"Damn it!" Ed cursed as he gripped his injured arm. The tree took advantage of Ed's momentary pause to look at his arm. A large branch swung around, and hit Ed directly in his side. The air was knocked out of his lungs and his side was ablaze with pain. He was knocked to the ground, rolling a few feet away from where he once stood.

Ed slowly stood up, gripping his bleeding arm and feeling pain rush through him with every breath.

"The Whomping Willow! You need to get out of there!" the students shouted at Ed. Before Ed could even think about getting away from the tree a large limb was coming down on top of him.

Ed reacted quickly, dropping to the ground and rolling out of the trajectory of the deadly tree branch. Kneeling on the ground Ed's hands clapped together and almost moved to transmute his automail arm. Luckily Ed stopped himself from revealing his lost limb in front of a group of students, but
moved to touch the ground beneath him. A large fist, made of rock, shot up and collided with the tree who apparently wanted to kill Ed. It stopped the branch coming towards him, but another limb was whipping around towards Edward.

Anticipating the attack, Ed leaped into the air, clapping his hands. Then as the branch passed under him, his hands connected and transmuted the wood. The branch splintered apart as Ed landed on the ground. Looking up at the tree, the branches rustled, but there was no wind.

Ed raised an eyebrow, the tree didn’t make another move towards Ed. Shaking his head, he walked away from the willow and towards the group of students.

"Professor! Are you alright!" a few of them yelled.

"He's hurt! Call Madame Pomfrey!"

"That was amazing, sir!"

"What was that thing you did with the fist and the ground?"

"How did you dodge the willow like that?"

"Did you learn to fight like that in the military?"

Ed was swarmed with questions as the group of students surrounded him.

"Shut the hell up!" he yelled at the top of his voice and the students all got quiet.

"Thank you," Ed said in a much quieter tone.

"Look, who can tell me what the hell was that thing?" he said, using his head to gesture to the tree as his right hand was firmly on his left arm, trying to stop the bleeding.

Ed noticed that Hermione, Ron, and Harry were all in the group surrounding him.

Hermione was the first to speak up. "That's the Whomping Willow sir."

"And that is?"

"It's a magical tree that will attack anyone who goes near it, Professor," Hermione explained.

"Why the hell is it here!?" Ed exclaimed, the pain from his arm was getting worse.

"Professor Elric!" a shrill voice yelled. Ed groaned as he cursed his luck. The horrific toad in pink was stomping towards him, a furious look on her ugly face. On the bright side, Madame Pomfrey was right behind her.

"What is going on here!" Umbridge yelled.

"Oh? I was just taking a lovely stroll on the grounds," Ed said in a mockingly sweet tone.

"Before this goddamn tree attacked me!" he then roared.

Madame Pomfrey, who saw Edward clutching his left arm quickly ran over, then assessing the damage done by the tree. "A small cut, I can heal it right now."

She took out her wand and said a few words, and the cut healed instantly.
"Are you hurt anywhere else?" she asked, her keen eyes scanning Edward.

"I think the tree may have caught me on my side. It's either a bruised rib or it's broken." Ed said in a nonchalant tone, almost like he was talking about the weather.

Taking a deep breath, and sensing the shooting pain throughout his entire chest, Ed nodded. "Definitely broken."

Umbridge stuttered for a bit, as pretty much everyone around Ed was shocked beyond belief.

Madame Pomfrey was the first to snap out of shock. "May I?"

Ed nodded and Madame Pomfrey touched his sides. He winced slightly from the pain, Madame Pomfrey noticed his discomfort and quickly removed her hands.

"He's right," she said, then touched the tip of her wand to Ed's side. The pain soon disappeared, and Ed felt his breathing becoming much easier.

"Most wouldn't be able to move after suffering from an injury like that," Madame Pomfrey commented.

Ed only shrugged. "I've had worse. Thank you for fixing me up, though."

The students stared in awe of their Alchemy professor. Umbridge realized that there was a group of students around them at that moment and soon ordered them all to disperse.

The kids groaned a bit, but all started to leave.

"And Mr. Elric! You come with me!" Umbridge ordered.

"I'm sorry, I need Mr. Elric to come with me. I want to make sure he is fully recovered," Madame Pomfrey said, standing in front of Edward.

Umbridge huffed a bit before turning on her heels and walking away. Madame Pomfrey turned back to Edward.

"Are you alright? Any other injuries?"

"I'm fine. The only thing left to fix is my coat."

Ed clapped his hands together and touched his coat. The blue alchemical light surrounded his left arm and when it disappeared his clothes were now fixed.

"That's alchemy?" she exclaimed.

"Yeah, I always have to fix my coat or buy red fabric and make a new one."

"Well, I think you are alright," Madame Pomfrey said, looking Ed over. "Is your...other arm and leg alright as well?"

Ed knew she was talking about his automail.

"It's fine, it can sure handle a lot more than a little tree."

"Well, tell me if you have any pain or injuries. And if Professor Umbridge asks, I gave you a thorough check up, and I found no other pressing injuries."
Madame Pomfrey smiled warmly and left, heading back into the castle. Ed sighed as he stuck his hands into his pockets, walking back into the castle.
Mustang strode into his office. His team was already at work and there was significantly less paperwork since the Elric brothers left for England. He smiled as he slid behind his desk and leaned back in his chair.

"Have there been any updates on the whereabouts of Scar?" he asked.

Lieutenant Hawkeye shook her head as she stood in front of Mustang's desk with a few folders in her hand.

"No, there have been no updates. A few people have reported sightings, but they were all dead ends or false leads."

"Hm, he must have been seriously injured when he destroyed the sewers."

"Do you think he'll return to Central?" Fury asked.

"Most likely. There are more State Alchemists in Central than any city in the country. If he still holds a vendetta, this is the best place to extract his revenge," Mustang answered.

Right then, there was a small tap at the window. Mustang turned around in his chair to see an owl with a letter in his beak, tapping against the glass. The letter, had Colonel Mustang scribbled on the front in very familiar handwriting.

"What in the world?" Breda said. Everyone in the office was looking at the owl, who looked like he was getting more and more annoyed.

"Is that letter from Edward?" Riza asked, seeing the distinct handwriting as well.

Roy grit his teeth together. Even when Edward was miles and miles away, he still manage to give the Flame Alchemist a headache. Standing up, the Colonel opened the window and the bird flew in, landing on his desk. Roy took the letter from his beak and the bird flew up to the rafters in the ceiling.

Everyone was silent for the longest time, staring at either the Colonel or the owl.

"He sent his letter via owl..." Havoc said slowly, as if trying to convince himself of what was happening.

Roy sat down, rubbing his temples. "Of course he would."

Opening the envelope Mustang quickly looked over the letter.

Dear Colonel,

Hope you have been enjoying our absence there in Central. Al and I have settled in and I have begun teaching. You were right when you said they practically ignore equivalent exchange. Many of these kids have never heard of it! Al thinks we can make some progress using their medical techniques and maybe mixing it with alchemy.

These wizards have no technology whatsoever, unless you count quills and candles. So I am sending
all of my letters to you via owl. There is no other way of doing so apparently. If you don't like this, then tough luck.

Other than that, nothing else has happened. One of the teachers here, Dolores Umbridge, wants me gone and I definitely would be happy if I never had to see her ugly face again as well. The other teachers and staff here seem alright. Many are shocked at my age and the fact I'm in the military. At least in Amestris people know who the Fullmetal Alchemist is and who the Elric brothers are. Here there are a lot of weird stares, but I couldn't give a crap what they think.

That's all. Oh, and Al asks that you tell everyone there at Central hello. Please send your reply with the owl.

Sincerely,

Edward Elric

The Fullmetal Alchemist

Mustang groaned a bit, rubbing his eyes.

"So Chief is sending his letters through a bird now?" Havoc asked.

"It would appear so," Roy groaned.

Edward

"Now, who can tell me what one of the three main principles of alchemy is?" Ed asked his class.

One girl raised her hand, she has on red and gold robes. "Understanding, Reconstructing, and Deconstructing."

"Correct," Ed nodded, then turning back to the board and writing the word understanding. Turning back to the class he asked "Now what does understanding entail?"

Hermione's hand shot up. "Would it be knowing what you are using, and what you are trying to make?"

"Correct, now this is important because if you don't know the internal structure of what you are working with, you can't transmute."

Harry raised his hand. "Why wouldn't we be able to perform alchemy, Professor?"

"If you don't know what you are working with, then any transmutation you would attempt wouldn't work. This is because in order to create something specific, you need certain components, and if you don't understand the base component you are transforming then you can't properly deconstruct it and therefore cannot reconstruct. Not understanding the substance and what it contains with will lead to failure because of this."

Neville then raised his hand. "How do you always know what you are transmuting, Professor?"

"I have studied enough alchemy and science to have a basic knowledge of the elements that surround me and therefore can make inferences based on that knowledge. If I didn't know what something was made up of, or assumed wrongly, then the transmutation wouldn't work."

Malfoy scoffed a little at this, catching Ed's attention. Edward narrowed his eyes and crossed his
arms. "Well Mr. Malfoy, you sound very uninterested by this lesson, why would that be?"

Malfoy had a small smirk on his face. "I just don't see the point in learning all of this. It sounds a lot like muggle science."

"That is because it is a science, Mr. Malfoy."

"Then why do we need to know it, we are wizards. Any muggle subject is useless to us." Malfoy jeered.

Ed raised an eyebrow at this. "Oh? Then if you seem so above this class, why haven't you solved the riddle yet?"

Malfoy stuttered a bit, trying not to look thrown off by Ed's question. "Well no one has solved it yet!"

"Actually, two people already have." Ed corrected.

Much of the class was shocked to hear this. Even Hermione, Harry, and Ron were shocked, since Professor Elric had said that only one student had solved the riddle.

"Who?" a girl in the back asked.

Ed saw Neville tense at this. "I won't tell you their names, because some of you would hound them to tell you the answer."

A few looked disappointed at this while the tension in Neville seemed to dissipate.

"Now listen, "Ed put his hands on his desk and the class became quiet. "I am teaching this to you, that way the few who have answered the riddle won't be behind and we can actually start working. Ed then pulled out the silver pocket watch and flipped it open.

"And that's all we have time for today. Class dismissed. If you have figured out the riddle, continue to work on what I assigned you. If you haven't solved it, that is all you have to worry about right now."

Ed sat down at his desk as the students packed up and started to leave his classroom. Neville however lingered until everyone had left.

"Do you need anything Neville?" Ed asked, organizing some of the papers on his desk.

"Thank you sir, for not telling them I solved it."

"No problem. I'd do the same for any student that answers the riddle."

Neville nodded and thanked Edward once again before leaving. Once he was alone in the room, and pulled out his alchemy notes. His travelogue was extremely coded. The only person who would probably have a chance would be Al, since almost everywhere Ed went so did his younger brother. Reviewing his old notes from time to time was always a great help to Edward. Though, since the discovery of what creating a Philosopher's Stone would take, the brothers had encountered a major set back. Perhaps the Colonel was right, Hogwarts and it's 'magic' did hold the answer.

As Ed was deep in his thoughts, there was a small knock at the door. A Hufflepuff girl from his seventh year class was standing at the door with a letter in her hand.

"A letter came for you Professor Elric. Professor Dumbledore asked me to bring it to you since I was
already heading here, and that he would like to see you." she said walking up to Edward's desk.

Ed took the letter in his hand and set it to the side. "Thank you, I'll talk to him soon. But you said you were coming to see me Miss...?"

"Miss Dodworth, Nicola Dodworth. And yes sir, I believe I solved the riddle." she said, clasping her hands in front of her.

Ed gestured for her to continue.

"It's the circle of life, sir. I figured it out when I was talking with my friend about a movie with that same message. The cycle of life is all about how we are all connected, so I reasoned that if we are one then everything else is all."

Ed smiled and nodded. "You're right."

The girl was beaming and clapped her hands together.

"Just start studying the periodic table on page ten in your book." Ed said, writing the girl's name on the list of students.

"Thank you Professor!" she exclaimed.

Ed nodded and Nicola left the classroom with a bright smile on her face. Edward looked over at the letter on his desk. He saw Fullmetal written on the front, flipping it over Ed broke the seal and opened the letter.

Fullmetal,

The owl you used to send your letters caused quite a disturbance in the office today. The bird wouldn't stop pecking Havoc and won't leave until I give it a letter to send back.

Things in Central have been rather calm since you left. Scar hasn't been seen and there are no leads currently. Armstrong informed me of what happened during your trip to the East, so I felt you should know any details concerning Scar for the time being.

Your mechanic, Winry Rockbell stopped by the other day. She still wasn't very happy you didn't tell her exactly where you were going. She asked me to tell you she has left Central and is back in Rush Valley. She wants to write you, concerning your automail, and forward her letters through me.

Remember your yearly assessment is approaching. Please have your research findings prepared and ready. Additionally, I will arrive at Hogwarts on October 1st, and will be making travel arrangements with Headmaster. You're still responsible for any duties and need to remember to take appropriate measures beforehand. Your physical assessment will occur on October 2nd and I will leave the day after.

Don't cause too much trouble and keep any damage to a minimum.

Signed,

Colonel Roy Mustang

The Flame Alchemist

Ed put down the letter and leaned back in his chair, staring up at the ceiling. Taking a deep breath he stood up and grabbed the letter. He walked out of his classroom, and out into the Grand Staircase.
He passed a few students who would wave and say hello, and Ed replied with a curt nod.

Walking up to the stone gargoyle, Ed stated the password and walked up the spiraling stairs. After knocking on the door and entering, Ed saw Dumbledore and the old man smiled at the young alchemist.

"Ah, Edward, I hope you received the letter?"

Ed pulled out the letter from his pocket. "I did, and before we start talking I want to inform you my State Alchemist assessment is approaching next week."

"Yes, the Colonel mentioned your assessment before we left Amestris."

"So I need to know if I can miss a day of class to perform my physical assessment."

Dumbledore nodded with a small smile gracing his face. "I see no problem in you taking one day off, to fulfill your duties as a State Alchemist. Might I ask when exactly your assessment will occur?"

"October second." Ed answered. "And the Colonel said he wanted to arrive the day before and leave the day after."

"I will make arrangements for the Colonel and send him a letter so we can discuss this matter further."

Ed nodded. "Thanks."

"Before I tell you what I asked you to come here for, might I ask how your research is progressing?" Dumbledore asked.

Ed shrugged. "We aren't making as much progress as we thought, but it's still early."

Dumbledore stood up from his desk and walked around towards Ed, then waving his wand and making a book fly towards them. Ed grabbed it, as it was floating in front of him, staring at the ancient leather cover. It was old, for sure. The brown leather looked worn and used, with gold accentuating the border of the cover.

"This is what I called you here for."

"A book?" Ed asked, holding it up.

"I found this the previous day, it is apart of a larger collection of a famous and acclaimed alchemist's personal journals."

Ed stared at the book before looking at Dumbledore. "Who?"

"Nicholas Flamel." Dumbledore answered. "Now, I've never gathered anything of importance from these journals, but perhaps it is because I have not studied alchemy as thoroughly as you have."

"These are Flamel's?!" Ed exclaimed, immediately opening the book to see 'Nicholas Flamel' written on the first page in elegant script.

Dumbledore chuckled a bit before nodding. "Yes, they are his."

"And they are in his exact words and everything? No tapering at all, not even a new binding?" Ed asked, rapidly flipping through the book.
Dumbledore was slightly confused by this but replied "Yes, these are his original journals."

Ed was practically radiating energy. "And we can have them!"

"Yes, perhaps you can find them of some use for your research."

"How many of them are there?" Ed asked, closing the journal in his hand.

"I believe there are about fifteen books in total."

Ed looked around the office a bit. "Where are the rest?"

Dumbledore waved his wand again and two stacks of books flew and landed on his desk. "I can have them delivered to your classroom, if you wish."

Ed wanted to start looking through Flamel's personal notes immediately, but he remembered that he had a class soon and Al was still in the library. "Okay, that will be fine."

"Very well," Dumbledore nodded.

"Thank you so much," Ed said before he left the office.

"It is no trouble, Edward."

Ed nodded and shut the wooden door behind him. Walking back to his classroom he passed the library saw Al leaving it at the same time.

"Brother! I was just coming to look for you!"

"Hey Al," Ed smiled at his younger brother.

"You seem happy, I thought after Miss Sprout yelled at you for hurting the tree you would still be a little mad. What happened?" Al asked, curious as to why his older brother looked so happy.

"Okay, first of all, the damn tree attacked me first. I only defended myself, and destroyed a small branch. She shouldn't have acted like I almost killed her firstborn child. And the reason I'm so happy is the old man found some old journals and gave them to us, and you'll never guess who's they are!"

"Who's are they?"

"Nicholas Flamel's," Ed said with a smirk.

"No way!" Al exclaimed. "They're really his!?"

"Yup, and I'm sure he has hidden some of his research in them too."

"Maybe a way we can get our bodies back without a stone," Al said to himself.

"That's right, Al."

"Where are they?" Alphonse asked, seeing that his brother was not in fact carrying the journals on him.

"The old man said he would deliver them to the classroom, since there are like fifteen of them."

"This is great!" Al exclaimed.
"Yeah, I have a class right about now but as soon as I'm done we start working and trying to maybe decode the notes."

"Okay," Al nodded. "I'll get some books from the library that might be useful for us."

"Then I'll see you soon," Ed extended his automail arm and the two brothers bumped fists before parting ways once more.

Harry

"Sirius said he wanted to contact us later tonight." Harry said to Ron and Hermione.

"In the common room?" Hermione asked.

"Yeah, he said he's going to wait until everyone else has gone to bed before talking with us through the fire." Harry explained. "We did it a few times last year during the Tournament."

Hermione chewed on her nail. "That sounds like an awful risk."

"He'll be fine!" Harry said, waving her off.

"Okay, so we wait here and then we'll finally get some information about the Order, but until then," Ron stated, before turning back to his Transfiguration essay. "Hermione, have you finished McGonagall's essay?"

"Are you still working on that?" Harry asked. "I finally got it done during our free period today."

"Well I had to finish that crystal ball reading thing today for Divination and the Charm's homework on the fire-making spell."

Hermione sighed a bit before pulling the scroll of parchment out of her bag. "You can look at mine, if you are having that much trouble."

"You're an angel Hermione, really," Ron thanked her, looking at Hermione's essay and writing more of his own. Hermione then pulled out a book with strange symbols on it and began reading.

Harry squinted to look at the strange symbols. "What is that?"

"An alchemy book. I got it from Madame Pince."

"Why are you reading that?" Ron asked.

Hermione sighed as she snapped the book shut. "I am trying to figure out what 'One is All and All is One' means."

"You still haven't gotten it?" Harry asked.

"No, and it is really frustrating me." Hermione frowned.

"Well only two people have gotten it, so don't stress about it." Ron said, waving her off as he focused on his essay.

"We have a week! Ronald!" Hermione exclaimed.

"Aw come on, I knew from the beginning I wasn't going to get it. You are going to stress and
probably read every alchemy book in the library until you figure it out."

Hermione scowled at Ron and then hit him above the head with the book.

Ron rubbed his now sore head. "Ow! Bloody hell, Hermione!"

"Harry, please tell me you've tried to solve the riddle."

He shook his head. "I've been thinking about a lot of other things, Hermione. But if you want, I'll try to figure it out with you."

Hermione smiled at this. "Thank you, Harry." She opened her book and began reading once more. Harry looked around to see all of the other Gryffindor's had left and gone to bed already. Only he, Ron, Hermione remained. Harry leaned back in his chair and stared at the fire, waiting for Sirius to appear. Closing his eyes for a moment, he attempted to try and figure out what that alchemy riddle meant and why it was so important.

"Harry?" Sirius whispered.

Harry quickly looked at the fireplace to see Sirius in the embers. "Sirius!" Ron put away his essay and Hermione quickly shut her book. The trio then crowded around the fireplace.

"Oh thank goodness, the coast is clear," Sirius said.

"Sirius, I have to say even though I know Harry is happy to see you, this is an awful risk you are taking." Hermione began.

"You sound like Molly, this is one of the few methods of communication that we can use now."

"Why not still send letters?" Ron asked.

"The Ministry is starting to check mail, I'm sure of it. And even if we used codes, those can be broken."

Harry, Ron, and Hermione shared a look before turning back to Sirius.

"Now, tell me about this Umbridge woman, what is she doing?"

"She is obviously working with the Ministry and won't teach us anything! We don't even use magic!" Harry fumed.

"That isn't surprising," Sirius muttered.

"Wait, why?" Hermione asked.

"The Ministry doesn't want you trained in combat. They think Dumbledore might be amassing an army."

"That's insane!" Harry snapped.

"It is, but Fudge sees Dumbledore as a threat right now. He thinks Dumbledore will stop at nothing to take his position. He's getting more paranoid by the day. It's a matter of time before he has Dumbledore arrested on some trumped-up charge."

"They can't do that!" Ron ranted.
"Dumbledore isn't being looked upon so favorably at the moment. I'm sure if he arrested him that the Prophet would support whatever twisted version of the story he came up."

Harry ran his hand through his hair. "Is there anything we can do?"

"Just keep your heads down for the moment."

"We can't just sit here and do nothing!" Harry exclaimed.

"Umbridge is powerful Harry, remember that. And Fudge is going to be looking for anything he can use against Dumbledore."

The trio nodded and Sirius cleared his throat a bit. "Now, the other thing I wanted to talk with you about was that new alchemy professor you mentioned in your last letter."

Hermione and Ron looked at Harry and then Sirius. "Professor Elric?"

"I said that his name was Edward Elric, he was new and a bit odd, that's it." Harry said.

"Yes, Edward Elric...Tell me about him." Sirius asked.

"Well he is short, and has blonde hair and golden eyes. He's apart of the military, and get this!" Ron described. "He's our age!"

"Your age?!" Sirius exclaimed.

"He said he was fifteen." Hermione said.

"And how is he in the military?" Sirius asked.

"He said he isn't a soldier, but a State Alchemist," Hermione explained. "Which I am assuming is an alchemist that the military uses."

"Hm.. Dumbledore mentioned that he was getting a powerful alchemist from Amestris, but his name was Van Hohenheim, not Elric." Sirius said to himself.

"Why did he bring back a different alchemist?" Ron asked.

"I'm not sure, but maybe the Amestrian government is working with the Ministry?" Sirius suggested.

"No...Professor Elric didn't seem to agree or like Umbridge," Harry said. "And I don't think Umbridge likes him either."

Ron snapped his fingers. "That's right! When he and his brother were fighting Umbridge looked furious."

"And when Professor Elric accidentally fought with the Whomping Willow, she looked really mad then." Hermione added.

"Professor Elric has fought?"

"Yeah, he and his younger brother fought and he lost then, but when he fought the willow he won!" Ron declared.

"The Whomping Willow? How on earth did he win?"
"He used these cool flips and moves and then he used his alchemy by clapping his hands and destroyed one of the branches!" Ron described.

"And his brother? What is he like?"

"He is huge!" Harry waved his arms about. "And wears this big suit of armor! He's about as big as Hagrid."

Sirius's eyebrows shot up. "Hagrid? That is large. Though I thought you said he was younger."

"He says he is, and he sounds young." Hermione explained.

"Yeah, but he never takes that armor off and we never see him at meals. He's usually reading something."

"Interesting. Do you think that they are dangerous?" Sirius asked Harry.

Harry shook his head. "I think they aren't after Dumbledore like Umbridge is. Professor Elric is a bit eccentric at times, but he seems to be alright."

Sirius nodded. "And what do you think Hermione?"

Hermione lifted her hand to her chin. "Professor Elric is definitely strange. And sometimes when we bring up certain topic he get defensive. I think he is hiding something. Also the fact his brother wears that armor all the time doesn't bode well for them either."

Taking a deep breath Hermione then continued.

"But they seem to be alright. Harry told me he talked with Professor Elric after he got kicked out of class by Umbridge. Instead of walking away and leaving Harry or even worse, encouraging him to try and fight Umbridge more, he calmed him down. And this is a kid who joined the military when he was twelve. I think that there is definitely more to the Elric brothers than we know, but I see no reason to see them as our enemies."

Sirius nodded. "I think you're right, now I hear Kreecher coming I better go. I'll write to tell you a time we can talk. If you can stand to risk it?"

There was a flicker of the flames around Sirius's head and he was gone.
"Edward?" A soft voice called.

Ed turned around, the white sheets they were hanging up to dry were all around him.

"Mom?"

Edward’s mother pushed aside one of the sheets and kneeled down so that her five year old son would be eye level. Trisha Elric wore her simple dress and apron, her hair tied into a loose side ponytail. With a warm smile she rubbed Ed’s head, ruffling his hair. "I think we're almost done here. I'll finish up if you can get your brother and go wash up for dinner?"

Ed smiled brightly and nodded. "Sure thing Mom!" He was eager to help his mother out as much as possible, ever since their dad left, Ed wanted to be the what some of the other adults called 'the man of the house'.

"Thanks little man," Trisha Elric stood up, her chestnut hair waving slightly in the light breeze. "I know I can count on you to take care of your brother."

The warm light of the sunset soon disappeared and everything else along with it. It was pitch black and the sudden cold made the young Ed shiver. He was all alone, surrounded by nothing.

"Mom?" He said, the fear making his voice shake. The small boy looked around for his mother, but was only met with utter darkness.

"You're his big brother!" A cold, harsh voice snapped. "You're supposed to take care of him!"

Ed placed his small hands over his ears, trying to shut out the voice. "Stop it!"

"You pushed him! You're the reason he's like this!"

"Shut up!" Ed roared, his eyes shut tightly.

"You didn't protect him! What kind of older brother are you!"

The wind started swirling around him, and Ed fought to stay on his feet.

"I didn't mean for it to happen! I never wanted this to happen!"

"You knew the risks, and yet you still pushed your brother to commit the taboo!"

"We did it together! We just wanted to see our mom smile one more time!"

"You're brother is trapped in a suit of armor! He can't sleep, can't eat, he can't even feel the warmth of the sun anymore! And why is he like this? You! You caused this! You did this to your own brother!"

The voice was screaming at him, Ed fell to his knees and practically curled up into a tiny little ball, trying to block out the voice.

"I'm trying to undo it! I've worked for three years to get his body back!" Edward yelled back.
"But how far have you gotten?" The voice sneered. "You looked for years for a Philosopher's Stone, an now that's a dead end! What now! How many more years are you going to make your brother suffer for what YOU did?!"

"Shut up! I said shut up!" Ed screamed.

"You just don't want to hear the truth Edward! You know what you did!" The voice bellowed.

"I know! That's why I'm working to get his body back!"

"But while you've been prancing around with your State Alchemist title what has your brother ben doing!?" The voice taunted. "He's been sitting alone at night while you sleep! His torture never ends while you waste your time hopping around the country chasing false leads on a tool you're too proud to even use!"

"Brother!" Al's voice was muffled, but Ed's eyes snapped open.

"Al?"

"Brother! Wake up!" Al's voice was becoming more clear.

Ed's eyes snapped open at this. His vision was blurry for a few moments, but everything soon came into focus. Al was above him, and his hands were on his shoulders.

"Al?" Ed, slowly moved to sit up and Al took a few steps back.

Ed rubbed his eyes with his flesh hand.

"Are you alright, Brother?"

"I-I just had a bad dream, okay," Ed muttered. The sound of the cold, cruel voice was still ringing in his ears.

"Do you want to talk about it?"

"No, I'm fine."

He knew it was his fault. This was his burden to bear.

"Are you sure? You were shouting and kicking a lot."

"I'm fine, Al," Ed waved his brother off.

"It's not a weakness to talk to me you know," Al crossed his arms and stared at his stubborn older brother.

'But it is weakness to shove my problems onto you,' Ed added in his mind.

Ed sighed as he swung his legs over his bed. "I know. I'm sorry Al."

"I thought since we found out it wasn't mom, the nightmares would stop."

Ed nodded and kept staring at the stone floor.

The nightmares would never stop. Ed knew that. Not until his younger brother was back in his body, and even then he wasn't so sure.
"Look, Al. I know you are worried about me, but I'm fine really."

"Are you sure?"

"I'll be fine, I promise I'll talk to you if it ever gets to be too bad," Ed said, standing up and grabbing his clothes. Slipping on his pants, shirt, jacket, red cloak, and white gloves, Ed looked out the small window their room had. The sun was just rising over the trees and Ed flipped open his pocket watch.

"I think I'll head to my classroom. Did you make any progress on the journal?"

Maybe Al wouldn't pry too much if he thought Ed wasn't really affected by his nightmares. And besides, talking about the journal would get his own mind off of it.

Al shook his head. "No, I think though the one entry about the forest might be like the green tea passage in Dr. Marcoh's notes."

"Hm...it might represent the Green Lion, the philosopher's mouth..." Ed muttered as he tapped his chin. "We should get to my room, we may be able to get some work done before my next class."

Al nodded and the two brothers grabbed the few journals they had brought to their room, and the other books they had gotten from the library. The portrait door swung open and they walked out.

"Edward? Alphonse?" A very tired sounding voice said. Turning around the brothers saw Elizabeth, the resident of the painting that concealed their room, rubbing her eyes.

"Oh, hey Elizabeth," Edward said.

"You guys are up early," She commented.

"We wanted to get some work done, so we are going to Brother's classroom,"

"Oh, what are you two working on?"

"Just some alchemy research," Ed explained.

Elizabeth smiled before curtsying. "Well I wish you luck, and remember just ask me if you need anything."

Ed nodded. "We will, thanks Elizabeth."

Alphonse waved goodbye. "Bye Elizabeth!"

The girl waved back as the brother's continued to walk to Ed's classroom.

---

Hermione

Hermione walked into the library with a pile of books. She sat down at one of the tables and quickly began working on her homework. The library was relatively empty at this time, with only a few students working.

She finished her Herbology homework on the different properties of self-fertilizing shrubs. Setting aside her textbook, she pulled out the Alchemy book she had been reading.

The riddle was frustrating her to no end. If she didn't figure it out soon, then she wouldn't be able to participate in the class. She groaned as she stared at the alchemy book. There was not one passage,
or even footnote relating to the riddle. If it was such a big concept in alchemy, surely it would be in the book.

"Excuse me, are you alright?" a soft voice asked.

Hermione lifted her head up to see Professor Elric's younger, but strangely larger, brother standing in front of her.

"Oh, I'm alright. You're Professor Elric's brother, Alphonse?"

He nodded "And you're in his class right?"

"Yes, I am." she nodded, sticking out her hand. "My name is Hermione Granger."

"Nice to meet you, Hermione." Alphonse said, shaking her hand.

Alphonse peered over to see what she was working on. "Is that an alchemy book? I didn't think brother had assigned anything yet, unless you solved the riddle."

"Oh, this?" Hermione gestured to the book. "It's just some research for the riddle."

"Oh? Do you think you're close to solving it?"

Hermione sighed as she shook her head. "No, I'm no where near close to solving it, and we only have two more days!"

Alphonse felt bad for Hermione, she looked really stressed and worried about the riddle. His brother was the same way; always going off to chase down every single lead in hope of getting their original bodies back. He always worked himself too much, and Alphonse saw how much he blamed himself and the guilt he carried every day for their mistake.

And the nightmare he had last night. It was the first one he had gotten since coming to Hogwarts. At least from what Al could tell. His brother was a master at trying to hide his weakness. He acknowledged the fact of his own mortality and part of the weakness that came with being human, that was a fact. But this, this was different. Edward didn't want anyone else to pay for what he thought was his own mistake.

Even though Alphonse knew that it was a joint decision between the brothers to attempt to bring their mother back. Ed insisted on carrying that burden alone. All Al wanted to do was help his older brother. Take away some of the guilt and the pain this whole mess had caused.

"Well, I can't give you the answer but maybe I can tell you where you are going wrong?"

If Ed was being stubborn, so be it. Alphonse knew pushing him would only drive him more away. But maybe helping out this girl would ease some of the turmoil he found within himself.

Hermione looked up at the younger Elric brother. "Is that allowed?"

"Hm...I'm not sure, but brother didn't say anything against it."

"You don't have to help me, Alphonse, I don't want to cause you and your brother to fight."

Al waved her off. "I'm not worried about Brother and I fighting. Even if we do, I'll win. I'm much better at hand to hand combat than he is!"

"Are you sure?"
"I'm sure, now tell me what you are thinking One is All and All is One means."

Hermione grabbed the open alchemy book and slid it over, closer to Alphonse.

"I'm not sure, I know that Professor Elric says it is very important in studying alchemy."

Al nodded. "It is, if you can't understand the meaning, then your progress as an alchemist will be limited."

Hermione groaned a bit at this. "And see the thing is, I've read this whole book, but I can't figure out how it even relates to alchemy!"

Alphonse knew she was wasting her time trying to read that book. Sure it would help her more once she understood the riddle and its' importance, but now? It couldn't help her.

"Hm...maybe I should tell you the story of when we figured out the riddle."

"Weren't you and your brother stranded on an island for a month?"

"Yeah, our teacher only gave us a knife and ordered us not to use alchemy."

"How did you two survive?" Hermione asked, thinking of how young the brothers must have been.

"We were starving for the longest time. Luckily the island was in the middle of a freshwater lake. So we drank the water to stay alive. It was hard, the hardest thing we had ever done at that point."

"Why did your teacher do that to you and your brother?"

Al shrugged. "That was the way she was taught. And we learned a lot of stuff on that island. After we got over the fact we had to make and do everything ourselves, including hunt, it became a lot easier to survive. Now, if someone dropped us in the middle of no where, Brother and I would be able to survive easily, even without alchemy."

"So how did you figure out the riddle?"

"Brother was actually the one to put it all together. The key is to not think too much about it. You'll over think it. The answer is usually much simpler than you think."

Hermione nodded and turned back to the book, shutting it. "Thank you, Mr. Elric."

Al put his hands up. "Please call me Alphonse, Mr. Elric sounds weird."

Hermione smiled at Alphonse. "Okay, thank you Alphonse."

"Good luck, Hermione. I'm sure you will get it!" Al said as he turned to leave. Hermione smiled as she put away her books and organized her papers. Maybe the situation wasn't hopeless after all.

---

Edward

Al walked into the classroom. "Brother! I got three books from the library."

"Ah!" Ed yelled as he gripped his hair.

"Something wrong?"

"This damn journal!" Ed roared as he shook the book in the air. "I was this close to cracking it and
then then everything fell apart on me!"

"What are you talking about Brother?" Al walked up to his brother and set the books on the desk.

"Look here," Ed pointed at one entry. "I had a theory on breaking the code but this passage just destroyed it!"

Al sighed as his older brother practically radiated anger. His frustrations were a bit warranted. These journals was undoubtedly the most difficult thing the brothers had faced thus far. Plus Ed was never good at sitting still for whatever reason. All of this work was fine and all, but if results weren't produced at the rate he wanted, Ed got fidgety and temperamental.

"We've been working on these journals for about five days brother, we weren't even able to crack Dr. Marcoh's code in that amount of time. I'm sure a great alchemist like Flamel has an extremely complex code that can't be broken within a week. Even if we worked round the clock."

Ed rubbed his temples and looked up at his brother. "You're right Al, I'm sure we will get it."

The two brothers sighed before looking at the stacks of journals and research books. "Eventually."

A small knock at the door caused both Elric brothers to look up and see the Weasley twins enter the room.

"Look, Fred! It's our favorite little professor!"

"WHO ARE YOU CALLING SHORT!" Ed roared, only being held back by his brother as he attempted to vault over the desk.

"Brother! Calm yourself! I'm sure they didn't mean it like that!"

The twins only smirked as the eldest Elric took deep breaths and sat down behind his desk, rubbing his temple. "Let's just get this over with."

Both Weasley twins clutched the space over their hearts.

"I'm hurt, Professor Edward!"

"You make it sound like you don't enjoy our time together!"

Ed only glared at the two red heads. "I don't, now just get on with whatever crazy theory you two have cooked up."

The two cleared their throats as Fred began.

"I believe that the riddle One is All and All is One represents alchemy itself!"

"How One is every principle alchemy has to offer, and therefore make up alchemy all together or in other words, All."

Ed stared at the twins and shook his head. "No, you two are completely wrong. Now leave."

Ed then picked up the journal and started rereading one entry.

"Whatcha got there Professor?" Fred asked.

Ed slammed the book shut and glared at the twins. "None of your business, now please go away."
"Brother, you need to be more polite sometimes," Al chided.

"Yeah, yeah, whatever Al."

"So is it some important alchemy research?" George asked, trying to get a closer look at the book Ed was holding.

"You two aren't going to leave unless I tell you," he sighed and the twins nodded.

"Okay, if you must know. It is alchemy research."

Fred quickly snatched the book off Ed's desk and flipped through it. "Looks like a normal journal to me."

Ed stood up and ripped the journal out of his hands and hit the two brothers over the head with it, causing them to cry out in pain.

"Of course it looks that way to you," Ed rolled his eyes. "Alchemy can be very dangerous if misused so alchemists usually hide and encrypt their notes in unassuming places. Some disguise their research as a cook book or a novel. Only the alchemist that wrote them can decipher the information within."

Fred and George exchanged a look before turning back to Edward.

"So what are you doing with those notes? Are they yours?"

"No, they are another alchemist's notes and we are trying to decode them." Al explained.

"Why?"

Ed groaned as he dragged his hand over his face. "Why do you think! We want to see if this research can help us or not."

"But-" the twins began before Ed cut them off.

"Nope! I answered your questions, now out!" he ordered.

The twins shrugged and then finally left the classroom.

"You were a bit harsh, Brother," Al commented.

"Tch, whatever," Ed crossed his arms. "Besides, if they asked why we want to use this research or for what, we couldn't tell them the truth."

"Hm, I guess you are right," Al mused.

Ed stood up and stretched a bit. "Al, let's have a spar. I think I need a break and maybe it will clear my mind enough that I can start looking at these notes clearly again."

"Won't Umbridge be mad at us again?"

Ed rolled his eyes. "And why should we care about that toad?"

"Brother, you shouldn't be so mean to people sometimes."

"What? She sure as hell isn't going to treat us nicely so why should I play nice?"

Al sighed as he stood up and Ed pumped his fist. "Yes!"
The brothers walked out of the classroom and through the halls and outside. There was a small breeze, causing Ed's red jacket to fluttered around his legs.

"Okay, just be cautious of that tree over there, Al," Ed pointed towards the Whomping Willow.

"Is that the tree that attacked you?"

"Yup, now come on," Ed waved his brother forward as they walked onto the grounds. A few students were out, enjoying the nice cool air and sunny day. Once the two got to a clear area both took a few steps away from each other.

"Okay, Al, ready?" Ed put up his fists.

Al raised his as well. "Ready."

"Then we go on three. One." Ed widened his stance.

"Two," Al clenched his fists tighter.

"Three!"

Ed charged at his brother, and Al sunk lower into his stance. Ed bent down when he approached Al, then punching upward. Al countered with his own jab which Ed quickly dodged. Ed continued attacking, punching and jabbing while Al dodged each attack and always countered with one of his own.

Ed threw another punch, and Al grabbed his brother's arm, throwing him to the side. Ed, in midair, changed his trajectory by extending his arms and doing a back handspring a few times, landing a couple feet away from his younger brother. As soon as his feet were firmly on the ground, Ed charged again, jumping into the air and extending his left leg. Al moved quickly to avoid the kick, leaping to the side. Ed, seeing he had missed his intended target, tucked his legs in and tumbled on the ground. Al then charged and slammed his fist down where Ed was kneeling. Ed rolled to the side and turned around to try and side sweep Al. Al saw his brother's tactic and leaped backwards to avoid him.

Edward stood up once more and charged while Alphonse did the same. Ed threw punch after punch and kick after kick, but Al blocked each one. Alphonse then went on the offensive and began striking his brother. Ed was able to block Al's attack with his automail arm. He was careful to make sure to only use his right arm. If he tried using his flesh one, it would have big bruises the next day and maybe a broken bone.

Edward then pulled his right arm backwards and swung with all his might. He was able to make contact with Al's chest and force him back, causing Al to dig into the ground.

Ed smirked a bit as he charged again. Al raised his fists to clock Ed's onslaught of attacks. Ed raised his right leg to kick Al in the side, but Al grabbed it before it made contact. Throwing Ed to the side, he soared above the ground.

"Damn it!" he yelled. Extending his arms and legs, Ed used the momentum to go into a series of cartwheels away from his younger brother. Skidding across the ground Ed looked up to see Alphonse charging towards him. Crossing his arms, Ed was able to block Al's first attack, but was caught unaware of Al's sweeping leg. His feet were knocked out from under him and he landed on the ground, hard. All the air was knocked out of his lungs and he gasped.

Staring up at the sky, Ed's lungs burned as they filled back up with oxygen.
"I win again, Brother." Al extended his arm and Ed gratefully took it. Once he was standing up, Ed saw the bottom half of his red coat was covered in dirt and torn. He sighed and shrugged the garment off.

"Man, I'll have to buy some more red fabric soon, if we keep this up," Ed clapped and touched the coat. The blue alchemical light flashed and the coat extended itself, now back to its' original state.

"In all fairness though, your coats never last long."

"Well I hoped it would have a longer run here," Ed said as he put his coat back on. The two brothers then started to walk back into the castle.

"You lasted longer this time," Al commented. "Like, a few more seconds."

"Hey! I got in a few punches too!"

"Lucky ones," Al muttered.

Ed rolled his eyes and he punched his brother's arm. "You're just saying that 'cause you know I'm gonna beat you soon."

"You've only won once Brother, and even then, that was an accident."

"Hey! It's still a win!" Ed yelled, pointing at Al.

As soon as they walked back into the castle, Umbridge was waiting for them, along with Dumbledore.

"There they are, and fighting again!"


Ed groaned as he saw Umbridge glaring at the two of them.

"Headmaster, this cannot continue," she stated. "This-fighting, is not setting the right example for the students. Soon there will be rough housing and fights daily!"

"Yeah, I doubt that," Ed muttered under his breath.

"I understand your concerns, Dolorous. But I see no problem in letting two skilled martial artists keep up their physical health."

"There are plenty other ways to maintain physical fitness!"

Ed crossed his arms. "Yeah, but this is the best way to make sure our skills don't go to hell."

Umbridge raised an eyebrow. "Why do you need to 'keep up' such barbaric behavior?"

"Encase you don't remember. I'm in the military. I go out into the field often, and even though many people in Amestris praise me as the 'Hero of the People', I still have enemies," Ed then pointed towards himself.

"So if I'm not practiced enough or in good enough shape, I'm dead. It's that simple."

Al nodded solemnly. He never liked the fact his brother was put in these dangerous situations because of the military, because of him. That's why, he always tried to be with his brother. His
armored body could take a hit, it could be shot, and still survive. As long as the blood seal was
undamaged, Al could still fight. The same could not be said for his older brother. One well aimed
shot and it was all over.

Umbridge stuttered at this, taken aback by Ed's bluntness. Ed ignored her and turned to Dumbledore.

"Can we go?"

"Yes, you may," Dumbledore said with a kind smile.

Ed continued on into the castle, ignoring Umbridge's protests while Al thanked Dumbledore and
then raced to catch up with his brother.
Edward

Ed groaned as soon as his eyes opened that morning.

"Good morning Brother," Al said as he saw Edward start to sit up. "Today is the day Colone-"

Ed put up his hand and stopped his brother.

"Don't remind me," he moaned as he stretched out his stumps.

"I don't see why you are dreading it so much," Al commented as he waited for his brother to come out of the shower. The room had a small bathroom with a shower included. Ed was happy about this, since he didn't need to worry about anyone seeing his automail before or after he washed up.

Laying on the bed, Ed dried his arm while Alphonse helped by drying his leg. "I'm dreading it because I know he is going to completely tease me about teaching and I know he is going to be so smug about it too!"

"I don't think it will be that bad."

Ed gave his brother a look and Al sighed. "Okay, it might be."

"Dumbledore told me the other day that Mustang will be here later tonight, and he is going to apparate them here. I can only hope Colonel Bastard loses his lunch when he gets here."

Al only sighed at his older brother's antics. Edward, now properly dried off, braided his hair and then began getting dressed for the day.

"I'm going to go to the library and return some of the books we aren't using anymore and grab a few more for researching the journals, and see if I can make some progress there," Al said as they reached the third floor, where the library was.

"Okay, Take your time though, I'll be with my students most of the morning. So try and get as much work done as possible, I won't be able to do much the next few days with the Colonel Bastard coming."

The brothers bumped fists and then parted ways. Ed continued to walk down to the Great Hall, while Al started walking towards the library. Sitting down next to Hagrid and Madame Pomfrey, Ed began filling up his plate.

"Hello, Ed! Good mornin'," Hagrid greeted cheerfully.

"Hey, Hagrid," Ed replied halfheartedly.

Hagrid frowned a bit at this. "Ev'rythin' alright, Ed?"

Ed sighed as he ran his hand through his bangs. "My superior officer is coming later today."

"Oh, I see," he nodded.

"Why is your superior officer coming to Hogwarts, Edward?" Madame Pomfrey asked.
Ed sighed as he pushed his plate back a bit, his appetite lost. "He is coming to do my assessment."

"Assessment? Fer the military?" Hagrid asked.

Ed nodded. "I'm a State Alchemist. Therefore, I am employed by the Amestrian military to do research and go out into the field from time to time. I'm also given a considerable amount of money and resources to further my research. So, to make sure their money is being put towards good use, the government requires that all State Alchemists must have a yearly review. We submit a report of our findings for that year, and if you go out into the field, must perform a physical reexamination."

"Oh, so your superior officer is coming to collect your findings and perform this physical assessment?"

Ed crossed his arms. "Yeah, pretty much,"

"Don' worry 'bout tha'. I'm sure everythin' will be fine and yeh'll pass with flyin' colors!" Hagrid said, patting Ed on the back rather vigorously.

The sudden shock of Hagrid's hand caused Ed to cough a bit and gulp down his drink. Once he was able to speak, Ed replied, "I'm not worried about passing. I know that even if I submitted a napkin with a transmutation circle scribbled on it. They won't kick me out."

"Why would that be?"

Ed smirked at this. "Cause the military gains a lot by having me around. Lately, the people of Amestris haven't been looking so favorably on the military and our government. I've helped that image by becoming the 'Hero of the People'. I would probably be chewed out for trying to pull something like that though, so I'll be good and submit my report like everyone else."

"So why are you still dreading his coming if you aren't worried about passing?" she asked.

"Well, it's the fact it is my superior officer," he explained. "We don't exactly sit down and braid each others hair and talk about girls."

Hagrid laughed heartily at his. "Is he tha' bad?"

"We butt heads a lot and I'm not looking forward to him riding me about teaching here."

"So when is yer officer comin'?"

"Dumbledore said that he'll apparate and bring him later tonight."

Madame Pomfrey gave a sympathetic smile before standing up. "Well, if your superior officer is sick after traveling, please send him to the infirmary. But other than that, I wish you luck Edward."

"I better go too, I have to see every single one of my classes today. Their time to solve the riddle is up." Ed said, pushing his chair back.

"Tha's today? How d'yeh think they'll do?"

"Most won't pass, that's for sure. I've already gotten two fifth years and one seventh year who have answered correctly."

"Who?"
"Um, Luna Lovegood and Neville Longbottom are the fifth years and Nicola Dodworth is the seventh year."

"Neville and Luna? I woulda though' Hermione would'a answered on the first day."

"Well, maybe she will get it today. I mean me and my brother only got it the day before our Teacher came to collect us off the deserted island." Ed stood up and gave a short wave to Hagrid.

"I have to go. I told the fifth years to wait outside my class after breakfast."

"Good luck today, Ed!" Hagrid replied and Ed walked out of the hall.

Hands in his pockets, Ed walked through the halls of Hogwarts, taking in the massive architecture and all the moving paintings that adorned the walls. Edward walked into his class to see most of the students conversing amongst themselves, as they waited outside. Once they saw him walking up the classroom they became quite. Standing in front of the door, Ed crossed his arms and stared out at the group of nervous looking students.

"Okay, you guys are my fifth years. As I told you yesterday, everyone will line up and come in one at a time. I will restate the riddle, and you will give me your answer. You get it right, you are allowed into the next part of the class. A wrong answer means you don't do anything for the rest of the year and have to do meaningless busy-work."

Ed opened the door and gestured for the first student to come in and shut the door behind him. Walking up to his desk, Ed sat down and pulled out the sheet of paper with the two fifth year student's names written on it.

"Name?" Ed asked.

"Finnigan, Seamus Finnigan."

"Sit down Seamus," Ed gestured to the seat in front of him, and the red and gold clad student sat down.

"Now," Ed looked up at him. "What does One is All, and All is One mean?"

Seamus gulped a bit. "Does it mean that everything is connected?"

Ed raised an eyebrow. "Elaborate."

Seamus looked excited and more nervous now. "Well, I figured when you were talking about understanding and making sure you know what you're doing when you transmутe, it must be connected to the riddle somehow. So I was thinking and I thought how is One is All, and All is One, then they are connected and you can really apply it to everything. From how the base you transmute is still the product."

Ed nodded and wrote Seamus's name under Neville's.

"You're right, now please study the periodic table on page ten on your textbook. Send the next one in and don't tell anyone anything when you leave, understood?"

Seamus nodded vigorously and stood up leaving the classroom, beaming. Ed sighed and watched as the next student walked in.

The day dragged on as students came and went. Mostly going like this...
"Wrong."

"Incorrect."

"No, you can't guess again. If you wanted more tries you should have come up to me earlier."

"Not even close."

"Wrong."

"Totally incorrect."

After an angry Ravenclaw girl stormed out of Ed's room, Draco Malfoy came in.

Sitting down with a smug look on his face, Ed sighed as he repeated the process.

"Name?"

"Draco Malfoy."

"And what do you think, One is All and All is One means?" Ed asked, leaning back in his chair and twirling his pen in his hands.

Draco pulled out a small bag and began taking out gold coins. "I think this is a good enough answer."

Ed gave a sickly sweet smile before clapping his hands together and touching the pile of gold with his finger. The gold sparked and flashed before turning into a pile of lead.

"Wrong, now please leave."

Malfoy stuttered a bit, looking on at his now useless pile of gold.

"Wha-what did you do!" he yelled.

"A simple transmutation. Turning your dirty gold into a nice pile of lead," Ed grinned as he laced his fingers together and watched Malfoy turn a nice shade of red.

"Bu-but you said we couldn't transmute gold!"

"Yeah, but since you tried to bribe me, I decided to break a rule myself. Now, please leave and send the next student in."

Malfoy was fuming as she stood up. "My father will hear about this!"

"Oh, I'm sooo scared," Ed clasped his hands together in a mock fashion before shooing Malfoy away. He stormed out of Ed's classroom, steam practically coming out of his ears.

Ed sat back in his chair as he waited for the next student to come in.

Closing the door behind her, Hermione walked into the room and sat down.

"Okay, Hermione, what do you think the riddle, One is All and All is One means?"

Hermione chewed her lip for a few moments before bowing her head. "I'm not sure, Professor. And I-I need to tell you something!"
Ed was startled at this but remained quiet and gestured for her to continue.

"Your brother and I talked the other day, and I think that it could be counted as cheating and I'm sorry Professor, but -"

Ed started laughing at that moment, harder than he had ever laughed before. Hermione stared at her alchemy professor, wondering if he had gone mad.

Wiping the tears from his eyes Ed spoke up, "Hermione, you didn't cheat. I know Al didn't give you the answer outright, he knows how important it is to studying alchemy. He probably told you the story of our experience on the island and some helpful words of advice, right?"

She nodded. "Yes, sir."

"Well, then you didn't cheat. Al would have said the same to any student he came across and if they asked him for help."

"But sir-"

Ed cut her off again. "Look, Hermione. I know you're smart. I've seen you rereading that alchemy book over and over again. You will probably do great in my class, but you overthink things too much sometimes."

Hermione took a deep breath in. "He said the same thing..."

"See, just clear your mind for a few moments and think."

Ed leaned back in his chair as Hermione closed her eyes and took deep breaths. After a few moments she opened her eyes and stared at Edward.

"Now, think, what did that book mention time and time again?"

"Um...equivalent exchange, the law that governs all of alchemy."

"Good, now think about One is All and All is One."

Hermione thought for a few moments "The law states how in order to create something, something of equal value must be given up or destroyed... so if one wants to do anything they need to pay a price...so they are connected and...like there is a certain flow to alchemy..."

Hermione gasped for a moment. "It's equivalent exchange! I mean it's how everything's connected and there is a flow of energy and matter!"

Edward smiled and wrote Hermione's name under a Ravenclaw girl named Padma Patil. The list was slowly growing with now five names written down.

"Correct. Now, study page ten in our book. And please send in the next person."

Hermione was beaming at this. "Thank you Professor! Thank you!"

She got up and walked out of the classroom, with Ron entering next.

"Please sit," Ed gestured to the chair.

"Looks like Hermione finally got it." Ron muttered.
"She did, and now it's your turn. What does One is All and All is One mean?"

Ron took a deep breath in and spoke, "One is one thing and all is everything else."

"Correct, now please study the periodic table on page ten of your book. Send in the next person and don't tell anyone anything."

"Wait! I'm right!"

"Yes, why is that such a surprise to you?" Ed asked.

"I just guess, sir!" Ron exclaimed.

"And how did you come to think up that as your answer?"

"Well I had written it on a sheet of parchment and I was doodling on it, not really thinking when it hit me that the riddle was probably the answer itself. I mean if One is All then All has to be One, and...well that's how I came up with it."

Ed nodded. "Luna Lovegood said something similar, now please study page ten and send in the next student."

Ron nodded and left the classroom, with Harry coming in after him. He walked in and sat down in the chair.

"So, Harry, what do you think the riddle One is All and All is One means?"

Harry took in a deep breath before speaking, "I think that it means how everything is connected, sir."

"Elaborate," Ed instructed.

"Well if what you were saying about understanding is true, then there is a flow of energy and matter that can't be broken in alchemy. So I think that it means how one thing is connected to everything else in the world...sir."

"Absolutely correct, Harry. Please study the periodic table on page ten. Send the next person in and don't tell anyone."

Harry smiled at Edward and stood up, thanking him and leaving the classroom.

A few more students came and went. All in all, there were fifteen out of the sixty fifth year students, who actually passed the test.

Ed looked over his list and reorganized it by houses.


Slytherins: Blaise Zabini, Milicent Bullstrode

Ravenclaws: Luna Lovegood, Padma Patil, Terry Boot, Anthony Goldstein

Hufflepuff: Hannah Abbott, Justin Flinch- Fletchley, Zacharias Smith

Smiling, he put the paper aside and stood up, stretching his muscles and ports. They were aching, more than usual. It probably meant rain was coming, either today or tomorrow. The thought of a
useless Colonel did put a smile on his face though.

Walking out of his classroom, Ed saw that in fact did not have enough time to see his brother before all the sixth years showed up. Because most of them were already lining up, eager to try and pass the test.

Today was going to be a long, long, day.

Alphonse

Walking around the library, Alphonse grabbed a few alchemy books and replaced the ones he and his brother would no longer use.

"Alphonse?"

Turning around, Al saw Hermione, Harry, and Ron standing behind him.

"Oh, hello," he replied with a small wave.

"Um, this is Harry Potter and Ron Weasley, Alphonse," Hermione introduced.

"Nice to meet you, did you guys already answer Brother's riddle?"

They all nodded.

"We all got it right!" Hermione exclaimed.

"That's great!" Al congratulated.

"I just wanted to say thank you for the other day, without it I don't know if I would have figured out what the riddle meant at all," Hermione said.

"I'm glad I could help you," Al replied. "And if you guys ever need help, I'm sure Brother won't mind if you ask me."

Harry nodded. "We will, thank you Alphonse."

"Alphonse? Why were you and your brother fighting the other day?" Ron asked in which Hermione smacked his shoulder.

"Ron! It was probably something personal they fought about!"

Alphonse put up his hands. "No, we didn't fight. I mean we did, but it wasn't like we were angry at each other."

"Then why were you fighting?" Harry asked.

"We were taught that you need to train the body before you train the mind. And since Brother sometimes goes on dangerous missions, we need to make sure we practice sparring."

"So you guys were practicing?" Ron asked.

Alphonse nodded. "Yeah, me and Brother spar all the time. Though I usually win."

"Well, I just wanted to thank you for the other day," Hermione said.
"It was no trouble at all," Al said.

"We better get going, Potions is soon and Snape will be mad if we are all late again." Ron said.

"If you are late Ron," Hermione corrected.

"Thank you again, Alphonse," Harry said and the trio walked out of the library.

"They seem nice," Al said to himself, before turning back to the selves to grab a few more books. once he was done, he decided to go to Brother's classroom and check up on him.

With a few books in his hands, we walked up the stairs and down the hall to Edward's classroom.

As he walked up he saw a very angry student wearing green and silver robes storm out of his room.

Opening the door, Al saw his brother, laying his head down in the desk.

"I told you! I won't let you into the next stage of my class you ingrate!" he roared, looking up.

"Everything alright Brother?" Al asked, tentatively.

"Oh, Al...sorry. I thought you were someone else," he confessed.

"I would hope so," Al joked as he walked up to his brother. "I take it some students aren't happy about not solving the riddle."

"Not happy is an understatement Al, but I can handle whatever these damn wizards throw at us. I mean, we survived Teacher, we can survive anything," Ed then leaned back in his chair and put his arms behind his head.

"How many have passed?"

"Fifteen out of the fifth years, and thirteen for the sixth years. I am almost done with the seventh years, and fourteen have already answered correctly."

"Who is left?" Al asked.

Right then the door burst open and the Weasley twins strode into the classroom.

"Sorry we're late Professor Ed!" Fred said as the two walked up to the desk.

"We had some..business to take care of," George added.

"Oh Truth," Ed groaned, laying his head back on the desk.

"Aw, are you going to miss our special moments outside of class?"

"I think he will George!"

Ed lifted his head back up. "That's right! If you two idiots can't get the riddle you can't bug me anymore! This is great!"

Ed was pumping his fists in the air and grinning like a mad man.

"Brother?"

Ed snapped out of it and turned back to the twins. "Okay! Since you two have answered the damn
riddle together every time, I'll let you go now.

The Weasleys cleared their throats and began with Fred speaking first. "So, One is All."

"And All is One."

"This is important in Alchemy, wouldn't you say George?"

"I would Fred, I would. Dare I say it is the basis of all alchemy!"

"Quite right George," Fred nodded and both turned back to Edward and Alphonse.

"One is All, and All is One," George began again.

"It means that we are one."

"And all is the universe."

"Everything is connected."

"In the natural flow of the universe!" George finished.

Ed stared at the twins, his jaw fell open.

"You got it...you two imbeciles actually got it on the last day...I thought I was free..." Ed muttered to himself.

"The last day? I would have thought Professor Ed had more faith in us?" George said to Fred.

Ed's eyes narrowed. "Wait...are you saying that-"

"We figured out that was the answer about a week and a half ago," Fred finished.

Ed stood up, slamming his hands on his desk. "Then why the hell did you keep bothering me!"

Both twins grinned mischievously before saying together, "It was fun."

Ed's eye twitched as he curled his hands into tight fists.

"Um...you may want to run...now," Al suggested after seeing the pure rage radiate off his brother.

"I think Mr. Armor is right, Fred" George said backing up a bit.

"See you in class Professor Ed!" Fred called over his shoulder as the two booked it out of the classroom.

Ed roared in anger and lunged over the desk, only held back by Al's strong arms.

"Brother! You can't kill them! They are students!"

"I'm not going to kill them! I'm just going to punch them a lot!"

"Brother, calm down!"

"Let me go Al!"

"Not until you stop fighting me and calm down!"
"No! They deserve to be punished!"

"Brother!"

Edward

Ed was walking towards the Great Hall with Al right beside him.

"Oh, don't stop acting sorry on my part, Al." he muttered sarcastically.

"You were acting possessed, Brother. I did what I had to do," Al replied.

"Did you really have to hit me over the head though?" Ed rubbed the still sore part of his head where Al had whacked him.

"You wouldn't stop yelling or struggling!"

"Well if you had let me go then it would have been fine."

"You would have attacked them!"

"They deserved it!" Ed roared.

"Brother," Al said sternly, looking down at his older brother.

"Okay, okay. I'm done," Ed said waving him off.

They both stood in front of the Great Hall. Ed moved to push the doors open but Al stopped him.

"Are you sure I should go in?"

"They said it was no problem. And you can tell them you ate earlier today if someone gets concerned. Besides, you said you wanted to see it."

Al nodded and Ed pushed open the door. Al was staring up in wonder while Ed and him walked to the front table.

Hagrid smiled brightly at the brothers and waved at them. Ed heard the whispers and felt the stares from all the students. Luckily, Al was too busy being amazed to take notice.

Sitting down in his usual seat, Madame Pomfrey waved her wand and a seat appeared by Ed for Al to sit in. The brothers thanked her and sat down.

"You must be Edward's younger brother," she said.

Al nodded. "Hello Madame Pomfrey, I'm Alphonse Elric, it is nice to meet you."

"It is nice to meet you as well," she said, smiling at the younger Elric.

Al nodded and looked back up at the ceiling, which showed the crystal clear sky full of stars.

"How do they get the ceiling like that?" Al asked.

"Some weird magic crap, at least that's what the old man said when I asked him a while back," Ed said before looking up a bit. "But it is amazing."
"I am surprised you didn't come here earlier Alphonse, why is that?"

"I'm going through some alchemy training. That's why I wear this armor and I don't eat a lot," Al explained.

"Oh, I believe Edward mentioned that, but I suppose I was still curious."

"So, Ed, isn' yer officer comin' later tonight?"

Ed turned to look at Hagrid and nodded. "Dumbledore said after dinner he was going to go and get him."

"Wha's he like?"

Ed groaned. "A bit egotistical and a pompous bastard at times. He always seems to know what we're doing and what we know."

"We do owe a lot to him Brother."

"Yeah, yeah, I know Al. That doesn't make it any better though."

Ed didn't eat at all during dinner. Part of him just lost his appetite after talking about the Colonel, the other didn't want to eat in front of Al.

"Ye alright, Ed?"

Ed sighed once more as he took a sip out of his cup.

"Brother had a long day," Al explained.

"Maybe ye two should c'mon down and 'ave a cuppa tea with me?"

Ed looked at his pocket watch, seeing the time. Shutting it he grinned at Hagrid.

"That sounds wonderful Hagird, thank you."

Hagrid smiled warmly at the two Elric brothers, and once all the students had left the Hall, they started walking down towards Hagrid's hut.

"I hope we aren't troubling you too much," Al said as Hagrid opened the door to the small hut.

"It's nothin', yeh two can c'mon down anytime!"

"Thank you for this Hagrid," Ed said as the two brothers sat down.

Hagrid started boiling a pot of tea, sitting across from the brothers.

"So, how was yer test today, Ed?"

"Good...I had fifteen pass in my fifth year, thirteen for sixth, and sixteen for seventh."

"Hm... and how d'yeh feel about yer classes?"

"Alright...we will start actually working towards transmutations now."

"I don' know much abou' alchemy, never really seen it."
"I can show you if you'd like?" Ed suggested.

The kettle began to boil and the screech filled the hut. Hagrid quickly got up and made a cup for Edward, then looking at Alphonse who politely declined.

"Alchemy, eh? What d'yeh do?"

"It's really simple, do you have anything that is broken or needs to be fixed?" Ed asked.

"Gotta ax, I broke the other day," Hagrid said pointing towards the ax in the corner. Ed stood up and retrieved it. It had snapped at the neck, the blade being severed from the rest of the handle. Ed cracked his knuckles as Hagrid watched curiously.

Clapping his hands together, Ed placed them on the broken ax. Blue alchemical light flashed and sparked around the tool and a moment later, it disappeared.

Picking it up by the handle, Ed inspected his work.

The ax was as good as new, the blade was reattached to the handle and looked newly sharpened as well.

"Hm.. had to extend some of the wood to compensate for the little that wasn't there, but I was able to fuse the metal of the blade with the wood more, so it shouldn't break as easily next time."

Ed handed the ax back to Hagrid who stared at him in wonder.

"Blimey Ed! Ye didn' even use a wand!"

Ed rolled his eyes. "It's alchemy, Hagrid, no hocus-pocus here."

"How'd yeh do it?"

"Simple transmutation," Ed explained, sitting back down. "I simply deconstructed some of the wood and metal, and reconstructed them in a way that the break would be gone and the blade strengthened."

"That's amazin' Ed!"

"Thank you, Hagrid, if you need anything fixed like that ask me or Al, he can transmute by clapping as well."

"There other ways of transmutin'?" Hagrid asked.

"The key for all transmutations is a circle, the array for which an transmutation can take place in. Most draw with chalk, but you can use really anything."

"How come ye didn't use a circle?"

Ed looked down a bit, he knew why he and Al could transmute by clapping. A byproduct of seeing the truth, of going through the portal after attempting Human Transmutation.

"It's a, um, special skill that we were able to figure out," Al quickly said.

"Yeah, not many...actually there is only one other person we know that can do what we do."

"Who?" Hagrid asked.
"Our master, she didn't need an array either," Edward said.

"What is she like?" Hagrid asked curiously, then taking a sip of his tea.

"Teacher was a great woman, we found her when she was travelling through Resembool one summer. After begging her to take us on as apprentices, she accepted," Ed began.

"Then we were left on an island for a month and told to solve the same riddle Ed assigned his students. Once we survived that, she started training us," Al continued.

Ed smirked. "She worked us to the bone sometimes. Training us physically, mentally, and teaching us alchemy."

"Sounds like an amazin' lady."

Ed and Al nodded in agreement. Edward then pulled out his pocket watch and checked the time.

"It's about time for the Colonel to show up," Ed said, shutting the silver watch.

"That's a lovely watch ye got there, Ed" Hagrid commented.

"It's for State Alchemist identification. Every State Alchemist receives one after completing the exam."

Ed then stood up and was followed by his brother. "Thank you for the tea Hagrid,"

"Glad to have ye, Ed! And Alphonse as well."

Ed and Al waved goodbye as they walked out of the hut and back onto the grounds. They brothers started walking up the hill. The clear nice air made Ed's coat whip around his legs.

"It is really pretty tonight," Al commented, staring up at the full moon.

"Yeah, but my ports were aching earlier today. it means rain is coming. And if we are lucky, during Colonel's stay." Ed ginned maliciously.

Al only sighed at his older brother.

"He's already late." Ed muttered, grabbing his pocket watch and looking at the time.

"You don't think something bad has happened...do you?"

"Come on Al, even if it's raining in Central and the Colonel is useless, the Lieutenant won't let that bastard die anytime soon."

The two walked up towards the castle and before they could open the doors Ed heard someone call his name.

"Ah, Edward. There you are," Dumbledore said. Turning around, the two brothers saw Dumbledore standing alongside Colonel Mustang and Lieutenant Hawkeye.

"Fullmetal, you're late," Mustang commented.

Ed's eyebrow twitched and pointed at the Flame Alchemist. "You're the late one!"

"I was here at the agreed upon time, where you showed up three minutes late."
Ed's hands clenched tightly as he ground his teeth together. "Three minutes! That's rich coming from the lazy Colonel who won't do his paperwork until the last minute!"

"Colonel, you promised not to fight with Edward too much," Hawkeye said.

"I see you brought the Lieutenant with you as well," Ed crossed his arms and glared at Colonel Mustang who only had a calm expression.

Mustang sighed, "That's not all."

"Wait...are you saying there is someone else? Who-of wait no!"

The massive figure had already appeared behind Edward and Alphonse.

"Edward Elric!" a booming voice yelled.

Edward didn't need to turn around to see who it was. He only started to run, but it was too late. Large muscular arms wrapped around him, trapping him.

"Major! Let me go!" Ed yelled as he kicked and thrashed. "Al! Help!"

"Sorry Brother! I don't want to be hugged either!" Al said, quickly escaping to hide behind Lieutenant Hawkeye.

"Oh Edward Elric! I have missed you so!" Major Armstrong said, tears running down his face.

Edward was soon released and air was allowed back into his lungs. Putting his hands on his knees, Ed looked up at the Major.

"And put a shirt on!" he roared.

Armstrong then flexed his muscles, and they practically sparkled in the moonlight. "I simply wanted to show you the muscles that have been cultivated through techniques that have been passed down the Armstrong family for generations!"

"Put on a damn shirt Major!" Ed then glared at the Colonel.

Mustang rubbed his temples. "He practically begged to join us, using the 'art of persuading that has been passed down the Armstrong family for generations'."

"And it worked!" the Major exclaimed, posing again.

"Colonel! Order him to put on a shirt!" Ed yelled, gripping the sides of his head.

"If I could, don't you think I would have?"

"Damn it Colonel!"

Hawkeye then cleared her throat and everyone got quiet.

"Major Armstrong, please put back on your shirt. I'm sure Edward and Alphonse have been thoroughly reminded about your muscles."

The Major nodded and re-donned his uniform. Ed and Al let out a sigh of relief.

Dumbledore, who had watched the affair with mild curiosity finally spoke up. "Well that was
exciting, I'm sure you three wish to retire for the night. We've made arrangements for two separate rooms for you."

The Colonel nodded and Ed rolled his eyes.

"Edward, their rooms are relatively near yours and Alphonse," Dumbledore added.

"Great..." Ed groaned.

"It is nice to see you again, Lieutenant," Alphonse said.

Riza smiled at the younger Elric. "Thank you Alphonse, it's nice to see you two again."

The group walked through the castle and the Colonel, Major, and Lieutenant were all awe-inspired by the sheer size and magic of Hogwarts.

"Are the paintings really moving?" Riza asked as they walked up the stairs.

"The stairs move too," Ed added.

"The paintings can be either really nice or mean, though. Elizabeth is one of the nice ones." Alphonse said.

Mustang raised an eyebrow. "Elizabeth?"

"Edward! Alphonse!" Elizabeth called from down the hall. The group reached Edward's and Alphonse's room, and Elizabeth stood in front of her panting smiling brightly.

"Our resident piano player and the entrance to our room; Elizabeth," Ed said gesturing to her.

Elizabeth curtsied. "Hello."

"Elizabeth, this is Colonel Roy Mustang, Major Alex Louis Armstrong, and Lieutenant Riza Hawkeye. They are here on military business and will be staying in the castle the next few days."

"It is a pleasure to meet you," she replied."Edward and Alphonse have been very kind to me and any friend of theirs is a friend of mine!"

"And you live behind her?" Riza asked.

"Yeah, Elizabeth, please show our guests," Edward said, turning back to the painting.

Elizabeth nodded and the painting swung open to reveal the entrance to their room.

"Just say the password and you can enter," Alphonse added.

The painting then swung back and shut the entrance behind it.

"If you follow me, I can show you to your rooms. We have prepared two for you," Dumbledore said, and Roy nodded.

"I'll expect your report handed to me first thing tomorrow, then after breakfast we will commence with the physical assessment."

Ed sighed and stretched his arms behind his head.

"Yeah, yeah. I know."
The Colonel sighed and Dumbledore lead them to their rooms which was down another hallway.

"Elizabeth, three-ten, and please don't let the Colonel or the Major into our room, no matter what."

Elizabeth nodded and opened the entrance to the room.

"Was that really necessary Brother?"

Ed collapsed on his bed and kicked off his shoes.

"I don't want the damn Colonel bursting in here, or the Major for that matter."

"And the Lieutenant?"

"You think I have a death wish?" Ed sat up. "She would kick down the door and drag our sorry butts out!"

"Yeah...Miss Hawkeye can be about as scary as Teacher when she wants to be..."

Slipping out of his regular clothes, Ed put on his white tank top and boxers, slipping under the covers of his bed.

"Are you going to be alright, Brother?"

"I'll be fine, Al." Ed laid his head down on the soft pillow and stared at his younger brother.

"You sure you don't want me to stay up with you?"

"I'll be fine, I'm going to work on the journals and add some of the food I saw at dinner to my journal!"

"Okay, night Alphonse."

"Goodnight, Brother."

And with that Ed shut his eyes and succumbed to the dark nothingness of sleep.
Rolling over in bed, Ed yawned as he slowly woke up.

"Good morning, Brother."

"Morning, Al," Ed said, sitting up and stretching. The ache in his ports was undeniable, grabbing his shoulder, Ed massaged the stump.

"It's raining...isn't it?"

"It started about an hour ago and I don't think it will let up."

Ed groaned as the pain flared in his shoulder and leg. "At least I can laugh at how useless the Colonel is in this weather."

"But what about your assessment?"

Ed shrugged as he stood up, moving to get dressed.

"I don't know...maybe the rain will stop and we can do it..."

Pulling on his white gloves, Ed looked out the window and saw the heavy rain pouring outside. Sighing, Ed grabbed one of the journals, Al was working on and the two walked out of the room.

"Good morning Edward and Alphonse!" Elizabeth greeted.

"Morning," Ed replied, waving towards the smiling blonde.

"The Colonel and Lieutenant came by, wondering where you were. I said that you hadn't left yet and were still sleeping," A look of disgust then crossed her face. "Then that Major took of his shirt and kept posing."

Ed rolled his eyes and grabbed the bridge of his nose.

"Truth almighty...," he muttered before looking back up. "Sorry about that Elizabeth."

She smiled brightly. "It's fine, they are only here for a bit. I'm sure I can manage."

"Okay, see you later," Ed and Al waved goodbye and made their way down to the Great Hall.

"Are you coming to breakfast too?" Ed asked Al.

"I'll stay in your classroom and work on those journals. I think we may be close to breaking the code."

"Okay then, good luck and come find me if you do."

The brothers bumped fists and Al left to head to Edward's room while Ed continued down the stairs. Pushing open the giant doors, Ed stepped into the Great Hall. Looking up towards the faculty table, Ed say Mustang, Armstrong and Hawkeye all sitting up there.

Groaning slightly, Edward made his way up to the table and sat in his usual seat.
Madame Pomfrey and Hagrid smiled at him as he slid into his seat.

"Mornin' Ed!"

"Good morning Edward,"

Ed nodded and reached for his glass the pain flaring in his right arm again.

Leaning over, Madame Pomfrey whispered into Ed's ear, "I slipped a tonic into your glass, it should help ease your pain over the bad weather."

Ed nodded and drank from the cup, the pain starting to fade away.

"I see you decided to sleep in this morning, Fullmetal," Mustang commented. He, Hawkeye and Armstrong were all beside Madame Pomfrey.

"I didn't decide to sleep in!" Ed snapped back.

"It is quite alright, Edward!" Armstrong said. "A rested body is a healthy body!"

Groaning Edward tried to turn his attention back to his food, but it would seem Mustang had other ideas.

"Fullmetal, want to have a word with you after breakfast."

Ed sighed and nodded, "Whatever, Colonel."

"Colonel Mustang has been telling us about some of your exploits in Amestris, Edward," Madame Pomfrey said.

"Hm? The great Flame Alchemist talks about little ol' me? Why gosh! I'm so flattered!" Edward mocked, glaring at Mustang.

"Don't get a big head, Fullmetal, I only warned them of how much damage and trouble you seem to create."

Edward narrowed his eyes at Mustang, who still looked impartial to the whole affair.

"If I recall, I always try and go back to fix the damage done during any of my fights. Where were you Colonel?"

"I was trying to do all the paperwork that you created because you and some insane person decided to tear up three city blocks."

"I didn't decide to do anything! These psychos you send me after attack me!"

"Colonel! Edward!" Hawkeye warned in a stern tone. Both alchemists quickly got quite, both knew better than to test 'The Hawk's Eye'.

Turning back to his food, Edward picked and barely touched anything.

"Ye alright, Ed?"

"I'm fine, Hagrid. Just not hungry this morning, that's all."

"Alright then," Hagrid said.
Breakfast soon ended and the students began leaving to go to class. Standing up, many of the teachers and staff left as well. Hagrid said goodbye to Edward and wished him luck. Madame Pomfrey told him that if anything continued to bother him to come to her. Edward thanked her for the tonic and she left the hall.

Mustang, Hawkeye, and Armstrong all stood with Dumbledore as Edward walked towards them.

"I am sorry to say, that we cannot perform the assessment today," Mustang said. "We will have to stay an additional day, I am sorry Albus."

"It is quite alright, Colonel Mustang."

"Hem, hem,"

Groaning internally, Edward say Umbridge walk up to them. Mustang raised an eyebrow and looked at Edward who had a look of disgust.

"Headmaster, I must voice my opposition towards this."

"Excuse me but who are you?" Mustang asked.

"I am Dolores Umbridge, and I teach Defense Against the Dark Arts," she replied. "And might I ask who you are?"

"I am Colonel Roy Mustang, also known as the Flame Alchemist. I am here with First Lieutenant Riza Hawkeye and Major Alex Louis Armstrong, the Strongarm Alchemist."

"Well I must know why the Amestrian military has decided to practically invade Hogwarts."

"We are here simply to conduct Fullmetal's yearly State Alchemist assessment, once that is done, we will go back to Amestris."

"Assessment? Why was I not informed about this?"

"Must have slipped my mind," Ed replied, sarcastically.

Narrowing her eyes at Edward, Umbridge turned back to Mustang.

"What exactly does this assessment entail?"

"That's classified," Mustang quipped.

"Dolorous, I agreed that Colonel Mustang would be able to perform Edward's assessment before the school year began. And he assured me that it is simply a report on Edward's research and a physical test."

"Well, I will have to inform the Minister of this, Dumbledore. And I am sure he will not be pleased."

Turning on her heals, Umbridge walked out of the Hall.

"I am sorry about that, Colonel. And you are all free to explore the halls if you so wish."

"I think I will observe Fullmetal's class for the day. Seeing as we cannot go outside."

Dumbledore nodded and stated he was needed elsewhere at the moment, excusing himself.

Taking a deep breath, Edward gestured for them to follow him.
"I can see why you said you never wanted to see that Umbridge woman again in your letter," Mustang commented as they walked up the staircase towards Edward's room.

"Yeah, isn't she just a delight," Edward mocked.

"I must say that she didn't seem to very keen on your stay here," Riza added.

"Eh, I've dealt with people like her in Amestris."

Once they reached the room and walked inside, Ed saw Al sitting by his desk and looking up.

"Brother! You're back."

"Since it is raining, and we can't perform the assessment, it would seem that the Colonel wants to see me teach," Ed grumbled.

"Hello Alphonse," Hawkeye greeted kindly.

"What exactly are you reading?" Mustang asked, staring at the journal Alphonse was reading.

"It's just some notes we are using for research," Edward explained.

"Mr. Dumbledore gave them to us! They are Flamel's personal notes!" Alphonse exclaimed.

Both Mustang and Armstrong's eyebrows shot up.

"Flamel!" Roy exclaimed.

"Have you cracked the code?" Armstrong asked.

"No, we got them only about a week ago. We've made some progress, but we are still far from cracking it."

"Brother and I have been working hard, but we can't devote all our time to it since he has to teach."

Before Mustang could add anything, students started to enter the classroom.

"You guys can sit down here," Edward said, pulling a few chairs from what he knew were empty desks.

Mustang and Armstrong sat down, while Riza remained standing.

Shrugging, Edward turned his attention back to his classroom full of students.

As they started to file in, Ed announced, "Those that answered the riddle are to move to the front of the class. If you didn't answer correctly, please sit in the back."

Some students grumbled and complained about the move, but Ed couldn't care less. Once everyone was in their correct sections Edward cleared his throat.

"Hello class, now I intended for Al to be my substitute today, while I had some business to take care of, but that has been delayed."

"Aren't you going to introduce us, Fullmetal?"

Ed shot a glare behind him. "I was getting to that, Colonel."
Looking back towards his class full of seventh years, he groaned a bit before gesturing behind him. "That is my superior officer, Colonel Roy Mustang. He is joined by First Lieutenant Riza Hawkeye and Major Alex Louis Armstrong."

Hands shot up instantly and Ed called on Fred Weasley.

"Why is your superior officer here?"

"He is only here to conduct matters concerning the Amestrian military, now-" He was interrupted by more of his students talking over each other.

"But why is he here?"

"Are you in trouble, Professor?"

"Will you have to go back to Amestris?"

The headache Edward had since the morning was beginning to grow as he rubbed his temples. Putting two fingers in his mouth he whistled loudly, and many of the students stopped talking over each other.

"Good, now if you all stop acting like toddlers, I can try and answer your questions, but only if they are about this class."

A few hands were raised and Edward called on one of the girls who answered correctly, Angelina Johnson.

"Professor, what are we going to be doing now that some of us have solved the riddle?"

"The few of you," Edward gestured to the seven students in this class who answered correctly. There were four Gryffindors, Fred and George Weasley, Angelina Johnson, and Alicia Spinnet. They all sat beside the three Ravenclaws, Grant Page, Roger Davies, and Latisha Randle. "Will start working towards transmutations."

"And what about the others?" one shouted.

"You will either be doing simple busy work or using this time as a study hall for other classes. For now, you can do whatever you want, just don't disrupt the others."

A few students complained a bit, but Ed's harsh glare made them remain quite.

"Now, for the seven who answered correctly, you should have started studying the periodic table."

The few students nodded.

"This is going to be very important as we start working towards actually transmuting."

Both of the Weasley twins hands' shot up at this.

"Yes?"

"Maybe a little demonstration of alchemy would show us what we are working towards?" they suggested.

Edward tapped his chin, thinking about this.
"Fine, a small demonstration."

The students looked extremely excited at this and Edward cracked his knuckles.

Clapping his hands together, Edward kneeled down and lightly touched the stone floor. Blue light flashed and sparked around the area. Slowly the stone began to climb upwards and start forming a shape.

Standing back to admire his handy work, the students stared in awe. Edward had made a perfect replica of the Hogwarts crest. The small statue sat in a small dent in the floor and only came up to Edward's waist.

"You all won't be able to create complex transmutations like this for a long time. You will be starting out with smaller objects and that's only after we have finished learning about understanding and deconstruction."

"What else can you do sir?"

"I've said there are many fields of alchemy. Alchemists usually focus on one to hone their skills and become masters in. I specialize in metal and earth transmutations, as you can see."

Mustang cleared his throat.

"Maybe then your students should see other forms of alchemy in action?"

The smug look on Mustang's face made Edward want to punch something. Hard.

"You think you can teach my class better than me Colonel?"

Roy remained silent, and crossed his arms.

"Fine, you show them your 'amazing flame alchemy' while I sit back and watch!"

Clapping his hands once more, Edward touched the small stature and returned the floor to it's original state. Stepping aside, Edward sat at his desk while the Colonel stood in front of the class.

"Now, as Fullmetal may or may not have told you, State Alchemists receive a title upon gaining certification. This is usually related to their field of study. I am known as the Flame Alchemist."

Taking off one of his white gloves, Mustang replaced it with one of his ignition gloves.

"Don't fry my students, Colonel," Ed warned, leaning back in his chair. Al, who was sitting behind his brother, sighed, turning back to his books.

The students looked rather scared and excited at the same time, watching the Colonel raise his right hand and snapped his fingers. Red sparks zig-zagged around the room before creating a mini explosion above the center of the room, which lit the entire classroom up.

"Wow!"

"That was so cool!"

"How did you do that?"

Roy only smirked as he put his hands back in his pockets and turned back to Edward.
"Looks like I can teach better than you, Fullmetal."

Ed scoffed. "You haven't done shit, Colonel. All you did was snap your fingers, creating a spark and then changed the oxygen density in the air. Simple alchemy."

"Then why don't you do it Fullmetal? If it's that easy."

"Cause its a stupid form of alchemy," Ed scoffed.

"If it's so stupid why are your students so impressed?"

"It's stupid cause you are totally useless when wet! At least my alchemy still works if it rains!"

"Shut up Fullmetal!"

"Oh, look the big bad Colonel is upset cause I called him useless!" Ed mocked.

"I'm not useless!"

"Then why when Scar attacked you, you needed Lieutenant Hawkeye to save you!"

"If I remember correctly, Scar was about to take you out as well, so don't call me useless!"

"He surprised me! And I was already out of it that day!"

"Both of you stop this useless fighting!" Armstrong thundered, standing up.

Ed crossed his arms, muttering under his breath.

"Both of your alchemical techniques are notable. But let me show you all true alchemy! The Strong Arm Alchemist, Alex Louis Armstrong will demonstrate the technique that has been passed down the Armstrong family for generations!"

The Major was then shirtless, his bulging muscling sparkling as he posed.

Ed face palmed right then and there.

"Dammit! Look what you did Colonel! Now his shirt is off again!"

"It's not like I asked him to do it, Fullmetal!"

"If you hadn't brought him here and insisted on showing off your skills then this wouldn't have happened!"

The students stared on in confusion as the blond haired man continued to pose shirtless, while Professor Elric fought with his superior officer.

"Brother!" Al shouted, trying to stop his brother from fighting with the Colonel.

Riza Hawkeye had remained silent and stoic the entire time, until now. She walked up to Roy and Edward and tugged on both of their ears, her mask still that of a calm one.

Both cried out in pain as the Lieutenant dragged them forward, towards the Major who was still posing.

"Major Armstrong, I believe that is enough for today."
The Major snapped out of his posing routine and looked at Hawkeye.

"Yes..I suppose..." he said, putting back on his shirt.

Hawkeye then turned to the classroom full of students.

"That is all for today. You can all leave."

The student quickly packed up and bolted out of the door.

"Hawkeye!" Mustang cried out, trying to have her release her death grip on the two of them.

"Promise not to act like children?"

"We promise!" both cried out and she released both of their poor throbbing ears.

Rubbing his red ear, Ed muttered under his breath and shot a dirty look at the Colonel.

"Brother, you really need to learnt to control that temper," Al chided.

"I DON'T HAVE A TEMPER!"

---

Harry

"Have you gotten any news from Sirius?" Ron whispered.

"No, not since we last talked to him."

Ron slumped back in his chair and frowned a bit.

"It's only been a few days, Ronald."

"Well we should still be informed of what's going on! I mean, Harry's a big part of all this, why aren't they telling him anything?"

"They think we are too young, and you heard what Sirius said, they might be checking owls. They can't just send us a letter about everything they are doing. The can't let the Ministry or You-Know-Who, find out what they are doing."

Ron grumbled about this for a moment before a couple seventh year students came bursting into the common room, including Fred, George, and Angelina.

"Did you hear! Professor Elric's classroom was bloody mental this morning!"

"What happened?" Ron asked his elder brothers.

"You know those weird blokes that came last night? They are apparently here to do some weird inspection on Professor Elric! The black haired one is a Colonel and the large man is a Major!"

"And who was that woman that was with them too?" Harry asked.

"She's a Lieutenant."

"So what happened?" Hermione asked.

"It was insane!" Fred said. "Professor Elric started out talking about alchemy and demonstrated some
"Then the Colonel guy started saying some things and Professor Ed told him to go on and teach himself!"

Hermione raised an eyebrow. "He talked like that to his superior officer?"

"That's not all!"

"Then the Colonel guy did some flame type alchemy and it was amazing! He and Professor Ed got in a fight and then the big bloke ripped off his shirt and started flexing his muscles while the Professor and the Colonel continued to bicker!"

"That sounds like a bloody circus," Ron commented.

"It practically was! I mean, until the Lieutenant lady walked over and started dragging the Colonel and Professor by the ears. They all listened to her and she barely moved a muscle!" George exclaimed.

"She sounds like a really intimidating woman," Hermione said.

"She was insane! These big bad military guys were helpless against her! I wonder why she is only a Lieutenant." Fred tapped his chin.

"Do you know else about the officers that are here?" Harry asked.

"No, we bolted out of that classroom as fast as we could. We only really know their names."

"Why didn't Professor Elric talk to us about them coming here?"

"He said that he planned on not being in class today, doing some assessment, and they were supposed to leave right after."

"Why haven't they done the assessment yet?"

"It's pouring rain, Ronald. I highly doubt they can do anything outside in this weather."

Ron then looked out the window to see how the rain was absolutely pouring down on Hogwarts. "Yeah, I suppose you're right about that."

"So do you think Professor Elric will be in our class tomorrow?"

Fred and George shrugged. "Dunno, he didn't say."

"I wonder if those officers will be in our class too," Harry pondered.

"I hope not, it seems like everyone from Amestris is bloody mental."

"They might not be that bad..."

"Well I'd rather not find out like Fred and George did."

Harry shrugged. "I guess we'll have to see."
"Professor Elric isn't at breakfast...do you think he is doing that assessment thing today?" Ron asked, looking up at the faculty table.

"But the officers are here...maybe he is running late or wanted to sleep in?" Harry suggested.

Hermione placed her hand on her chin. "I don't know Harry, but I have this feeling like something is the matter."

"Maybe he's sick?"

"He could be," she shrugged. "But I suppose we won't know until we get to class."

Right then the owls started dropping off mail, packages, and newspapers. Hermione unfolded the Daily Prophet and began reading the articles.

"You're actually reading that?"

"It's important to know what the enemy is saying, Ronald. They may not be reporting everything that is happening, but there are a few things we can find out."

"Like what?" Harry asked.

"This," she said, laying down the paper.

**THIRTEEN MUGGLES DEAD**

*Ministry officials claiming Sirius Black behind the accident*

"That's a load of rubbish!"

Hermione folded back up the paper. "They have to blame someone, Ron, and Sirius just so happens to be the perfect scapegoat."

"It shouldn't be like this," Harry gritted through his teeth.

"I know Harry, but Dumbledore can't prove Sirius's innocence without Pettigrew, and he's with You-Know-Who. Plus, Fudge refused to acknowledge that he has returned in the first place. With all that is going on, the Ministry needs to provide a culprit or cause."

"It still isn't right. Voldemort is out there and all the Ministry is doing is helping him by ignoring the problem."

Hermione sighed and looked at her friend. "Harry, the Order is working to fight him. We need to remember that."

Harry nodded and Hermione gave him an encouraging smile.

---

**Mustang**
Walking out of their rooms, Colonel Mustang with Riza Hawkeye and Alex Louis Armstrong began to walk down the hall towards the Grand staircase.

"Um.. Colonel Mustang?" a soft voice asked.

Mustang, along with Hawkeye and Armstrong, stopped in their tracks, seeing that they had just passed Fullmetal's room.

"Can I help you?" Mustang asked slowly. He couldn't believe he was having a conversation with a painting.

"You're Edward's superior officer right?"

"Yes, I am Fullmetal's commanding officer."

"What can we help you with Elizabeth?" Riza asked softly.

Chewing on her lip, Elizabeth played with the frills on her bright blue dress. "I'm worried about Edward and Alphonse..."

"Why?" Major Armstrong asked.

She twisting her pinky finger, looking away from the Colonel. "It's just-they are usually so nice to me in the mornings and will sometimes talk to me but today..."

"What do you mean?"

"They seem...different. I don't know what happened but there is something wrong," Elizabeth sighed. "Well Alphonse left early, and didn't say a word. I was a little shocked but I thought maybe he had something important to go and do. See he usually says good morning and sometimes talks to me. Then a few hours later Edward came out. He seemed distant and when I told him good morning he only grunted in response...he's..they've never done that before and I'm worried. Edward and Alphonse are good people. They're nice to me and I don't like seeing them this way."

Mustang placed his hand on his chin. "I'm not sure, Fullmetal sometimes gets caught up in his own thoughts and tunes out the rest of the world, but Alphonse never acts that way."

Riza sighed. "Sir...it's October third."

Mustang's eyes went wide as he gasped. "I must have lost track of the days..."

"We were supposed to have left the other day...," Armstrong commented.

Elizabeth was looking more worried by the second. "What's so special about today? Is something wrong?"

"Today is a difficult day for Edward and Alphonse," Riza explained.

"Why? I-I'm just worried about them. They've been really nice to me and...well..."

Elizabeth looked truly worried about the Elric brothers and this touched Riza.

"Elizabeth, today is a day that neither Edward nor Alphonse particularly look forward too. But they always get through it. They may act a little depressed or out of it today, but I can promise you that tomorrow they will be fine. They always are."
"Are you sure?"

Riza smiled softly. "I'm sure. The Elrics are strong boys. They will be fine."

Elizabeth let out a small breath of relief and sat down on her bench. "Thank you, Miss Hawkeye. It was just so out of no where I didn't know what to do."

"Don't worry Elizabeth. But I thank you for caring about them so much to voice your concerns."

Elizabeth gave a small smile and nodded.

"Is there anything else we can do for you Miss Elizabeth?" Armstrong asked.

"No, I'll be fine. But you better get going, breakfast will be starting soon."

Riza nodded and they said their goodbyes, then continuing their walk to the Great Hall.

Sitting down at the head table, Mustang looked over to see that Fullmetal's seat was empty. But breakfast was short and the students quickly left to go to their classes.

"Do you plan to conduct your assessment today?" Professor McGonagall asked they stood up. "The weather is much more favorable and I can cover Edward's first class if he wishes."

"Thank you for your offer, but I don't see Fullmetal accepting that. We won't be performing his assessment today either."

"Why?"

Mustang let out a sigh as he ran his right hand through his hair. "It wouldn't be right for me to force him today."

Before McGonagall could ask why, Hagrid walked up to them.

"Edward didn' show up te breakfast, is somethin' wrong?"

"I'm not surprised Fullmetal didn't show up, and well..it's complicated." Mustang answered. He knew fully well that this day was not the one of the better ones of they year for the Elric brothers.

"Why's tha'? Is it 'cause o' the assessment?"

"Today...is a rough day for the Elric brothers. I won't force him to go through the assessment today."

"Why?" McGonagall questioned.

Mustang sighed. "I am not sure of what happened on this particular day. Fullmetal left right after getting his certification and returned two days latter with his brother. It wasn't until the following year any of us knew something was wrong. I called Fullmetal into the office to turn in some report. When he showed up, everyone saw that something was wrong. He barely spoke, kept his head down and just had this...air about him. It was so different from his usually cocky and loud antics, many of my men were worried something was terribly wrong. After he left, I sent one of my subordinates to check up on him and he wouldn't leave his room."

"What 'bout Alphonse?"

"Alphonse wasn't any better. We got a few reports of him sitting by a fountain for nearly the whole day, not moving from his spot. Made a few people nervous but they let him be. He didn't talk or do"
anything, he just sat on a small bench and stared at that fountain."

"But why this day?" Madame Pomfrey asked, also concerned about the young alchemy professor and his younger brother.

"Fullmetal has been in the military for three years now. I tried to figure out what happened but felt it was better if I didn’t pry. Neither will tell me a thing even if I did try."

"But shouldn’t you be more concerned if this is so out of character?" Madame Pomfrey insisted.

"We are concerned, but the boys insist on carrying this burden themselves," Armstrong said solemnly.

"Fullmetal will get past this day, he always does."

Madame Pomfrey, McGonagall, and Hagrid didn't look particularly pleased about this.

"Is there anythin' we can do?"

"Carry on as normal, they hate it when people try and treat them differently today."

Madame Pomfrey looked angry at this. "That's all, just act normal when they are so clearly depressed? We should try and help them through this! find out the root of the problem and help them deal with it."

"If we try and push them to open up, it will only drive them away. I understand your concern, but Fullmetal is my subordinate, and has been for three years now. I know him well and this is the best course of action."

"I know you are all concerned, but Edward and Alphonse are stubborn this way, insisting on bearing the weight of their burdens alone," Riza stated.

"Are you sure about this Colonel? Is this the best course of action?" McGonagall asked.

"I'm positive."

McGonagall nodded. "Very well then, please notify me if you, Edward, or his brother need anything at all."

"Please tell Edward and Alphonse the same for me. They can come by the infirmary at anytime today is they wish to do so."

"Or me hut for a cuppa tea."

Mustang nodded and then excused himself as he, Hawkeye, and Armstrong began walking to Fullmetal's classroom.

Edward

Edward sat in his room, staring the wall. Alphonse wasn't there when he woke up. Considering today's date, that was expected. Edward sighed as he pulled out his pocket watch, looking at the inscription he carved there himself.

Don't forget October 3rd.
Don't forget.

As much as he would wish that he could go back in time and change their mistakes, it wasn't possible. They had to keep moving if they wanted to get their original bodies back.

He thought that after burning down their house and leaving Resembool that they wouldn't look back. But every year, this day was different. Alphonse would disappear for most of the day, usually going and sitting beside some water source, usually a fountain or maybe a small stream or lake if there was one close by. He said it reminded him of sitting by the the river that ran through Resembol and Ed never questioned it. Alphonse had every right to spend this day whichever way he wanted.

Edward on the hand would try and get through the day, but would usually not leave their room unless he absolutely had to. Whenever anyone asked them what was wrong, the brothers would remain silent. Alphonse never wanted to talk about the matter and Edward didn't want any more stares of pity. He hated that look.

Students began coming into his classroom and sitting in their seats.

"If you passed the test, sit in the front."

Standing up, Edward started writing a few things on the board and drew a circle. He heard the students shuffle around and a few complaints. Right then Mustang, Hawkeye and Armstrong entered the room quietly and made their way to the front.

He turned around and saw the students had separated themselves like he had asked. Neville, Seamus, Pavarti, Hermione, Ron, and Harry were all grouped together in the front with Blaise and Milicent off to the side.

Taking a deep breath Ed began, "Class, this is Colonel Roy Mustang, and his First Lieutenant Riza Hawkeye. They are accompanied by Major Alex Louis Armstrong. Since the other class has probably already told you, they are here on military business and will be sitting in on our class today."

Malfoy raised his hand. "Why is the military here at Hogwarts?"

"Because I need to have my yearly State Alchemist assessment. They are only observing my right now, until we can conduct the assessment."

Edward sighed once more as he turned back to the chalkboard to write a few more things.

The students noticed something was definitely off about their Professor. He just seemed to be lacking any energy, while in previous classes he seemed full of it. He always seemed to be full of emotions, mainly anger sometimes, but still emotion. The person in front of them today was seemed...empty. No one could put their finger on it, but there was definitely something going on.

"Professor? Are you alright?" Hermione asked.

"I am perfectly healthy, Miss Granger," Ed replied halfheartedly as he turned around.

Neville looked over to Hermione who looked like she showed the same amount of concern for their professor as he did. Edward then turned back to the board and started writing again.

"But sir, you weren't at breakfast this morning and well..."

"I'm fine," he snapped, crushing the piece of chalk in his hands.
Hermione recoiled at the harshness of Edward's tone.

"I'm sorry Professor. I was only concerned..."

Edward sighed as he ran his hand over his face. "No, I shouldn't have snapped at you like that."

Mustang raised an eyebrow at this. Fullmetal rarely apologized and even more so for an outburst of any kind.

"Today those of you that passed will continue on in the course. The others will be doing some minor work over the rest of the year. Right now, do whatever you want. The rest of you will be learning more about the first key element of Alchemy; understanding."

Edward looked down to grab another piece of chalk as the one he was previously using was now dust. Seeing that there was none, Edward turned to walk to the small supply cabinet in the corner of the room.

"Write down what I have already," he ordered.

The eight students in the front began to write as Edward grabbed the handle on the cabinet. Pulling it open Edward was forced back as a large black mass burst out.

"What the hell!" he exclaimed, leaping back.

The mass flowed out of the open cabinet and started to pool on the floor, instantly taking shape.

Edward's instincts reacted instantly and he moved to clap his hands together. His hands were less than an inch apart when his entire body froze.

The mass was a pile of organs and human body parts, surrounded by a pool of blood, and somewhat covering a transmutation circle.

"Ed-ward-" the voice croaked out, the mangled hand reaching towards him.

Students began screaming and moving to the back of the class.

Edward stared on in horror, his hands still frozen a fraction apart. His knees began to shake as the creature began to move towards him, crawling by using its distorted arms and legs. It's red eyes were staring right at him, the blood continuing to flow out of it and cover the circle.

______________________________

Mustang

Mustang bolted out of his chair, yanking off his regular gloves and putting on his ignition ones. Roy rushed towards him and once he reached the scene, pushed Edward to the side.

The creature began to morph and take another shape. Mustang raised his right hand and prepared to snap his fingers, but the creature finally finished changing forms.

In front of him was a young woman in rags, with dark skin and red eyes. Tears were streaming down her face as she clutched a small baby close to her chest.

"Please! Don't! We're innocent!" she cried out. Mustang only paused for a fraction of a second before snapping his fingers.

"You're a mons-"
The woman was then engulfed in flames, and screamed in agony. Roy made sure that the controlled explosion only harmed the creature. It cried out in pain as the Flame Alchemist snapped his fingers twice more, creating a small column of flame, surrounding it.

Armstrong and Hawkeye had reacted as well. Quickly moving towards the students and trying to calm them down. Luckily Hawkeye had enough sense about her to send one of the less distraught students to go and get Dumbledore and any other faculty members.

The creature was now a bubbling mess and Mustang turned back to see his youngest subordinate on the floor.

Edward was gripping the sides of his head, hyperventilating. "It's all my fault...I forced him...I suggested it...It's all my fault...Al's like this because I made him do it..."

Mustang kneeled down and looked Edward in the eyes.

"Fullmetal, you need to calm down, it's gone now."

"It's all my fault...I did this...I created that...all for nothing...it didn't even work...it was impossible."

Right then, Mustang brought his hand up and slapped Ed right across the face, just as Professor McGonagall and Snape entered the room.

The room was silent for a few moments after that, everyone staring in shock. You could hear a pin drop at that very moment.

McGonagall was the first to speak. "I want every student here to leave and go with Professor Snape to my room this instant."

The mass of students, still looking at their alchemy professor, slowly exited the room as McGonagall ushered them out of the room and Snape lead them away.

"What happened here?"

Edward had snapped out of his state of shock, looking up at Mustang, and promptly brought his knees to his chest and hide his face.

Mustang then stood up and looked over at McGonagall. "I was about to ask the same question. Some thing came out of there and attacked my subordinate."

He pointed towards the cabinet where the bubbling mass still lay in front of.

McGonagall covered her mouth in shock. "What did you do?"

"It was moving to attack Fullmetal, so I reacted and came to his defense."

Mustang then glanced over at where Edward was still sitting.


"Take Fullmetal to the infirmary, now."

Armstrong nodded and walked over, lifting Edward into his arms and briskly walking out of the room.

Mustang then glared at McGonagall. "I want to know what the hell happened here, and now. I don't
take lightly to my subordinates being in danger."

Turning back to Riza, "But now we need to see that Fullmetal is getting the attention he needs. Lieutenant?"

Riza nodded and the two walked out of the room with McGonagall.

Armstrong was still making his way to the infirmary. Once there, Madame Pomfrey quickly stood up from her desk as she saw the Major holding Edward.

"What happened?"

"Some despicable creature came out of a cabinet and he is still in shock."

"Bring him here," she said gesturing to one of the empty beds and the Major laid Edward down. Ed limply hung from his arms as he was gently placed on the bed.

Running around, Madame Pomfrey quickly grabbed a few potions and returned to Edward's bedside.

"Edward, please tell me what happened."

Ed only stared off into space, not responding to anything.

Right then Mustang, Hawkeye, and McGonagall entered the room.

"How is he?"

"He isn't responding... I think he still may be in a state of shock," Madame Pomfrey said, setting a few vials down on the bedside table. "What exactly happened."

"Some creature came out of a cabinet and he froze," Mustang answered.

"What did it look like?"

"It changed shape after I stood in front of Fullmetal and pushed him to the side."

"Then it must have been a boggart, but I have no idea how it would have even gotten there," McGonagall said.

Mustang narrowed his eyes. "What is a boggart?"

"Its a creature that will shape-shift into what you fear the most in this world."

Mustang and Hawkeye stared at McGonagall in shock.

"How is that even possible?" Hawkeye asked.

Dumbledore then came into the infirmary with Umbridge right beside him.

"Minerva, what happened? Severus informed me that an incident occurred in Edward's room, where a terrible monster appeared and then was engulfed by flames."

"It was a boggart, it was in the cabinet Edward opened and it put him in a state of shock."

"What did he see?" Umbridge asked. "The students are all in a state of panic over it."

"My subordinate was attacked and is now bed ridden. Who cares what the damn thing looked like!"
Madame Pomfrey then spoke up, "I can give him a potion that will put him to sleep."

"Will that help him?" Hawkeye asked.

"I believe so. A dreamless sleep will help reset his system and at least give him a few hours of peace."

"Do it," Mustang ordered. Madame Pomfrey nodded and grabbed a small clear potion and lifting Edward up.

"Please Edward, drink this."

Ed blinked a few times before slowly grabbing the vial and drinking it in one shot. His eyelids became droopy at that point and Madame Pomfrey laid him back down on the bed gently.

"Armstrong, find Alphonse. If we go off what he's done in the past, check any source of water near here."

Armstrong saluted Mustang and quickly left the infirmary.

"Alphonse is usually in the library," McGonagall commented.

"Not on today. I told you today is a rough day for these boys. Alphonse usually spends the whole day near a fountain or finds a small river to sit by."

"But why?"

"I never asked why, every year I give them this day to do as they wish and I try not to pry and force them to talk."

Before Umbridge could speak, the Major along with Alphonse came into the infirmary.

"Brother!" Running towards his brother, Alphonse knelled beside the bed. "What happened? The Major only said there was an accident and he was in the infirmary."

"There was an incident with a creature while Fullmetal was teaching a class. He went into shock and Madame Pomfrey suggested we give him something to put him into a dreamless sleep," Mustang answered.

"What was the creature? The only things that really scare Brother are needles and Teacher."

McGonagall then stepped forward. "It is called a boggart, a creature that has the ability to transform into your worst fear."

"How is that even possible! And why was it in Brother's classroom?"

Mustang looked at McGonagall. "I would like to know the answer to that as well. Why the hell was a creature like that in Fullmetal's cabinet?"

"Colonel Mustang," Dumbledore said. "I am not sure how the boggart was in Edward's room, but I will investigate the matter thoroughly."

"As will I, I am sure the Minister will want a report on the matter immediately," Umbridge added. "That being the case, I would like to ask you a few questions about the incident Colonel. What did Edward see, that is causing the students' to be in such a panic? Many of them are calling it a horrible monster."
"I believe that is private information, Miss Umbridge," Mustang snapped. Alphonse turned away from his brother and stared at the Colonel curiously.

Umbridge narrowed her eyes at the Flame Alchemist. "Then perhaps you would be so kind as to tell us how you were able to 'handle the situation' as you so well put it."

Mustang kept a cool expression, and adjusted his sleeve. "I saw my subordinate was in danger, and reacted. I then used my alchemy to dispose of the creature."

"Alchemy?" Dumbledore asked, raising an eyebrow with a curious gleam in his eyes.

"I created a controlled explosion, centered around it, and was able to end the threat in a matter of moments."

"Explosion!?!" Umbridge exclaimed. "You could have harmed a student!"

"I assure you there was no danger or risk posed to any of the students. I have mastered my craft and can use it to pinpoint accuracy."

"You're telling us that you caused an explosion in a classroom full of students!"

"Colonel Mustang is renowned for his accuracy. He had been known to hit a single target from over a thousand feet away. He never misses. The small explosion was centered around the creature, it's only victim was that creature," Hawkeye interjected.

"It is true, the Colonel is highly decorated for his alchemic achievements. He would not have used his abilities in a crowded room unless he felt it was necessary," Major Armstrong added.

"Dolores, I have faith that the Colonel acted to the best of his ability to handle the situation. And as I have been informed, there were no injuries or damage done."

Umbridge looked very unhappy about this and opened her mouth to speak once more before Mustang interrupted her.

"I will also remind you Miss Umbridge, that I am here as an ambassador of Amestris. Any quarrel you wish to have with me involves my country as well. And I do not think that your Minister will want to have an international incident on his hands."

Umbridge huffed for a bit before straightening out her hideous pink dress and straightening her posture. "Very well Colonel, but I will have you know I am writing to the Minister immediately and we will see how he feels about this situation." And she then left the room.

"On that note, I will retire for the moment to write to the Fuhrer. Fullmetal is one of the military's important alchemists. He will want knowledge of these events."

Dumbledore nodded at this and Mustang turned to Armstrong. "Major, I want you to watch over Fullmetal. Inform me at once if there is any change."

The Strong Arm Alchemist saluted the Colonel, before Mustang turned to walk out of the infirmary. But before he left, he stopped and looked right at Dumbledore.

"I will want a full report on the matter immediately."

And with that, Mustang turned and left the Hospital Wing. Hawkeye was right behind him as they walked the corridors.
"Wait, Colonel!"

Roy and Riza stopped in their tracks, both turning to face the younger Elric. He raised an eyebrow, and Alphonse seemed to look down for a moment.

"What was it?" Alphonse asked, softly. "What did my brother see?"

"I think you already know the answer to that question, Alphonse."

"I want to be sure."

"It was the same thing you saw almost four years ago."

Alphonse turned his head away. "I thought after... we found out... but he's still scared of it..."

"I suppose some demons never fully go away," Hawkeye said softly.

Alphonse nodded. "Thank you Colonel, and thank you for helping my brother."

Mustang nodded curtly and Alphonse left to return to his brother, leaving only the Colonel and his Lieutenant in the hallway.

It was silent for a few moments before Riza spoke up, seeing the strain the day had on the Colonel's face. "Colonel, are you alright?"

Mustang ran his hand through his hair. "On today of all days... to see that- that thing."

"You couldn't have predicted something like this would have happened, sir."

"You saw the look in his eyes Lieutenant. I've never seen his eyes more dull and blank than they were just now. Not after the Turner incident, not when Scar attacked him, not any October third before now..."

"Edward is strong, you said it yourself. He will get over this and move on."

"Will he? He just came face to face with the symbol of his biggest mistake and failure. The thing that haunted those boys for the past four years."

"Until he discovered it wasn't their mother."

"You heard what that professor said. That... thing... becomes your biggest fear. It still haunts him."

"And it probably will, what they have been through would be too much for many people."

"But what if this is the thing that finally broke him. No one can bear that much weight on their shoulders."

Riza raised an eyebrow. "And what about you? Shouldn't the future Fuhrer be more confident in his abilities? Or do you think you're the exception?"

"I have a team that supports me, I wouldn't be anywhere without them. Fullmetal takes on too much, and Alphonse tries to help, but I can see that Fullmetal still bears the brunt of it."

Riza let out a small sigh, before looking back up at her superior officer.

"Colonel, Edward will be fine. He has never been the one to let something like this defeat him. He'll
keep putting one foot in front of the other until they finally reach their goal."

Mustang sighed as he rubbed his eyes.

"I forget they are still children sometimes, and when something like this happens...I..."

"I understand, sir. But you know Edward doesn't need someone to treat him like a child. He needs someone to show him how to be a strong adult."

Mustang sighed. "You're right Lieutenant."

"He is resting now, tomorrow is new day and hopefully will be a better one for the Elric brothers."

"I hope so Lieutenant, I hope so."

And with that, the two continued their walk to their rooms.
Magnesium

Harry

"How do you think Professor Elric is?"

Hermione was practically chewing her nails off as she paced in the Gryffindor common room.

Ron shrugged. "Professor McGonagall only told us that no one was injured, including the Professor."

"I mean mentally Ronald!"

"I don't know Hermione, how can anyone be after seeing your worst fear in front of you? And on top of it being...well whatever that creature was," Harry stated.

Hermione sighed as she rubbed her temple. "There was a boggart in that cabinet, and there hasn't been one there all term. So why on today did one magically appear?"

"Wait...," Ron said. "Are you trying to say that someone put a boggart in that cabinet?"

Hermione rolled her eyes. "Yes! And I'm trying to figure out who did it and why."

Harry tapped his chin. "Well if someone wanted to scare Professor Ed, they definitely did the trick."

"Do you think it was a prank and the bloke who did it didn't realize Professor Elric's fear was...that?"

Hermione turned to Ron. "You may be right, but I don't think it was a harmless prank. Maybe someone wanted to make the Professor look bad so he would get in trouble with his superior officers or fired?"

"I don't know about the first part. Seeing your worst fear would stop anyone, but that Colonel dealt with his rather quickly," Ron stated.

"And I don't think Dumbledore would fire him, he seems to like the Professor Elric," Harry added.

"Hm...I guess you're right...but that still leaves the question as to how and why that creature was put there!"

Harry sighed. "I don't know Hermione. But Colonel Mustang seemed rather angry it happened and I overheard he was demanding that Dumbledore conduct an investigation."

Hermione sighed and ran a hand over her face. "I know, but it is still bugging me. I saw Professor Elric freeze when he saw that monster. There was this look in his eyes. It was confusion at first, then realization, then...pure terror and pain..."

Ron stood up and put a hand on Hermione's shoulder, comforting her. "Professor Elric seems like a tough person, Hermione. I'm sure he will get over this, and Dumbledore will figure out what happened and punish anyone that did this."

The corners of Hermione's mouth tugged slightly into a small smile. "Thank you Ron, and I hope so."
Edward

Ed awoke to his brother sitting beside his bed.

"Brother! You're awake!"

Ed gripped his head and slowly sat up. "What happened?"

"Do you not remember?" Al asked his older brother.

Ed looked down at the floor. "No...I remember."

"Oh...Do you want to talk about it?"

Ed swung his legs over the side of the bed. "I'm fine Al, you don't need to baby me."

"I'm not trying to baby you! But I think we should at least discuss what happened."

Edward stood up and began stretching his automail ports. "What happened after I fell asleep?"

Al sighed. "Well the major found me and brought me to you and Colonel Mustang was really mad. He wanted Dumbledore to find out what happened and everything. He told me it was a boggart. Something that will transform into your worst fear."

Ed ran his hand through his hair. "Worst fear huh?"

"Yeah...so that's why you saw...that thing..."

Ed hung his head, unable to look at his brother. "I-I thought after digging it up, I was over it."

"I suppose some part of your mind still is a little afraid of it. Maybe not of what it was, but what it represents."

The edges of Ed's lips twitched slightly. "When did you get so smart and philosophical Al?"

Al's mood instantly lifted. "I dunno Brother, I guess hearing a some of your motivational speeches influenced me a bit."

Ed chuckled a bit and noticed his red coat had been taken off, along with his boots.

He slipped back into his clothes and looked back at his younger brother. "So how do you feel all about this?"

"I feel? B-but you were the one-"

Ed cut him off. "I still want to know Al. I know you, and this probably wasn't easy for you."

Alphonse sighed a bit. "It was hard to even comprehend at first. But when they talked about a monster and your worst fear...I don't know...but once all the insanity died down and everyone go calm again I started to think. And well, I thought what if I had been there? Would I have been able to stop it or maybe help you? And if I did what would I have seen?"

Edward listened intently as his younger brother continued.

"But I don't know what I would have seen, or even if I could have done anything. So my point is, that I sort of understand what you went through and the utter shock you had in that moment. But I
want you to know I'm here for you Brother, and so are a lot of other people."

Ed nodded and walked over towards Alphonse, laying his automail hand on his shoulder.

"I know Al, I know."

And then, right at that moment Mustang walked into the Hospital wing, with Riza and Armstrong right behind him, along with Dumbledore, Madame Pomfrey and Professor McGonagall.

"Edward, you're awake," Madame Pomfrey stated. "How do you feel?"

Ed shrugged. "Okay I guess."

"We would like to ask you a few questions about the incident yesterday, if that is alright," McGonagall stated.

Ed nodded and sat back down on his bed.

"Do you think you can walk us through the events of that day?" Dumbledore asked.

Ed sighed a bit before speaking.

"Well, I was teaching in my class. And I accidentally broke the piece of chalk I was writing with. So I went over to the small supply cabinet and opened it. And something burst out of it. I leapt away and moved to defend myself, unsure of what was happening. Then it transformed and...and I froze."

Clenching his hands into tight fists, Ed looked away and stared down at his shoes.

"I froze and the Colonel pushed me aside and I fell on the floor. He used his alchemy on the creature and disposed of it. Major Armstrong then brought me to the Hospital wing and you gave me some sleep potion. That's...and that's all."

"Thank you Edward, and I assure you I am launching an investigation to find out what happened."

Ed looked up and saw Dumbledore giving him a small smile and nodded. "Thank you."

"Do you have any idea on how the boggart got into your supply cabinet in the first place?"

McGonagall asked.

Ed shook his head. "No, I barely used that thing and all the times I did there was nothing in there."

"Do you know anyone who would have wanted to put a boggart into your room?"

"Like enemies? I have no clue. I mean making enemies is something I never- well I've never avoided it but I don't know anyone who even has access to a creature like that let alone someone who wanted to put one in my room!"

Roy cleared his throat and the tension in the room dissipated.

"I believe that Fullmetal has answered enough questions for the moment."

Mustang turned his attention to the young alchemist, Roy stated. "Fullmetal, the weather is much more amicable today and seeing how you are in good health, your physical assessment will begin shortly."

"Assessment?!" Madame Pomfrey exclaimed. "He can't be expected to fight now!"
Mustang raised an eyebrow at this. "Fullmetal is perfectly capable in performing his assessment
today."

"Dumbledore! Edward still needs to rest. After being in such a state of shock, he needs bed rest."

"Can't I say something!"

Everyone turned towards Ed who had crossed his arms and had a small scowl on his face.

"I'll do the assessment. I'm perfectly fine and just want to get this whole thing over with."

"But Edward, I need to insist that you stay here."

"I'm fine, Madame Pomfrey. And this reassessment won't take long."

"Are you sure that you wish to do this now Edward?" Dumbledore asked.

Ed nodded and stood up.

"Very well, if he feels up to the task, I believe we can't do much to stop him."

"B-but sir!"

Dumbledore put up a hand and stopped Madame Pomfrey.

"I understand your concern, but Edward is a guest at our school and he is only allowed to stay with
the permission from his superior officer and the military. And he and his officer seem to believe they
can carry out this reassessment now and I don't see a reason why Edward cannot participate."

Madame Pomfrey huffed at this and turned to Edward. "Very well, but I want you back here the
moment it is done so I can preform a small examination."

Ed agreed to this and Mustang turned to walk out of the infirmary, with Armstrong and Hawkeye
following suit.

"Coming Fullmetal?"

Edward turned to his brother and the two followed the officers out of the Hospital wing. They
walked in silence and through the multiple halls and stairways. The group soon reached the entrance
to the castle and walked out into the grounds and the bright sunshine. It was a nice cool temperature
today with little to no wind blowing across the grounds.

"Dumbledore gave us permission to use the grounds for your assessment," Mustang explained.

Ed resisted the urge to roll his eyes at the Colonel. "Great, let's just get this thing over with."

Riza and Al stopped in their tracks as Edward, Armstrong and Mustang continued to walk further
into the grounds.

Once they were a good distance away from the castle Ed and Roy walked away from one another.
So now, Edward stood a few feet away from Roy with Major Armstrong in the middle.

"Major Edward Elric, aka the Fullmetal Alchemist," Armstrong began. "Today we will be
conducting your physical reexamination for your State Alchemist certification. If deemed acceptable,
along with your research findings, you will be allowed to keep your certification for another year. If
you fail, your certification may be taken away or put on probation. Do you understand?"
"I do."

Armstrong nodded. "Alchemists, get ready."

Ed shifted his stance, lowering himself and lifting his arms up defensively. Roy on the other hand, stood calmly with his hands in his pockets.

"Set and go!"

Armstrong quickly moved away and Roy lifted his right arm and snapped his fingers.

The red sparks zig-zagged over towards Ed who was then in the center of a small explosion. The force caused him to be thrown into the air.

"Damn it!"

Ed was staring right at the ground, which was getting closer ever second. Tucking in his legs, he shifted his center of gravity and soon landed on his feet, albeit skidding back a couple feet.

Edward growled a bit at the Flame Alchemist and clapped his hands together, and slamming them on the ground. Blue light flashed and sparked around him, and a large first burst out of the ground and was shot straight at Mustang.

Roy snapped his fingers a few times and caused the earthen fist to explode.

Edward ground his teeth together and took off running. Roy snapped his fingers a few more times, causing mini explosions to happen all around Edward. Luckily, Ed's reflexes were sharp and he was able to leap around the contained blasts of fire.

"That all you got Colonel?" Ed taunted.

Roy smirked slightly and lifted both hands in front of his face, snapping them at the same time. A large explosion erupted around Edward. Smoke filled the air and surrounded Mustang.

"Okay...maybe I overdid it."

Looking around Roy tried to see where Edward might be.

But right then, Edward leaped out of the smoke and extended his leg out. Mustang moved quickly to avoid Ed's attack. Landing right beside the Flame Alchemist, Edward twisted around and tried to give Mustang a right hook.

Roy blocked the swing, and used his other hand to push Edward away. Ed skid back and clapped his hands together, kneeling down and touching the ground once more. The ground around Mustang then started to collapse around him.

Mustang was quick to leap to the side and counter with his own flame alchemy. Another well aimed explosion at Ed's feet caused the young alchemist to shoot into the air.

Ed tumbled along the ground and got most of the air knocked out of his lungs. Standing up, he saw his red coat was torn and burnt all to hell.

"Damn it Colonel! Fabric doesn't grow on trees!"

Edward then finished the rant and tore off his red coat, throwing it to the side.
Clapping his hands once more, Edward touched the ground and caused a large platform to burst out of the earth and launched him towards Mustang.

But Mustang anticipated his attack and blew up his platform, causing Edward to hit the ground hard. Rolling to his side, Edward was able to pick himself up and glare at the now smirking Flame Alchemist.

"Ready to give up Fullmetal?" he taunted.

"Never!" Ed bellowed, and charged Mustang once more. Roy snapped his fingers and the red sparks shot towards Ed. Ed leaped to the side but was a little too late. The flames came in contact with his right arm and burnt away some of his shirt and glove.

"Are you determined to ruin all my clothes!?"

"Look at it as an excuse to update that wardrobe of yours Fullmetal."

"My style is cool as hell and you're just jealous!"

"Jealous of a little pipsqueak?"

"WHO ARE YOU CALLING SO SMALL THAT EVEN BUGS CALL HIM TINY!"

Roy smirked at his subordinates outburst and used it to his advantage. And created a small blast around the eldest Elric brother. Edward had to leap back to avoid becoming barbecue.

Mustang shook his head. "You're too predictable Fullmetal."

"Predictable? That's rich coming from a one trick pony like you, Colonel. While I have a few more tricks up my sleeve."

Ed touched his right arm and extended the iron material into a blade.

Running forward he dodged a few small explosions until he was close enough to Mustang to attack. He swiped his blade and tore a hole in Roy's right glove. Once he saw he was successful, Edward leaped back and smirked.

"One down Colonel, and one to go,"

"You got lucky that time Fullmetal, but it won't happen again."

Another snap followed and a couple bursts of flame erupted around Edward.

Dodging the explosions, Edward found himself a couple feet away from the Colonel. Looking out of the corner of his eye, Edward saw they were rather close to the large lake Hogwarts sat next too. He then returned his automail to its' normal state and lifted his hands to his mouth.

Edward yelled at the top of his lungs, "You call that 'pinpoint accuracy' Colonel! It looks to me like you couldn't hit the broadside of a barn!"

Roy's eyebrows scrunched together as he roared, "I'll show you accuracy you little runt!"

Roy snapped his fingers a few more times and Edward ran away from the explosions.

Mustang raised an eyebrow. "Running away so easily Fullmetal?"
Edward dropped to the ground and clapped, touching the damp soil beneath him before turning around.

"Nope," he smirked.

And then the blue alchemical light surrounded him and a large column of water erupted behind him. The liquid was aimed right at the Colonel who only realized too late what was happening. He was soaked from head to toe within seconds.

Roy scowled at his youngest subordinate and Edward was grinning like a Cheshire cat. "You should really pay more attention to your surroundings Colonel."

Mustang's left eye twitched a bit as he glared at Edward.

"I think this assessment is over now," he said turning to walk back to the castle.

But instead of a nice little walk back to the castle, Ed was met with a large stone spike hurdling right past him, only a few inches from his face.

"It is far from over, Edward! Let's see how you fair against me!" Armstrong bellowed, striking a pose in his shirtless state.

"What the hell Major! I thought I was only fighting the Colonel!"

"Well I had to give a legitimate reason for his coming, and this was the best one," Mustang shrugged while ringing out his jacket.

Ed growled a bit, but he didn't have time to be pissed at the Colonel, as multiple spikes came flying at him. Edward dodged them by leaping from side to side.

"It seems you've gotten faster! Not many can avoid my attacks!"

Armstrong slammed his fist into the ground and spikes of rock came flying at Edward.

Ed clapped his hands and touched the ground beneath him to create a small platform, and lifting himself up a good ten feet. Armstrong countered this by launching more metal spikes at the eldest Elric brother. Edward clapped his hands and touched his automail, creating the blade once more. And he used his automail blade to deflect the incoming projectiles.

Armstrong sprinted forward and slammed his fist into Ed's platform, causing it to crumble beneath him.

"Ah! Damn it!"

Ed struggled to try and stay upright as the ground beneath his feet crumbled away. He leapt backwards and launched himself into the air. Ed clapped and touched his automail, and returning it to its' usual state. Extending his arms, Ed did a few back hands springs once he touched the ground to try and dissipate the momentum from his fall.

Clapping once more, Ed touched the ground and multiple fists burst forth. Armstrong was quick to punch and dodge each one, but as he did Edward sprinted forward, clapping and turning his arm into a blade. With the tip of the blade pointing right at his chest, the Strongarm Alchemist couldn't move a muscle.

Edward smirked. "Gotcha."
Armstrong nodded. "I concede Edward Elric, you win."

Lowering his arm, Ed returned the transmuted metal to its' original state.

"So are we done? Or is Hawkeye going to start shooting at me?"

"No, we're done here," Mustang answered.

Ed let out a sigh of relief. "Good, cause I really don't want to have to fight another person right now."

He then began walking back towards the castle where he saw that Riza and Al were no longer standing alone. Dumbledore, McGonagall, Snape, and Umbridge were all in front of the large entrance to Hogwarts.

"Why are you all here?" he asked, once he was close enough.

"We heard the ruckus and came to investigate, only to find you were engaged in a battle with your superior officer!" Umbridge exclaimed.

"Yeah? So what?"

Umbridge looked red in the face. "You destroyed the grounds of Hogwarts with our battle!"

Edward looked behind him to see a little of the destruction caused by the three alchemists and stated. "I'll return it to normal, it will only take a few seconds."

"I'll take care of it Brother," Al suggested and then walked out to return the grounds of Hogwarts to their original state.

"I am sorry to disturb you Edward, but I believe none of us realized that your assessment was this...strenuous," Dumbledore explained.

Ed rubbed the back of his head. "It's alright, but I am sorry about your grounds. It will all be fixed up in no time."

"Wh-what happened to your arm!?"

Edward instantly looked at his automail. With his red coat, glove, and part of his black shirt gone it gleamed in the bright sunlight.

He lowered his arm and fought the urge to hid it behind his back. "Oh...crap..."

"You didn't tell them about your automail?" Riza questioned.

Ed rolled his eyes a bit. "No, I hate it when people freak out over my automail. And besides, why do they need to know in the first place?"

Umbridge cleared her throat. "And what exactly is automail, Mr. Elric?"

"You don't know?" Armstrong asked, a little surprised.

"They apparently don't have it here, Major. But to answer your question, automail is an automotive armored prostheses."

"Prostheses?" McGonagall questioned. "Do you mean to say-"
"That I lost my arm? Yes."

Edward hadn't wanted to reveal his missing limbs at all, and just because the cat was out of the bag with his arm it didn't mean that he still couldn't keep his leg under wraps.

All of the wizards looked absolutely shocked.

"H-how?" McGonagall stuttered.

Ed looked away and mumbled, "There was an accident."

McGonagall instantly looked at the boy with pity in her eyes. She had no idea what it was like to lose a limb, and at such a young age as well. Right then Al returned and watched on in confusion at the tense scene.

"Is something wrong?" he asked.

Mustang then used this to speak up. "Yes, is there a problem with my subordinate having a disability and using technology to overcome it?"

Before Dumbledore could speak, Umbridge stated, "No, but I must say it is a tad suspicious that he didn't tell us of his...condition."

"Condition? You mean Brother's automail?"

Ed groaned as he rubbed his face. "I don't like it when people freak out over my automail, they do it in Amestris and I didn't want them to do it here too!"

"Edward is entitled to some privacy, and I see no reason to reprimand him for not revealing his prosthetic," Dumbledore stated.

Edward raised an eyebrow at Umbridge who was still glaring at him.

"W-well, I saw you fight with a sword! Where is it now?" Umbridge exclaimed, racking her eyes up and down Edward to see where he might be hiding such a weapon.

Ed tilted his head slightly at this. "Sword? I don't have a sword...Oh! Yeah, I think you mean this."

He clapped and touched his right arm, causing the metal plating to elongate and form a blade.

"I just used alchemy to extend the metal a bit and form a makeshift blade," he explained.

The wizards all stared in awe of the young alchemy professor.

"And you can do this at any time?" Snape questioned.

"Um...yes?"

"Dumbledore, I cannot allow Professor Elric to walk around Hogwarts with such a weapon."

"Weapon!" Ed exclaimed, clapping and returning his arm to normal. "It's my arm! You can't just take it away! I freaking need it!"

Dumbledore looked at Umbridge for her reply.

"It is simply too dangerous to let a child have a weapon such as this!"
"Brother's arm isn't a weapon! He needs it to work and do alchemy!"

"Excuse me, but Edward doesn't possess any weapon. His automail is purely civilian in nature and not combat oriented," Riza stated.

"Combat? What do you mean?" McGonagall questioned.

"Some automail in our country, mostly soldiers in the military, has special modifications that can be used in combat situations."

Snape raised an eyebrow. "And Edward's doesn't? It seems like that blade is very combat oriented."

Mustang narrowed his eyebrows. "Fullmetal's automail is essential for his being in the military. Without it he cannot perform many basic functions without difficulty or aid. The blade you see him create is the product of alchemy, and he only uses it when completely necessary for his own or other's safety."

"It is still extremely dangerous to let him walk the halls of Hogwarts with such a weapon."

"Brother isn't dangerous...well to people who aren't a threat to us that is..."

Ed face palmed at this. "I mean seriously! It's a metal arm! I'm not going to attack anyone here with it! You make it sound like I have a loaded gun hidden on me!"

"Do you have a gun?" McGonagall asked slowly.

"No," Ed snapped.

Riza sighed and explained, "Edward was given the option of obtaining a military issued gun but declined, he has had some fire arms training though that I myself facilitated."

"I don't need one, guns only kill people," Ed muttered under his breath, so low that no one caught it except Alphonse.

Umbridge cleared her throat. "I still have concerns over Edward's automail."

Roy rolled his eyes a bit. "Of course you do, but I assure you Fullmetal is not any threat to anyone at Hogwarts. He is only here to teach and research."

Umbridge looked ready to retaliate with another comment before Dumbledore raised his hand and stopped her.

"Edward is no threat to Hogwarts, and his automail doesn't change anything. Now I believe Madame Pomfrey wished to give you a check up right after your examination."

Ed snapped his fingers, "Oh yeah, forgot about that. Come on Al."

Dumbledore then stepped to the side and allowed Edward and Alphonse to walk back into the castle.

"Do you think they will tell everyone about your arm?" Alphonse asked as the two brothers trekked up the stairs to the Hospital Wing.

"I get the feeling Umbridge isn't the type of person to keep secrets like this. So yeah, the whole school will probably know about my arm by dinner."

"And your leg?"
"Let's just hope the Colonel doesn't mention it and keep this one to ourselves."

Al nodded and the two continued to make their way back to the infirmary.
Alphonse

Brother sat at his desk, reading one of the Flamel journals. I sat beside him, looking through an old alchemy text Brother seemed to think was the key to decoding Flamel's notes.

"Okay, this passage mentions a cat, what if it is referring to a lion?"

"Like the Green Lion!"

Ed smiled at his younger brother. "Exactly."

Ed then handed the journal he was looking at to Alphonse who read the passage quickly. "I think you're onto something Brother."

"If I am, then we may have this code cracked by the end of the week!"

"You really think so?"

"Maybe, but I think we need to reference a couple more books to be sure."

Alphonse stood up, grabbing a stack of books they no longer needed. "I'll go there now. You try seeing if there is anymore parts of the entry that fits your theory."

"Okay Al, maybe see if you can find that book from Thomas Norton. You know the one."

Alphonse nodded and left the classroom, walking towards the library.

Madame Pince noticed when he walked past her and gave him a curt greeting. The librarian hadn't warmed up to the alchemists yet, and Alphonse thought she might not ever like them. She put up more of a fight in the beginning of the year though and only gave them half the scoldings they would have gotten a month ago.

But since Dumbledore gave them permission to use the library whenever they wanted, she set a few ground rules.

One, they had to tell her which books they took.

Two, keep the books in the same condition in which they were originally.

And three, put everything back when they were done.

The last one was created so she didn't have to put back the large stacks Ed and Al used every week it seemed.

So Alphonse made his way back to where the first book in his hands belonged. Sliding it back into place he overheard a few students talking.

"Did you see that fight the other day?" one boy asked.

"Yeah! That Colonel's explosions and flames were awesome!" another replied.

"Those officers were pretty cool. I'm kinda sad they left last night," one boy sighed.
A girl then whispered to the others, "But what about Professor Elric's arm? I heard it is this artificial thing made entirely of metal."

"Yeah! He turned it into a sword when he fought yesterday!"

"This alchemy professor keeps getting more and more interesting," the first boy stated.

"He certainly is a peculiar person. I mean, he isn't even of age and he's been in the military for years."

"And that brother of his? He claims to be younger but I don't see how they can be related! That guy is huge!"

"Maybe they have different fathers?" the girl suggested.

"Maybe, but we don't know if they look alike since he wears that scary suit of armor the whole time."

"Why does he do that? Does he think someone is going to attack him at Hogwarts?" one of the boys laughed.

"If you believe Dumbledore and Potter, yes."

Al heard the girl sigh. "Come on guys, maybe he wears it because that is what people from Amestris do."

"Well it's still weird," one of the boys grumbled. "And I think those Elric brothers are a mad bunch and have no idea why Dumbledore brought them here in the first place."

Alphonse sighed and put the books in his hands down. Staring at his hands, Al wondered whether those Flamel journals held the key to getting his body back.

It had been over four years since that fateful day. They had even spent three of them searching for the fabled Philosopher's Stone and now that was all for nothing.

How could they use something that was made of human souls to rectify their mistake?

"Alphonse?"

Al turned to see a blonde haired girl in blue robes and wearing what looked like radish earrings staring at him curiously, a few books in her hands.

"That is your name right? Alphonse Elric, Professor Edward's younger brother?"

"Oh! Yes, sorry. And you are?"

"My name is Luna. I'm in your brother's class. And are you alright? You seemed to be deep in thought there," the girl stated dreamily.

Al sighed a bit. "I'm fine, I was just thinking about something..."

The girl seemed to ponder this for a moment before asking, "What were you thinking about?

Alphonse was a little shocked at this. He and his brother had only been at Hogwarts for over a month now, and a few of the students were already comfortable being around them.
"I-I was just thinking of...home...that's all."

"Ah yes, you both traveled here from Amestris. I've never heard much about it. Is it that different from Hogwarts?"

Alphonse rubbed the back of his neck. "It's different alright."

"Is that one of the reasons you wear a suit of armor? Because it is normal in your country?" Luna asked.

Alphonse paused for a moment and Luna stared at him with a content expression.

"It isn't exactly normal where I'm from," Alphonse admitted. "But most people there don't seem to mind as much, but it's different here."

Luna tilted her head a bit at this. "And that's a bad thing?"

"No...not really...I don't know..."

"I think it makes you more are both rather peculiar individuals. But everyone is a little unusual if you just look close enough."

Alphonse was too shocked at this to reply. This Luna girl spoke with a dreamy sort of feel to it, but everything was blunt and honest.

"I better get going. It was nice talking to you Alphonse."

Alphonse snapped out of it and replied, "It was nice meeting you Luna."

Edward

Edward sighed and ran a hand over his face, setting down the journal in his hands. Alphonse hadn't returned from the library and Ed's eyes were staring to become strained from staring at the same entry. As his body relaxed his mind began to wander to the events of last night.

Edward stood outside in the cool night air, the wind blowing around him softly.

"Fullmetal, a word before we leave."

Ed sighed and followed the Colonel a couple steps away from the rest of the Group. Armstrong was holding their luggage and seemed to be conversing with Hagrid. Riza stood off to the side, her keen eyes trained on the Colonel and Ed. Dumbledore was talking to Professor McGonagall.

"What do you want?"

"I talked with Albus earlier today," he began. "And he told me an interesting story."

Ed noticed Mustang had switched back to Amestrian. He assumed either that the translation spell Dumbledore put on the Colonel had finally worn off or the Flame Alchemist didn't want anyone to overhear their conversation.

"A story? Did it have a beautiful princess and a dragon?" Ed snorted. It felt a little weird to be talking in his native tongue again. With both him and Alphonse using English everyday. They didn't even use Amestrian in private, so as they could practice the new language more and more.
Mustang glared at Edward but continued. "Are you aware of a wizard named Voldemort?"

Ed perked up at this and nodded. "Yeah, I know he is crazy and a really powerful and bad wizard."

"And then you know about Harry Potter and the role he plays in all of this."

"Dumbledore told me Harry survived some killing curse when he was a baby, and that caused this Voldemort guy to be destroyed. But now, he's back and is after Harry."

"So what do you think of the situation?"

Mustang waited as Ed tapped his chin. "I'm not sure. I know I don't have all the facts, and know only the big picture. But from what I've heard the government is in denial about this guy's return. And I am too, in a sense. Because if he died, there is no way he has returned. But...but if he didn't die...then he could be back. And if what I've heard from the first time he was at large, that isn't a good thing."

"I agree. Dumbledore asked if Amestris would help if the Ministry of Magic finally accepted his return, and I told him it would depend on the higher ups, but I will try and send some aid."

"So...where do I play into all this, because I highly doubt you pulled me over just get my opinion."

Mustang smirked at this. "You're right, I want you to keep an eye on the situation here. If something happens, let's just say I won't reprimand you for defending yourself and your brother."

Edward grinned at this, Mustang knew he wouldn't sit ideally by if someone was in serious danger.

"Anything else Colonel?"

"Yes, I want you to watch out for Harry Potter in particular. Dumbledore is aware of the government's presence in Hogwarts and knows he may be forced to leave. He wants to know that Harry is safe and asks if you could do this for him."

Ed nodded. "Sure, I've talked to Harry and he seems like a good kid. I'll keep an eye out for him."

Mustang and Ed then returned to the rest of the group.

"Are you ready to depart Colonel Mustang?" Dumbledore asked.

He nodded and Riza turned to Edward and Alphonse. "You boys take care, and be sure to write."

Ed resisted the urge to roll his eyes. "Okay."

"Don't destroy anything, Fullmetal."

"I haven't destroyed anything yet you bastard!" Ed roared.

"Never say never, Fullmetal."

Ed growled a bit and clenched his fists, fighting the urge to punch something.

"Don't you have some paperwork to go put off?"

Mustang's eyebrow twitched at this and Riza decided to speak to Dumbledore at this moment.

"I think I speak for the Colonel and the Major in that we thank your for your hospitality and
understanding during our stay."

"You are quite welcome, Miss Hawkeye."

Mustang flipped open his watch and looked at Dumbledore.

"I believe it is time that we depart."

He then looked at his youngest subordinate. "Fullmetal, I still expect reports on your progress, so don't slack off too much."

"I'm not the one who slacks off you lazy bastard!"

"Brother," Al chided.

Ed was breathing a little heavy and glared at the Colonel.

"Goodbye Edward! I hope to see you again soon!" Armstrong cried out, hugging the boy tightly. And without any shirt on.

"Damn it Major! Let me go!"

Edward was brought out of this memory by the noise of students entering his class.

They all went to their desks and the few students that answered the riddle correctly, pulled out their text books. It was an eerie silence, unnatural for this group of fifteen year olds.

Everyone was staring at Edward intently.

Sighing, he moved to the front of his desk and leaned back against it, crossing his arms.

"Look, I know you all are wondering what happened the other day with the boggart."

A few students looked down in shame at this and Ed continued.

"So for right now, I will allow you guys to ask a few questions."

The students exchanged a few looks before Hermione spoke up, "Do you mean to say Professor, that we can ask you anything? And you'll answer?"

"Within reason," he warned.

The room was soon filled with a buzz, as everyone was talking. A couple hands shot up and Edward called on Neville first.

"Are you alright sir?"

The question shocked Edward a bit. He was expecting the obvious; what was the thing the boggart turned into? But this? This shocked the young State Alchemist who cleared his throat before speaking.

"Um-yes. Yes, I'm fine Neville."

Neville gave him a small smile and Edward called on another student from the Gryffindor side.

"How did the your superior officer do the thing with flames?"
"The flames? That was alchemy. If you remember, the Colonel is also a State Alchemist. He is known as the Flame Alchemist and used his skills to dispose of the boggart."

The students talked amongst themselves about this for a few moments before Edward called on a Slytherin girl.

"Sir, what exactly did the boggart turn into?"

The silence in the room was so thick you could cut it with a knife.

Edward swallowed the lump in his throat and began.

"The boggart, as you know turns into your worst fear. For many of you, it would probably be something common; like snakes, clowns, or heights. But for me? It turned into something I never thought or hoped to see again. It was product of a mistake I made years ago and that is all I will say on the subject."

There was a pregnant pause after Ed finished.

And Hermione was the one to break it with, "Thank you Professor. I know this all must be hard for you."

The corners of Ed's mouth tilted upwards a bit.

"You're welcome, Hermione."

"Sir? Can we ask you about your assessment yesterday?" One boy from Gryffindor asked.

Ed shrugged. "Sure, I guess."

"How did you do the thing with your arm?" Ron asked. "We heard it's made of metal too!"

Hermione glared at Ron and then looked at Edward apologetically. "I'm sorry about that Professor he-"

Ed lifted his hand and stopped her there. "No, it's fine. I knew this would come and honestly was a little surprised no one has blurted out that question earlier."

The students stared on intently, curious about the rumors the Alchemy Professor didn't have a right arm and it was made entirely of metal.

"It is called automail. It is an automated armored prosthetic. And I created the blade by using alchemy to transmute some of the plates on my arm into a makeshift weapon."

"So you are missing your right arm," Harry stated.

Ed only nodded in reply.

The class erupted in conversation as the students discussed this newest development.

"Can your automail do anything else?"

"How did you lose your arm?"

"Can you turn it into anything other than a blade?"
"Can we see it!?"

Ed was bombarded with question after question. After a few moments of this he lifted his hand to his mouth and whistled sharply. Everyone in the room covered their ears and winced from the sharp sound.

Ed sighed, "Better, now if you guys do that again I won't answer any questions. But to answer the few I heard; Not really, in an accident, yes I can transmute the iron into other shapes but rarely do, and hell no."

The students looked rather dejected at this.

"But sir-"

"Nope, now that is enough questions for now. For those of you who answered the riddle we need to start going more in depth into understanding."

The students all looked a little disappointed at this but the few in the front opened their books and pulled out pieces of parchment and their quills.

Edward made his way to the chalkboard and wrote in giant letters;

```
ELEMENT
```

Turning back to his class Ed asked, "Who can tell me what exactly an element is?"

Hermione's hand shot up and Edward called on her.

"An element is a substance consisting of atoms which all have the same number of protons and is chemically the simplest substances and hence cannot be broken."

"Correct, now you all should have been studying the Periodic table."

The group of students nodded.

"Good, so if you've all been studying it. Then, who can tell me what the is atomic number of aluminum?"

Ed looked around and called on Neville.

"Um, thirteen?"

Ed smiled a bit. "That's right."

Neville seemed to relax at this and smiled at his professor.

"Now, you all need to keep studying the elements in the periodic table. It is vital that you know them, their makeup, and properties. We will be having quizzes every week on a set of elements. The next time you are in here, be sure that you have studied the Alkali metals. This is the first group in the table."

The students nodded and a few made a note of the upcoming quiz.

"This is all vital, you need to grasp that. Without knowing this information, you cannot even think of attempting any alchemy."
Then, Blaise Zabini raised his hand and Edward called on him.

"Why do we need to learn all this muggle science? It's all nonsense."

Edward narrowed his eyes at the boy and replied, "This is all vital. Any transmutation you try without understanding the chemical make up will only be disastrous."

"But why is that Professor? You said that the transmutation wouldn't work, that's all."

Ed sighed and crossed his arms. "Not knowing what you are transmuting is idiotic. It could cause a rebound, if you aren't careful."

Harry then spoke up, "A rebound sir?"

"Rebounds in alchemy are when a transmutation goes wrong. And horrible things can happen when they do."

"What can happen, Professor?" Neville asked, the nervousness in his voice showing.

"A multitude of things. Sometimes the transmutation just won't work, others there might be an explosion, death, or even worse."

Students gasped at this.

"Death? You mean we could die if we perform alchemy!?" Malfoy exclaimed.

"No, Mr. Malfoy. You won't die because you won't be performing any alchemy whatsoever," Ed retorted.

A couple students giggled at this and Malfoy's face turned a little red. From embarrassment or anger, Ed didn't know.

Then, Hermione raised her hand and asked, "Professor, you said something even worse than death can happen...what exactly is that?"

Before Ed could answer, Alphonse walked back into the room.

It was cruel irony in a way, and this caused Ed's train of thought to halt in its tracks. The flashback to hearing Al's cries for help, as his body was broken down rang in his ears.

"Brother?"

This caused Ed to snap out of the memory and stare at his brother and students. Most had a concerned expression and were staring at him intently.

Clearing his throat he answered Hermione's question. "Nothing you need to be concerned about, class dismissed."

A few students bolted out of the door at this, while most packed up and slowly left the classroom.

Edward turned away and sat back down at his desk.

Alphonse walked towards him, and Ed ran a hand through his bangs.

"I'm okay, Al. It's just...you coming in right when she asked? It brought up the memory of that day again."
"Are you sure you're alright Brother? I know you are still taking that sleep potion from Madamè Pomfrey."

"That is only to make sure I actually sleep at night, I'm fine Al."

Al sighed. "You can't just brush off the subject whenever it come up, Brother."

Ed leaned back in his chair and looked up at the ceiling.

"You're right Al...but I-I don't know if I will ever be over what happened. I promise I'll try and open up more though. Okay?"

Al seemed content with this as he nodded. He then set the books in his hand on the desk in front of him, causing Ed to lean forward in his chair.

"I got the books you asked for, Brother."

Ed picked up the book on the top of the stack and started flipping through it. "You took a while, anything happen?"

"I talked with this one girl, Luna?"

Ed raised an eyebrow at this. "Luna Lovegood? She was the first one to solve the riddle."

"And she is really nice Brother," Al added.

"Hm...she seemed like an alright girl. A little out there at times, but a smart one."

Ed flipped through the book once more and Al sat down next to him reading through the journals once more.

Edward set the book in his hands down and rubbed his eyes.

Letting his eyes wander for a bit, he looked over at Neville's desk. There was a lone book left on there and Edward walked over, picking it up. Flipping through it he saw multiple drawings and sketches of plants alongside text.

"What is it Brother?"

"Some book Neville must have left. Looks like a book about plant life."

"Oh, okay."

Ed thought for a couple moments before reaching a decision.

"Hey Al? I'm going to return it to him. I'll be back in a bit."

"Okay Brother," Al replied and started reading his book again.

Closing the book, Ed walked out of the classroom. He then realized that he had no idea where Neville was and stopped in his tracks and pondered this for a moment.

He personally would want any book returned to him as fast as possible. It could be the next step for getting his brother's body back. But this book might not be as important to Neville.

As Edward was deep in thought another Professor passed him on the stairs.
"Hello Edward," Professor Sprout said curtly.

Ed snapped out of his thoughts and looked up at the Herbology Professor who was slightly glaring at him.

He groaned a bit and ran his hand over his face. "I said I was sorry about your tree!"

"But the fact is you still did irreparable damage to the Willow."

"It tried to kill me!" Ed roared.

"You still didn't need to destroy a whole branch like that."

Edward groaned once more and took a deep breath, trying to calm himself.

"I actually am lucky I ran into you," he stated, "Neville left this in my classroom and I don't know where he is, it looks like subject you teach; Herbology right?"

She nodded and he handed the book to her.

"Ah yes, I gave this to him last week for some extracurricular study."

"So can you give it to him? I don't see him for a couple days and don't want to try and hunt him down in this giant castle."

"I have him later today, so I will return it to him."

"Okay, thanks."

"Neville speaks very highly of you, you know." the Herbology professor stated.

Edward raised an eyebrow at this. "Neville talked about me?"

"Yes. He holds you and your subject in high esteem."

Edward shrugged a little at this. "He's a good person, and smart too. Was the second one to get the riddle I assigned them a month ago."

"I heard a few of the students talking about that," she stated. "A rather odd teaching method if I do say so."

"It was how me and Al were taught," Ed replied.

"Well I'll tell Neville you returned his book, and thank you for doing so. Most Professors might not care about this sort of thing."

Ed crossed his arms. "I'm not most professors."

Sprout then had the tiniest of smiles. "I suppose not. Take care, Edward."

Ed watched as she left, and then turned around to walk back to his room, sticking his hands in his pockets.

Harry

He, along with Ron and Hermione were waiting in the common room, late at night. All of them
staring at the fireplace, eager for Sirius to appear.

Soon a face took shape in the embers.

"Harry?"

"We're here Sirius!"

All three then moved closer to the fireplace.

"I got your letter, what happened at Hogwarts?"

"Well a lot has happened since I sent that letter to you Sirius," Harry explained.

"Is it Umbridge?"

"No, it is Professor Elric."

"Elric? The young State Alchemist from Amestris? What has he done?"

"Well it started out with his superior officers coming to Hogwarts," Harry began.

"You should have seen them Sirius! There was this Colonel, who was also an Alchemist, I think his name was Mustang. But he does these things with flames! Then this woman, Hawkeye, was with them, and even though they told us she was in a lower rank she seemed to command the most respect. And this giant dude named Armstrong! With lots of muscles, he kept taking his shirt off and made the others yell at him to put it back on," Ron exclaimed.

"Sounds more like a circus troupe than a group of officers."

"It was! And that isn't the weirdest thing that happened."

Harry then spoke up, "There was a boggart in Professor Elric's room."

"A boggart? How did one get in there?"

"We don't know, but Dumbledore is investigating it," Hermione stated.

Harry then continued with the story. "And Professor Edward opened the cabinet it was in and it formed into this horrible creature."

"What kind of creature?" Sirius asked.

"It...it's nothing any of us have ever seen before. I even tried looking it up in the library, but there was nothing," Hermione said.

"What did it look like?"

"It was this...almost humanoid looking thing. But the arms and legs were bent at odd angles and it blood pooled around it. It reached for Professor Elric and he froze...there was this look of absolute horror on his face."

Sirius seemed to mull this over for a few moments. "I've never heard of anything like that. But what happened if Edward froze?"

"Well Colonel Mustang disposed of it with his flame alchemy," Harry answered.
"He did? Wouldn't that be dangerous in a class full of students?"

"It was very contained, it only centered around the creature, which changed when he got in front of it."

"Into what?" Sirius asked.

"It was a woman...holding a baby...I didn't get a good look at her, but she called him a monster and then he destroyed her without a second thought," Hermione replied.

"A woman? And her child?" Sirius let out a small huff. "Well, as a soldier I suppose one's greatest fear might be that your own citizens would fear and hate you for what you've done...but what happened after the boggart was gone?"

"Professor Elric was in such a state of shock the Colonel slapped him then sent him to the infirmary."

"And has he returned to class?"

Harry nodded, "He was up and moving the next day. And did his re-certification too."

"Re-certification? For what?"

"His State Alchemist title, he and the Colonel and Major Armstrong went out into the grounds and fought each other."

"Yeah! They used their alchemy and created these giant platforms and flames and spikes! But that isn't even the craziest part!" Ron exclaimed.

"Wait! They had a battle on the grounds of Hogwarts?!"

"Yeah, but then they fixed it with alchemy. And not one of them had a scratch."

"How did they fight using their alchemy?" Sirius asked.

"Well Professor Elric would touch the ground and create large platforms and giant earthen fists, the Colonel created flames and mini explosions and then Major Armstrong made these large spike and other things."

Sirius's eyebrows shot up at this. "And how did you see all of this?"

"We were in the common room when someone burst in yelling about a battle on the grounds. We watched from the window," Hermione answered.

"And what did you think of their abilities?" Sirius inquired.

"It was like nothing we've ever seen, Sirius. I didn't see one of them use a wand."

"No wands? At all?"

"No, Professor Edward said they only used alchemy."

"And it was that powerful? I've never heard of alchemy having such abilities."

"Well Amestris has alchemists in the military. So it can't be a rarity that alchemy can be used in battle like that."
"You guys are forgetting the other major development!" Ron exclaimed.

Both Harry and Hermione turned to Ron, a little confused.

"Professor Ed's arm."

"His arm?" Sirius questioned.

"I was going to tell him, Ron," Harry said.

"What is this about Edward Elric's arm?" Sirius pressed.

"His arm, Sirius...well it's completely metal."

"Metal!" he exclaimed.

"Yes! His right arm is completely missing and he has this metal prosthetic in place of it."

"His arm...missing...this is unusual. But how did you not notice it before?"

"He always wore a long coat and gloves. We never saw his right arm until now."

"Has he said anything about it?"

"We were able to talk to him in class today. He said there was an accident a few years ago that made him lose his arm," Hermione replied. "He then ask we drop the subject, and we did. But when we talked more about alchemy another touchy subject seemed to come up."

"And what would that be?"

"A rebound. It's were in alchemy, a transmutation goes wrong. Professor Elric said that the effects can range from nothing, to something worse than death."

"What can be worse than death?" Ron asked.

Harry looked away at this. "A lot of things Ron...a lot of things..."

"I-I'm sorry, mate. I didn't mean-"

"It's fine Ron. Continue on Hermione," Harry said.

Hermione cleared her throat and continued, "Well, Alphonse then came back into the room and Professor Elric got thing pained expression on his face, like he was reliving some great tragedy."

Sirius seemed to mull this new information over for a few moments. "I'll have to discuss this with Dumbledore."

"Why? Do you think he's dangerous?" Ron asked.

"Oh, I believe he is dangerous. But from what you told me with his dealings with Umbridge, so I don't think he is with the Ministry. But this power he holds...it is greater than I think than Dumbledore even imagined when he brought him to Hogwarts."

"Is Dumbledore going to ask him to join the order?!" Ron exclaimed.

"No, we don't know enough about this boy yet," Sirius stated.
"How are things in the Order? Would Professor Elric's abilities help?" Hermione asked.

"The Order needs all the help it can get. And we aren't getting it from the Ministry as you can tell. Fudge is growing more paranoid and I've heard rumors that big changes are coming to Hogwarts, and soon."

"Soon? What do you mean? What changes?" Harry questioned.

"I-," Sirius then seemed to look over his shoulder to a moment. "Someone's coming. I have to go. Stay vigilant and keep an eye out for anything suspicious."

Sirius left, leaving only a couple burning embers in the fireplace.

Harry leaned back on his knees and groaned.

"Stay vigilant? Voldemort is out there and we are supposed to just look out for something?"

"Harry. Dumbledore and the Order won't let anything tragic happen. They are already working against him. And once the Ministry realizes he's returned-"

"It will be too late!" Harry yelled his fists clenched tightly.

Hermione physically recoiled at the outburst.

"Harry...you need to calm down, mate," Ron said slowly.

"I am calm!"

"No you aren't. You're frustrated and angry. Go up and get some sleep, we'll figure out something tomorrow," Ron ordered.

Harry almost rebuked him but Hermione spoke up.

"He's right Ron. Voldemort is out there and we can't just sit here."

Hermione took in a deep breath. "We need to learn to defend ourselves. And Umbridge sure as heck isn't going to do it."

"What are you suggesting?" Harry asked.

"I'm saying. That if Umbridge won't teach us, we need to find someone who will."
Edward walked into the Great Hall and sat down, and began to eat his breakfast. The students were abuzz with excitement. Madame Pomfrey had explained that it was because of a trip to the little town by Hogwarts called Hogsmeade next week. Plus, it didn't hurt that it was a nice Saturday morning with absolutely no classes that day.

"Ello Edward," Hagrid greeted.

"Hey Hagrid."

"How are ye?"

Edward shrugged a bit. "Fine I guess, how are you?"

Hagrid scratched his chin a bit. "Well I 'ave to go to Diagon Alley today."

"Diagon Alley? Is that apart of Hogsmeade?"

Hagrid shook his head. "No, it's in London. It's a wizardin' shoppin' area. Most students get their books an' things there before school starts."

"Why do you need to go there?"

"Need te get some feed fer me Bowtruckles."

Edward didn't know what the heck a bowtruckle was, but he assumed it was some weird magical creature that Hagrid had.

"Well, I hope you find what you need. Wish I had some more books on elements for these kids to read and maybe some different samples of elements."

Hagrid processed this for a few moments, before exclaiming.

"Why don' ye c'mon with me!"

Ed's eyebrows shot up. "Really? Could I?"

"Ye need supplies, right?"

Edward nodded, "It would make teaching some of these kids a lot easier, if I had a couple more things."

"Then join me!"

A smile soon appeared on Ed's face and only grew in size.

"And I'm sure Dumbledore will give ye money te buy supplies."

Edward's eyebrows scrunched up at this. "Money? I don't need money. Mustang told me he set up my account here encase I needed anything."

"That's great! I'll still 'ave to ask 'em permission, but I don' see a reason why ye can' join me."
"I'll go talk to Al about it and meet you back at your hut in half an hour."

Edward stood up and quickly left the Hall. But he was so excited that he didn't pay enough attention and ran into a woman.

"Damn it!" Ed cursed as the force of their collision forced him back and to lose his balance.

Ed stood up and brushed himself off and looked at the woman he had run into.

She was a thin woman, draped gauzy shawls and cloaks and bangles all covered with shining sequins and glittering strings of beads. She had thick glasses, which hugely magnified her eyes. She had frizzled brown hair, dark green eyes, and somewhat pale skin.

"I'm sorry my boy. I was looking into the beyond and seemed to have distracted myself."

"No, I ran into you. Sorry," Ed apologized.

The woman stared at him curiously for a few moments and asked, "You're the alchemy professor, Edward Elric, correct?"

"Yes..."

"I sense a great deal of darkness in you boy. And for someone so young..."

"I'M NOT THAT YOUNG YOU HAG!" Ed roared.

The woman seemed a little startled at Ed's outburst. "I am sorry if what the Inner Eye sees angers you. But it is the truth."

Ed raised an eyebrow. "Inner Eye?"

"Yes. I am one of the few in this world to see into the beyond," she stated.

"Beyond...like the future?" Ed stated slowly.

The woman paused for a moment and proceeded Edward's tone before stating, "Ah, I see you are not a believer."

"Believer? Look lady, I don't believe in anything other than what science tells me. And who the hell are you anyway?"

Ed crossed his arms and raised an eyebrow at her.

"I am Sybill Trelawney, and the Divinations professor here at Hogwarts," she said proudly.

"Divinations...wait, you mean like you think you're a fortune teller?"

"I am a Seer, thank you," she rebuked.

Ed rolled his eyes. "Sorry, but scientific study has proved that so called 'precognition' is a total hoax."

"Science! It is a gift, my boy. You cannot explain the workings of the Inner Eye through any muggle means!"

"Okay then. Tell me about my future."
"The Inner Eye does not see on command."

"Shocker," Edward said sarcastically.

Trelawney looked furious and then reached out, grabbing Ed's left arm.

"Hey! Let go!"

She moved to take off the glove and examine his palm despite his protests.

"You were born in...late winter, and have experienced great pain and sacrifice in life. And you will continue to do so for the near future...But I sense a great darkness within you."

Ed was finally able to yank his hand away from her and angrily put his glove back on.

"What the hell was that for!"

"I simply read your palm," she stated.

Ed growled a bit, his fists were clenched tightly. He wanted to yell at this woman more, but he remembered that Hagrid would be waiting on him and decided to ignore the crazy woman.

"Don't do that again," he growled.

He then pushed past her to continue on his way towards his classroom.

"And be wary, Mr. Elric. Someone you know will soon reveal his true colors. He is not what he seems!" she called after him.

Ed scoffed at this and rolled his eyes. She was completely insane. No one can see the future.

'But she said you were born in late winter. That's February.' the small voice in his head stated.

'Lucky guess.'

'And sacrifice, you gave up your arm to save Al.'

'Again lucky. That could mean a number of things. Everyone has sacrificed something. She probably just assumed that because I'm in the military. She can't see the future.'

While Ed argued with himself he finally reached his room. Opening the door he saw Al, sitting by his desk, with books surrounding him.

"Hey Al,"

Alphonse looked up at his brother. "Brother! I'm glad you're here! I think I found something."

Edward walked up to his brother. "Wait, what did you say?"

"I think I found something! I've been looking at a few entries in the beginning journals saw that he made sure to emphasis the color of the red roses in his garden. So I'm thinking that it must be apart of the code. I mean it can't just be a coincidence that he emphasizes red and that is the color of the Philosopher's stone."

"Really? That's great, Al! We need to-," Ed stopped mid sentence realizing he couldn't go with Hagrid to Diagon Alley now.
"Brother? What's wrong?" Al asked.

"Oh...well Hagrid is going shopping in this town, and he told me I could tag along to get some stuff for my classes," Ed rubbed the back of his neck. "But I should stay with you, I mean if we work all day maybe we can crack the code or-"

Alphonse cut of his older brother right there. "Wait...you were invited by Hagrid to join him on this little trip?"

"Um, yeah?"

"You should go, Brother."

"Go! But if we crack the journals it could be the key to finding a way to get your body back!"

"I won't crack the code today Brother. You should go with Hagrid to get your supplies."

"But Al!" Ed protested.

"Brother, I'll be fine. We've been working on these journals so much lately maybe we should both take a break. Maybe some time off will help us get a new perspective."

Edward was ready to protest more but Al crossed his arms. "You should go Brother."

"But what about you?"

"I'll be fine! I think I want to explore the castle a little more, or maybe I'll go and talk to Elizabeth."

Ed chewed his bottom lip a bit, his mind racing while Al sighed and stood up.

"Brother, go. I'll be fine. We will work on the journals tomorrow," he said in a very stern tone.

Ed deflated a bit and nodded. "Alright Al. But we work all of tomorrow!"

"Okay."

"You're sure you'll be alright alone?"

"I'll be fine, Brother."

Ed ran a hand through his bangs. "Okay. I better go now, and I'll see you later today okay?"

"Bye Brother," Al extended his arm and the two bumped fists.

"Bye Al!" Ed called after him as he ran out of his classroom. He sprinted through the halls, and out into the grounds of the school. He saw Hagrid outside his hut.

"Ed! Ye made it!"

"Yeah, so how are we getting there? Apparition?"

"No, we 'ave a Portkey!" He then gestured to a small boot and Ed was really confused.

"Portkey?"

"It's a magical objec' with te power te take us to a se' destination."
"That boot is going to transport us somewhere?"

"Yep! Jus' a touch an' we'll be off!" Hagrid stated proudly.

"Just touch it?"

"Yeah, an' hold on tight," Hagrid warned.

"What will it do? How does it work?"

"Magic o' course!"

Ed groaned a bit and rubbed his eyes. "I'm really starting to hate that saying."

"Do ye have everythin' ye need?"

"Yeah, let's go,"

The two walked closer to the boot and Hagrid counted down from three.

"One, two, three! Grab on Ed!"

The pair grabbed the boot and Ed felt as if someone hooked his jacket and flung him up. He was spinning for a couple seconds before he felt his feet touch the ground.

Gripping his head, Ed felt nauseous and his head was spinning. He blinked a few times an' things came into focus. Edward was in the middle of a dark and shabby looking bar. A couple people sat at tables and were talking. One man was wiping down the counter of the bar and greeted them.

"Hello Hagrid,"

"Ello Tom. How's business?"

"Good, why did you bring a student with you?" he asked.

Ed's eyebrow twitched and he took in a deep breath, ready to rant before Hagrid corrected him, "This is a friend o' mine, and a 'fessor at Hogwarts. He teaches alchemy."

Tom looked at Ed curiously for a few moments. "He looks a little young, if you ask me."

"I'm fifteen, you idiot," Ed hissed.

"Fifteen? He's not even of age?!"

"I'm a State Alchemist from Amestris. I'm fully qualified to teach some brats the basics of alchemy."

Hagrid then interjected with, "Tom, can ye watch our Portkey fer us?"

Tom nodded and pulled out a wand, floating the boot towards him and setting it behind the bar.

"Thank ye. C'mon Ed."

Ed sighed and followed Hagrid past the bar and into a small courtyard.

"Why are we here?"

Hagrid smiled and pulled out a pink umbrella, tapping the bricks in a certain order. Once he finished
the wall began to rumble and move, revealing a bustling alley lined with shops an' full of people.

"Wow..."

Hagrid grinned and the two walked through the alley. Ed was looking at every shop they passed. There were shops selling robes, shops selling telescopes and strange silver instruments Ed had never seen before, windows stacked with tottering piles of books, quills, and rolls of parchment, potion bottles, globes of the moon.

"Where are we going first?" Ed asked, feeling a little like a kid in a candy store.

"Gringotts. It's the wizardin' bank where ye can pull out some of yer money."

Ed nodded and continued to follow him through the street and towards a large white building.

They walked up the steps to a set of burnished bronze doors. The doors were flanked by small creatures with pointed noses and ears and dark slanted eyes and wearing uniforms of scarlet and gold. They walked past that and into a small entrance hall and with another set of doors. Engraved on the doors were the words:

\[\text{Enter, stranger, but take heed} \]
\[\text{Of what awaits the sin of greed} \]
\[\text{For those who take, but do not earn,} \]
\[\text{Must pay most dearly in their turn.} \]
\[\text{So if you seek beneath our floors} \]
\[\text{A treasure that was never yours,} \]
\[\text{Thief, you have been warned, beware} \]
\[\text{Of finding more than treasure there.}\]

Walking through the second set of doors, Edward found himself in a vast marble hall long counters stretching along its length and around a hundred of the same little creatures sitting at desks.

"Hagrid...what are they?" Edward whispered.

"Goblins, they run Gringotts."

He was a little shocked but accepted Hagrid's answer. Maybe with all the other craziness surrounding him, he was becoming a little desensitized to all of this. Ed turned away and they continued to walk the length of the hall. They walked up to a large counter and the goblin looked up at them.

"Can I help you?"

"I need te withdraw some funds from the Hogwarts vault."

"Do you have the key?" the goblin asked.

Hagrid dug around in his pockets before producing a small golden key. The goblin took it from him, and examine it before nodding.
"And Ed needs to pull out some money as well."

The goblin raised an eyebrow and looked at Edward.

"I don't have a key. My superior officer told me he set up my bank account here though."

"Superior officer?"

Ed nodded. "I'm Major Edward Elric, a State Alchemist of the Amestrian military. Colonel Roy Mustang is my superior officer."

"Can you produce any identification?"

Edward shoved his hand in his pocket and lifted out his silver pocket watch.

"This should prove I'm a State Alchemist."

He narrowed his eyes at the watch for a few moments and nodded. "Very well, Gornuk will take you to your vaults."

Another goblin took Hagrid's and Edward's key, which the head goblin had produced from a small drawer in his desk. They walked through one of the many doors and into a dark hallway, only lit by flaming torches. Gornuk directed them to a small cart, which both got onto. Gornuk then got behind the controls and the cart lurched forward.

They began racing through the cavern and pasted multiple vaults. Edward was looking around and was in awe of the massiveness of this bank. Back in Amestris he would just walk up to the counter, show his watch, and get money. But here? You got onto a rollercoaster just to get to your money!

Gornuk pulled a lever and the cart came to a screeching halt.

"Vault number 431. I believe this is you. Mr. Elric."

All three got out of the cart and Gornuk placed Edward's key into the lock and turned.

Edward heard the bolts on the other side of the door turn and the door swung open. In it, piles upon piles of glittering coins. Ranging from gold to silver to bronze.

"Blimey Ed!" Hagrid exclaimed. "Ye got enough money to last ye about twenty lifetimes!"

Ed walked into the vault and picked up a coins, turning it in his hand.

"What's the exchange rate for Amestrian cens and this money?"

"500 cen's to every galleon."

Ed looked around the vault and nodded. "Seems about right, though the Colonel seemed to have left most of it in my Amestrian account."

"Most!?"

"How much would I need for a couple books, and supplies for my classes?" Ed asked.

"Hm... perhaps about a fifty or so galleons," Gornuk answered.

"Okay, then I guess I'll need a bag or something. Hagrid? Do you have any spare piece of cloth or
Hagrid looked confused at the request but pulled out a clean handkerchief, handing it to Edward. Ed clapped his hands together and transmuted the cloth into a small little bag. He then proceeded to fill the entire thing with gold, silver, and bronze coins.

"This should be enough, if not we can just come back, right?"

Ed then got back in the cart and looked at Gornuk, who was staring at him. "That was strange magic, I don't think I've ever seen someone do that before," he commented. "It's not magic, it was alchemy," Ed explained.

Gornuk narrowed his eyes at Edward for a few moments before pulling back the lever and making the cart move again. They flew through the caverns, twisting and turning until Gornuk stopped the cart.

"Vault number 856."

"That's me," Hagrid said. He stood up and Gornuk took the key from him. Putting it into place, the locks began to turn and the door swung open. Inside was a considerable amount of gold, but not close to the amount Edward had in his vault.

He grabbed a couple coins to put in his pocket before leaving and getting back in the cart. Gornuk once again pulled the level and brought the cart back to their original starting point.

"Thank you, Gornuk," Ed said, getting out of the cart. The goblin stared at him curiously. "There are not many wizards who would thank a goblin, for what they believe is doing their job. Many might say you would be treating me as your equal then."

Edward brushed a little dirt off his coat. "I'm not most people. You may not look human, but considering how intelligent you are, you probably have a soul. And that is good enough for me."

"Hm... interesting notion, Mr. Elric."

Gornuk bowed his head a bit and left Hagrid and Edward. The pair started to walk out of the bank. 

"'nterestin' conversation ye had with Gornuk, there Ed."

Ed raised an eyebrow at this. "Why?"

"Most people don' see goblins as equals. Many look down on 'em."

His brows furrowed a bit at this. "Because they look different right?"

"That, and there's a lot o' bad blood 'tween us. Goblins can be bloodthirsty and cruel,"

"So can humans," Ed mumbled under his breath.

"An' goblins are looked on as inferior. Wizards also denied 'em wands, an' goblins denied us the
secrets behind their magic for makin' weapons an' armor."

Edward shook his head a bit. "Still seems stupid to me. But I suppose humans are like that everywhere."

"What de ye mean, ev'rywhere?" Hagrid asked.

Ed sighed a bit. "Back home, a couple decades ago, we annexed the small country of Ishval in the east. They weren't happy about it and tensions rose, until an accident where an Ishvalan girl was killed sparked a revolution."

Hagrid gasped at this a bit, but allowed Edward to continue. He stuffed his hands in his pockets and stared at the ground.

"The war ravaged the East for years. Ishvalans are looked upon as filthy and decrepit. The few that survived the war live in the slums of the cities. All because they have tanned skin, white hair, and red eyes and practice a different religion."

Hagrid didn't know how to respond to this, and remained silent.

"I was young when the war ended, so I don't know much about it. But I do know that they are still people."

"That's very noble of ye Ed."

He nodded in reply and the two continued to walk out of the bank and into the bustling street.

"We'll get ye set up first, Ed."

Ed agreed to this and followed Hagrid through the street and stopped in front of an alchemy shop. The window was filled with silver equipment and tools. Ed strode into the store, causing a little bell to ring.

"Hello, welcome to Lee's Alchemy shop. I'm William, how may I help you?" a person at the counter greeted.

"Do you have any samples of elements? Like Aluminum, Silicon, Lead or Carbon?"

"We got a whole selection here, how much would you like?" William moved out from behind the counter and towards a wall full of little shelves.

"Hm.. I think I need about half a pound of aluminum, a pound of carbon, and some lead as well."

The boy nodded and waved his wand. A couple drawers opened and the metals flew out and onto the counter.

"Anything else?"

"You have any books?" Ed asked.

The boy scratched his chin. "Not much of a selection here, but Flourish and Blotts has a great one."

"Then that will be all."

William nodded. "That will be about ten galleons and three sickles."
Edward looked to Hagrid who said, "Ten gold and three silver."

Ed nodded and laid out the correct amount. William packaged the elements up and said, "If you want we can owl them to you."

"Um, sure? Send it to Hogwarts, for Edward Elric."

William nodded and wrote down the information on a slip of paper.

"You'll get your purchase tomorrow."

Ed thanked him and he and Hagrid walked out of the shop.

"Where is that store William mentioned?"

"Right over there," Hagrid gestured. Ed smiled as he saw the mounds of books within the windows of the shop. They walked over and entered it, and Edward had a large grin on his face.

Walking up to the counter, Edward asked, "Where is the alchemy section?"

"In the back and to the right," the man replied. "I'll show you.

"Thanks."

They all walked to the section and saw about three bookcases full of various texts.

"What exactly are you looking for?" the man asked.

"I need some basic books about the elements and their properties. And do you have Richard Stanyhurst: A Study in Alchemy?"

"Well I have some books on the periodic table here," the man gestured. "And Stanyhurst is over here."

The man handed Edward the book and he thanked him.

"I'll be up front if you need anything."

He then left Edward and Hagrid back in the stacks to return to the counter.

Ed pulled a few books off the shelves and flipped through them. He finally decided on a text and put the others back on the shelf.

"Decided on a book?" Hagrid asked. Edward nodded and walked up to the counter.

"I'll take A Study in Alchemy and about sixteen copies of Elements of the Natural World,"

"Sixteen?" the man questioned.

"I just need a class set for a couple of my students," Ed explained as he reached into his pocket to grab his bag of coins.

The man raised an eyebrow. "You're a teacher?"

"Ed here teaches Alchemy!" Hagrid exclaimed. "Real prod'gy too,"

"And can you deliver them to Hogwarts for Edward Elric?"
"Um...yes. Yes we can."

It was obvious the man was a little shocked at the situation but proceeded to write down the order and tell Edward the total price.

"That'll be fifty galleons, three sickles, and two knuts."

Ed nodded and counted out the appropriate amount of change.

"I'll take this with me," Edward picked up *A Study in Alchemy* and the man nodded.

"Alright, you will receive your delivery in two days."

"Thank you," Edward waved as he and Hagrid walked out of the shop.

"Thanks for bringing me along, Hagrid."

"No trouble, Ed!"

"And you still need to get your feed for...Bowtruckles?"

"Yeah! It's just' down the street."

They walked a couple steps further down the street before stopping.

"Here we are," Hagrid said. The shop had a sign that said Magical Menagerie.

"I'll be out inna bit," Hagrid stated and entered the shop. Edward kicked a little pebble as he waited on Hagrid, observing the shops around him.

Sighing, he looked in the shop window of the place next to the Magical Menagerie shop.

It had multiple cages and each one had a fluffy owl in it with a few of the birds. A small one, a rusty color with golden eyes caught Ed's attention. It was chirping its' little head off at something while the attendant tried to cover the cage in hopes of calming it down.

"Ed?"

This broke Ed's train of thought and he turned towards the larger man. He was holding a sack over one of his shoulders.

"Got what you need?"

"Yeah, told ye I'd be out quick," Hagrid beamed before looking over Ed's shoulder to see what the younger had been staring at.

"Thinkin' 'bout gettin' an owl?"

Ed shook his head. "No, I can't take care of a pet with all the traveling I do.

"Owls don' need much care. Ye just have te let 'em hunt and they'll return te ye."

"I don't know, Hagrid..."

"Nonsense! C'mon!"

Hagrid then dragged Ed into the Owl shop. There were all different kinds of owls chirping and
flapping their wings within their cages.

"Will you calm down!" one attendant yelled. The small little bird Ed had watched earlier chirped some more and snapped its beak at the man.

Ed watched the scene curiously before Hagrid noticed the attendant, and then pulled Ed over him over.

"Me friend here wants to buy an owl," Hagrid stated.

The man turned his attention away from the small bird and forced a smile. "What kind of owl are you looking for?"

"What kind of owl is that?" Ed asked, pointing at the rust colored owl.

The man sighed. "Sorry about all the ruckus sir, but to answer your question. It's a pygmy owl."

"Looks a little small," he commented. The bird turned to Ed and snapped at him, looking like he didn't appreciate the comment.

"Doesn' look like he can carry a letter, let alone deliver one," Hagrid added.

"He is small, but they can still carry letters. They're usually used for fast deliveries."

"Over far distances?"

"Yes. They don't have to carry much weight so the long trip isn't as hard on them as some other owls," the man answered.

Ed processed this information for a few moments and weighed all the options in his head. Edward looked at the owl who only seemed happy to return the gaze.

"How much?" Ed asked.

"Y-you want to buy him?"

"Yeah, how much?" Ed asked, getting out his bag of coins.

"Ye sure Ed?" Hagrid asked.

Ed mulled this over for another moment before nodding.

"So how much?" he asked again.

"Um..about five galleons."

Ed grabbed five of the golden coins and extended his palm out. "This alright?"

"Y-y-yes! Yes!" the man took the coins out of Ed's palm. "I'll throw in the cage as well if you want!"

"Thanks," Ed lifted the handle on the cage and held it out, eye level.

The owl threw himself against the bars a couple of times, looking like he wanted to get free.

"Ye sure 'bout this Ed? He looks a little rough round the edges," Hagrid commented.

"He just needs a little talking too," Edward stated, before returning his attention back to the owl.
"Listen here, I need an owl who will be able to fly long distances and deliver one or maybe two letters. In between you can do whatever you want. So if you never want to see this place again, act calm and don't attack me...Deal?"

The bird tilted its' head a bit and Ed raised an eyebrow.

He then replied with a small chirp and Ed smiled.

"Good," he turned back to the attendant. "Thanks again."

The attendant stuttered a reply and they left the shop right after.

"Blimey, Ed. How'd ye know that'd work?"

Edward shrugged. "I didn't, but he didn't seem to like it there and I suppose you were right about something. Having an owl to send letters will be nice. And-"

An evil grin appeared on his face. "And, I think he will get along with the Colonel very nicely."

The owl tilted his head at Ed once more and snapped his beak a bit.

"Ohhh yes...they'll get along great."

Harry

"So have you figured out anything with the plan?" Ron asked.

Hermione rolled her eyes a bit. "Please try to be more obvious Ronald. Me and Harry have no idea what you mean."

"About Defense Against the Dark Arts!" Ron whispered.

Hermione sighed and shut the book in her hands. "Alright, but try to keep your voice down."

Ron grinned and scooted his chair closer to Hermione and Harry. They were all in the common room, a few students were in there talking and doing homework. Most were outside, enjoying the last of the good weather they would receive for a while. October was getting colder and colder and soon the grounds would be covered in snow.

"We need to learn how to defend ourselves," Hermione stated.

"But who will teach us?" Ron asked.

"Professor McGonagall?" Harry suggested.

Hermione shook her head. "No, she doesn't like Umbridge but she won't break the rules like that."

"What about Dumbledore!" Ron exclaimed.

"Fudge will throw him out faster than you can say 'owl', no...we need someone else," Hermione then tapped her chin for a few moments, thinking hard.

"What about Professor Edward?" Harry suggested.

Hermione looked a little shocked at this and Ron exclaimed, "What!?"
"Professor Elric...hmm...," Hermione mused.

Ron looked between Hermione and Harry. "Wait...do you think he would do it?"

"He's in the military, and obviously has the skill to teach us," Hermione stated.

"He obviously doesn't like Umbridge," Harry added.

"But would he do it!?" Ron exclaimed.

Hermione sighed. "I'm not sure...should we ask him?"

Harry thought about this for a moment and shook his head. "Not yet. We need to decide what exactly we are going to do before we approach him, it we even decide to."

"What exactly is all of this?" Ron asked.

"Well," Harry began. "Fudge thinks Dumbledore is training us to be a wizard army. So why don't we give him what he wants. We get everyone together. Everyone that believes Voldemort came back last year, get them together and learn to defend ourselves."

"And we ask Professor Elric to help us?" Ron inquired.

"Maybe...Sirius didn't seem to fully trust him, and I think we should wait before talking to him. Wait and see if we could trust him with this."

"And his brother?" Hermione added.

Harry shrugged. "I don't know, maybe? Maybe not. We can't let too many people know about this. We have to keep it secret of Umbridge will come down on us all."

"Alright, we keep it close. But if Professor Ed is out, then who will we get?" Ron asked.

"Well we need to find someone," Harry sighed.

"I think it should be you Harry," Hermione blurted out.

Harry's eyebrows shot up. "Me?"

Ron was grinning. "Yeah! You'd be great at it!"

"No, I'm not a teacher...no."

"You are the only one that has any experience whatsoever."

"Experience!?" Harry exclaimed.

Hermione saw Harry was getting angry, and chewed her lip nervously. "Well, you...you are the only one that has fought against You-Know-Who."

"Fought? I barely survive each time, and I've always had help Hermione. It wasn't skill, a lot of the time it was luck!"

"Harry, calm down," Ron said slowly.

"I am calm!" Harry roared, causing everyone in the common room to jump a bit and turn towards them.
"Harry, you need to take a deep breath and calm down," Hermione said in a low voice.

Harry was breathing heavily but did as Hermione told. Taking a few deep breaths his heart rate calmed and he no longer felt angry.

"I-I'm sorry," he mumbled.

"It's alright Harry," Hermione replied with a soft smile.

"It's just...-"

Ron cut him off. "We understand, mate."

"But we still need someone to teach us," Harry stated.

"And we will find them. But we need to consider all the options. And that includes you Harry."

Harry sighed. "Alright, Hermione. But I don't think I should teach. I wouldn't be any good"

With that he stood up and left his seat, walking up the staircase to the dormitories.
Edward

Edward could feel the excitement radiating off the students that morning. It had been becoming more and more apparent until the day for the Hogsmeade trip came. The week after his little trip was alright. All his packages came before his next class, and Edward was pleased with his purchases.

Furthermore, Alphonse had seemed to have found another clue to unlocking the Flamel journals. Edward was excited for finally seeing what secrets those texts held. Maybe a way to get Al's body back. Because if anyone had figured it out, Flamel was their best bet.

"How are ye Ed?" Hagrid asked as Edward sat down.

"Good, how are you?"

"Fine, thanks."

"Edward," Madame Pomfrey said. "I think it might rain today, so please be careful."

Edward nodded and picked up his cup, drinking it. Madame Pomfrey always made sure to put a pain relief potion in his drink if she knew there was a chance of rain that day.

"So what is the deal with Hogsmeade?" Edward asked as he cut into his egg. "I get why getting out of the castle might be exciting but what else?"

"Hogsmeade is a nice little town with multiple shops that the students like to visit."

"What kind of shops?"

"There are a few restaurants, candy stores and a prank shop, to give you an idea."


"Teachers can visit Hogsmeade as well," Madame Pomfrey added.

"Really? I might have to check it out with Al later."

Edward continued to eat his breakfast before Hagrid asked about Edward's owl.

"How's yer owl, Ed?"

"He's fine. Seems to have adjusted well to Hogwarts."

"Did Al figure out a name fer 'em?"

Alphonse was more than pleased to have a pet. The little owl found out quickly that any attempt to peck or scratch Al was futile. The little bird was free to fly around the classroom and seemed to be much happier with his new home. The students were a little shocked that an owl would fly around the room during class, but they quickly learned just not to mention his size, and the owl wouldn't bother them.

Edward had let his little brother name the rust colored bird. He was excited to do so, and had finally decided on a name for the owl after debating one for a few days.
"Al decided on naming him Ferro."

"Why that name? Is it from your country?" Pomfrey asked.

"Actually it is the Xeres word for iron. It also means to be physically strong. Me and Al were able to teach ourselves some Xerxian with some books we found as kids. Since it is a dead language, we never really speak it, but we know a few words here and there. Al decided on it because of his rust colored feathers."

"That's very interestin' Ed."

"Al was really happy when he decided on it, and it seems like Ferro likes his new name as well."

Madame Pomfrey smiled and stood up, telling Edward to come by the infirmary if he needed to today.

"I better get going to," Edward stated as soon as the nurse left.

"'ve a nice day, Ed!"

Edward stood up and moved to walk out of the Great Hall. He was about to walk past the long tables but he heard someone call his name so he stopped and turned around.

"Mr. Elric. I wish to inform you that your inspection is this Monday."

Edward groaned a bit. One little tidbit of this week was that the pink monstrosity had been given the pompous title of Hogwarts High Inquisitor. Pretty much she had as much power over the school as she wanted, just a little short of being Headmaster. Madame Pomfrey had told him that she planned to do inspections for all the classes and professors here at school.

"Thank you, now if you excuse me," Edward turned to leave.

"You don't seem to be taking this very seriously, Mr. Elric."

"Well I have somewhere I actually want to be."

Umbridge's eyebrow twitched a bit at this as she clutched her clipboard fiercely.

Edward quickly turned on his heels and walked out of the hall. He strode through the halls and up the stairs until he entered his classroom.

"Hey Al."

Al looked up from his spot on the floor. "Brother! How was breakfast?"

"Fine...but there is that Hogsmeade trip for the students today. I think I might check out the village."

"Really?"

"Yeah, do you want to come with or stay here?"

"I want to reorganize some of our research materials today," Al stated, gesturing to the multiple books around him and stacked on Ed's desk. "Madame Pince seems to be getting a little mad at the fact we've had some of these books for so long."

"Do you want me to help?"
"No, you should go. Interact with some of the other teachers or students."

Ed rubbed the back of his neck. "Are you sure? I feel bad saddling you with all of this."

"No. You should go, Brother."

Edward sighed a bit before smiling at his younger brother. "Alright, I'll see if I can bring something back for you."

"Thanks Brother!"

Edward checked his watch and started to walk out of the room. "I better get going. I'll be back before dinner, okay?"

"Alright Brother, have fun."

The two brothers bumped fists and Edward left his room, and walked through the halls and down the stairs to the courtyard where many of the students had gathered to walk to Hogsmeade.

The wind was blowing all around them, causing a lot of the fallen leaves to swirl around them. Ed rubbed his arms a bit to get warm and cursed Mustang a little under his breath for sending him to a place that was much colder than he was used to.

He kept to himself, watching as the excited students walked to the small town. Once there, Ed observed as the mass of students dissipated as many split off, going to different shops and things.

He looked at a few of the signs of the shops, with some of the weirdest names Ed had ever seen.

Dervish & Banges, Three Broomsticks, Honeydukes, Scrivenshaft's Quill Shop, Ceridwen's Cauldrons, Spintwitches?

Ed shook his head a bit as he looked in one particular shop window. It was called Zonko's Joke Shop and a lot of the students seemed to be in there, and enjoying themselves.

The colorful shop had caught Ed's attention and he found himself walking into it. He wanted to get something for Al. And he didn't know if any of these shops sold armor polish. Food was definitely not an option and the thought saddened Ed a bit.

But he looked around the joke shop. Surely something here would be a good present for his younger brother.

There were stacks upon stacks of products and lots whistles and chimes were ringing in the shop.

As he looked around, one caught his eye.

"Magical flying cars?" Ed mused, picking up the toy and winding it up. The small car began to hum and floated off his hand and proceeded to fly around his arm and waist before dying out and landing on the floor.

Ed smiled, picking up the toy and continuing to walk through the crowded store, until something else caught his attention.

One one of the shelves there were a pile of envelopes and Edward picked one up. A wicked grin appeared on his face as he grabbed a handful and walked up to the counter.

"How do these things work?" Edward asked, showing the man the envelopes.
"Magical Prank-velopes. Yes, just put your letter inside, seal and once the recipient opens it a squirt of water will soak you." one of the clerks stated.

"How much?" Ed asked, also placing the toy car on the counter.

"Two sickles each for the envelopes, and a three sickles and two knuts for the toy car, so it looks like about...a galleon, six sickles and two knuts total."

Ed placed the assortment of gold, silver and bronze coins on the counter in a flash. The man wrapped the envelopes and the car in a small package and Ed took it from him.

"Thanks," he stated.

"Um...you're welcome?" the man looked a little scared at Ed's expression, but he could care less at this point.

Edward nodded in reply and turned to walk out of the shop.

Once outside a cold wind blew hard, causing him to shiver and wrap his coat tighter around his body. His shoulder and knee gave a small pinch of discomfort but Ed continued to walk through the town. He observed the students bustling about. But a crack of thunder broke his train of thoughts and rain began to fall.

"Damn it," he cursed, looking around quickly for some form of shelter. He saw a sign that said Hog's Head and sprinted towards that. The rain was starting to pour now and Ed's ports began to ache more and more. The pain potion he got earlier today was either wearing off, or it wasn't counteracting the pain successfully.

He burst through the door and cursed a couple more times. He slipped out of his red coat and shook it a few times. He looked around and saw that this was a bar. And, it wasn't empty at all. Over in the corner, about twenty to twenty five students were staring at him. Once they realized he was staring at them as well, they quickly turned away and started to act like nothing was wrong. Ed frowned a bit at this. Their actions looked too forced and tense, like they were hiding something.

"You can hang your coat there," the bartender said, gesturing to the hook behind Ed. He nodded and hung his jacket on the hook and walked over to the group of students.

"Okay, what is going on here?" he asked, crossing his arms.

"Nothing, Professor," Hermione quickly answered.

He raised an eyebrow. "Really?"

Harry cleared his throat. "Really?"

He raised an eyebrow. "Really?"

Harry cleared his throat. "We're just hanging out."

"Oh? And I'm the Fuhrer," Ed replied sarcastically. Confusion crossed many of their faces as they stared at him. He waved them off though saying, "That's something from Amestris. But the point is, you all are here for a reason. And it isn't to drink whatever that is."

Ed pointed at the frothy beverage that a few of the kids had.

"Professor Ed," Fred began and Edward groaned slightly.

"We are simply visiting this fine establishment to enjoy each other's company and relax," George finished.
Ed put his hands up. "Okay, I won't pry. Continue...enjoying each others company."

Ed smirked a bit before walking over to the bar and sitting down. He could feel the tension in the air and looked over to the bartender.

"What do you want?" the man asked.

"I'll take anything that doesn't have milk."

The man stared at his oddly, but brought out a mug and filled it with a foamy amber liquid.

"That will be a galleon."

Ed pulled out his coin bag and grabbed the gold coin, handing it to the man.

Edward stared at his mug for a couple seconds before bringing it to his lips and sipping it. It was a warm drink, and tasted like the butterscotch candies he and Al would get as kids. He remembered saving up enough change to get one, running into town, going to the little cart and buying the sweets.

The man who owned the stand, Mr. Michael would always be nice to him and his brother, usually pulling the candy out behind their ears, like magic.

A small smile appeared on his face as he set his cup down.

Looking over his shoulder, he saw the students staring at him. A few looked away and he saw Ron, Hermione, and Harry all whispering with one another. Grinning he stood up, mug in hand and walked over.

"Look, I can go straight to Umbridge right now and tell her what you are doing."

Many of the students became tense, and some looked fearful, while others looked a little angry.

"Or, you can tell me what you all are doing here and I promise I won't tell a soul."

A few students shifted in their seats a bit, but Ed kept his attention on Harry, Ron, and Hermione.

"I'm sorry if you think we are up to something Professor, but we aren't," Hermione stated.

Ed let out an exasperated sigh. "I know what a secret meeting looks like. I've been in them, organized them, busted them up even. And this? This is about as obvious as you can be."

"Obvious?" Ron commented.

"Yes, you are all huddled in a corner. You stopped talking once I came in, and some of you look about as nervous as you can possibly be. Whatever you are trying to hide, you are doing a shit job at it. And you really didn't choose the best place to host one of these by the way."

"We aren't hiding anything," Neville said softly.

Edward sighed. "Look, we can do this the easy way or the hard way. Your choice."

"There is nothing going on here...Professor," Ron answered.

"Hard way it is then." Edward, taking a large swig from his glass and he set his drink down on the small table near him and cracked his knuckles.
"Now, you all are all here for a reason. You don't want a Professor to know about it so it must be something that either breaks the rules or you would get in trouble for."

A couple of them shifted in their seat nervously at this, which confirmed Edward's theory.

"Now, I know some of you don't break the rules as much as these two," Edward jerked his thumb over towards the Weasley twins. "So it has to be something you all believe should happen or needs to happen..."

Harry, Ron and Hermione all exchanged a worried look, which Ed caught onto.

"And you three must be the ring leaders for this."

All three pairs of eyebrows shot up at this, causing Ed to grin a bit.

"So rules.. it can't be something small...no this is big. Something you all could probably get expelled for...but the question is why?"

"We aren't doing anything Professor!" Hermione protested.

Ed shook his head. "No, you are. And it obviously has to be something that would connect or bring all of you together."

Edward raised his hand to his chin and thought hard for a few moments before a crazy idea struck him.

"Actually...I don't need to figure it out."

All of the students looked a little confused at this.

"Well, thanks for your time, I'm off to tell Dumbledore you had a secret meeting."

Edward saluted them and turned on his heels to walk out of the bar.

"But there is no meeting!" Ron exclaimed. Ed then heard a small slap that he assumed Hermione gave Ron.

"Then you have nothing to worry about! I mean I'm sure Umbridge will love to hear you all were here in a secret meeting."

"Umbridge!" A few exclaimed.

Edward smirked as he turned around to see that some of these kids had turned as pale as a sheet.

"Well she is the 'Head Inquisitor' now, so I have to report this to her as well. But since you all aren't doing anything, you can't be worried."

"Wait!" Hermione called out.

"Why? Is there something wrong?" Ed asked innocently.

"Please don't go to Umbridge, Professor," Hermione pleaded.

"Well...I suppose I could be persuaded not to tell her if you explain to me what you all are doing here."
Hermione chewed on her lip nervously before saying, "Swear on you life you won't tell anyone."

Edward straightened up a bit. "I sweat on my life I won't tell anybody about this."

Hermione exchanged a look with Harry and Ron, who didn't look too sure of the situation.

"We...we're trying to find a way to get around Umbridge."

Ed began walking back to the group. "Umbridge? What about?"

"She isn't teaching us how to defend ourselves, Professor," Hermione clarified. "And with... Voldemort...out there. We need to learn how to fight."

"Fight? You all want to learn to fight?"

"With Voldemort out there? Yes," Harry answered. "He's back and we're all in danger. We can't be unprepared."

"Fight? You think any of you are capable of actually being in a real fight?"

"Harry here has done it!" Ron countered.

Harry seemed to shrink a bit under Ed's gaze. "Really?"

"Yes, sir."

Luna then spoke up saying, "He fought You-Know-Who in his first year, and then the Basilisk in his second, and faced off against about a hundred dementors in third! And he fought You-Know-Who last summer."

Edward then turned his attention back to Harry. "And how did you feel? Fighting for your life?"

"I-It was...terrifying to tell you the truth. Most of the time I only won because I was either lucky or someone was helping me."

Ed nodded, crossing his arms. "And you kids think you can go out there and fight?"

"We just want to be able to defend ourselves," Neville stated.

Ed's glare softened a bit at this. "I realize that. But I still think you all don't know what you are getting into."

"You can't stop us. Even if you do tell her, we will still figure out a way-" Fred began before Ed stopped him.

"Stop you? Why on earth would I stop you?"

"You don't want to stop us?" Hermione asked, looking rather confused.

"You all are going against Umbridge. That alone has given you all my support. I want that hag gone probably as much as all of you do."

Neville was practically beaming. "So you'll help!"

"Hell yes," Ed crossed his arms and smirked.

"Yes! Professor Elric is going to teach us how to fight," Dean exclaimed, pumping his fist a bit.
Ed shook his head. "That right there is proving my point. You all think you can actually win a real fight?"

A couple of them shrugged and a few nodded.

"Well you're wrong. None of you, except for maybe these three," Ed gestured towards Harry, Ron, and Hermione. "Have ever experienced a life or death situation."

"But that still doesn't mean we shouldn't know how to defend ourselves," Fred countered.

"I never said I didn't agree with that."

Many of the kids looked confused at this.

"But I thought-"

"No," Ed interrupted. "I agree, you should all be prepared for what is out there. And that includes telling you the hard truths."

Taking a deep breath he began, "You all have only maybe fought a bit in class. That is a controlled setting where you know the worst that may happen is a bloody nose or maybe a broken bone if things get out of hand. But out there? In the real world? They don't care if you are kids. They don't care at all. I have been shot at, actually shot, beaten, stabbed, broken multiple bones, been chased through most of the city, have had assassins from another country come after me, have had a serial killer attack me, and then chase me and my brother as he tried to kill us, but mainly me."

All of their eyes went wide at this and many gasped.

"Why?" someone whispered.

"Why?" Ed raised an eyebrow. "Because I am a State Alchemist. I am apart of the military and therefore am put in dangerous situations. But I know the risks, and more importantly I am very skilled at what I do."

"Yeah, you got your alchemy," Seamus commented. Edward turned his attention to the boy and said, "Sometimes in my fights I can't use alchemy."

"Why? You only need to clap and bam!"

"I'll give you an example. Before I came here there was a serial killer loose in my country. He was attacking State Alchemists and came after me. He was quick. His reflexes and moves were lightning fast. I barely had enough time to dodge the attack, let alone clap my hands and transmute."

"But you were able to still use your alchemy. I mean you could still outmaneuver him and transmute a giant fist to fall on him."

"He knew that as well, so he disarmed me...literally. He destroyed my arm, thus rendering me without my alchemy completely. He had already disarmed Alphonse, so I was defenseless."

"How did you escape?"

"Luckily, some MPs and a couple of my fellow officers arrived just before he killed me. They were able to fight him off."

"Did they catch him?"
"No, as far as I know he is still at large in Amestris."

"Why was he after State Alchemists?"

Edward sighed a bit, looking down at the ground. "He was Ishvalan, and he rightfully hated State Alchemists for what they did to his homeland and his people. He was simply acting out his revenge."

Many of them looked confused so Ed took a deep breath and explained.

"My country, Amestris, annexed the region of Ishval a couple decades ago. They were not happy about it, but accepted being apart of the country. But...there was an incident. A soldier accidentally killed an Ishvalan child. That was the spark that started a full on revolution in that area."

Many of the students looked horrified at this, but Ed continued.

"It was a bloody civil war. And it dragged on for years. Then...the government decided to send in the State Alchemists. They were ordered to raze Ishval, completely destroy it and its' people."

"You had to kill innocent people!"

"No.. I was still a child during all of this. I hadn't gotten my certification yet."

Edward saw the tension and fear in a couple of the kids dissipate instantly.

"So that is why that man wanted to kill State Alchemists...but why you? You said you had nothing to do with that war," Hermione asked.

"He was blinded by revenge and wanted to destroy all State Alchemists and I am one."

"But you were innocent," Hermione protested.

"I am still a dog of the military...and I'm not completely innocent," Edward muttered under his breath.

Hermione stared at the young alchemy professor curiously before Seamus spoke up. "So are you on our side?"

"Yes. But you all need to know what is really out there. I won't baby you."

Another student then took the chance to speak.

"So if you are really on our side, and want to tell us the truth," Zacharias Smith stated a with a suspicious grin. "Then show us your automail."

Edward looked at him like he just said 1+1= coffee

"What?"

"Your arm, the metal one."

"I'm not showing you my arm."

"If he won't show us his arm, what else is he hiding?" he countered.

A few students seem to nod at this, and this gave Zacharias more confidence. Ed and him seemed to have a staring contest of sorts for a few tense moments before Ed lifted his right arm. He yanked off
his glove, and pushed up his sleeve.

There were a few gasps as all the students stared at the gleaming metal.

"There, happy?"

"How much of...of your arm is gone?" a red haired girl that seem to resemble Ron, Fred, and George a bit asked.

Ed let out a small sigh and tapped the part of his shoulder where his flesh met metal.

That caused another round of gasps.

Neville looked absolutely shocked. "You're whole arm?"

Ed nodded and pushed back down his sleeve and put on his white glove again.

"Did you lose it in a fight?" Seamus blurted out.

A few of the students near him glared and Hermione scolded him saying, "Professor Elric already talked to us and told us all he wanted to and besides, it is a personal matter."

Edward narrowed his gaze at the student before replying, "No. I didn't lose it in a fight."

A few of the other kids had a mixture of shock and confusion. Because if he didn't lose his arm in a fight, how did he?

Hermione cleared her throat, causing the attention of the group to shift away from Edward.

"I think we should resume the original reason we all came here."

Harry nodded. "So we all are going to train with Professor Elric. Is everyone okay with this?"

"Actually, you will need to find someone in addition to me. And if you want, I know Al will help me train you kids as well."

"Why?"

"I may not be able to come to all to your meetings because of different duties I have to perform as a teacher. Furthermore, I can't teach any of you magic."

"Why can't you teach us magic?"

"I can't do it."

"But surely you know that we all need to learn defensive magic to properly protect ourselves."

"I agree," Ed crossed his arms. "But I literally cannot teach any of you magic."

"Why not?"

Ed let out an irritated sigh before face palming and grumbling under his breath. "I can't do magic."

"What?!" many exclaimed.

"You're a squib?"
Ed frowned a bit at this. "No, I think the term Dumbledore used was...muggle?"

"Muggle!?"

The group seemed to go into a frenzy of sorts before he lifted his fingers to his mouth and let out a sharp whistle, making all the students cover their ears.

"I can't do magic, but I don't need that to do alchemy. Therefore, Dumbledore agrees I am qualified to teach."

"But what about the Statute of Secrecy? You could go back and tell other muggles about wizards."

"I'm under orders not to talk about it to anyone who doesn't already know."

"So you can't tell anyone?" Hermione asked.

"Nope, not unless I want to be Court-Martialed. Which I really can't afford right now."

"But...a muggle professor at Hogwarts? This doesn't make any sense!" Zacharias exclaimed.

Ed growled a bit as he glared at the boy.

"Look here, I am damn good at what I do. I've been doing alchemy since I was five and got my certification when I was twelve. I'm a goddamn prodigy in my country and I won't be talked to like a second-class citizen."

His tone was dead serious and the students quickly picked up on the fact he wouldn't take any crap from them anymore.

"Now," Ed continued in a lighter tone. "You brats need a magic teacher. So start thinking of one."

"So will you be teaching us alchemy, sir?" Neville asked, meekly.

Ed shook his head. "No, a lot of you couldn't answer the riddle in my class and some of you aren't even in my class."

"So what will you be teaching us?" Zacharias pressed.

Ed smirked. "Combat."

Many of the boys in the group grinned at the prospect.

Hermione then stated, "So with Professor Elric...unable to teach us defensive magic...we need someone else to teach us magic."

"Harry should do it."

"I don't think-," Harry began before Hermione cut him off.

"No Harry, you are the most qualified out of all of us."

"You are the only one with actual experience with all of this stuff," Ron added.

"But I didn't do it alone!" Harry shouted. "I had help or was just plain lucky."

"No...you're wrong," Ed stated.
"What?" Harry looked a little confused at the alchemy professor's comment.

"I can see that you are trying to be humble here, but I can see that out of all these kids you've got the most experience. You're the only one that can teach them what they need to know."

Harry sighed and nodded. "Alright."

Hermione smiled and turned to the rest of the group. "So does anyone have any objections?"

Everyone seemed to agree with Hermione, so she continued.

"Well, now we need to set a time and a place."

"Professor Ed can use his classroom!" Fred suggested.

"Hang on," said Angelina Johnson. "We need to make sure we chose a night that works with everyone too."

A few nodded in agreement with her statement.

"But we need to be careful as well," Hermione cautioned. "Umbridge and the Ministry thing Dumbledore might be training his own wizarding army. They won't want us learning these defensive spells."

"Wait...what?"

Everyone looked over at Ed and Hermione explained.

"Well the Ministry sent Umbridge here-"

Ed cut her off. "No, I get why the hag is here. But why on earth do they think that Dumbledore would be raising an army of children?!"

"They think Dumbledore wants to take power from the current Minister of Magic, Fudge."

"That's insane. He doesn't want that, clearly. He is in no position, being a Headmaster of a school to work up the ranks and become the Minister. Your government may not be as militaristic as mine, but the concepts are still the same. Dumbledore obviously doesn't want that."

"But Fudge is paranoid, he is grasping at straws and Dumbledore is his fall guy," Harry stated.

Edward rubbed his temples a bit. "I thought leaving Amestris meant taking a break from all this bullshit."

"So we will figure out a meeting and time later, but right now I think everyone should sign their names. Just so we know who was here. So if you sign, you promise not to tell Umbridge or anyone about this meeting."

Hermione then pulled out a quill and a sheet of parchment.

A few of the students; Fred, George, Neville, Luna, Ginny, and so on happily walked forward and signed their names. But a couple of the kids looked nervous at the prospect.

Ed knew what they were thinking and spoke up.

"You got a plan to make sure this thing is never found?"
Hermione smiled in a very confident way. "I have a plan. No one will find this list."

Ed nodded and strode over, signing his name at the bottom of the list.

"Thank you Professor."

"No problem, Granger."

"Well, time's ticking on," said Fred briskly, getting to his feet. "George, Lee, and I have got items of a sensitive nature to purchase, we'll be seeing you all later."

The group quickly broke up, with many leaving after Fred, George, and Lee.

Only Hermione, Harry, Ron, and Ed were left in the Hog's Head afterwards.

"You all were smart to try and form this group. But you need to be careful, you made a lot of mistakes that could have made this whole thing blow sky high. Now none of you have had any training or have been in any covert operations. But lucky for you, I have. You need a meeting place, and not my classroom. It would be too suspicious if all these kids just happened to show up at my room once a week. Especially since many of them aren't really participating in my class anymore."

Hermione sighed a bit. "I guess we will have to look around for a secret meeting place."

"I'll see what I can find as well. But another thing is, you guys will need to figure out a covert way to contact everyone. I know a few codes from my military experience, but the thing about them is they can be broken. You guys have magic, so see if you can figure out something there."

Hermione tapped her chin a bit. "I have a few ideas, but I'll need to look up some spells."

He pulled out his pocket watch and checked the time. "It's about time I headed back. Keep me informed. If you can't get to me, find Al. He'll get the message to me."

Hermione nodded. "Thank you again Professor."

"No problem. Anything I or Al can do, don't hesitate to ask."

Edward gave them a sort of mock salute and walked back over to the door, grabbing his red coat. Putting it back on, he opened the large wooden door and stepped out into the cold fall air.
Edward

Ed was hunched over his desk as he worked on his notes. They hadn't cracked the Flamel code yet, but in their research to do so, they found out a few things that Ed felt the need to write down in his 'travel log'.

The peace and quiet didn't last long as students for Ed's next class came bustling in. The few who answered the riddle correctly took their seats in the front and pulled out their books and sheets of notes previously taken. The others were in the back, some already asleep while others worked on homework for other classes.

Edward stood up, putting his log in his coat pocket for safe keeping, watching as the students got ready for the class in a relatively calm fashion.

But everything changed when the pink toad attacked.

Umbridge came into the class, clipboard and quill in pudgy hand.

Ed tried to hold back the small groan and watched as she walked up to him.

"Hello Mr. Elric, I'll be observing your class today. Please don't mind me, conduct your class as you normally would. And I ask that I might stay after to ask you a few questions as well."

Ed nodded, mostly because he knew if he opened his mouth that his words would cause her to turn pinker than her dress in anger. Umbridge walked over to a spare chair and sat down, scribbling on her clipboard already.

Ed sighed and hoped that he wouldn't need to go to Madame Pomfrey for another pain potion due to a migraine he feared may form during this class.

Clearing his throat, he began, "Alright, for those of you actually taking this class, we are getting close to finishing the Understanding part of our class."

All eight students looked eager and excited at this. Ed smirked a bit and crossed his arms. "But that doesn't mean you all can start slacking off. This last portion will be extremely important if you want any chance of performing any transmutation in the future."

"Hem-hem."

Edward turned around to see Umbridge staring at him.

"I'm sorry to interrupt Mr. Elric, but I'm confused. Why are only some of your students actually participating in your class?"

"Because they are the only ones who actually could learn any alchemy."

"And why is that?"

"I gave them a riddle at the beginning of the year. If they answered correctly, they would move on in my class. Incorrectly, and they wouldn't be allowed to continue on and perform any transmutations."

Umbridge wrote a few things down before continuing. "And why would a riddle be important to the
Edward sighed a bit and looked over at Hermione. "Miss Granger, please state the riddle and what importance it has in alchemy."

Hermione nodded and said, "One is All, and All is One. This is the core of alchemy itself. It means how everything is connected and there is a natural flow to the universe. In alchemy we use that flow to transmute objects."

Edward smiled at her and then looked at Umbridge. "That is why only eight kids here are participating. They got the riddle and are the only ones with any hope of becoming alchemists."

Turning back to his class, Ed continued with his statement from earlier.

"So right now I need all of you to pay close attention. We'll be learning different chemical reactions today, there are four types you need to know. So it is vital that you understand them, okay?"

They all nodded and Edward walked over towards his chalkboard.

"Now, we will start with the simplest one. This is Combination or Synthesis. It is when two elements combine to form a compound."

Ed wrote 'Na+Cl= NaCl' on the board.

"Who can tell me what this compound is?"

Pavarti raised her hand and answered, "Sodium Chloride or table salt."

"Correct, now remember that Sodium has one valence electron and Chlorine needs one, so this combination allows these elements to have their outermost shell filled with electrons. That is the purpose for every reaction you see here. These elements are pushed to have their electron shells filled, and therefore need to react with other elements."

"Hem-hem."

Ed groaned a tiny bit before stepping away from the board and turning towards Umbridge.

"Yes?"

"I am curious Mr. Elric, as to why your lesson does not involve any magic. It seems to me that this is more of a muggle science lesson than alchemy."

Ed crossed his arms. "That's because it is."

"Why on earth are you teaching these students muggle science?"

"Because, if they don't they can't transmute anything. The three basic pillars of alchemy are as follows, understanding, deconstructing, and reconstructing. They are still in the understanding part of this class. You need to know the chemical makeup of the material you are using in order to change it."

"Chemical make-up? So are you saying you aren't teaching these children any magic?"

Ed rolled his eyes. "Alchemy is a science. Therefore I will teach it like one."

Umbridge pursed her lips and wrote vigorously. Ed then turned back to his class and continued with
his lesson.

"The next reaction type you need to know is Decomposition. It's the opposite of Synthesis. It is when a compound deconstructs into two products."

Ed wrote, \( \text{CaCO}_3 = \text{CaO} + \text{CO}_2 \)

"Now the next two are similar as well. They are Substitution or Single-Replacement and Double-Replacement. The first is when another element inserts itself into the compound and replaces another. The Double-Replacement is when two compounds sort of switch an element."

As Ed spoke, he wrote, \( \text{Zn} + 2\text{HCl} = \text{H}_2 + \text{ZnCl}_2 \) and \( \text{HCl} + \text{NaOH} = \text{NaCl} + \text{H}_2\text{O} \)

"These are the four main types of reactions. So for homework, I want you eight to write down three sample equations for each type. This is due the next class."

The eight wrote down the homework and Ed announced, "That's all for today. Class dismissed."

The entire class then packed up and left, leaving Ed and Umbridge alone in the room.

"You said you wanted to ask me some questions?"

Umbridge nodded and stood up from her chair.

"Yes, I am curious as to your personal history, before you started teaching here at Hogwarts."

"Personal history? What does that have to do with anything?"

"I simply wish to conduct a full investigation into the staff here at Hogwarts."

Ed ran his hand over his face, and groaned a bit.

"Fine," he snapped. "Let's just get this thing over with."

Umbridge narrowed her gaze as she gripped her quill tightly. "I ask that you keep this professional, Mr. Elric."

Ed sighed and nodded.

"Now, how old are you exactly?"

"I told you earlier in the year. I'm fifteen, I turn sixteen in February."

"Where were you born?"

"Resembool, Amestris."

"And your parents?"

"Trisha Elric," Ed's tone then changed to a much harsher one. "And Van Hohenheim."

Umbridge was writing quickly as she asked all of these questions.

"You're in the military correct? And for how long again?"

Ed sighed and crossed his arms. "Yes, I'm a State Alchemist. I have been for the past three years."
Umbridge looked up from her clipboard. "And what exactly do you do as a State Alchemist?"

"There are two types of State Alchemists. There are researchers and those that go out in the field. I'm a little of both. I go around the country, researching and also maybe doing things for the military."

"And what do you do for the military?" she pressed.

Ed narrowed his gaze. "I mainly bust up or discover corruption. I have done a couple missions with my superior officer, but I try to focus on furthering my alchemy."

"What do you do on these missions, with..I believe you are speaking of your superior officer, Colonel Mustang."

Ed nodded. "I do a variety of things. I just help out when needed and do what needs to be done."

"Hm...interesting...," she mused as she wrote a couple more things down.

"And how did you end up joining the military?"

"I took the exam, passed, and got my certification."

"But why did you join the military?"

"There was something I needed to do, so I became a State Alchemist."

"What was it you needed to do?" she inquired.

"That is a very personal question, and one I don't want to answer," Edward growled.

"I would remind you, that as Hogwarts High Inquisitor, all faculty are required to submit to an investigation. So please, answer the question Mr. Elric."

Ed glared at her for a couple seconds before stating, "I had to support myself and my brother."

"Support?"

"Yes. I needed money, and the military pays me a lot of money to research and go out into the field."

"Why on earth would a twelve year old need money?"

"Because our mother was dead and we hadn't seen our father in seven years."

"Your mother passed away?"

"Yes," Ed snapped. "We had no one to support us, and I had pay for my surgery as well."

Umbridge wrote all of this down before asking, "What surgery?"

"My automail. It was expensive and I needed to pay for it."

"Hm..your automail, that is your metal prosthetic. Correct?"

"Yes."

"Please elaborate on that."

"Tsk, I'm an alchemist. I don't do automail, if you want to know about it call up my mechanic."
"I ask that you take these questions seriously, Mr. Elric," she ordered.

Ed rolled his eyes. "I'm not an expert in automail. I just have it."

"And you don't know anything about it?" she asked as Ed detected a slightly accusatory tone in her voice.

"I'm an alchemist, not a mechanic. My time is better spent learning more about alchemy than trying to figure out the inner workings of my prosthetic."

"Well I would like to know how you lost your arm."

"What?" Ed hissed. "How in the hell is that important?"

"I would ask that you mind your language, Mr. Elric."

They engaged in a staring contest of sorts for a few tense moments before she asked again. "How did you lose your arm?"

"I lost it in an accident," he gritted through his teeth.

"What kind of accident?" she pressed.

"A very personal one," he growled.

"I ask that you answer my questions, Mr. Elric. I have the full support of the Minister in these investigations."

Ed glared at her ugly toad face before answering. "There was a bomb. It was due to the fact my country was in the middle of a civil war. My town was hit hard by some of the fighting. Me and my brother were simply at the wrong place at the wrong time."

"Was your brother injured as well? Or was it simply you?"

Ed looked down at this, the sounds of his brother's screams rang in his ears as he remembered his brother disappearing in front of his eyes and then his leg.

"Mr. Elric?"

Ed snapped out of the awful memory to see Umbridge staring at him intently.

"Yes. He was hurt, but his injuries were a little different than mine and didn't require automail."

"What were they?"

"You said I had to answer questions about my past. Not my brother's," Ed snapped.

Umbridge narrowed her gaze, scribbling a few more things down before looking back up.

"Very well, I only have a few more questions for you Mr. Elric and then we will conclude our little meeting."

Ed let out a little sigh of relief and leaned back against his desk.

"Now, there are rumors floating around Hogwarts, and the wizarding world as a whole at the moment," she began. "I would like to inquire about your opinions on them."
"You're asking me about rumors now?"

Umbridge pursed her lips a bit but continued. "Do you know anything about the claims the Headmaster and Mr. Potter have been making of late?"

Ed shrugged a bit. "Bits and pieces from what I've overheard from the students."

He knew where Umbridge was going with this, so he had to play his cards right to keep her suspicions of him low. Maybe he didn't agree with that fact that someone returned from the dead, but Dumbledore told he he never thought Voldemort was dead in the first place. If that was the case, then he trusted the old man and had the feeling Harry wouldn't lie about this.

But Umbridge couldn't know anything about that.

"So you know about the accusations that a certain evil wizard has returned?"

"I spoke with Dumbledore about that," Ed explained. "I heard a few students talking about it so I investigated the matter myself."

"And what did you find?"

"Well that apparently there was an evil wizard about fifteen years ago, and then he was defeated by Harry Potter. Then last year he returned?"

"So you don't believe Dumbledore or Mr. Potter then?" she inquired.

"If he did die all those years ago, he then he hasn't returned. It is impossible to raise the dead."

Umbridge raised an eyebrow at this. "So you agree with the Ministry?"

Ed shrugged. "This isn't my country, as far as I'm concerned your problems are your own."

"Hm.. thank you for your time, Mr. Elric."

Umbridge then strode out of the room and Ed groaned a bit, and rubbed his temples.

Right then, Al returned from the library and saw his older brother leaning against his desk.

"What's wrong Brother?"

"Umbridge interrogated me after my class. And was interrupting the whole time when I was trying to teach the few students I actually have about chemical reactions."

"I'm sorry, Brother."

Ed sighed and walked around falling into his chair. "It's not your fault Al, just her mere presence seems to give me a migraine."

"What did she ask you?" Al asked.

"She tried prying into my past. I had to tell her I lost my arm in an explosion caused by the Ishvalan Civil War, and that you were injured a little as well."

Al nodded. "Okay, so we're using our usual cover story then."

"Yeah, but she can't really ask you anything. Since you're not a teacher or anything, she has no
authority over you. Unfortunately, she does hold some power over me."

"Should we tell the Colonel about this?"

"Good thinking Al," Edward then pulled out the stack of envelopes he got the other day and a couple pieces or parchment.

"Those are the prank envelopes aren't they?" Al asked.

"Yup," Ed grinned as he wrote.

"The Colonel won't be happy..."

"And when do I care about the Colonel's happiness?!"

Al sighed and shook his head. "I wonder sometimes which of us is the older sibling," he said under his breath.

Ed finished his letter and gave a short whistle. Ferro flew down from one of the rafters and sat on Ed's desk as he sealed the envelope.

"Okay, you need to take this to Colonel Roy Mustang in Amestris. Only let him open this letter, got it? And don't peck or claw anyone...well except for the Colonel himself." The little owl nodded and took the letter from Ed. Edward stood up and walked over to the window, opening it up. Ferro took off from the desk and flew out of the window and into the cool autumn air.

Ed quickly shut the window as the cold air was making him shiver.

"The Colonel deserves everything coming to him, especially after sending us up here in the freaking cold."

Al sighed and sat down in his usual spot, opening one of the Flamel journals.

Harry

"Did you see that 'Educational Decree'?"

Hermione sat down across from Ron and Harry in a back corner of the library.

"All organizations are dissolved," Harry replied. "So that means Umbridge thinks we're up to something."

"Do you think someone snitched?" Ron asked.

Hermione shook her head. "No, because then we all would have been brought in. And besides, we would know who told if they ever did."

"How?"

Hermione smiled innocently and replied, "I jinxed the parchment before everyone signed."

Ron and Harry looked at her in utter shock.

"You jinxed it?"
"Yes, and trust me. The person that tells will not like the results."

"That's bloody brilliant, Hermione!"

"A simple precaution," Hermione stated. "But right now we need to focus on a place to meet. And how to tell everyone."

"Spreading the word by literally telling everyone isn't safe, but right now it is our only option."

"I'm looking into a way to rectify that," Hermione said. "I just need to look up a couple more spells and I think we'll be ready by the time we meet."

"Alright, so we're working on communication but we still need a place to meet."

"We can't use a place that will be found easily. That means somewhere that not a lot of people even know about."

"Where are we going to find a place like that!" Ron groaned.

"Maybe you could use the map, Harry? See if there is a secret room?" Hermione suggested.

"I've looked over that map for years now, and so have Fred and George. I can't think of one that we all can use. And I think if there was a secret room the twins would have told us."

Ron sighed and leaned back in his chair a bit. Right then Neville walked up to where the trio was sitting.

"Um..guys?"

"Yes Neville?"

"I-I think I found a place to hold our...meetings," he whispered.

Harry's eyebrows shot up. "Where?"

"On the seventh floor. I'll show you."

All of them stood up and followed Neville out of the library and up to the seventh floor.

"Where are you taking us?" Ron asked.

"Here we are," Neville stopped and smiled at a wall.

"Um...Neville? Should we be seeing something?"

"Yes! Well, no. Not right now." He rubbed the back of his neck sheepishly.

Hermione offered him a soft smile and said, "Go on Neville."

"Well I was thinking of how we need a room to train, and well...I was pacing around and then this door appeared!"

"A door?"

"Watch, you just need to walk past this spot three times and think of the place you need. Like 'We need a place to train'!"
Neville then proceeded to show Harry, Ron, and Hermione by walking back and forth in front of the wall.

Once he finished the wall began to transform and a large wooden door appeared in front of them. The trio watched on in awe as Neville smiled and pushed open the door.

"See! It's perfect!"

In the room, there was a large space to practice. The walls were lined with mirrors and there was a fireplace on the far wall. A bulletin board hung on the opposite wall near a shelf of books.

"This...this is amazing..."

"It's the Room of Requirement! You found it Neville!" Hermione exclaimed.

"What's the Room of Requirement?" Harry asked.

"It's a legend that before leaving, Helga Hufflepuff created a room that would only appear to those who needed it."

"This is great!" Harry exclaimed. "It's like Hogwarts wants us to fight back!"

"Great job Neville," Hermione said.

Neville was beaming as the four of them stood in the middle of the room.

"Spread the word, be careful though. Meeting this Saturday. Tell them how to find the room, and make sure that they come alone or in small groups of two or three."

"I'll tell Professor Elric and his brother," Hermione volunteered.

Harry nodded in agreement and smiled at the fact their plans were going smoothly and soon they would be learning how to fight and defend themselves.
Edward

Edward and Alphonse stood in front of the wall as it transformed into a door in front of their very eyes.

"Wow..."

"Yeah, even though all this magic stuff doesn't make any sense...I have to admit, it comes in handy."

They pushed open the door and found a few of the members already inside and talking with one another.

Hermione walked up to the two brothers, once she saw them enter.

"Thank you both for coming today, we'll start once everyone's arrived."

Ed nodded. "Okay, me and Al are probably just going to observe today though, if that's alright."

"Okay," Hermione agreed. "I think Harry wanted to start out with something simple, like disarming."

"Alright then," Ed then looked up at Al and waved for him to follow. "Come on Al."

The two then stood by one of the walls as the other students talked and more came in. Once everyone was there Hermione cleared her throat and everyone looked at her, Harry, and Ron at the front.

Hermione looked at Harry who took a deep breath before speaking.

"Okay...um...thank you all for coming. Today's our first meeting and we'll start with learning a few of the basics."

"We should also elect a leader, and decide on a name," Hermione added.

Harry raised an eyebrow. "Leader?"

"Well to make it official and all, and I think we all agree that Harry is leader...correct?"

Everyone nodded and the twins gave a hearty "Yes!"

"O-okay then... and I guess does anyone have ideas for a name?"

"Maybe the Anti-Umbridge League?" Angelina suggested.

"Or the Ministry of Magic are Morons Group!" George shouted.

"It should be something that we can talk about outside without raising too much suspicion."

"Like an acronym?" Ron asked.

"How about 'The Defense Association'? said Cho Chang. "The D.A. for short, so nobody knows what we're talking about."

"Yeah, the D.A.'s good," said Ginny. "Only let's make it stand for Dumbledore's Army, because
that's the Ministry's worst fear, isn't it?"

A few of the kids chuckled at this and nodded in agreement.

Ed grinned. "I like it, if they are terrified of you all training, let's give them what they want."

"Everyone agree?"

Everyone's hands shot up.

"So Dumbledore's Army it is."

Hermione pulled out the parchment with all of their signatures on it and scribbled 'Dumbledore's Army' on the top before walking over and pinning it onto the board in the back.

"Right," said Harry. "Shall we get practicing then? I was thinking, the first thing we should do is Expelliarmus, you know, the Disarming Charm. I know it's pretty basic but I've found it really useful."

Zacharias scoffed at this. "Expelliarmus? That's kid stuff! That won't save us against Death Eaters or You-Know-Who."

"I've used it against him," Harry stated. "It saved my life last June."

This shut Zacharias up and caused many of the kids to stare at Harry in awe.

Harry clapped his hands and rubbed them together. "Alright, we should break up into groups of two and practice disarming each other."

Everyone started breaking up into pairs, leaving Neville looking all alone. Ed frowned at this for a brief moment before Harry walked over towards Neville and paired up with him.

Edward and Alphonse watched as the students cast their spells, causing the other's wand to fly out of their hands. Some didn't even do that though, their spells caused their partner to be forced back or be knocked down.

Ed looked on proudly as Neville disarmed Harry and then have a large grin on his face. Harry then told Neville to pair up with Ron and Hermione, allowing him to walk around the room and observe the others.

Ed crossed his arms, leaning against the mirror covered wall.

Harry walked around, offering advice and demonstrations to a few of the other students before coming over towards Ed and Al.

"What do you think?"

"You're doing good. Some of these kids are alright, but some really need work. But for a first meeting...it's alright."

Harry smiled. "Thanks Professor."

He then turned around and walked over to a pair of girls, helping them out with their casting.

"This is great Brother," Al whispered.
"Yeah, but they're all still kids."

"Some are older than us, Brother," Al chided.

"But they haven't experienced anything. I mean, some of them have potential but I get the feeling that some are a little too full of themselves."

Ed sighed, "If they're serious about learning to fight...learning to defend themselves, they need to learn they are just human."

Al nodded in agreement.

The students continued to practice until Harry called for everyone to stop.

"Okay. That was good for a first try. There is still a lot of room for improvement, but I think we're doing alright."

Many of the kids were smiling at this before Harry looked over towards Ed and Al.

"And I think next week we should have Professor Elric and his brother join in and teach us a few things."

Fred and George were grinning like mad men and so were a few of the other students.

"Why?"

Ed's gaze zeroed in on Zacharias Smith.

"I mean, what is the point?"

Ed shook his head. "You think you're invincible with that wand of yours don't you? You don't understand a thing about a real fight."

"I understand!"

Ed raised an eyebrow. "Really? Then you wouldn't mind facing me?"

"What?" a few of the surrounding students said.

"Yeah, what?" Zacharias said.

"Fight me. You use your wand. I use my martial arts, no alchemy."

"You'll fight me? Without alchemy?"

"Unless you think you'll lose," Ed smirked.

"Ohhhh," a couple of the students said causing Zacharias to turn a bit red.

"I won't lose!"

"Then you have nothing to worry about."

Zacharias was red in the face and shouted, "Fine! I'll fight you!"

"Are you sure about this Professor?" Hermione asked.
Ed waved her off. "It will be fine, don't worry."

Edward shook off his red coat and took off his white gloves, handing them to Al. The two of them stood about ten feet apart with all the other students lining the walls around them.

Harry stood in the middle and looked at Edward nervously who only gave a confident grin in reply.

"This won't take long," Zacharias said confidently.

Ed lifted his fists and sunk into his fighting stance. "No...it won't."

"Alright, both of you ready?" Harry said.

Both Zacharias and Ed nodded.

"Then on three!"

"One!"

Zacharias lifted his wand and smirked.

"Two!"

Edward took a deep calming breath and smirked.

"One!"

"Stupefy!" he shouted and a bolt of red light shot out of his wand.

He was fast, but luckily Ed was faster. The red light came towards Edward who ducked into a small crouch instantly. Their spells seemed to be about as fast, or maybe even a bit faster than Teacher's knives. This made Ed grin like a mad man as he bolted up from his crouch and sprinted towards Zacharias.

Zacharias on the other hand was too shocked in the fact Ed had dodged his spell, and before he could cast again. Ed was right beside him. Ed stuck out his leg and kicked Zacharias's out from underneath him.

He fell to his knees and Edward grabbed his right arm, taking the wand out of his grasp at the same time. Ed placed the hand holding the wand on the back of Zacharias's neck. Ed's other hand held Zacharias's right arm forcefully, twisting it behind his back.

The room was deadly quiet as everyone stared at the young professor, mouths agape.

"Hey! Let me go!"

Ed smirked as he looked at his younger brother.

"How long was it this time Al?"

"About...thirty-five seconds."

"Damn, I need to work on that. Teacher would have me running laps for a time that slow."

"That was slow!" Dean Thomas exclaimed.

Zacharias was still struggling under Ed's grasp.
"Are you done yet?" Ed asked.

"Let me go!"

Ed sighed and turned his attention to the rest of the group.

"This is why me and Al are here. You guys think that your wands make you invincible, but you're not. We're all human. We're all mortal. You need to remember that."

"Understand?" Ed directed at Zacharias.

He gave a small huff before nodding and Ed released him from his hold. Zacharias stood up, rubbing his arm and Edward handed over the wand.

"That...that was amazing, Professor," Neville exclaimed.

"Will you be teaching us that?!" Fred shouted.

Ed rolled his eyes and walked back over to his brother.

"I won't be teaching any of you anything now. And besides, those skills took me years to perfect and lots of hard work."

"Where did you learn to do stuff like that?" Seamus asked.

"My alchemy teacher trained me and Al in alchemy and in martial arts."

"She told us that 'In order to train the mind, we must first train the body'."

Ed chuckled a bit as the memories started to come back to him. "Yeah, she would make us run for miles, carry large weights, even threw knives at us to improve our reflexes."

"She threw knives at you!?!" Hermione exclaimed.

Ed shrugged. "She made sure that to miss us in the beginning. After that, if we were nicked she would yell at us for not being fast enough."

A couple of the students mouths were agape at this.

"How bloody insane is your country?!" Seamus blurted out. He soon realized what he said and covered his mouth, looking a bit scared and ashamed.

"Amestris is more militaristic than many of the other countries we have relations with, but every country is crazy in some shape or form."

Many of them seemed to mul this over in their heads for a bit before nodding in agreement or just plain shrugging.

Harry then cleared his throat and everyone looked at him.

"Professor...maybe you should show us some of your skills. I think that might be a good way to end the meeting."

Ed pondered this for a moment before looking up at his brother.

"What do you say, Al? Wanna give them a show?"
Al nodded and Ed and he walked apart from one another. The students lined the walls as they all watched eagerly while Ed and Al sunk into their fighting stances.

"On the count of three," Al stated.

"One...Two...Three!"

Ed took off and so did Al. They met in the middle with Ed trying to uppercut Al, and Al slamming his fist down towards Ed. Ed stopped his attack, and slipped through the gap between Al's arm and his body. Now behind him, Ed jumped and lifted his left leg up to kick Al in the back.

Al stumbled forward a bit, but quickly turned around, and raised his fists. Ed sprinted towards Al, and threw a punch. Al blocked it and countered it with his own blow. Ed dropped down into a couch to dodge the attack, and swept his legs under Al's, trying to make his younger brother lose his balance.

Alphonse saw this and leapt back to avoid his older brother's attack. Ed popped right back up and charged at Al. He leapt into the air and swung his leg around. Al raised his arms to block the kick and was able to grab Edward's leg and throw him away from himself.

Ed flew through the air, and landed on the ground hard. But he was quick to recover, standing up and running back towards Alphonse. He punched Al, right in the gut, who countered with his own blow. Ed ducked under the punch and threw his right hook. Al caught his hand in his fists and twisted Ed's arm. Ed was able to pull himself out of Al's grip and attacked once again.

Edward was now crouching and Al brought his fist down.

Ed slid to the side, missing Al's attack, and lifted himself up onto his palms. Ed now was balancing on his hands, and began to attack. He kicked at Al, who grabbed Ed's leg and threw him once again. While airborne, Edward extended his arms. Once they made contact with the ground he pushed himself off and did a cartwheel that led into a front flip. Once his feet touched the ground again, Edward pushed off and charged at Alphonse.

He jabbed as Alphonse blocked and countered with a cross punch. Ed ducked and threw his right hook. Al dodged this as well and then lifted his left leg, in an attempt to knock his older brother down.

Ed saw this and pushed off from the ground. He quickly turned himself so as his hands were now on Al's leg. Pushing off, he wrapped his legs around the neck part of Al's armor. He spun around once before his legs locked themselves around Al's neck and Ed used his momentum to slam Alphonse down to the ground.

Al hit the ground with a large thud, and Edward jumped back. The younger Elric didn't need anytime to recover though and was back up and charging at his brother.

Ed lifted his arms and crossed them, blocking the multiple jabs and punches Al threw at him. The force of those attacks made Ed skid back a bit, and before he could move his own arms to attack his brother, Al grabbed Ed's right arm and threw him over his shoulder.

Ed flew through the air and braced his body for the hard impact of the floor. When he collided, Ed bounced a little before coming to a stop.

Laying on his back, Ed was breathing heavy as he stared up at the tall ceiling.

"How close was I this time?" he asked, once his breathing became normal again.
Al walked over and stood over his older brother. "You got in a couple good hits, and that one maneuver with your legs is really improving."

Ed smirked and lifted his arm. Alphonse grabbed his hand and helped Edward up.

Everyone was staring at them in utter shock and awe.

"That was bloody insane!" one kid shouted.

"Professor, are you alright?" Cho Chang asked.

Ed's eyebrow furrowed a bit. "Yeah, why wouldn't I be?"

"Your brother threw you across the room! And both of you were hit a few times by the other!" a girl named Lavender Brown exclaimed.

Ed shrugged. "I've been in worse fights. Besides, I know Al wouldn't seriously hurt me."

"But why do you two fight...well...so intensely?" Hermione asked.

"Because Al here is where I can test out all my moves. Also, if we don't take these spars seriously, then we'll never be ready for a real fight when it does happen."

"But aren't you two worried you might actually hurt one another?"

"I never hurt Brother too bad. He may have a couple bruises, but nothing that lasts more than a day or two. He is skilled enough to where I actually shouldn't be able to hurt him that bad."

So are you going to teach us some of those moves?" George inquired.

"No, we'll work on basics. These moves took years to perfect require a lot of time and effort."

A couple students looked a little defeated at this.

"But you both are alright?" Hermione asked.

"We're fine, Hermione. Promise," Al said.

Harry nodded and looked out to the rest of the group. "Alright then. I think that's enough for tonight. We all did really well for our first meeting and-"

"Wait! We have one more thing!"

Hermione ran over to her bag and pulled out a small bag. It sounded like there was a lot of change in it as it jingled in her hands.

"I found a way for us to communicate secretly."

Opening the small purse Hermione took out a small gold coin that resembled the wizarding currency everyone here used. She then proceeded to pass out the coins.

"This will tell you when the next meeting is. The numbers will change and you will feel it get a little warm and buzz in your pocket. That will then tell you the time and date of our meeting."

Everyone turned the coins over in their hands, examining them.

Hermione held out a coin for Ed which he took and grinned as he examined it himself.
"This is brilliant! Great job."

Hermione was beaming at this and Ed put the coin in his pocket for safe keeping.

"Okay, then that's it. Everyone check your coin for the next meeting and be careful...alright?"

Harry pulled out a piece of folded up parchment and tapped it with his wand, muttering a few words. Looking it over he announced the coast was clear and that everyone should leave in groups of two to four.

All the students then paired up and Hermione helped dismiss them. Making sure that she didn't send everyone at once and that they were all spaced out. Soon, all the other members had left, leaving Harry, Ron, Hermione, Alphonse, and Edward.

"I think all things considered, everything went very well for a first meeting."

Edward nodded in agreement. "For a bunch of kids? You guys did alright."

Ron huffed a bit. "You're our age too, you know?"

Ed crossed his arms. "Yeah, but I'm a member of the military and have actual experience and training. Plus, I'm your professor. Therefore, I can call you all kids."

Hermione shook her head a bit and chuckled. "Well thank you for joining us and helping out Professor."

Ed gave a curt nod. "My pleasure. Anything you three need to go up against that toad? I'm your guy."

Edward then checked his pocket watch and saw the time. "We better go as well. I'll check my...coin...for any updates and if anything seriously happens, come and find me or Al."

The trio nodded and Edward and Alphonse turned to leave.

"See you next class!" Ed called over his shoulder as he and Al left the room.

Once they left the seventh floor and got to their way to their room, they saw Elizabeth sitting at her piano.

She was playing a sweet song that sounded like something out of a dream. As soon as she saw Ed and Al though, she stopped playing and smiled at them.

"Edward! Alphonse! You're both out late tonight," Elizabeth commented, after rubbing her eyes. She was starting to look rather tired and Ed took notice of this.

"We had a couple things to do, but you didn't need to stay up for us."

Elizabeth yawned a bit while waving them off. "No, I'm fine. Plus it's my job. Who else would let you into your room!"

Ed smiled at the young girl. "Thanks, we really appreciate it."

"No problem! No come on, if you guys are about as half as tired as I am, then you need to get to bed."

Ed chuckled a bit and said their password. With that the portrait swung open and the two brothers
walked inside.

"She is really sweet, you know?" Al commented.

Ed smiled softly as he took off of his red coat and black jacket. "Yeah."

"I'm glad she is our painting."

"Me too Al," Ed pulled off his black tank top and grabbed a white t-shirt.

"Brother? Do you think that this group...Dumbledore's Army will really do some good?"

"Whatever helps these kids prepare will do them good."

"But do you think that they really are in danger here? Like will this Voldemort guy attack?"

Ed sighed as he sat down on his bed and rested his elbows on his knees. "I think this place is safe...at least for now. But this Voldemort person? I don't know. If he really is back and still wants to take over this world, then he's probably biding his time right now. I don't see him attacking this school...not yet."

"And if he does?"

Ed looked up at his younger brother. "If we're still here, then we help defend it. You know we-I-won't let innocent kids die because of some psycho. I don't care who he is."

"I know Brother...it's just this whole D.A. thing got me thinking."

"It's alright Al," Ed kicked off his shoes and pulled off his pants. Laying down on his bed, Ed was on his back and put his hands behind his head.

"Do you like it here Al?"

Al paused for a moment before replying. "Yes Brother...I do...I really do."
Walking into his office, he saw his team hard at work.

"Any updates on Scar or the Elrics?"

"There are a few leads stating that Scar is now in the West. We've sent men and notified Eastern command about the situation. But there haven't been any more attacks. And for Edward and Alphonse? There was an owl outside with a letter when I got to the office. I let him in, but he wouldn't let any of us take the letter from him and tried to take Havoc's hand off."

Mustang looked up to see a small rust-colored owl with golden eyes staring at him intently. A letter, only a bit smaller than him was in his beak.

Roy let out a long sigh as he sat down in his chair.

The little bird took this as an invitation to fly down and place the letter on Mustang's desk before flying back up to the rafters. He chirped loudly a couple times and Havoc had his unwrapped hand on his sidearm.

Holding up the letter, Mustang saw his name scribbled on the front and shook his head. He flipped it over and popped the seal on the back. As he lifted the flap he felt a squirt of water fly right in his face.

The entire office was silent for a few moments as the soldiers watched as their superior officer's hands shook with anger.

"I'm gonna kill that munchkin when he comes back."

"Sir, you can't kill Edward," Hawkeye chided as she handed the Colonel a handkerchief to dry his face off with.

Mustang had a deadly look in his eyes and was met with Riza's own lethal glare. Even in his anger, he knew to back down from this fight and save it for another day. Like when Fullmetal came back and he could assign the shorty to investigate something in the Central City Sewers.

Roy turned his attention back to the letter and pulled out the folded parchment.

**Dear Colonel Useless Bastard,**

*Hope you like the little toy I got from a joke shop here at Hogwarts. I think this whole magic thing is growing on me.*

Mustang growled at this, but continued to read on.

*The owl, as you may have noticed is different. This is because I was able to purchase one of my own. His name is Ferro, I paid good money for him and Al is very attached so don't fry him or else.*

*Overall, things are progressing nicely here at school. Some of these brats might have a chance at learning some alchemy...A few, like this one boy named Ted isn't amongst the main group of kids that will ever do any alchemy.*
How are Riza and Armstrong? My brother asked me to add that right now, by the way. But back to what I was writing.

Another girl, Ida, shows some promise in one of my classes. She has some actual experience with the periodic table, unlike Nickolas, another student of mine. But Ida is a good girl and shows some promise once we move past understanding. Nickolas on the other hand will just use my class as nap time.

How are things in Central though? I know you probably miss General Grumman and your chess matches. Kain told me you finally beat him before you left. I guess a hundred and five times is the charm!

Also, are things alright with Lieutenant Ilse and Danny? I know they were having a little rocky patch since she thought he was cheating on her with Sheska. But I personally think that was a rumor started by Kain and 1st Officer Edison.

Man, all of this though is making me miss home a lot. And our portrait, Elizabeth was able to play an old folk song that Granny Pinko used to sing. She would sing and Mr. Smith would play his guitar. Then his son Edison would try and dance around while we watched on.

But that reminds me of Major Comanche trying to dance around on that peg leg of his. One time he tripped and fell right into 2nd Lieutenant Rebecca, you know the one who is friends with Miss Elizabeth? I think she's married to Officer Tim?

Man, thinking about Amestris and the military really has brought back some memories. Like when Lieutenant Melissa and Officer Tim glued Falman to his chair.

I don't think I've laughed harder in my life...

Well Al is bugging me to finish this and get some dinner.

Please send your reply with the owl and be careful, he's a biter!

Sincerely,

Edward Elric

Fullmetal Alchemist

Mustang frowned as he finished the letter.

"What's wrong sir?" Fury asked.

"This letter...it makes no sense..."

"Let me see, sir," Hawkeye said, holding out her hand. Mustang handed the parchment over and her eyes scanned the entire letter.

"You're right sir, but did you notice that the moment before things start to become weird, there are three dots?"

Mustang's eyes went wide with shock. "Hand that over."

He quickly pulled out a sheet of paper and pen as Riza handed him back the letter.

"Okay so first there is Ted. Then Riza and Armstrong. Ida, Nickolas, Ida again followed by Nickolas
and Grumman, Kain, Ilse, Danny, Sheska, Kain, Edison, Elizabeth, Pinko. Smith, Edison again, Comanche, Rebecca, Elizabeth once more, Tim, Melissa, Tim again, and finally Falman before the three dots appear again."

"Chief is sending us a message using the name code?"

"It would appear so," Mustang stated as he looked at the message in front of him.

"What is it?" Breda asked.

"'TRAINING KIDS KEEP SECRET MTF'."

"More to follow? Why is he training those kids in the first place?" Fury asked.

"Yeah, isn't Chief a teacher already?"

Mustang laced his fingers together and leaned back in his chair. "Not sure. But Fullmetal will be sending more messages, and all with some sort of code."

"And I trust his instincts. If he feels the need to do this, then there must be something going on."

"Are you going to reply with your own code, sir?" Fury asked.

Mustang nodded as he wrote his own reply to Edward and sealed it in an envelope. He held up the letter and Ferro swooped down, snatching it from Mustang's hand and flying out the open window.

---

Edward

Edward was walking towards the Great Hall for lunch. He and Al had been working for most of the day on the journals. They were getting closer to cracking the code, Ed could feel it. It was just as if they were missing the final, crucial piece.

The gold coin was in Ed's pocket. He made sure to keep it in his pocket ever since the meeting two days ago. To make sure no one would suspect him, he carried around his small coin bag as well. So that way if he was searched, he could simply say that the coin fell out of the bag.

Before he could turn and walk into the Hall, he saw a mass of students rushing outside.

Frowning, he went to investigate the matter. He pushed his way through the crowd to the front of it. In the courtyard stood the weird woman he met a few days ago. The Divination Professor that tried to read his future.

She was looking very confused and scared as she stood in the middle of the courtyard, surrounded by a growing crowd of students. The thing that caught Ed's attention though was Umbridge. She was standing there with a haughty expression.

"Bu-but why?"

"Didn't you see this coming? Incapable though you are of predicting even tomorrow's weather, you must surely have realized that your pitiful performance during my inspections, and lack of any improvement, would make it inevitable you would be sacked?"

Trelawney looked devastated. "Y-you c-an't! Hogwarts is my-my home! Where will I go!"
"It was your home. Until an hour ago, when the Minister of Magic countersigned the order for your dismissal. Now kindly remove yourself from the grounds. You are embarrassing us."

Ed growled a bit and pushed out of the crowd and into the clearing surrounding Trelawney and Umbridge. At that moment, McGonagall did the same. The Transfiguration Professor quickly went over to the distraught woman.

"There, there, Sibyll...Calm down...It's not as bad as you think, now...You are not going to have to leave Hogwarts..."

Edward stood in front of the two woman and between them and Umbridge.

"What the giant hell lady!"

"Mr. Elric, please mind your language."

"Oh, I'll show you language!" he roared.

"Mr. Elric! I will remind you that I am the Hogwarts High Inquisitor and I am asking you to stand aside."

"And I'm Major Edward Elric of the Amestrian military and I'm telling you to shut the hell up!"

Many of the students around them gasped and whispered amongst themselves.

Edward turned his attention away from Umbridge and turned around to see McGonagall practically holding Trelawney upright.

"Look, I may not agree with everything you believe but you are still a human being."

Edward reached into his pocket and brought out his bag of coins. Even though he had used a lot of it in Diagon Alley and Hogsmeade, there was still a good amount of coins left in there.

"Here. Use all of this and if you still need more, send me a letter and I'll transfer more money to you."

McGonagall and Trelawney stared at him, utterly shocked. The Divination professor shakily took the bag from Ed's grasp and opened it.

McGonagall gasped as she looked inside the bag as well.

"Edward! This is over thirty galleons at least! Not even counting any of the sickles and knuts!"

Ed shook his head. "I don't need it. My grant from the military is so big that giving that up wouldn't even begin to put a dent in it."

This caused another wave of whispering to go through the crowd as McGonagall and Trelawney both started at Ed dumbfounded.

"I will not allow this, Mr. Elric!" a shrill voice said behind him.

Ed groaned a bit and turned around to face Umbridge. "Oh shut up you toad."

The students all collectively gasped at this.

"It's my money, so I'll spend it however the hell I please."
"Mr. Elric! I am the Hogwarts High Inquisitor! You will treat me with the respect someone with my title deserves!"

Edward narrowed his gaze and turned his glare on full power. He could see Umbridge shrink a bit under his gaze, but tried to remain confident.

"No," he hissed. "I will treat you with the respect you deserve. I don't give a damn about any title you're given. You think just because someone signed a piece of paper that gives you power? You think that makes you better than everyone else?!"

Umbridge's confident facade was beginning to crumble and fear was showing through.

"No. You are still a human being, just like her. And the fact that you think you are any better than anyone here shows me the type of person you are. You are weak and don't even know it. But I do. I know how invincible we like to think we are, but we aren't. We're only human."

The entire courtyard was silent as Edward felt his rage course through his veins.

"That is enough, Professor Elric," a loud booming voice announced.

Everyone turned to see Dumbledore stroll through the crowd as it parted for him. Edward stood his ground though, not knowing what the old man had planned right now.

"No one will be leaving Hogwarts today."

Ed let out a small sigh of relief and heard Trelawney cry out a bit from joy.

"No one, Headmaster? I'm sorry that I must correct you like this but I'm afraid you do not understand the situation," Umbridge stated while pulling out a scroll of parchment. "I have here an Order of Dismissal signed by myself and the Minister of Magic. Under the terms of Educational Decree Number Twenty-three, the High Inquisitor of Hogwarts has the power to inspect, place upon probation, and sack any teacher I feel is not performing up to the standard required by the Ministry of Magic. I have decided that Professor Trelawney is not up to scratch. I have dismissed her."

Ed looked back at Dumbledore who still had a cheery smile on his face.

"You are quite right, of course, Professor Umbridge. As High Inquisitor you have every right to dismiss my teachers. You do not, however, have the authority to send them away from the castle. I am afraid," he went on, "that the power to do that still resides with the headmaster, and it is my wish that Professor Trelawney continue to live at Hogwarts."

Edward soon found himself grinning wildly and Trelawney gave a small cry of joy. "Oh thank you Headmaster!"

"Minerva, would you be so kind as to escort Sybill back upstairs?"

McGonagall nodded and started to guide the former Divination professor back into the castle. But Trelawney stopped her right as they passed Edward.

"Wait! H-here is your money-"

Ed shook his head. "I told you. I don't need it. Keep it just encase, alright?"

McGonagall was smiling warmly at the young professor and Ed could see the respect she held for him in that moment in her eyes.
"Th-thank you my boy!" Trelawney cried out.

Ed gave her a small smile. "It's no trouble."

McGonagall then helped Trelawney back into the castle and Edward turned his attention back to Dumbledore.

"And I know you are already wondering about the new Divination professor, but not to worry Dolores. I've already found one."

"Y-you've found one! Headmaster! Under Educational decree number-"

Dumbledore held up his hand. "You have the right to appoint a candidate, only if the Headmaster is unavailable to do so."

"And who do did you appoint?"

Everyone turned to face the open front doors, and Edward heard hooves. There was a shocked murmur around the hall and those nearest the doors hastily moved even farther backward, some of them tripping over in their haste to clear a path for the newcomer. He had white-blond hair and astonishingly blue eyes, the head and torso of a man joined to the palomino body of a horse.

Edward's eyes went wide with shock as he whispered. "Chimera..."

"This is Firenze," said Dumbledore happily to a thunderstruck Umbridge. "I think you'll find him suitable."

"Now, I believe it is time everyone returned to the castle."

He then turned and started to walk back into Hogwarts while many of the students also started to disperse. Edward watched as Harry chased after Dumbledore as well as Umbridge starting to turn an atrocious shade of red.

She huffed a bit and stomped back into the castle. Edward on the other hand, turned his attention to the Chimera now in the courtyard.

The man-horse hybrid noticed Edward and trotted up to him.

"Hello," he said.

"You're a Chimera...how?"

The man/horse frowned a bit. "I am not a chimera, young one, I am a centaur."

"But...how?"

Ed was trying to fight back the flashbacks of the Tucker house and was failing. He could hear Nina's voice ringing in his ears as she stood over her wretched father.

"I was born to this form. If that is what you fear."

Edward snapped out of his memories to look up at the centaur.

"I-I wasn't...I mean."

Firenze held up his hand and Ed stopped.
"I see the pain in your eyes. I can tell that you have seen creatures like myself created using dark means."

Ed bit his lip and nodded slightly.

"I assure you I am happy with my form and do not wish to see you reliving these horrible memories."

Ed sighed and ran his hand through his bangs. "I'm sorry. It's..just like what you said..bad memories."

"It is alright. Though I will ask, what is your name?"

"I'm Edward Elric," Ed extended his arm."Alchemy Professor."

Firenze shook his hand. "Professor? Interesting for someone so young."

Ed crossed his arms. "I'm fifteen, and a fully qualified State Alchemist from Amestris."

Firenze nodded. "Very well. I believe I must take my leave of you for the moment. Headmaster Dumbledore wished that I 'settle in' as soon as possible."

Edward stepped to the side and Firenze thanked him, walking into the castle.

Ed shook his head and ran his hand through his bangs once more as he then started to walk back into the castle.

"Professor Ed!"

Edward groaned internally as he tried to walk faster towards the staircase.

"Wait! Professor Edo!"

Edward debated using his alchemy to create a hole that would allow him to escape but the twins were fast and jumped in front of him, breathing heavy.

"What is it?" Edward asked, rubbing his temples.

"Me and my brother," Fred pointed his thumb at George who waved weakly. "Have a proposition for you."

"What kind of proposition?"

"One that involves a certain pink clad professor."

Edward stopped massaging and looked at the twins. He lowered his hands and grinned.

"What do you need?"

The twins stared at the young alchemy professor a little confused. "You don't even know what we're asking for."

"If I know you two, then it means the pink toad won't be happy with what you have planned. So consider me in."

Both red haired twins grinned mischievously. "We'll need your...special set of skills and a little bit of
your status as a respectable professor here at Hogwarts."

"Alright, what do you need me to transmute?" Edward asked, crossing his arms.

"We plan on...entertaining Umbridge and a few of her associates for a while. So we'll be requiring your skill set a often."

Ed was grinning like a mad man. "Come by my office anytime you two need me. And if you can't find me, use Al. He's able to use my technique in alchemy as well."

"Very good, Professor. Now if you excuse us, we have some business to attend to."

George then waved for his brother to follow him and the two twins departed.

Ed was still grinning as he returned to his classroom.

"How was lunch, Brother?"

Ed realized he had forgotten to eat in all the commotion. "Um...well I didn't eat, but there was a sort of incident in the courtyard."

Edward quickly told Alphonse all that had happened, from Umbridge firing Trelawney all the way to meeting Firenze.

"That Umbridge lady...she is really mean Brother. I don't like that she has a lot of power."

Ed snorted through his nose as he leaned further back in his chair. "Tell me about it."

"But that was really sweet of you to give that lady your money."

Ed shook his head. "She was being forced out on the street! Even if she was a bit crazy, I wasn't going to stand by and not do anything."

Ferro tapped on the window a few times before Ed stood up and let him in. He took the letter from the owl's beak and the bird took off to rest in the little nest he had made up in the rafters.

Ed walked back to his desk and opened the letter from Mustang.

*Fullmetal,*

_The stunt you pulled with the envelope will not go unpunished. And try to train that owl of yours to not attack any of your fellow officers..._

Ed read through the rest of the letter and was grinning at the end of it.

"What is it Brother?"

Ed pulled out a spare sheet of paper and started looking between it and the blank sheet he was writing on. Once he finished decoding he lifted up the sheet and read it out loud to Al.

"*WE COPY NOW USE CODE 2*"

"Looks like the Colonel got your message."

Ed snorted a bit as he set the decoded message down on his desk. "He should have. I sounded way too sentimental in that letter. Anyone that may have looked at it, would have seen a silly homesick
kid. But because the prank worked we know they aren't checking letters yet. But that will probably change now."

"At least since you're writing in Amestrian they will have more trouble reading it."

Ed shook his head as he looked at the letter. "Hopefully. But we can't take any chances."

Clapping his hands he touched the paper with the secret message causing it to turn into tiny minuscule scraps. Gathering them up in his hands, Ed walked over and tossed them out of his window and into the chilly Autumn wind.

Ed shivered a bit and closed the window quickly. He debated on sending another letter to Mustang to update him on the situation, but his thoughts were interrupted by a knock at his door.

"Professor?" Neville called.

"Yes, Neville? Come in."

The boy walked into the room and smiled at the young alchemy professor

"Professor Dumbledore wanted me to tell you that he needs to see you immediately."

Edward stood up. "Really? Did he say why?"

"No, sir. He just asked me to come by your room and tell you."

Edward gave him a small smile and walked over, patting Neville on the shoulder.

"Thanks, Neville. Did you need anything else?"

"Um.. I wanted to ask you a few questions about your alchemy assignment the other day but since you have to leave.."

Ed quickly turned around to look at his younger brother. "Al? Can you help Neville?"

"Sure!"

Ed looked back at Neville. "There you go, Al can help you with anything you need. I'll be back soon."

Neville was smiling brightly and he thanked Edward and Alphonse profusely. Edward then turned and left the room, walking towards the Headmaster's office.

Once there, he said the password and walked up the spiraling staircase. He knocked on the door and heard Dumbledore from the inside tell him to come in and Ed opened the large wooden door.

Dumbledore stood behind his desk and Edward looked over at Draco who was looking like he would rather be anywhere else than here.

"What is going on?"

"I have finished my investigation as to the events of October 3rd."

Edward stiffened and felt his heart stop.

"W-what did you find?" he managed to get out.
Dumbledore glanced at Draco who refused to look at Edward or the Headmaster.

"Mr. Malfoy here believed he was instigating a prank that would embarrass you in front of his peers and your officers."

Edward glared at Draco who quickly said. "It was just a prank! I didn't know his biggest fear was a monster! You should be investigating whatever that thing was!"

Dumbledore put up his hand and Draco shut up.

"Seeing as you were the, for lack of a better term, victim of this, I leave the punishment up to you."

Ed thought about this for a few moments before looking back up at Dumbledore. "He'll have detention. With me."

"For how long?"

"I think two or three hours will be enough."

Draco looked ready to object but Dumbledore's glare showed there was no room for that.

"Very well. Draco, report to Professor Elric's classroom at noon on Saturday."

"My father-" Draco began before Ed interrupted.

"Is someone you shouldn't be hiding behind. And even if he is very powerful here, I don't give a damn. You're going to go through this and receive the punishment you brought on yourself."

Draco scowled at this and Ed turned his attention back to the Headmaster.

"Is that all Dumbledore?"

He nodded. "Yes, and I want to apologize on behalf of Hogwarts and the Ministry of Magic once again for this whole incident."

"Thanks, and Draco?"

The blond haired boy looked back towards the now smirking alchemy professor.

"For your detention, don't wear anything...too nice. You'll be working outside for all of it."

Draco looked a little horrified at this at the same time Dumbledore looked a little intrigued.

"I better go, my brother will be expecting me back now."

Dumbledore nodded and Ed gave a slightly salute to the Headmaster, then turned on his heads and walked out of the office.
"As I told you yesterday," Ed announced to his class. "Today is your big test on understanding. If you pass, you can move onto the next part of this course, which is deconstruction. If you fail, you will have to take this test again before moving on...does everyone understand?"

Everyone nodded and Ed passed out the test.

"You have the entire class to complete. Good luck."

The students frantically began, while Ed made his way back to his desk. He pulled out an alchemy text he was using as reference to the journals and read through it while his students took the test.

He had told all of his students to come by during the day at set group was the last one of the day and consisted of the 7th year class.

Ed looked at the stack of papers and began to grade. He was able to go through the questions easily and make the incorrect ones, do a small calculation in his head, then write the final grade at the top.

He continued this for a while, until something broke his concentration.

"Professor Ed?"

Edward looked up to see Fred and George handing in their papers.

"How was it?"

"Alright... though I have to say, the third page was very hard."

Ed felt the corners of his mouth twitch a bit and nodded. "Duly noted. And if you have any questions please come back in about an hour once everyone is finished and I've graded your papers."

"Certainly, Professor."

Both twins were grinning as they packed up their things and left the classroom.

He set aside the twin's tests and resumed his earlier actions, and continued to grade the other tests in front of him. More students came up and placed their test in front of Edward, some speaking to him briefly.

Once everyone had left the classroom, Ed reached over and grabbed the twins' tests.

He flipped both of them over to the second page and saw chemical formulas scribbled on the top of both pages with an amount beside the two of them. He recognized them as dyes and smiled. One he knew was edible, and the other was for cloth.

Ed copied down the formulas, C16 H10 N2 O2 and C37 H34 N2 Na2 O9 S3 and scratched out the equations on the tests.

Luckily, the formulas were made of simple elements and Ed knew he could find the needed supplies either in his very classroom or outside.
Edward decided that he could take a walk outside to get some air. Grabbing two bottles of the right size, and formula's in hand, he walked out of his classroom and outside. The carbon, hydrogen, oxygen, sodium, and sulfur could all be found in the soil and Ed knew just a simple transmutation would combine them in the order he needed.

A few other students were out in the grounds as well, but since it the temperature was starting to drop, they were hurrying inside. Ed cursed Mustang under his breath for sending him somewhere this cold but focused on the task at hand.

He looked over his shoulder to see that no one was near him, or could see what he was about to do. Kneeling down he clapped his hands and focused on on each formula, making sure to take his time and get the exact compound right.

Once he had filled both bottles, he capped them and put each back in his pockets, and walked back into the castle. He saw the twins standing by the door to his room as he approached.

"Hello, Professor," Fred greeted.

"I hope we aren't bothering you with our questions."

Ed was grinning. "Oh no, not at all. Come inside and we can talk."

Ed opened his door and the twins followed him inside.

"Did you get it?" George whispered.

Ed rolled his eyes and handed them the bottles of the deep royal blue powders. "It was a little too easy, boys."

Fred grabbed one bottle, while George got the other. Both hid them in their robes quickly before turning their attention back to their professor.

"This is way better than trying to order it via owl. Umbridge and Filch are searching them you know."

Ed scoffed a bit. "Yeah, which is why I've been using codes for the past month. That toad thinks she's so much smarter than everyone else, where me and Al are probably three steps ahead of her now."

Fred and George looked very impressed. "Wow... well thanks Professor! I'm sure you'll enjoy the show this Monday."

Ed now had a wicked grin. "Oh.. I'm sure I will."

"Well thank you again Professor for all the help."

"See you tomorrow!" George called back as the twins departed from Ed's room.

Ed smiled as he walked back to his desk to finish grading the tests. He wanted to finish them before the DA meeting later tonight.

Edward worked fast and diligently until Alphonse tapped his shoulder, alerting him that they had to go to the meeting. And so, the two brothers left Ed's classroom and started to walk.

Edward looked at the small coin in his hand. It read that the DA meeting was supposed to start in about 30 minutes. He and Al seemed to be the first ones there, and that pleased him.
Harry had asked Edward to train them today, and Ed needed to make the room suit his needs for physical training as opposed to magic.

He stuffed it back into his pocket and paced in front of the wall, three times thinking the same thing over and over again.

*Give me a place I can train these kids.*

*Give me a place I can train these kids.*

The large wooden door took shape and Edward pushed it open.

Inside, the walls were still lined with mirrors and the bulletin board still hung in the back. But the floor had a small circular track running around it and in the center were a few sparring dummies. He noticed that there were also two doors off to the side labeled BOYS and GIRLS.

The two brothers walked into the room and Edward began inspecting the dummies. They were two types, a soft one that looked to be filled with sand that resembled a human torso. And another one with rotation wooden extensions.

"Brother! Look!"

Ed turned his attention to his brother, who was standing by one of the two doors.

"What's in there?"

"It looks like one of the locker rooms we have back home. And there are different uniforms, with different colors and sizes too!"

"Really?" Ed thought about this for a moment before nodding. "Yeah, well I guess these kids wouldn't want to train in their school clothes. But it's a little weird that the room assumed to make something like that."

Soon, the golden trio entered the room and were surprised to see the dramatic change.

"Why does it look so different?" Ron asked.

"I need a place to train you kids physically. The room before was more suited for magical training."

Ron nodded, understanding Ed's logic.

Hermione then turned to him and asked, "So what do you plan to teach?"

"Some of the basics," Ed shrugged. "But you three might want to change before anyone else gets here."


"Al said there are some locker rooms there with uniforms" Ed pointed towards the rooms. "And trust me. You guys won't want to be in those stuffy things once we get started."

The trio exchanged a look before heading off into the two locker rooms. Ed took the opportunity to shrug off his red coat and take off his gloves. He set them to the side and the trio then emerged from the locker rooms.

They were wearing red shirts with the symbol for Gryffindor on the right side, and black shorts. And
Hermione had pulled her hair back into a ponytail.

Right then, the rest of the DA seemed to show up, trickling in slowly so as to avoid suspicion.

"Professor Elric and his brother will be training us today, so I want everyone to listen to them," Harry announced once everyone was there.

"And I'll need everyone to change into the uniforms in the locker rooms there!" Ed yelled, pointing to the two doors. There were a few protests but many of the students got changed without too much hassle.

Once they were all ready, Ed noticed that there was a mixture of red, blue, and yellow shirts, each with the insignia of their house on the left side.

"Everybody ready?" Ed asked.

They all nodded and a few replied with a yes.

"Alright!" Ed boomed. "I want eight laps from everyone!"

"Eight!"

"Why are we running!?"

Ed groaned and rubbed his temples as some of the students protested this. He then lifted his fingers to his mouth and whistled loudly.

This caused everyone in the room to cover their ears and stop talking.

"I was told by my teacher, that in order to train the mind you must first train the body. And to train the body I'll need eight laps from each and every one of you!"

There was still a small bit of grumbling, but a few of the boys took off and began to run around the small track. Ed judged that about eight laps around would equal about a mile.

A few of the kids were running with ease, while others were struggling after the second lap. Ed sighed and ran a hand over his face, realizing how these kids had probably never really worked out in their lives.

It took the group about fifteen minutes to finish the mile and Ed tried to remind himself that for this group, that was probably a good time.

"Some of you are probably still wondering why I asked you to run."

A couple nodded and the group mumbled in agreement.

"If you ever in a dangerous situation, what is the first thing you do?"

A few of the students supplemented their own answers very quickly.

"Punch them?"

"Use your wand to jinx them!"

"Put them in a full body bind?!"
Ed shook his head at all of these.

"You try and escape. You run."

One Gryffindor, Cormac McLaggen scoffed. "I'm not going to run like a coward."

Ed narrowed his gaze and crossed his arms. "Really? You think running away is cowardly?"

McLaggen smirked. "Yeah, everyone knows only people who are scared and weak run from a fight."

"No. Only those that are stupid stay and fight a battle they can't possibly win. A smart man runs and saves his life so he can fight another day."

"But-"

Ed cut his off. "No. You all need to know this. You may think a few moves and your wands make you invincible, but you're not. You are all kids and more importantly; human. We are not infallible and most importantly...we're mortal."

The room was silent as all of the kids absorbed Ed's speech. He cleared his throat and then began.

"Now, I'll start by demonstrating a few defensive maneuvers you can use to get out of a situation. But first, there are a few parts of the body you need to know."

A few of the students looked a bit confused but Ed continued.

"Now, everyone has weak points. No one is completely invincible. If you are ever in a dangerous situation and can't escape right away, attack these points."

Ed pointed at his eyes.

"Gouging, poking, or scratching the attacker's eyes with your fingers or knuckles would be effective, as you can imagine. Besides causing a lot of pain, this should also make your escape easier by at least temporarily interfering with your attacker's vision."

Ed pointed at his nose next.

"If the attacker is close in front of you, use the heel of your palm to strike up under their nose. You have to throw the whole weight of your body into the move to cause the most pain and force him to loosen their grip on you. If they're behind you, you can strike their nose with your elbow. Either way, aim for the nasal bones. It will cause a lot of damage and pain, letting you be able to go free."

Ed then moved onto his neck.

"Hitting the neck is very effective. You could temporarily stun your attacker by jabbing the neck with all of your fingers held straight and tightly together, with thumb tucked and slightly bent at the knuckle, at the side of the neck. For even more injury, you could thrust your elbow into your assailant's throat while pitching the weight of your body forward."

He then pointed at his knee.

"And lastly, the knee is an ideal self-defense target, vulnerable from every angle and easily kicked without risk of your foot being grabbed. Kick the side of the knee to cause injury or partially incapacitate your attacker. Kicking the front of the knee may cause more injury but is less likely to result in imbalance."
He then crossed his arms and finished his lecture.

"These four points are the places you can inflict the most damage with the least amount of risk or force. Now I'm going to demonstrate a few moves on how to effectively use these points. I'll need a volunteer."

Everyone seemed to take a step back, leaving Harry standing alone.

"Harry, come on up."

Harry looked around and sighed, walking forward.

"Now, I need you to stand still and right in front of me."

Harry looked a bit nervous but stood in front of Edward.

"Now if I came at you, and grabbed your wrist." Ed reached over and grabbed Harry's wrist.

"What is your first instinct?" he asked.

Harry looked down at his wrist and answered, "To pull away, sir."

"Yes, and you need to ignore that. What I want you to do is to squat down into a strong stance, then lean forward and bend your elbow towards me all the way towards my forearm until I can no longer hold onto your wrist."

Harry nodded and soon began to do what Ed had instructed. His feet shifted into a strong stance, and then pulled and twisted Ed's arm also it was a very uncomfortable to keep holding onto Harry's wrist.

Ed let go and Harry looked very pleased with himself.

"That was great, you did very well Harry."

Ed then turned to his younger brother. "Should I show them how to get out of a Bear Hug?"

Al nodded and Ed looked over at Harry. "This one is a bit more serious so I'm going to ask you to rejoin the others. Al will be assisting me for this one."

Harry nodded and rejoined the group of teenagers.

"Al, grab me from behind and I'll explain the move while we demonstrate."

Alphonse nodded and hugged his brother from behind.

"Now this is a much more realistic attack. If you find yourself here, you need to remember your legs are the strongest part of your bodies. So use 'em."

Ed dropped his weight, entering into a sort of squat.

"Here, your center of gravity can help you disarm the attacker. So once you are here, try to hit their head with your elbows or stomp their feet with your feet. It will shock them enough so you can wiggle out of their hold. But, if that doesn't work, pull their fingers back to force them to release you, rotate out of their hold, and attack him with your knees or kick. But don't be stupid there, if you can get away, do it. Don't be cocky and get yourself captured again."

Ed grabbed Al's fingers and pulled back. Al, who didn't feel a thing, acted a little bit in pain and Ed
twisted out of his hold.

Ed then turned to the group. "Everyone pair up and practice using those maneuvers. But be careful, I don't need any of you getting hurt because your partner was a little too excited."

The group began to break off into pairs and started to practice the moves. Ed and Al walked around, observing their progress.

Neville was working with Hannah Abbott, and he looked like he couldn't get out of her hold on his wrist.

"Neville, you have to twist it away from yourself. Make it so their arm can't hold onto you anymore."

Ed lightly directed Neville's movements to demonstrate the correct form.

Neville nodded and tried again, successfully getting out of the hold.

He was practically beaming at Ed. "Thank you Professor!"

Ed smiled a bit. "You're the one who did it, Neville. Now keep practicing, you're doing great."

He continued his rounds, observing each of the pairs and offering advice and critiques. When he got to Luna and Ginny he was happily surprised to see Ginny quickly get out of Luna's hold.

"Very good, Ginny. That was excellent form."

"Thank you Professor."

Ed looked over to see Cormac McLaggen working with Terry Boot and smirked.

"McLaggen!"

Everyone turned to look at Ed, including Cormac.

"Yes?"

"You versus Ginny Weasley."

Some looked very shocked and a few looked very worried.

"Are you sure Professor?" Terry asked.

Ed grinned. "Oh, I'm sure."

Ginny looked confident as McLaggen strode over. "Now, don't be disappointed if you don't get out the first time."

Ginny scowled and looked over at Ed who nodded, signaling them to begin.

Ed took a few steps back as McLaggen wrapped his arms around Ginny.

Behind him, he heard the twins placing a few bets with a couple of the other students.

"Put me down for Ginny to win," he whispered back.

Fred nodded and everyone watched as Ed called out for Ginny to start.
McLaggen was smirking, looking like he had no worried in the world, but Ginny had a different expression. She looked determined as hell, as she quickly dropped into a squat and elbowed McLaggen in the stomach while stomping his foot.

He cried out as the breath was knocked out of him. Ginny twisted around and grabbed McLaggen's wrist, forcing it behind him and completely disarming him.

The room was silent for a few moments until Ed started to clap slowly and walk forward. Ginny released her hold and McLaggen stood up quickly and rubbed his shoulder.

"Great form, Ginny. And I liked the added touch at the end."

"Thank you Professor, I thought you would," she answered innocently.

Many of the girls rushed forward and began congratulating Ginny while McLaggen huffed and walked away.

"I think that's enough for today. Everyone should change and start to head out," Ed announced.

The members quickly split up to change back into their school uniforms and left the room in groups as Harry instructed them to leave.

So then there was only Ed, Al, Harry, Ron, and Hermione left.

"They did good, for beginners at least," Ed commented as he put on his gloves and red coat. "But this was a cake-walk considering me and Al's first defense lessons."

"But we had Teacher."

Ed nodded. "True."

"Your teacher...what was she like?" Hermione asked.

"She's a housewife in Dublith, that's in the Southern part of our country. Her husband is a butcher," Al answered.

"You're alchemy teacher is a housewife?!" Ron exclaimed.

Ed and Al exchanged a look and nodded. "Yeah, but she's probably the best alchemist and fighter we've ever seen."

"So she isn't a State Alchemist like you?" Harry asked.

Ed scoffed a little. "Teacher hates the military. She threw a cleaver at my head the last time I saw her, because I joined the military."

"A cleaver!" all three exclaimed.

"She did that throughout our training. Throwing knives at us improved our reflexes and speed. We trained with her in hand to hand combat and alchemy for about... six months before she sent us home to continue our training ourselves."

Al chuckled a bit. "Yeah, those first few weeks after the island were a little scary. But we quickly learned to dodge whenever we walked into the shop or house."

Ed smiled as he remembered their training days in Dublith. "Remember that time we fought and then
she kicked both of our butts and ordered us to clean the shop from top to bottom?"

Al nodded. "Or the time those older kids started a fight with us?"

Ed laughed a bit. "That one kid was so scared of her he begged his family to move!"

The trio looked a little shocked and a tad horrified as Ed and Al continued to talk about their teacher.

"She really is a great woman," Ed said, smiling softly.

"Yeah," Al replied.

Ed pulled out his watch and checked the time. "You three should probably go, it's getting late and you don't want to be caught out of your dorms."

The trio nodded and said their goodbyes, leaving the two brothers in the room.

"How do you think she is doing?" Al asked softly.

Ed sighed. "I don't know. The last I heard from here was when she called me."

"You did a good thing telling her that Brother."

Ed nodded. "She deserved the same relief we got, Al."

And with that, the two brothers left the Room of Requirement and walked back to their room.

The next day, Ed woke up early. He pulled on a black long sleeve shirt, his jacket, coat, gloves and what not, and headed out. He told Al that since he would be doing Draco's detention not to wait up for him for anything.

Pushing open the door to his room, he saw Draco standing in the middle of it.

Draco looked like he would rather be anywhere than Ed's classroom and Ed partially wished he didn't have to be here either. But the kid pulled a stupid prank and needed to be punished.

And Ed knew the perfect way to do it too.

"Okay, Draco. You're with me for the next few hours."

Draco huffed a bit, looking very displeased with the whole situation and asked. "So are you going to make me write lines or clean the board?"

Ed shook his head, grinning a bit. "Oh no.. I've got something special in mind for today."

A visible lump seemed to form in Draco's throat as he gulped a bit, a flash of terror in his eyes before being replaced by a face of confidence that Ed easily saw through.

Ed turned on his heels and started to walk out of the classroom.

"Follow me."

He heard Draco follow behind him as they walked through the castle and out into the grounds. The temperature was dropping greatly and Hagrid told Ed that they were expecting snow soon, as they usually had snow on the ground in the December.

Luckily, Ed had transmuted his red coat to have a little fur lining it to provide some extra warmth and
the sun was out that day, offering some relief.

"What are we doing out here?" Draco asked.

Ed turned around and crossed his arms. "I'm going to go through my usual work out, and you are going to join me."

Draco's eyebrows shot up instantly. "Work out!?"

"Yes. Now try to keep up."

"And if I refuse?"

"What's the usual punishment for kids that refuse to do their detention?"

Draco didn't answer that. But a deep scowl had set in on his face.

"Thought so," Ed mused and started into a light jog, so as to let his body warm up properly.

He looked over his shoulder to see Draco starting to follow him, and looking not at all happy about it.

Ed smirked a bit and picked up his pace, lengthening his stride to really start working his muscles. He kept his breathing even, making sure to let out a breath every time his left foot hit the ground.

Ed loved the feeling running gave him. The wind rushing past him. The sound of his feet hitting the ground. The way his muscles burned.

Though most of the time, his runs weren't as peaceful as this one. There was either a deranged serial killer, or corrupted official, or even a pissed off Mustang chasing him.

Ed glanced over his shoulder to see Draco lagging behind him a bit. His face was red and his breathing was heavy.

Sighing Ed slowed his pace a bit and fell in line with Draco.

"How...much...longer?"

"Hm...," Ed looked around him to see they had only run for about a mile or so around the castle. "We'll turn back in a half mile."

Draco groaned a bit and Ed turned his attention back to his run.

Once they had jogged for the extra half mile, Ed stopped and turned around.

"We're going back now, and then we'll do some other stuff."

Draco's scowl only worsened at this, and Ed heard him mutter something about his father.

Ed rolled his eyes and started to head back. Draco was falling behind him again and Ed sighed.

"Pick up your feet more. They're dragging and are costing you energy."

Draco sneered a bit, but Ed noticed him picking up his feet a bit more and thus increasing his speed.

Once they reached their starting point Ed saw Draco bend over and place his hands on his knees.
"Keep your head above your heart. It'll keep you from fainting."

Draco stood up a bit and brushed himself off.

"What next, Professor?"

Ed narrowed his eyes at the platinum blond. Saying professor like it was a dirty word or something.

"I'm going to do a few exercises and you're going to try and keep up. First up is push ups."

Ed dropped to the ground and started to do his push ups. Draco followed suit, but at a much slower pace than Ed.

After doing twenty regular pushups with both of his arms. Ed placed his right automail arm behind his back and started doing one handed push ups.

Draco stopped for a second to see Edward doing the one hand push ups and Ed looked over and without missing a beat, switched his arms so that his flesh arm was now resting while the automail one was on the ground.

He continued to switch every five push ups or so until his count reached thirty.

"Next is crunches."

Ed swung his legs forward and rested his back on the ground.

He started his internal count and glanced over to see Draco grimacing while copying Ed's movements.

He continued his exercise until his count reached fifty.

"Burpees."

Ed stood up and jumped up, once he landed he placed his hands on the ground and kicked his legs out, going into a push up.

Draco was moving extremely slow at this point and look exhausted. But Ed simply continued doing his thirty burpees.

"Last is a two minute plank."

Ed placed his forearms on the ground and started counting to one hundred and twenty seconds. Draco was able to stay up for about fifteen seconds before collapsing on the ground.

Ed watched as Draco took a couple deep breathes before looking over at Edward.

"Can't do it?"

Draco looked a little insulted at this and regained his former position on his forearms.

Once Ed finished counting he stood up and saw Draco collapse on the ground again.

Brushing himself off, Ed stated, "Your detention is almost done. You only have to answer one question for me and then you can leave."

Draco was panting and sat up, looking at Ed expectantly.
"Why?"

"What?" Draco asked, looking confused.

"Why did you put it there?" Ed asked again. His tone wasn't accusatory or even bitter. It was calm and neutral.

Draco looked away. "I just wanted to pull a prank..."

"No, that's not it."

Draco looked back up at Ed, a brief wave of shock passed through his eyes which Ed caught.

"I think you were angry that you didn't pass the first test with the riddle. And therefore, acted out."

Draco huffed a little at this. "So what if I did?!"

"Then you are only proving my decision to not allow you into the next part of my class."

Draco scowled at this. "It was a stupid task to begin with!"

Ed sighed and shook his head. "And there you go again, proving me more and more right."

Draco rolled his eyes. "You know nothing about me. What do you know about how well I could or couldn't do alchemy? You're my age!"

Ed nodded. "Yes. I am your age, but I know more about the world than you can possibly imagine."

"You're still only fifteen," Draco snapped.

"Yes and in those fifteen years I've had to see my good for nothing father leave and never come back, bury my mother, try and take care of my younger brother, gotten injured, gone through automail surgery and rehabilitation, joined the military, and have been in more life or death situations than I can possibly count."

Draco stared at the young professor, dumbfounded.

"You're still just a kid. And I still am in some sense. I'm not arrogant enough to say I know everything. Because I don't. But what I do know is that you have potential Draco. That is if you finally try to see past your ego and stop hiding in the shadow of your father."

"I don't hid," Draco sneered. "I am a Malfoy!"

Ed shook his head. "So arrogant... Just remember this Draco. Pride goeth before the fall."

And with that, Ed turned to leave, heading back into the castle to take a nice shower and maybe get some lunch.

"And you might want to stretch before heading back!" Ed shouted over his shoulder. "Or else you won't be able to move tomorrow!"
Edward

"Brother! Brother wake up!"

Ed's eyes snapped open and his boy tensed. He shot up out of bed and right into a fighting position.

"What are you doing?"

Ed stared at his younger brother and looked around the room to see they were the only people in it.

"I thought something was wrong...what is it Al?"

"It's snowing! See!" Al pointed at the frost covered window and Ed walked over and stared outside at the now white covered grounds.

"Wow..."

"Remember the last time it snowed?"

Ed smiled. "Yeah, that was about the time I was seven and you were six right?"

Al nodded. "Yeah! We had a big snowball fight and you made a giant snowman with alchemy!"

Ed chuckle at that. "Yeah, and then Granny made us hot chocolate and stew while we warmed up by the fire."

"That was a great day," Al sighed.

Edward turned around to look at his younger brother. He could hear the little bit of longing in his voice and had already made up his mind.

"Do you want to go outside and play a bit?"

Al perked up at this. "Really!?"

Ed nodded. "I don't have any classes today. And we could both use a break from everything."

"Oh thank you, thank you Brother!" Al exclaimed, standing up quickly and hugging his brother tight. Ed smiled at his younger brother's antics. They rarely ever hugged nowadays and Ed welcomed it gladly.

"I'll just have to ask Madame Pomfrey for a little extra pain potion today," he said. "And make sure to dry my automail after."

Al nodded and Ed turned to get dressed. He pulled on his pants, put on two layers of socks and layered his long sleeve white shirt with a short sleeve black one. Grabbing his white gloves and red coat with transmuted fur lining, they headed out.

Once they exited their room, Elizabeth greeted them.

"Good morning boys!"

"Hey Elizabeth," Ed replied.
"It's snowing!" Al exclaimed.

Elizabeth chuckled a little at this. "It usually does around this time of year. But I'm guessing from your reactions, that you don't get a lot where you're from."

Ed shook his head. "No, we had one snow storm when we were kids, but that's it. The parts of Amestris we travel around are pretty warm most of the year, and some are even in the desert."

"Wow, well you'll get plenty of snow here, trust me. Have fun!"

"We will!" Ed called out as he and Al turned to leave.

The two brothers walked to the Great Hall and up to the faculty table. Al squeezed in next to Ed and they were greeted warmly by Madame Pomfrey and Hagrid.

"Hello Edward, and Alphonse. Lovely morning, isn't it?"

"I can't believe it's actually snowing!"

Madame Pomfrey laughed softly at this. "Yes, it is. And I suppose you and your brother are not used to seeing such a sight?"

Ed shook his head as he began to cut into his breakfast.

"No, we're usually in the Southern or Eastern part of Amestris. Our hometown did get a snowstorm one year when we were young though."

"And Brother said that he and I could go out and play a bit today!"

"Really? That sounds great," Hagrid stated.

Alphonse then started to converse with Hagrid about a few of the things he wished to do that day and Edward leaned over to Madame Pomfrey.

"I already put the potion in your cup, dear," she stated before Ed could speak.

"Oh..thanks, but I was wondering if I could have a bit extra today? Cold bothers my joints and I feel snow probably won't help."

Madame Pomfrey nodded and pulled out a small blue bottle filled halfway with liquid.

"Take a bit when you're out there, and please don't push yourself too much. Are you sure it will be safe?"

Ed took the bottle and put it in his pocket. "I'll be fine. We won't stay out there all day, I'm just worried about my automail rusting to be honest."

Madame Pomfrey looked a bit concerned but nodded and returned to eating her meal.

Ed looked over at his brother who was still talking with Hagrid.

"Brother! Hagrid said he's chopping down trees today for decorating."

"Why?"

"Fer Chris'mas o'course!"
Ed's eyebrows furrowed a bit. "Christmas?"

"Hagrid said it was a holiday they celebrate here," Al explained. "Like our solstice festival back home."

Ed nodded and Hagrid continued. "Gotta drag 'em back te put up."

"Well we can help you if you want," Alphonse offered.

Hagrid's eyebrows shot up. "Really?"

Ed looked at his brother curiously, but nodded. "Sure thing. I could use a little bit of a workout anyways."

Hagrid was beaming at the two brothers. "Well thank ye! It'll be nice ter 'ave some comp'ny."

Breakfast soon ended and Hagrid, Edward, and Alphonse left the Hall and the castle.

As soon as the Elric brothers stepped outside though they paused and stared in awe. The grounds were all covered in the fresh white powder.

"Woah"

Ed looked up at his younger brother. "Yeah even though part of me knows it's just frozen water...there is something special about it..."

Hagrid smiled fondly as he observed the two brothers staring up at the sky and seeing the snowflakes fall softly.

"Come on Brother!" Al called as he stared to walk and catch up to Hagrid.

Ed grinned and sprinted towards them.

The group walked through the snow and to Hagrid's hut. Hagrid grabbed a couple yards of rope and two axes.

"I only 'ave two-"

Ed put up his hand. "I don't need one. I can use my alchemy or my arm."

Hagrid nodded and they walked into the dark forest. The snow crunching under his boot and the forest smelling a mix of pine and fresh snow.

Hagrid stopped and looked up at one of the smaller trees.

And by smaller, it looked to be about 25 feet high.

"This one looks good," he said, handing Alphonse the other ax in his hand.

"Ye two get two more trees a bit smaller."

Ed and Al nodded and looked around the forest. Ed spotted a tree that was a tad smaller at 12 feet high and headed towards it. Alphonse on the other hand, walked towards a 15 foot tree.

Edward clapped his hands together and touched the bark of the tree. He concentrated on the makeup of the tree and destroyed a small layer of it. Blue alchemical light flashed and sparked around
Edward and the tree near him.

Once the transmutation was complete Ed stepped back and pushed on the tree.

"Timber!" Ed large evergreen tree soon fell to the ground with a loud thump.

Ed was grinning and walked over to where Hagrid had just finished chopping. Ed looked over to see that Al had used alchemy to chop down his own tree as well.

"Blimey! Ye two are fast!"

Hagrid handed Ed and Al long lengths of ropes and the two brothers tied it around their respective trees.

"Now we 'ave te drag 'em back."

Ed and Al nodded and Hagrid looked at Ed with a concerned expression. "De ye need help?"

Edward shook his head. "I'll be fine. It looks to only be like a hundred pounds or so."

Hagrid looked a little shocked, but nodded as he started to pull his own tree behind him.

Ed and Al followed, dragging their own trees behind them as well. They soon exited the forest and made their way back up to the castle. And Ed's shoulder started to ache more and more as they continue to walk back. Once they reached the large doors Hagrid told them they could leave the trees there for Professor Flitwick to take care of and actually set up and decorate.

Hagrid told them they needed to get three more trees and then they would be done. Ed and Al nodded before they started walking back to the forest.

Ed slowed his stride a bit and hung behind Al and Hagrid. He reached into his pocket and brought out the small bottle of pain potion. Uncorking it, he brought it to his lips and quickly swallowed.

The throbbing in his shoulder and leg soon dulled to a small ache and Ed sighed. This was his price to pay for his sins, and he had to live with it.

"Brother?"

Ed looked up and sprinted towards his younger brother and Hagrid. "Sorry, Al."

They walked back into the forest and Hagrid began chopping down another tree. Al cut down his quickly, using alchemy and Ed looked around for a tree for him to cut down. Once he saw one about the same size as the last one he cut, he walked towards it and clapped.

The blue alchemical sparks surrounded his palms as he touched the tree and destroyed a small layer of the wood, allowing the tree to fall to the ground.

Ed grabbed more rope from Hagrid and began to tie it around the evergreen.

His shoulder started to protest more and more, as well as his left leg. He grit his teeth and tried to ignore the pain, hoping the potion would try and counteract it more.

Edward continued despite the pain. The cold always bothered his joints so he supposed the extreme cold of the snow was causing his ports to ache more than usual.

"Brother?"
Ed looked up to see his brother staring at him.  

"Yeah, Al?"

"Are you alright? You don't seem well."

"I'm fine," he answered, pulling the rope over his shoulder. As he adjusted the rope's placement, he felt it right automail arm act more stiff than usual. It wasn't responding as well as it usually did and this puzzled him.

"Ready to go?" Hagrid called and Ed nodded. He could see out of the corner of his eye his younger brother staring at him and knew it was just Al being a little overprotective of him.

Ed started to pull and drag the giant tree behind him. Once they were out of the forest, Ed's left leg began to stiffen as well, and it became harder and harder to move it.

Edward was grinding his teeth so hard now, he was surprised one of his teeth hadn't chipped itself yet.

"Brother..are you alright?"

Hagrid stopped and looked at the eldest Elric with worry on his face.

"I'm fine," Ed spat out. The pins and needles in his arm and leg had turned to fire.

Al shook his head. "No, you're not."

Ed glared at Alphonse who let go of his own tree and made his way over to Ed.

"I'm okay Al!" Ed tried to swat Al away but his right arm froze in mid air, stiff and unable to move anymore.

"Ye alright Ed?"

The throbbing pain in his shoulder and leg were spreading and now his automail wasn't working. As stubborn as he was, he knew something was wrong.

"Al," he barely whispered.

Alphonse felt a wave of fear crash over him and he quickly grabbed his brother. Holding him in his arms he turned around to see a very concerned Hagrid.

"Something's wrong. We need to get him to Madame Pomfrey at once."

Hagrid nodded, letting go of his own tree and following Alphonse as they ran through the snow and back into the castle.

Ed was groaning as the change in temperature made the pain worse. The fire was now raging and but now he couldn't feel his shoulder or leg.

Al sprinted up the stairs, going two or three at a time. A few students were walking around and quickly got out of his way, staring in shock as they saw the young alchemy professor lying in his arms.

They finally got to the Hospital Wing and burst through the large wooden doors.
"Madame Pomfrey!"

The nurse had looked up to see the two Elric brothers in her infirmary and saw Ed in Al's arms.

"What happened?"

"I don't know! We were outside helping Hagrid and now he's in a lot of pain and his automail isn't working as well.

Ed groaned again as he gripped his shoulder fiercely.

"Get him on the bed. We need to take off his clothes and warm him up."

Al laid Edward on the nearest bed and Madame Pomfrey pulled off his red coat, two shirts, shoes, and pants. She gasped and quickly ran to her cupboard and brought out a medium sized bottle with pure white liquid.

The area around the Ed's ports was a bright red color and Ed was gripping the sheets tightly with his left hand as his right one was no longer responding.

Hagrid gasped as he saw the gleaming metal that was Ed's right arm and leg. "Merlin's beard!"

"Get every blanket and wrap him in it," she ordered Alphonse.

Al nodded and moved around the infirmary, grabbing every blanket he saw.

Madame Pomfrey lifted Ed's head and brought the bottle to his lips. "Drink."

Ed frowned. "Is it milk?" he croaked out.

"No, now drink!" she snapped.

Ed opened his mouth and drank. It had no taste but it it felt like it was burning him from the inside out once he finished the bottle. He cried out, thrashing around.

"Hagrid! Hold him down!"

Ed felt large warm hands pin his shoulder and legs down and fought against them.

"I'm sorry Ed," he whispered as Ed's movements began to calm down as the fire started to die down.

Alphonse then laid about five blankets on top of him and Ed's body went limp, completely exhausted after everything that had happened.

At that moment, Ed saw the large doors of the infirmary open and Dumbledore, McGonagall, and Umbridge walk in.

"What happened?" Dumbledore asked.

Madame Pomfrey let out a sigh and replied, "Frostbite...or at least the onset of it. If he stayed out there for another half hour, he might have lost more of his limbs."

"Frostbite...I guess I should have known," Ed croaked out.

"How did Edward get frostbite! He was only out there for about an hour and a half." McGonagall exclaimed.

"My automail," Ed groaned, sitting up in his bed.

"You are very lucky your brother got you here in time," she chided. "And you shouldn't be moving right now."

The three wizards' eyes went wide as they saw Ed's right arm, fully exposed. The metal was shining in the light and Edward saw as all three of the wizards were staring intently at his automail.

Ed groaned as he stared at his right shoulder. The scarred skin still looked irritated and red. The numbness was beginning to fade and the muscles around his points felt full of pins and needles, but no where near the intensity that it was earlier. He tried opening and closing his hand, but the action was stiff and slow. Something was definitely wrong with his arm and leg.

"Why d'yeh go outside if ye knew 'bout yer automail?"

Ed sighed and looked over at Hagrid. "Al wanted to, and I had never been in snow with my automail."

"Alphonse told me ye two hada snowstorm when ye were little."

"I didn't have automail back then. And ever since then I've traveled around the warmer parts of our country and I've never experienced snow."

"Is he alright now?" McGonagall quickly asked Madame Pomfrey.

The nurse nodded. "Yes, I gave him a potion to counteract the frostbite and he should have no lasting injuries from it. I still want him to remain here though, as his body temperature was starting to drop."

"I feel fine now," Ed said, pulling off some of the blankets. His body was starting to get warm again and all the thick blankets were causing him to get a little too hot.

Madame Pomfrey sighed and took away a few of the blankets. "You are staying here until I say you can leave, Edward."

Ed glared at her a bit before sighing and looking over at Alphonse. "I'm sorry Al, I know you were excited about the snow."

"You are such an idiot!" Al yelled. "I don't care about the snow! I care that you almost lost more of your arm and leg."

"Leg?"

Al gasped a bit and saw Umbridge narrowing her gaze at the brothers.

"Why did he say leg?"

"Um..." Al looked over at Edward who sighed and lifted the last blanket off of his body.

Everyone in the room gasped at the sight of Edward's metal left leg.

"My left leg is also automail okay?" he snapped, a bit irritated at this whole situation.

"Why did you not tell us this earlier!?" Umbridge exclaimed.

Ed glared at the woman in pink. "Because it's private, and I wanted to keep it that way. I didn't want
Dumbledore stepped forward and Edward saw his keen eyes sweep his entire body.

"I understand why you did not divulge this information with us, Edward. But I must voice my concern for your safety."

"Safety? This place has been a paradise compared to some of the other situations I've been stuck in!" Ed retorted.

Edward saw the flash of sadness cross Dumbledore's eyes before it disappeared.

"What I meant to say was, I am concerned for your health if you continue to stay here at Hogwarts."

"Health?"

"You almost got frostbite from your automail. And the snow isn't going to go away anytime soon," Madame Pomfrey stated.

"So I won't go outside. Easy, problem fixed."

Madame Pomfrey shook her head. "No, the problem that your automail has the potential to kill you is not fixed."

"I'll be fine!"

"Brother," Al chided.

Edward huffed a bit and moved to cross his arms, but his right arm was stiff in its movements and stopped halfway in the air.

"Damn it," Ed said under his breath.

"What's wrong?" Al asked quickly.

Edward saw everyone staring at him concerned, well everyone minus Umbridge.

"My automail. It's not working like it's supposed to. The movement is stiff and unresponsive."

"I have no idea how to fix your arm or leg, Edward," Pomfrey admitted.

Edward groaned as he collapsed back onto the bed, using his left arm to cover his eyes. He knew what he had to do but he really wished he hadn't.

"Brother...you know what you have to do."

"Damn it Al! She's gonna kill me!"

"No she won't...well kill is a strong word...maybe maim a bit?"

"Wha' are ye two talkin' 'bout?"

Edward removed his left arm from his eyes and sat up on the bed.

"Dumbledore?"

The Headmaster looked at Edward intently and nodded. "Yes, Edward?"
Ed sighed and ran a hand over his face. "I need you to get someone for me."

Dumbledore looked a little surprised at the request.

"Who!?" Umbridge demanded

Edward groaned and looked at his brother who nodded.

"The only person who can help me with my automail..."

Taking a deep breath he steadied himself and said,

"My mechanic...Winry Rockbell."
Edward

Ed was staring up at the ceiling, mentally writing his own will as his time left on Earth was numbered. It was starting to get late as Edward observed the sun setting through one of the windows. As he did so, his thoughts drifted back to the events of that afternoon.

Edward pointed at the small dot on the map.

"Rush Valley. That's where you'll find her."

Dumbledore nodded. "And do you know exactly where in Rush Valley she might be?"

"Go to Garfield's Shop. Or simply ask for Winry Rockbell. She's made a name for herself in Rush Valley as I've come to understand."

Edward looked at the letter he had written, sitting right on the table beside the map of Amestris. He handed the envelope to Dumbledore.

"Give her this, it should explain everything and allow her to get the supplies she needs."

Dumbledore took the letter and placed it in his pocket.

"Very well, I shall return shortly with Miss Rockbell."

Dumbledore took a few steps away from Edward's bedside and smiled warmly at the young alchemist. He then disappeared and Ed sighed, laying back on his bed.

"Brother, she isn't going to kill you," Al chided.

Ed glared at his younger brother. "You aren't the one who left without telling her anything because Mustang ordered you not to and then proceeded to mess up her precious automail."

Al sighed and returned to reading a book he brought with him. "You're her best customer, she won't kill you."

"No, but she is going to beat the shit out of me!"

Madame Pomfrey shook her head and continued sorting out a few of her potions, making note of which ones she needed to stock up on.

Edward looked at his pocket watch to see that an hour and a half had passed and knew the old man had to be returning soon.

McGonagall was speaking to Madame Pomfrey about something but Ed didn't catch most of their conversation. Umbridge was scribbling something down on her clipboard as they all waited for Dumbledore to return. Hagrid had left to take care of the trees they had left in the middle of the grounds and even returned with some supper for Ed. The giant apologized for having Ed be outside and Ed told him he had no ill will towards him. It was his own fault. Hagrid had to leave to take care of some of the creatures in his possession though, so that left him with Pomfrey, McGonagall, Umbridge, and his brother.

Ed ate the meat pie and green beans Hagrid had brought him but left the glass of milk untouched. No
way in hell was he drinking that disgusting cow juice.

Edward wiggled around in his bed and huffed a bit. He was getting bored and a bored Ed was a fussy Ed.

"Brother, she'll be here soon. Stop worrying."

"That's what I'm worrying about!"

Al shook his head, and continued to read.

Then Ed heard a few muffled voices from outside the door and the large wooden doors creaked open.

"Thank you again for bringing me here, Mr. Dumbledore. It was very kind of you to travel all the way to Rush Valley to get me."

Ed felt his throat go dry and his heart began to beat frantically.

Winry was wearing a navy blue dress with brown boots. Her long blonde hair was pulled up into a ponytail, and her bangs framed her face. She was smiling brightly and had her tool box in one hand and another case in the other.

"It was no trouble at all Miss Rockbell. I am sorry though we had to pull you away from your work in Rush Valley."

Dumbledore was smiling warmly at her as well, and he had a suitcase in his hands as well.

Once she fully entered the Hospital Wing, she turned her attention away from Dumbledore and focused on Edward.

Ed began to sweat a bit under her tense glare.

"H-hey Winry...It's been a while. How've you been?"

In a flash, she had a wrench in her hand and flung it directly at Edward. And it hit its' target dead center, causing Ed to fall out of the bed and onto the floor. He knew better than to dodge her wrenches, since she would simply either throw more or hit him harder.

"Damn it Winry!"

Ed gripped his now throbbing head with his left hand and tried to get up. Al helped him to stand but Winry was over by him in a flash, picking up her wrench and hitting Ed repeatedly on the head.

"You. Are. Such. An. ID-I-OT!"

Every word was met with a hit from her wrench. Ed coward a bit under her attack and retorted. "Winry! Calm down!"

Ed realized his mistake as soon as it left his lips. Winry almost sounded like she growled and her eye twitched a bit as she gripped her wrench tightly.

"Calm!! I'll show you calm!"

Ed screamed a bit and ran to hide behind his brother.
"Al! Help!"

Al moved away, as Winry threw her wrench at the pair of them.

"Brother! Don't drag me into this!"

Al had dodged the attack, and the tool hit Ed directly in the head, causing him to fall back and directly on his butt.

"Damn it Al! Help me!"

Al shook his head. "I'm sorry Brother, I don't want to get hit anymore than you do."

Winry strode over and grabbed her tool from the ground and continued to glare at Ed.

"Are you trying to kill me!?"

Winry continued to glare at Ed, throwing her hands in the air. "No! Cause you seem to be doing a pretty good job of it yourself!"

"I'm sorry! I'm sorry! Is that what you want!?"

Winry lowered her hands and sighed, rubbing her temple with her free hand. "What am I going to do with you Ed?"

"What is going on here!?" Madame Pomfrey exclaimed.

Winry turned around to look at the shocked group of wizards before turning back to shoot a glare at Ed.

"I'm trying to knock some sense into him, since he is so keen on sending himself to an early grave."

"By hitting him with a wrench!?" McGonagall exclaimed.

Ed stood up, rubbing his head. "She does it to me all the time. It's not a big deal."

"Are you alright?" Madame Pomfrey asked Edward.

Ed shook his head. "I'm used to it, trust me."

Winry continued to scowl at Ed. "Because you're a big idiot that never learns his lesson."

Ed sighed and walked back over to the bed and sat down, still rubbing his sore head. "Crazy gearhead," he muttered.

"Hem-hem."

Ed groaned a bit before turning to look at Umbridge.

"Excuse me, but I have a few questions to ask Miss Rockbell."

Winry looked a little confused at this and looked over at Ed who shook his head and shrugged a bit.

"Why?"

"It is just a few informative questions, dear," she said in a sickly sweet tone.
Ed saw Winry try to hide her grimace and nodded. "Okay, ask away."

"How old are you?"

"Fifteen."

"Fifteen!?" Umbridge exclaimed. "And how are you qualified to work on what seems to be a complex prosthetic?"

"What?"

Winry looked utterly shocked that this woman was questioning her qualification to work on Ed's automail. She had designed it from the ground up! She was probably the only one who could work on it!

"What is your problem!?" Winry blurted out.

"I didn't realize that you were calling a child here to Hogwarts."

Ed's eyebrows shot up and a scowl instantly appeared in his face.

"Hey! Winry is the best damn mechanic in Amestris. She is the only one I trust with my automail, so if you've got a problem with that then shut the hell up."

Ed didn't see this, but a small pink tint appeared on Winry's cheeks.

"Edward," Madame Pomfrey said in a very calm and soft tone. "I must say that I am a little shocked someone so young is working on your automail."

Ed scoffed a bit. "Winry is no amateur. She designed my automail and is the only person I trust to work on it."

"You are quite skilled then for someone your age," McGonagall commented.

"She was very popular in Rush Valley," Dumbledore added. "Had many customers that loved her work."

Winry's smile was bright now and Ed felt a rush of gratitude towards the old man.

"I've been Ed's mechanic ever since he got automail four years ago. I know his arm and leg better than anyone. Now, if you could please give us some privacy, I'd like to do my job."

Ed smirked and Winry crossed her arms. Umbridge glared at the two of them before stating she would inform the minister of this and left the Hospital Wing.

Dumbledore smiled and looked at Winry. "I am sorry we had to call you up here on such short notice. Please feel free to ask us for anything you may require."

At that, he and McGonagall departed, along with Madame Pomfrey said she had to visit Snape at that time to restock some of her potions and left a few moments after.

Once everyone was gone, Winry let out a small sigh and turned to Edward.

"Okay Ed, let's see the damage."

Ed laid down on the bed and Winry pulled up a chair to sit down beside him. He felt her hands touch
the skin around his ports and move onto his automail.

She lifted the arm and saw that the elbow joint was sticking as she tried to move it.

"You're going to need winter automail Ed."

"Winter automail?"

Winry rolled her eyes as she set his arm down. "Yes. It's specially designed automail that won't give you frostbite and will work in freezing temperatures."

"So that's why my arm and leg stopped working? The cold was affecting it?"

Winry nodded. "It's due to the oils in your arm. They can freeze and stop your automail from functioning."

"Do you have winter automail with you?"

Winry gave Ed a look before standing up and walking over to one of her cases. She opened it and held up the metal arm. It looked liked Ed's other arm, but the color was slightly different and there seemed to be some parts missing.

"You're just lucky a man came into the shop about a month ago and asked for winter automail. That got me thinking so I started working on a set for you, just encase. I'm almost done with it too."

Ed sighed with relief. "So how long?"

Winry put the arm back in her case and walked over, her eyes scanning Ed.

"I need to do some more measurements to make any adjustments. That and putting the finishing touches on it will take about...a day and a half or so."

"Seriously!?"

Winry glared at Ed and put her hands on her hips. "Be grateful I have your automail at all! If I hadn't taken it upon myself to be proactive you would have had to wait a week at least!"

"A week? It took you three days the last time."

"That was just your arm! I would have to make your leg from scratch too and those three days were all nighters! It took me forever to get back on a usual sleep schedule."

Ed huffed a bit and looked away. "Fine, fine. A day and a half."

Winry sighed and rubbed her temple. "Let's just get the measurements I need and get that automail off you."

She looked around for a table Ed could use to rest his arm upon and saw one by Ed's bed which had a plate and a glass of milk on it.

"You didn't drink your milk."

Ed shot a glare at her and then turned his head. "I'm not going to drink it if I don't want to."

Winry gripped the sides of her head. "You're going to be short forever if you never drink it!"
"I'M NOT SHORT!"

"Yes you are! And it is because you don't drink your milk!"

"I WON'T DRINK THE GODDAMN MILK!"

Ed and Winry continued their shouting match as Al watched on.

"Are they always like this?" Madame Pomfrey asked.

Al nodded. "Since we've been little Ed and Winry have fought. Though once she became his mechanic their fights got a lot more heated."

Their argument finally ended and Winry cleared off the table and moved it so Ed could lay down and place his automail on it.

Winry walked over to her suitcase and pulled out a white apron and brown leather gloves. She pulled on the gloves and tied the apron apron her waist. She grabbed a cloth measuring tape and returned to her seat beside Ed.

"Your arm won't need much adjusting, but it seems I'll have to add an extra quarter of an inch to your leg."

Ed smirked. "Short my ass."

"You're still the shorter than me," she shot back, standing up and hanging the tape around her neck.

Ed growled a bit, but once he saw the wrench and other tools in Winry's hands he kept his mouth shut. One concussion per day was his limit.

Winry sat back down and started to unbolt Ed's arm. Once she removed all the necessary screws, she pulled the arm away, lifting it up and looked over at Al.

"Al, come over and take Ed's arm."

Alphonse did as Winry asked and took Ed's arm from her.

"Set it with the winter automail," she instructed.

Al nodded and walked over to set Ed's arm down.

Winry moved onto taking off Ed's leg and handed it to Al as well.

Standing up, she walked over to grab the wooden prosthetic leg they used as a substitute for Ed.

"I bought this, so that way you could still walk."

Ed smiled and sat up. Winry fixed the leg into the port and Ed swung his legs over the bed. He stood up shakily but didn't lose his balance.

"It's a little shorter than you are, so you'll have to be careful."

"Yeah, yeah," Ed waved her off. He hobbled over to grab his clothes and started to put them on.

It was quiet for a few minutes before Ed cleared his throat. "It's good to see you again Winry."

Winry sighed and walked over towards Ed.
"You too, you alchemy nerd."

Ed smirked playfully and retorted. "Better a nerd than a gear head."

Winry rolled her eyes. "Joke all you want, but you'd be nowhere without me."

"I'd be a lot richer," Ed muttered. Winry heard his little comment and snapped her fingers together. "That reminds me! I'll have to charge you extra for this!"

Ed whipped around. "What!?"

"There is the cost of the new winter automail, installation fees, rush order fees, and transportation...," she listed, pointing at each of her fingers as she did.

"Transportation! The old man apparated you here! It cost you nothing!" Ed roared.

Winry glared at Edward and put her hands on her hips. "I have to cover my costs, Edward."

"By bleeding me dry of all my money!"

Winry waved him off. "You've got plenty to spend."

"I need that for research! It's my State Alchemist fund!"

Alphonse shook his head as Winry and Edward continued to fight and bicker.

Harry

"Everyone's talking about Professor Elric," Ron said as he looked at the groups of people talking in the common room.

"He wasn't at lunch or dinner...and Lavender Brown told me she saw Alphonse carrying him in from outside and to the Hospital Wing," Harry said as he was bouncing his knee.

"They would have told us if something was wrong...right?" Hermione said, looking at her best friends.

Harry sighed and leaned back into his seat more.

"I dunno Hermione. I would hope so."

Hermione was chewing on her bottom lip, nervously. "What do you think is wrong though? I mean he didn't seem sick this morning."

"It could be hypothermia? It was rather cold out today."

Hermione shook her head. "Professor Elric told us he has had survival training. He would know the signs and get inside before it was too late."

"Do you think something in the forest got him?" Ron suggested.

Harry shook his head. "Lavender said there was no sign of blood."

Ron ran a hand over his face. "Well it has to be something. People don't rush to the Hospital Wing just for the heck of it."
"Do you think he'll be alright?"

Harry shook his head. "I don't know Hermione. But I hope so."

"What if he isn't?" Ron asked solemnly.

Hermione and Harry's eyes went wide and Hermione gasped a bit.

"I mean what does that mean for us in the DA?"

Hermione was now biting her nails. "If he is still able to help us then there isn't a problem, but if not...maybe Alphonse can teach us?"

"What if they send them away? And get a new professor?"

Harry sighed and leaned forward, placing his arms on his knees. "Then we deal with that issue when we come to it. We still need to focus on the next meeting and training any way we know how."

Hermione and Ron nodded in agreement, but you could still feel how the trio was nervous over the whole situation.
Edward

Edward woke up the next morning and turned over on his side. It was an odd feeling, not having his automail. After having it on for so long, he had gotten used to the metal prosthetics.

"Did you sleep well Brother?"

Ed yawned and sat up, rubbing his eyes with his left hand.

"My head is still sore," he grumbled, rubbing the side of his head. "Winry's got one hell of a swing there."

Al sighed and helped Edward get out of bed and get dressed. Even though he only had one arm now, he was still able to do most of the activities he normally did.

Looking down at his right side he saw the sleeve of his red coat flowing free and took a deep breath.

"Today's gonna be a long day," he said under his breath.

"Ready to go?"

Ed looked up at his younger brother and nodded. "Let's get this over with."

The two brothers left their room and walked out into the hall.

Elizabeth was up at that time and was playing a happy tune that reminded Edward of the winter solstice festival back in Resembool. Before he could greet the young girl who occupied their painting, his attention was directed down the hall as Winry was exiting her room right then.

She was wearing a navy blue skirt and cardigan, with a white tank top underneath. Her hair was still in a ponytail, but some of her bangs framed her face.

"Good morning Ed," she greeted.

"Hey Winry."

"Good morning, did you sleep well?" Al asked.

Winry nodded, smiling at the younger Elric. "Yes I did, thank you Alphonse."

Ed scowled a bit. "What's that for! I didn't do anything!"

Winry rolled her eyes and put her hands on her hips. "Yes, you did nothing."

Ed sighed, not wanting to further the conversation and turned on his heels, muttering under his breath. "Crazy gear head."

But unfortunately for him, Winry heard the little comment.

A wrench sailed through the air and hit him in the back of the head, causing him to stumble forward and fall right on his face.
"Edward! Are you alright!" Elizabeth exclaimed.

Winry had met Elizabeth last night when Ed and Al showed her to her room. She was using the room down the hall from Ed and Al, right where Mustang had been. Winry was astounded at the magical paintings and Elizabeth was delighted to meet one of Ed and Al's friends from Amestris. Though the fact he was now limping and missing an arm did alarm her.

Though once they explained the whole situation, she understood that Winry was there to help Ed with his automail and then proceeded to thank her for helping Ed.

Alphonse turned to Elizabeth and explained that everything was fine and this was a common occurrence. This didn't seem to ease her nerves though.

"Where the hell do you keep them!" Ed roared, turning over to stare at Winry.

She only smirked, walking over and picking up her tool. "A good mechanic never reveals her secrets."

Ed groaned a bit and Winry chuckled a bit as Ed slowly stood up, rubbing his head.

"You will be the death of me one day. Mark my words."

Winry hummed a little to herself, a content smile on her face. Ed's eyes narrowed at her, but his glares never held any power over Winry.

"Edward, are you sure you're alright?" Elizabeth asked again.

Ed turned his attention back to the young girl who had clasped her hands together and seemed to be very worried.

He smiled a bit and this seemed to reassure her. "I'm fine Elizabeth. Winry is just very enthusiastic about her tools and hitting me with them."Elizabeth nodded a bit but still seemed a bit shaken.

"Okay...if you say you're alright, then I believe you."

"Thank you for being concerned Elizabeth, but there is no need. Now if you excuse us, we have to get
to breakfast."

They quickly said their goodbyes and headed out to the Great Hall. Alphonse broke off from Winry and Ed to go to Edward's classroom before they got to the hall.

Once the two of them reached the Hall, Winry was amazed at the sheer size of Hogwarts. Since she was apparated right into the Hospital Wing, and then taken to her room at night, she hadn't seen much.

As they walked into the Hall, Ed saw all of the students stare at them and the hurried whispers that then followed. He lead Winry up tot eh faculty table and took his usual seat, Winry sitting where Al sometimes sat.

"Hagrid, this is my mechanic. Winry Rockbell."

Winry smiled and Hagrid returned it wholeheartedly. "Great te meet ye, Winry! My name's Hagrid. Keeper o' te Keys and 'fessor of Magical Creatures."
"Hello Hagrid. It's nice to meet you as well."

Ed was stabbing at his breakfast rather vigorously, since he couldn't use a knife and fork at the same time. But he made it work.

"So yer the one who fixes Ed's metal arm an leg."  

Winry nodded. "I've been fixing Ed up for years now, ever since he was eleven and got the automail."

"Very int'resting stuff. Never seen nothin' like it."

"Yeah, apparently they don't have automail here," Ed added.

Winry's eyes went wide and she exclaimed. "You don't have automail!?"

Ed sighed and knew he made a mistake telling her that.

"But automail is such a beautiful thing! The gears and plates moving in perfect harmony to create the perfect machine!"

Ed could see the stars in Winry's eyes as she went off about automail and knew this could go on for a while. So he returned his attention to his breakfast and tried cutting up a sausage with the side of his fork.

"Do you need help dear?" Madame Pomfrey asked.

Ed shook his head. "I'm fine."

"Don't worry about him, Madame Pomfrey. He doesn't like it when people who care about him try and help."

Ed frowned. "I don't need help, Winry."

"You're an idiot," Winry sighed.

Ed scoffed a bit but turned back to his meal.

"So how long 'ave ye two known each other?"

"Since we were kids," Ed replied. "Winry grew up right next to me and Al in Resembool."

"Yeah," Winry smiled. "I've known them for as long as I can remember."

"How did you become involved in automail, Winry?" Madame Pomfrey asked.

"My grandmother was a mechanic," Winry explained. "She was training me to become one, and I wasn't exactly sure that was what I wanted. But I suppose the real push was when Ed needed automail himself."

Both Hagrid and Madame Pomfrey's eyes widened a bit at this.

"And that was when he was eleven, correct?"

Winry nodded. "Yes. He was determined to see himself through the entire process."

"Process?" Madame Pomfrey questioned.
"Automail is a great solution to a very difficult situation. But it is very difficult to get in the first place. The usual amount of time is three years for a full recovery."

Ed scoffed a bit. "I did it in one."

Winry rolled her eyes. "Yes, but you almost worked yourself to death doing it."

"I still did it," Ed protested.

"Ye took only one year?"

Ed nodded, and Winry interjected. "But he was coughing up both his lungs and probably a whole pint of blood the entire time."

Madame Pomfrey looked shocked. "It was that serious?"

Winry sighed a bit. "Automail is a tricky thing. It's a difficult surgery to begin with. If the person survives that, then it usually takes about three years of hard physical therapy for them to regain full mobility. Edward pushed his body to the absolute limit, trying to cram all of that into only one year."

"Why does it take s'long?" Hagrid asked.

"Automail is three times as heavy as a normal limb. The muscles in your body aren't used to carrying around that type of weight. Plus you need to teach the nerves in your body to respond and use the automail limb itself."

"Why would you try and rush your healing process?" Madame Pomfrey asked.

Edward sighed a bit, knowing the real reason he pushed himself so hard. Part was wanting to return Al to his body as soon as possible. He couldn't make Al wait three years just to get started. The other, he never said out loud, but he felt that all the pain he experienced was part of his punishment. Al couldn't feel anything because of him, so why should he have taken his time while his brother's soul was trapped in a suit of armor.

"There was something I had to do. I didn't want to wait around three years before I could start living my life again."

Winry had a sympathetic look in her eyes. She knew Ed blamed himself for everything that had happened. He was hell-bent on restoring his younger brother's body, even if it was the last thing he did.

Madame Pomfrey nodded and looked over at Winry.

"Do you know where you will be working, during your stay here?"

Winry shook her head.

"You can work in the Hospital Wing. I can clear a space for you to work in, no problem."

"Are you sure?"

Madame Pomfrey smiled softly. "It's no problem dear."

"Well I should be done by tomorrow, Ed. Try not to hurt yourself between now and then," Winry chided.
"I won't hurt myself in less than twenty-four hours! I can barely do anything!"

Winry rolled her eyes. "That hasn't stopped you before."

Ed growled a bit, his eyes narrowing at her. "Crazy gear head."

"At least I'm not a self-destructive alchemy freak!"

"I am not self destructive!"

"Yes you are! How someone so small can be so determined to practically kill himself I'll never know."

"I AM NOT SMALL!"

Winry smirked a bit. "Yes you are."

"DAMN IT WOMAN! TAKE IT BACK RIGHT NOW!"

Winry shook her head, standing up and looking over at Madame Pomfrey.

"I should get started. Ed starts to get fidgety when he doesn't have his automail."

Ed was fuming, but Winry had a smug smile on her face as she walked away from the table.

"Blimey, Ed! She's a fiery one!"

Ed groaned a bit and rubbed his temple with his left hand. "Yeah, she certainly is."

With that, Ed stood up and said goodbye, then walking out of the Hall. He walked to his classroom to find Al sitting there, reading.

"Hello Brother. Where is Winry?"

Ed sighed and walked to his desk, sitting down. "In the Hospital Wing."

"Is she working on your automail?"

Ed nodded, and started rubbing his temples again.

"I take it breakfast was an interesting affair," Al commented, sitting his book down.

"Yeah, that's a word for what happened."

Al shook his head a bit and stood up. "I'll go check on her, make sure she's alright and everything."

"Good luck, Al."

Al would have rolled his eyes at his brother if he could. Ed and Winry were so oblivious sometimes.

"I'll be back soon, Brother."

Ed grunted in response and Al left the classroom.

The small relief that was silence soon ended though, as students started coming into his classroom. Ed sighed, walking up to his chalkboard and grabbing a piece of chalk.
Edward started to write on the board and could feel every student in his class staring right at him. He stopped writing and spun around.

"What?"

The silence was so thick you could cut it with a knife. Ed looked around the room, his keen eyes scanning each one of his students.

Hermione then cleared her throat and asked.

"Sir...you're arm..."

Ed's eyes flashed down to his right side where his sleeve hung loose in the air.

"Yeah? What about it."

He was met with blank stares until Hermione continued.

"Well...it's um...missing."

Ed groaned a bit and ran his hand over his face. "I know that, but why are you all freaking out about it!?"

"You're arm is gone and you expect us not to react!?" one kid shouted from the back.

"And you're limping!" another added.

Edward sighed and rolled his eyes. "You all already knew about my automail. So why are you freaking out about it?"

"So it's true?" Pavarti Patil asked. "About your leg being missing as well."

Ed nodded and this sent a wave of whispers and outbursts throughout his class.

Edward lifted his left hand to his mouth and whistled loudly. Many covered their ears because of this and all the talking stopped instantly.

"There. Now, since you all are determined to talk about this, we will."

Many of the students perked up at this and Ed continued.

"You all know about my right arm. But what you didn't know was my left leg was also missing as well. I lost both my limbs in an incident when I was younger. I got automail, which as you know is made entirely of metal. Now, yesterday you know that it snowed over night. I thought I could go outside and be fine, but I was mistaken. The metal in my arm and leg made it so I almost had frostbite only after being out for a short amount of time."

Many gasped at this.

"Are you alright Professor?" Neville asked.

Edward felt a small smile tug on the corners of his mouth. "Yes, I didn't lose any more limbs."

Taking a deep breath, Edward continued. "Luckily, my brother was with my and rushed me to the Hospital Wing. Madame Pomfrey was able to treat me and thanks to her I am alright."
"So why is your arm missing?" a girl in the back asked.

"Frostbite wasn't the only problem I had. My automail started to act up and lock. I wasn't able to move my arm or leg the way I'm supposed to at all," Edward took another breath and said the next part he knew would get a big reaction. "So I asked Dumbledore to travel to my home country, Amestris, and get my mechanic."

And his suspicions were right as he was quickly bombarded with questions.

"Who is your mechanic?"

"What exactly does he do?"

"Will you be without your arm for long?"

"Where is he?"

Ed lifted his hand to his mouth once more and blew hard. The sharp whistle stopped everyone in their tracks.

"I really need to get a whistle or something," he muttered to himself.

"Now," he said in a much louder tone. "Listen up! My mechanic is an old childhood friend of mine and her name is Winry Rockbell. She is currently in the Hospital Wing working on my arm and leg. She had to take off my automail to make sure I didn't have an incident like I did yesterday. The reason I can walk now, is because she had a spare leg that I could use until my new winter automail is ready. Which will allow me to go through the winter without getting frostbite and still perform even in freezing temperatures."

This seemed to answer a lot of the questions that his students had.

"Now that that is out of the way, let's actually start learning alchemy."

The back of the class now tuned him out but the front looked eager to start.

"We're starting deconstruction. This is where you are actually going to start using the information you learned the past few weeks."

Edward turned around to the chalkboard and flipped it over. He took the chalk in his hand and drew a large circle.

"This," he pointed to the circle behind him. "Is something you will use for every single thing we do from here on out."

Many looked a little confused.

"A circle is key to performing any transmutation. If you don't have a circle, you can't transmute."

Hermione raised her hand. "But sir, you don't use a circle. You just clap your hands."

Ed looked down a bit. "Because I've seen the truth," he said to himself quietly.

Taking a deep breath he addressed his students in a louder tone. "That is because I learned how to. It was extremely difficult and I am only one of a handful of people that can transmute without a circle. You all will need a circle to transmute."
"Can you teach us?" Ron asked.

Ed felt his body tense up, subconsciously. He knew Ron wasn't asking to see the Truth, but it still struck a chord within him.

"No," he snapped.

A few of the kids looked crestfallen at this but Ed continued.

"So your homework is to draw about ten perfect circles. You cannot use anything other than your paper and pencil. Understood?"

A few grumbled at this but the small group of students nodded.

"That's all the time we have for today, class dismissed."

Everyone packed up and started to leave his classroom.

Edward turned and walked back to his desk. Once he sat down he pulled out his notes and began skimming them.

"Professor?"

Ed looked up to see Hermione standing in front of him.

"Yes? What can I do for you?"

Ed closed his notes and put them to the side.

"Well..I was hoping that you could sign this," she said, handing him a slip of paper.

I, _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ 

Hereby give Permission to Hermione Granger to check out the Restricted book: Secrets in the Art of Alchemy

Ed looked back up at her and said, "Why do I need to sign this?"

"It's a book in the restricted section. I can't get it without a Professor's permission. I was hoping to use it to help me in class...and outside of class..."

Ed nodded and signed on the line where his name was supposed to go.

"Here you go."

"Thank you Professor," Hermione said, taking the slip from Edward and turning to walk out of the classroom.

But the empty classroom only left Ed bored. He tried to work on the journals but his mind kept coming back to his automail.

Sighing, he stood up and walked out of his classroom and down the corridors to the Hospital Wing.

Once he opened the door, he saw Winry leaning over his new leg, tightening something with her wrench.
"Edward," Madame Pomfrey greeted. "How are you?"

Winry looked up from her work and Ed tensed a bit, fearing her wrench.

"I'm fine. Nothing's wrong... Just bored."

Winry sighed and rolled her eyes. "You always get that way when I have to take off your automail. I thought this time might be different since you actually have stuff to keep you busy."

"Well excuse me for just wanting to check in on you!"

Winry shook her head and turned back to her work.

"You really should be resting though, Edward," Madame Pomfrey chided.

Ed waved her off. "I'm fine."

"Yeah, you weren't knocking on death's door yesterday or anything."

Ed narrowed his eyes at the blonde mechanic. "Okay first of all, it was only the onset of frostbite. Never actually had it. Second, I'm fine! There's no damage and I'm perfectly healthy. And third, I've been in way more dangerous situations than that one."

Winry scoffed a bit, not looking up from her work. "You're incorrigible."

Ed stuck out his tongue at her and proceeded to then walk over and look over her shoulder at his automail.

"So how much more work do you have?"

"Just a little more assembly then I have to make some adjustments."

"So..."

"Tomorrow. You'll get it back tomorrow."

Ed smiled and saw that Madame Pomfrey had pulled up a chair for him to sit on. Smiling at the nurse, Ed sat down beside Winry and leaned back a bit.

"So anything else happening back home you haven't told me?"

"Not really. I've been so busy at work I've barely had the time to call Granny."

Ed whistled a bit. "That busy?"

"Yeah," Winry smiled a bit. "A lot of people are liking the work I'm doing and word's spreading."

"That's great, Winry."

"Professor Edward?"

Ed turned to look at the door and saw Harry, Ron, and Hermione all standing there looking at him.

"Oh, hey guys. Do you need anything?" he asked standing up.

"Oh! We just wanted to check on you is all," Hermione said looking a bit nervous.
"And?"

"And…um…" Hermione looked to Harry and Ron who quickly added. "To um...meet your mechanic!"

Ed looked a little surprised and glanced over his shoulder at Winry who had stopped her work. "Really?"

Winry scowled and Ed felt his heart drop a bit.

"I-I mean I'm surprised you three hadn't come by earlier!"

Ed felt the sweat drop from his forehead as he waited for the wrench or the slap that he hoped wouldn't come.

Winry sighed and turned her attention to the trio.

"Hello, I'm Winry Rockbell. It's nice to meet you."

Standing up, she crossed the wing and shook hands with all three of the students.

"I'm Hermione Granger."

"Harry Potter."

"Ron Weasley."

Ed walked over to join them and saw that Winry was smiled warmly at the teens.

"So you're all Ed's students?"

They all nodded. "We're in his year five class."

"He's a really great teacher, though his methods are a bit unusual," Harry stated.

Winry laughed a bit at that. "Unusual? That's Ed's middle name."

The trio all laughed while Ed glared at Winry.

Ron seemed to peer over Ed's and Winry's shoulders and was staring at his automail intently.

"So you're actually working on Professor Ed's leg and arm."

Winry turned around to glance at her work and then back at Ron.

"Oh yes. I only have a few more things to do before they are both ready to go."

"So Professor Edward will be back to normal tomorrow?" Harry asked.

"As normal as he'll ever get," Winry rolled her eyes.

Ed scoffed. "Oh don't act so 'holier than thou'. You shouldn't be calling anyone weird or unusual."

Winry put her hands on her hips. "And what is that supposed to mean?"

"You're a crazy gearhead, that's what!"
Ed was then knocked flat on his ass by the force of Winry's wrench.

"Professor!" Hermione exclaimed.

Ed was rubbing the sore spot on his head and glared at his mechanic.

"Damn it Winry! Stop doing that! I'm gonna get a concussion by the time you leave!"

"If you shut your mouth once and a while then you wouldn't have to worry about that."

"Professor! Are you alright?" Hermione kneeled down and Ed gave her a reassuring smile.

"I'm fine," he then turned to glare at Winry. "But my mechanic seems to be hell bent on beating me everytime I open my mouth."

Winry rolled her eyes at the young alchemist.

Hermione helped the young alchemy professor up as the spare leg was a little difficult to use.

"So do you three need anything?"

"Oh, no Professor. We just wanted to check on you and see when you would be….back to normal," Harry stated.

Ed knew they were checking in on him for the DA. He couldn't very well teach a lot of those kids the proper technique with only one arm and a spare leg.

"And we were a little curious about your mechanic," Ron added.

Winry's eyes lit up. "You all want to learn about automail?!"

Ed groaned a bit and knew a rant about the 'glorious invention that is automail' was mere moments away.

Winry sprinted to her work station behind them and held up Ed's leg.

"I just finished the final plating and only need to adjust it for Ed's height."

"This is amazing," Harry said, in awe of the technology.

"How did you learn how to make automail? "Hermione asked.

"Oh, well my Granny owned a shop and I just studied under her. I never knew I wanted to be an automail engineer really though until Ed was injured and needed automail. It was then I decided I had to work and learn all I could to help."

"So Professor Ed said this is different from his old stuff?" Ron asked.

Winry nodded. "It's composition is more suited to the colder climates."

The trio nodded and Winry started to talk about some of the inner workings of Ed's automail.

"You're very bright if you know everything about this," Hermione commented. "I mean everything about it is so complex."

"Thank you Hermione," Winry smiled. "Though I am still learning about different techniques and tools myself."
"Well from what I can tell you are already a great engineer. I myself was never drawn to the mechanical engineering field when I was in primary school."

"I never got into it into later. I thought I was going to be a doctor when I grew up."

"Really!? Me too!"

Ed looked between his childhood friend and one of the smartest girls in the school and wondered if this budding friendship would cause him more or less harm.

"Um... Hermione?"

The brunette looked back at her two friends and nodded before turning back to Winry.

"I'm terribly sorry, but we have to go. We were only stopping by between our classes."

"Of course, I'm here till tomorrow night though so stop by if you want."

"I will. It was very nice to meet you."

"You as well."

Both Ron and Harry said their goodbyes and the trio left the Hospital Wing.

"I like her," Winry stated.

"Really? I never would have guessed."

Ed was griping his head faster than he could say alchemy.
Edward

"Now," Ed began. His class had taken their seats and the few who were actually still taking the course had pulled out their supplies.

"As you know, we are beginning the second section of the course. Deconstruction."

The group in the front looked very eager to start and some sat up a little more at this.

"You've all learned most of the basics of understanding. And now that we aren't exactly learning anymore doesn't mean you can forget all of that. It is vital you keep all of that information in your heads."

Edward turned around and flipped the board showing the circle he had drawn yesterday.

"This is the first thing you guys need to get down pat."

"A circle?" Fred questioned.

"Why a circle?" George added.

"Because," Ed rolled his eyes. "This is the first and most important part of your transmutation array. Without it, there is no transmutation."

"But why don't you use a circle?" Angelina Johnson asked.

"Because I've learned a way to make myself a circle..."

Ed remembered when he had asked Teacher that same question. Her answer never made any sense until he saw the Truth.

"But none of you lot will ever get to the level I am at, to even attempt to learn this technique. Therefore, you need to start with the basic array."

Ed pointed to the circle behind him. "I need you all to draw me ten perfect circles. If the circle isn't right, then your transmutation can and will fail."

There were a few grumblings through the group of students, but nothing major.

"So, with deconstruction-"

Ed was then interrupted by his door flying open.

"Edward!" Winry called and started walking towards him. She was wearing a knee length green dress with brown boots. Her apron was still ties around her and Ed saw she was still wearing her work gloves as well.

"Winry?! What are you doing here?"

"Oh? I just missed you," she said rolling her eyes. "What do you think!?"

"I can't read your mind woman!"
Winry scoffed a bit and crossed her arms. "Really? I never knew."

Ed's eyebrow twitched and his hand clenched into a tight fist.

"Get back to your work, gear head. I'm teaching here."

Winry looked over her shoulder to see the entire class staring at them with extreme curiosity.

"Oh...well that can wait."

"No it can't!" Ed threw his arm up in the air. "You can't just barge in here and disturb my class!"

"Fine!" Winry yelled back. She stomped past him and grabbed his chair, sitting down in it.

"What are you doing?" Ed asked as he began to rub his temple.

"I'm waiting till you're done!" Winry crossed her arms. "Since it's so important."

"Fine! I will!"

Ed turned around and saw everyone staring at them.

"Sir? Who is that?"

"Yeah! She's been sitting by you at all the meals you've been at!"

"She's my mechanic," Ed sighed.

"For your automail?" Alicia Spinnet asked.

"Yes, now back to deconstruction-"

"So she works on you arm and leg!"

"Yes, that's why I called her my mechanic. So anyway-"

He was interrupted once more. "Why does she look so young?"

"She's my age. We've been friends since childhood."

"Why is your arm missing?"

Ed rolled his eyes. "Because I had to get it repaired! Now please if you would stop asking questions about my automail we can-"

"But Professor!" Alicia complained.

"This is an alchemy class, not automail 101."

"But sir! You have to know we're curious about your automail," George said.

"If you show it to us maybe-" Fred suggested before Ed cut him off.

"No way."

"Edward!"
Ed flinched a bit. That was her 'I'm about to hit you with a wrench' tone. "You haven't shown them your automail?!"

"I didn't want to have everyone ogling it."

"But automail is the most glorious thing ever! It deserves to be shown around and appreciated!"

"It's just an arm and a leg," Ed muttered. He felt Winry slap him upside the head. "I heard that!"

"Damn it woman! Stop hitting me!"

"Once you stop saying stupid things I'll stop hitting you."

Ed rubbed the sore spot on his head and grumbled that even when he's quiet she still hits him. "Now, your students obviously want to know about automail!"

"No they don't."

"Yes we do!" George called out.

Ed's head whipped around and glared at the red headed twin. "Fine! You guys want to know about automail! Ask her! See if I care that you learn alchemy!"

Ed stomped past Winry and plopped down in his chair. "Go on Winry, teach them."

Winry narrowed her gaze. "I will."

She turned around and looked out at the group of students with a smile on her face. "What do you want to know?"

"What exactly is automail? Professor Elric said is was a metal prosthetic." Angela said.

Winry nodded. "It is.'Automail' is the common term for automotive armored prostheses."

"Professor Elric can turn his into a blade, is that common?" Latisha Randle asked.

Winry shot a glare at Edward before looking back at the class. "No...well not in the way Ed does it. You see, he uses alchemy to transmute the metal in his arm to form a blade. Other types of automail can be outfitted with weapons like blades or even explosives. But that is called combat automail. Ed here had civilian type automail, that only serves to replace the limbs he's lost."

"How common is automail?" Fred asked. "We've never seen it before."

"Automail is not as common as you might think. It's a difficult process that some people don't have the time, money, or will power to see through."

"Is it expensive?"

Winry nodded. "You have to pay for the surgery, the rehabilitation, common maintenance, and any
"And don’t forget transportation cost, rush order fees, and anything else your grease filled head comes up with," Ed added.

Winry scowled a bit and Edward had a cocky grin on his face.

"But mostly it is the time and effort that drives people away."

"How long does it take to get automail?" Grant Page asked.

"The surgery takes a few days, depending on the limb and the state of the patient."

"How long did Professor Elric's surgery take? And what happens during it?"

"Ed," Winry looked back at him. "It took you what? Two weeks?"

Ed shrugged. "I didn't have the best sense of time at that moment, so I'm not sure."

"Well it was two days for wiring the nerves, then a day of rest. Then we had to install the port, which took a day, and then a day of rest. Then we repeated the process with your leg, which actually took five days with all the wiring and giving you a day or so to recover. And it took you about two days, because you caught a fever and we had to wait to put your leg in," Winry counted all the days on her fingers as she spoke. "So about...twelve days in total."

"Twelve days!?" many exclaimed.

"That little room was practically hell during that time," Ed stated. "It was probably the second most painful moment in my life."

"Second?" a few question. Winry looked over at Ed and knew the look in his eyes.

He was thinking about the human transmutation. Waking to find his leg and his brother gone, then crawling over to a suit of armor and giving up his arm to save Al.

Winry quickly knew she had to change the subject.

"Rehabilitation however, takes three years."

Many looked shocked at this.

"Three years! Why does it take that long!?" George exclaimed.

"Automail is three times as heavy as any normal limb. Your muscles need to adjust to carrying around this new weight and you need to train your nerves to use the automail properly.

Ed scoffed a bit. "I did it in one."

"One Year? Wow!"

Many students looked very impressed at their teacher.

"But you were coughing up blood every day and almost pushed yourself to death."

The looks of awe and wonder disappeared quickly.

"I still did it!"
"Al and I had to literally tie you down one day! And another, you went out for a run before I said you were ready and collapsed on the side of the road for two whole hours before we found you!"

"Why would you do something like that?" Angela asked.

"I wasn't going to sit around for three years with her yelling at me all the time," Ed replied, jabbing his thumb in Winry's direction.

Winry was lightning fast. She snatched a book off Ed's desk and chucked it at his head.

He fell out of his chair and onto the floor. Rubbing his head, he glared at her.

"What the hell was that for!"

"For being an idiot!"

"That's not a good enough reason!"

"Well maybe if you were being such an idiot you would realize it was!"

"That doesn't make any sense!

Ed was fuming at this point as he and Winry continued to bicker and fight.

The class on the other hand watch on as the two went at it.

"Wonder how long till they start to date?" Fred whispered to George who grinned in response.

"Alchemy nerd!"

"Gearhead!"

"I'm okay with being a gearhead! But since you seem to have such a problem with it you can re-attach your own automail!"

Ed's eyebrows shot up. "What?!"

"Your winter automail," Winry said while crossing her arms.

"Wait! Are you saying it's done!?" Ed exclaimed.

Winry rolled her eyes. "Of course it is. Why else would I have come here?"

"Why didn't you tell me!"

"You didn't let me!" she retorted.

Ed looked back at his class. "Class over! Get out!"

He grabbed Winry's arm and pulled her out of the classroom as quickly as he could. Which was quite a feat since his spare leg was a little short and gave him a small limp.

He dragged her all the way to the Hospital Wing where, once they entered he saw his winter automail sitting on a table beside a bed.

"Where's Madame Pomfrey?" he asked.
"She said she was going to get Al from the library."

He turned to Winry and said, "Okay. Come on, let's get this over with."

Winry nodded and Ed took off his shirt and pants. He laid down on the bed and Winry pulled up a chair beside him.

Ed stared up at the ceiling while he heard Winry get everything else ready.

"I'll start with your arm and then your leg. Okay?"

Ed nodded and took a deep breath. He turned his head to the side as Winry began working on his port.

"I'm making a few adjustments in your port. Nothing major, but tell me if something feels off or extremely painful."

"Okay."

He felt her start to work on his right arm port. It was an odd feeling, since the metal didn't have any nerves, but he felt the pressure she exerted on it through the skin attached to the port.

"I'm going to put your arm on now. I'm not reconnecting the nerves yet."

Ed sighed as he heard her shuffle around and place the arm into the port.

He turned his head a little to see that she was tinkering away. Her gaze was laser-focused on his arm. He saw her chewing a bit on her bottom lip as her hands worked on re-configuring his arm.

He heard the doors open and tried to see who came into the infirmary. But Winry was blocking his view.

"Ah. I see Miss Rockbell has finished your automail," Dumbledore said.

"I'm just about to finish up with his arm."

"Brother!" Al rushed to his brother's side and Ed turned his head too look at him.

"Hey Al."

"Does it feel alright?"

Ed gave a sort of shrug and Winry yelled at him to stop moving.

"Normal. If that is even the correct term for all of this."

"Do you need a pain potion?" Madame Pomfrey asked.

"No. I'll be fine."

"Fascinating," Dumbledore commented. "Such intricate detail into one machine."

Winry smiled at this. "This is a Rockbell original, sir. I make sure to make it's perfect."

She then turned her attention back to Ed. "I'm going to attach your leg, then we'll do the nerves."

She moved away from his arm and grabbed his new automail leg.
"Al, can you take the spare off?"

Al nodded and took off the wooden prosthetic.

"Thank you."

Winry was now sitting on his left side and adjusting the port on his leg.

"So why are you here old man?" Ed asked.

Dumbledore chuckled a bit and replied. "I ran into Madame Pomfrey and Alphonse on their way back here and decided to join them."

Ed felt a small ache in his leg and grit his teeth together. "Winry...that's a little too much pressure."

Winry looked up from her work and nodded. "That must be the interlock system. I'll adjust it some more then."

"Thanks."

Winry turned back to her work and was fiddling with the innermost part of the metal port.

"Do you not feel any pain?" Dumbledore asked.

Ed shook his head. "No. I mean, there is some pressure, but not pain. The metal doesn't have nerves...well at least the ones that allow me to feel pain."

Dumbledore nodded and continued to watch with interest as Winry worked.

"I'm attaching the leg," she announced.

She slid the leg into position and Ed heard a small click as she did so. She worked on the rest of the metal limb, tightening a bolt there or adjusting some wires here.

It was silent for a few moments before Ed decided to end it.

"So Winry...how's everything in Rush Valley?"

"Good. Mr. Garfield is really helpful and nice. I've been learning a lot and have got a lot of customers now."

"That's good."

There was a pause before Winry spoke up.

"Mr. Dominic is also pretty helpful as well."

"The old man is letting you watch him?" Ed asked.

Winry nodded. "Mm-hm. After helping out Mrs. Satella with her baby, he let's me come down to his shop every Sunday and observe him work, baring I don't have a big order to finish."

"That's nice."

"They named the baby too, I don't know if I told you yet."

"Really? What's his name?" Ed asked.
"Aaron Rockbell LeCoulte."

Ed's eyebrows shot up. "They named him after you?!"

Winry laughed a bit as she reached behind her to grab another tool. "Well I did help him come into this world, and Mr. Riedel and Mrs. Satella were so grateful for helping deliver him, they insisted."

"That's amazing, Winry!" Al exclaimed.

"Winry...I'm sorry to interrupt, but am I right in assuming you helped deliver a child?" Madame Pomfrey said.

Winry looked back and nodded.

"We were at this old man's shop, when his daughter-in-law went into labor. But there was a really bad storm at the same time, so they couldn't get her to the doctor. Winry here stepped up and delivered the baby," Ed stated proudly.

"That's amazing!" Madame Pomfrey exclaimed. "How did you know what to do?"

"Winry comes from a family of doctors. She didn't grow up reading from picture books. She read medical texts for fun."

"It was more interesting than any dog who could apparently talk," Winry shrugged. "And it's a good thing I did, or else we would have seriously been in trouble."

"And mother and child were both healthy afterwards?" Dumbledore asked.

Winry was smiling warmly now. "Aaron and his mom are doing well, he's starting to crawl just about everywhere now."

Winry then looked over at Edward and said, "I'm going to reconnect the nerves now."

Ed felt his stomach drop and he nodded, gritting his teeth together as he prepared for the pain that would soon occur.

Winry moved her chair back to Ed's right side and put away some of her tools, leaving only her wrench.

"Ready?"

Ed nodded. "Get it over with."

He gripped the sheets underneath him and took a deep breath.

"On the count of three," he said and Winry nodded.

He turned his head away and continued to take deep breaths.

"One...Two..."

Winry turned the wrench at that moment and pain shot through Ed's body. The fire in his shoulder was burning and he cried out, gripping the sheets and wringing them in his free hand.

"Three," Winry finished.
Ed was breathing a little heavy at this point and turned his head to glare at her.
"What the hell Winry!"

"You were taking too long," she said, moving over to attach the nerves in his leg.
"You're supposed to warn me! Or let me count down!"

"It's better to get it over with, Ed. You know that."

Winry then turned her wrench sharply, connecting the nerves in his leg.
"DAMN IT!" Ed yelled. The fire spread up his leg as fast as lightning.

Winry shook her head and stood up, putting away her tool.
"Don't be such a baby Ed."

"That hurt! You didn't even give me a warning that time!" Ed sat up on the bed, glaring at her.

"It's like pulling off a band-aid, Ed. You need to do it quick."

"What's wrong?" Madame Pomfrey asked. "I thought you said that it wouldn't hurt."

"It doesn't... well all the stuff before doesn't. It's when she reattaches the nerves. Hurts like hell."

"I could have given you something."

Ed shook his head. "No. I need to be awake and aware during it. If something's wrong, I'll be able to tell. If I couldn't feel it, I wouldn't know."

Madame Pomfrey nodded, seeming to accept the explanation. Ed swung his legs over the side and stood up.

"Wow... this is..."

Ed lifted his right arm and closed, opened, and closed his hand.

"It's so light..."

He sunk into a crouch and did a couple jabs. "I'm so fast now!"

Winry chuckled a bit, shaking her head. "It's winter automail, Ed. It's going to feel a little different."

Ed nodded and clapped his hands together, touching his right arm.

And nothing happened.

"Why didn't it work?"

"Are you seriously trying to transmute my beautiful automail only after having it for less than a minute!"

"Winry, you know me. I need to be able to transmute this!" Ed held up his arm while saying so.

Winry sighed, shaking her head. "Alchemy freak," she muttered before saying louder. "It's winter automail. The composition is completest different from your iron arm. It is mostly made up of
aluminum with a high percentage of carbon fiber."

Ed nodded and clapped again. Though this time, when he touched his arm it transmuted into a blade.

"Nice."

Ed clapped and turned his arm back to normal, but the entire thing had earned a scolding look from Winry.

"Amazing," Dumbledore said.

"Don't encourage him!"

Dumbledore chuckled a bit before apologizing. "I m sorry Miss Rockbell. But I must admit the way Edward is able to transmute his arm is fascinating."

He extended his right arm across his torso to stretch a bit. "Yeah, Winry. Just admit alchemy is cool as hell."

Winry rolled her eyes as she finished packing up her tools and Ed's old automail. She took off her apron and work gloves as well.

"Now because of this, it won't rust as much as your old one but that doesn't mean you can be careless."

Ed lifted his arm over his head and pulled it towards his left side. "Yeah, yeah, I know. Dry it off immediately after a shower or bath. Make sure to get every joint and bolt dry."

"And because it is lighter, it's also less dense, which means it won't pack as much of a punch."

Ed raised an eyebrow as he sunk into a crouch. His right leg extended as he stretched. "Really?"

"Yes. So be careful, okay?"

"When am I never not careful?"

Both Al and Winry looked at Ed. "Seriously?"

"I'm not that reckless!"

"Brother. I'm sorry, but you are."

"Name one time!" Ed stood up and crossed his arms.

"One time we were walking to the train station and you saw these men mugging an old man and you rushed in there, not realizing one of them had a gun!"

Ed waved his brother off. "Those punks were too easy."

"You were shot in the shoulder and had to go to the hospital!"

"I was only there for a day!"

"Because you broke out, saying we had to make out train!"

Ed then felt a large smack upside his head and cried out, turning around to see Winry glaring at him.
"You think you're so smart with that big brain of yours," she said poking his head. "But in those situations, you're stupid Ed."

Edward glared at her for a few moments before sighing and admitting defeat. "Fine! I'll try to be more careful alright!"

Winry looked unconvinced as she turned to put her tool box aside.

Dumbledore cleared his throat a bit and all three teens looked over at him.

"Well Edward, I must take my leave as of now. If there are any more problems, please come and see me. And Miss Winry can leave at any time, just come to my office and I will apparate you home."

Winry nodded and Dumbledore turned to leave.

"I have to check on my stocks to see if Severus resupplied the potions I need," Madame Pomfrey said, leaving the Hospital Wing as well.

Edward decided then was probably the best time to get dressed, and walked over to the chair where his clothes were folded.

Ed pulled on his black shirt and pants. As he clasped the top part of his black jacket he took a deep breath.

"Hey Winry..."

"Yeah Ed?"

"I'm sorry you had to come all the way up here to help me."

"It's alright Ed, I just wished you had told me you were going somewhere so far north."

"I didn't know the weather would be like this, or that the cold would affect my automail that much."

"Well you probably never knew about winter automail since you never traveled north."

Ed licked his lips nervously. "Thanks for doing this though."

Winry smiled, tucking a bit of her hair behind her ear and feeling the heat rise in her cheeks. "No problem Ed."

Edward put on his red coat, white gloves, and black boots.

"So do you want to head back home now?"

"I'll have some dinner before I leave and make sure I've packed up all my tools. It's still early in the morning back in Amestris though."

Ed pulled out his pocket watch and looked at the time, he subtracted the appropriate amount of hours and nodded.

"You're right...It's like 4 am there."

"Do you want me to help you bring your things back to your room?" Al offered.

"Thank you Alphonse, I would."
Al grabbed one of the tool boxes and Winry held the other in her hand. The trio then walked back to Winry's room to set her things down.

Once that was settled though, Winry, Ed, and Al all headed down to the Great Hall for dinner. Al sat next to Hagrid, and next was Winry and Ed who was closest to Madame Pomfrey.

"So will you be heading back home later tonight?" Madame Pomfrey asked.

"Yes, Mr. Dumbledore promised to apparate me home after supper."

"And you'll go back to Rush Valley, correct?"

"Yes. Though I might not stay there too long as Granny has been wanting me to come back home to Resembool for a visit."

"Really? Garfield will let you do that?"

"He actually wants to go on a small vacation himself for the solstice. I told him I would hold down the shop then and he said I could take some time off in February to head home to Granny and Den," Winry explained.

"The solstice?" Madame Pomfrey questioned.

"It's a celebration we have in Amestris on the Winter Solstice. There are giant bonfires in the country and a lot of people in the city set off fireworks. People bake sweet cakes and different treats for the occasion and some exchange gifts."

"Sounds a little like Christmas."

Winry looked a little confused at this and looked at Ed.

"It's apparently a religious celebration on the 25th of December. They don't do the bonfires or the fireworks but they do exchange gifts and have feasts. The students are actually about to leave the school to go back home to their families for it."

"Oh...that sounds really nice."

"It's why the Hall has the trees in it and there are all these decorations," Ed added, gesturing to some of the decorations.

Winry hummed a bit, and a small smile appeared on her face.

They continued to talk throughout dinner. Once it finished, Ed, Al, and Winry all headed back to her room to finish packing. Ed and Al waited outside their own and spoke to Elizabeth for a bit.

Once Winry was ready, they walked out of the castle and out to the grounds. Dumbledore was already waiting out there, as Ed had told him Winry wanted to leave after dinner.

Edward stuffed his hands in his pockets.

"Make sure to do your maintenance and usual stretches daily. It might take you a while to get used to this new automail."

Ed nodded, "Yeah, yeah, I know."

Winry looked up at Al. "Make sure you look after him, Al."
"I will Winry."

"I'll be back in Rush Valley, but I'll send you a letter when I'm back in Resembool and when I go back too."

"Okay," Ed shrugged a bit.

"Bye Ed," Winry said, quickly hugging him before turning on her heels to walk over to Dumbledore.

"Thank you for your service, Miss Rockbell."

"No problem Mr. Dumbledore," Winry said, shifting the tool box and suitcase in her hands.

Dumbledore looped his arm around hers and Ed's eyes locked with Winry's.

"Take care, nerd," she said playfully.

"You too, gearhead," he replied in the same manner.

Then, in a blink of an eye, Dumbledore and Winry disappeared.

Ed released a breath he didn't know he was holding in, and turned on his heels. Alphonse followed suit, and the brothers walked back into the castle.

"I'm going to take a walk," Ed told his brother.

"Want me to join you?"

Edward shook his head. "No, I wanna clear my head a bit. I'll see you back at the room."

"Don't stay out too late, Brother."

The two brothers bumped fists and parted ways. Alphonse headed down the hall to their room, while Ed turned to walk up some of the stairs.

He allowed his mind to wander, as his feet took control and he walked aimlessly through the huge castle.

Edward thought of a lot of things.

Like the Flamel journals. They had had those things for months now. Months! It had only taken him and Alphonse ten days to work through Dr. Marcoh's work.

But, Flamel was one of the greats. They could fill libraries dedicated to his research and all the breakthroughs he had.

Maybe it was because Ed was using half or sometimes most of his time teaching. Al had to make up all the work Ed could have been doing. But there was nothing they could do. Ed had to teach. But the kids were leaving soon, so maybe they could make a breakthrough then.

He managed to get all the way to the top floor before deciding maybe he should turn back.

Walking down the stairs, he heard some commotion as he passed the seventh floor.

"I saw it Ron! We have to tell someone!"

Edward's eyebrows furrowed a bit at this. He rushed over towards where he heard all the commotion
was happening and saw Harry, Ron, and Hermione all in their pajamas.

Harry looked rather distressed and he was gripping his forehead.

"What the hell is going on here?"

All three turned to see the young Alchemy Professor staring at them.

"Professor! I need to see Dumbledore now!"

Ed put up his hands. "Woh, woh, woh, Harry. Explain to me what's happening, why are all of you
up and why does Harry look like he might pass out from pain?"

The grimace on Harry's face told Ed he was in a considerable amount of pain. He also noted that
Harry was sweating, breathing heavy, and his pupils were dilated.

"Ron's dad is hurt! We need to save him!"

"How do you know he's hurt?"

"I dreamt it!"

Ed sighed and rubbed his temples with his left hand. "So you had a nightmare, and how you are
freaking out?"

"It's not a nightmare! It actually happened! I was having a dream at first about something completely
different, something stupid...and then this interrupted it. It was real, I didn't imagine it. Mr Weasley
was asleep on the floor and he was attacked by a gigantic snake, there was a load of blood, he
collapsed, someone's got to find out where he is..."

Ed looked over at Ron and Hermione. "What's going on with him?"

"I'm not lying and I'm not mad!" Harry told him, his voice rising to a shout. "I tell you, I saw it
happen!"

Edward narrowed his gaze at Harry. Green met gold in an intense stare off.

Ed's eyes widened in shock. "You actually believe it..."

"Yes! And we're wasting time! We need to get to Dumbledore!"

Ed shook his head. "No.. Dumbledore just left. He's taking Winry back home."

"Your mechanic?" Hermione questioned.

"Yeah, he apparated out of here with her just a while ago."

Harry cursed a bit before his eyes lit up again. "McGonagall! She could help!"

"What in the world is going on here?!"

Edward turned around to see McGonagall marching up to them in tartan dressing gown, her glasses
perched lopsidedly on the bridge of her bony nose.

"Why are your three out of bed at this hour! Neville came and got me claiming you were violently ill,
Potter."
"I'm not, but it's Ron's dad," he said. "He's been attacked by a snake and it's serious, I saw it happen."

"What do you mean, you saw it happen?" said Professor McGonagall, her dark eyebrows contracting.

"I don't know...I was asleep and then I saw it..."

"So you dreamed it?"

"No! I was dreaming at first, but then I was interrupted. I saw a snake attack Mr. Weasley! There was blood everywhere...and.."

Professor McGonagall was gazing at him through her lopsided spectacles as though horrified at what she was seeing.

Edward felt his entire body stiffen.

"You believe him," he stated.

McGonagall nodded.

"We have to go now. Miss Granger, please get all of the other Weasley children and bring them to the Headmaster's office at once."

Hermione nodded and ran back towards the common room.

"Come along," she ordered.

"But the old man's gone," Edward said. "He took Winry home."

"Dumbledore had already returned, Edward. It only took him less than an hour to transport your friend home."

Harry, Ron, and Edward were all following McGonagall through the castle at this point.

They reached the gargoyle and she said, "Fizzing Whizbees."

Climbing up the stairs Edward was confused on McGonagall's reaction to all of this. She had looked surprised, but not utterly shocked. More so like she had hoped and prayed something like this wouldn't happen.

McGonagall opened the wooden door for them and they all stepped into the office.

"Oh, Professor McGonagall...and...ah."

Dumbledore was sitting in a high-backed chair behind his desk; he leaned forward into the pool of candlelight illuminating the papers laid out before him. He was wearing a magnificently embroidered purple and gold robe, the same one he had left with Winry in. His bright blue eyes fixated on McGonagall.

"Professor Dumbledore, Potter had a...well...a...nightmare..."

"It wasn't a nightmare," said Harry quickly.

"What happened?" Dumbledore asked, standing up.
"I...well, I was asleep..." said Harry. "But it wasn't an ordinary dream...it was real...I saw it happen." He took a deep breath and continued, "Ron's dad, Mr Weasley, has been attacked by a giant snake."

There was a pause in which Dumbledore leaned back and stared meditatively at the ceiling. Edward's gaze was locked on Dumbledore, who seemed to be contemplating this.

"How did you see this?" Dumbledore asked quietly.

"Well...I don't know," said Harry, rather angrily "Inside my head, I suppose-"

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

Harry gaped a bit before taking a deep breath and saying,

"I was the snake. I saw it all from the snake's point of view."

The silence was almost deafening.

"Is Arthur seriously injured?"

Harry nodded. "Yes, there was a lot of blood and-"

Dumbledore quickly moved to some of the paintings in his office. "Everard, raise the alarm. Make sure he is found by the right people."

"Dilys, I need you to go as well."

The two paintings to which he was addressing nodded and left their frames.

"Alright old man, I need some explanations as to what in the giant hell is going on!"

Everyone turned to look at Edward, seeming to have forgotten he was there as well.

"Why are you believing him? Why do you think Ron's father is actually injured? And why does it seem like some unspeakable evil has just roused its' ugly head?"

"There is much to discuss, at the moment I wish to see if-"

One of the paintings came running back into his painting.

"I yelled until someone came! They got him and carried him past my painting...he doesn't look good."

The other man then entered his painting as well.

"He's at St. Mungo's. They just carried him past me. He's covered in blood."

Ron made a small convulsive movement and looked like all the blood was gone from his face.

"Good. Minerva, please inform Molly of what has occurred and take the inform the other Weasley children."

"I've already asked Miss Granger to wake them."
McGonagall then looked over at Ron. "Come along."

Ron looked a mixture of terrified and sick.

"I- think-"

Edward knew that Ron was in shock.

"Ron!" He barked. "Listen up, your father is going to be fine. That painting said he's at a medical facility. It probably looks a lot worse than it actually is. I've walked away from some fights and injuries that some might say I shouldn't have been able to. People are more resilient than you think. Now go with McGonagall and be with your siblings! You need to be with your family now and you need to be strong for them, and especially for your father now."

Ron nodded and started to look less sick now. He and McGonagall left the office at that moment.

Edward took a deep breath, before looking back at Dumbledore.

"Thank you for that, Edward."

Ed crossed his arms. "No problem. But I still have questions."

"Yes, I suppose you do-"

"Which you'll answer now, old man," Ed snapped.

Dumbledore sighed and nodded, walking back to sit at his desk.

"Professor I-" Harry started to say before the door burst open. Snape strode in and looked at Harry and Edward.

"You called for me?"

"Yes, Severus. I believe we cannot wait another moment."

Snape's eyebrows shot up for a split second before he resumed his neutral mask.

"Very well. Come along Potter."

Edward stared at Harry. He had seen piles of trash that had looked better than he did at that moment. Harry's hands were shaking and Edward could tell he was keeping his jaw clenched tight. Like he was afraid to open it or something.

"Why?" Ed questioned.

"That is none of your concern, Elric."

Ed's fist clenched and he ground his teeth together. "I'll be the one who determines what I'm concerned about Snape."

"Edward, please allow Mr. Potter to go with Severus. I will answer your questions then," Dumbledore said calmly.

Edward narrowed his eyes at the Potions Professor before stepping aside and allowing Harry to follow Snape out of the office.
"Now start talking Dumbledore."

Dumbledore sighed and took his glasses off.

"Harry did in fact see Arthur, Mr. Weasley, being attacked."

"Through a dream?"

"Not a dream...a vision...a connection I hoped would never fully be realized."

"What are you talking about?"

Dumbledore put his glasses back on and stood up, walking towards Edward.

"Voldemort and Harry have...a connection. One that allows the other to see into the other's mind or feel what they are feeling."

Ed's eyes went wide. "How is that possible?" he breathed.

"When Voldemort tried to kill Harry when he was a baby, it was created. I am not fully sure of how this came to pass, but I am fairly certain that Voldemort's actions lead to this."

"What does this mean for Harry? Is he going to start being controlled by him?"

Dumbledore shook his head. "That is why I asked Severus to come and take Harry. He will teach him how to protect his mind."

"How? With magic?"

Dumbledore nodded. "Occlumency. He will need to master this skill before Voldemort realizes the connection."

"And what exactly is he doing? What is Snape teaching him?"

"Simply how to guard one's mind from outsiders. It is a difficult art to master, and requires complete control of one's self."

"So what happens if he can't do it, and this Voldemort guy realizes he can sneak a peek into Harry's mind?"

Dumbledore sighed a bit. "Voldemort will be able to use Harry. He could do a number of things. Torture him through visions of horrible atrocities, lure him into a trap, or any number of horrendous things."

Edward rubbed his temples a bit. "Truth almighty..."

"I am sorry that you were dragged into this Edward. I truly am. And you are free to tell your brother everything that has happened. But I ask that you tell no one else."

"Thank you...but I have to ask. Is there anything I can do to help Harry?"

Dumbledore's eyes widened a bit at this, but only for a split second. "Continue to watch over him as you have."

"So you want me to just sit back and watch as some sick fucker plays with him mind like putty!"
"I understand your concern. Which is why Severus is working with him right now to prevent it from happening."

Edward let out a deep breath. "Alright. I'll continue to keep an eye on him. But don't think I'm happy with this whole thing."

"I didn't realize you cared for him that way," Dumbledore commented.

"These brats are growing on me a bit. And as you know, the Colonel asked me to keep an eye out for him."

Dumbledore nodded and said, "If I have answered all of your questions, I need to leave so as to check on Arthur's condition."

"Yeah, I'll go now."

Ed turned on his heels and walked out of the office. He walked through the halls and back to his own room.

"Edward! You're back! Alphonse said you were taking a walk."


She nodded and wished him goodnight, as the portrait swung open.

Ed walked into his room to see his brother waiting for him.

"Brother!"

"Hey Al."

"Are you alright? What happened?"

Ed sighed and rubbed his eyes with his left hand. "A lot of shit Al...a lot of shit..."
Edward

It had been a week since the whole incident concerning Ron's father. The Weasley children were gone for the entire day following the attack on their father. And when they returned to school, Ed informed the twins and Ron that any assignments that had for his class that were due the previous day they were exempt for.

He could tell that they were all worried for their father's health, but his condition was stable now and he was on the road to recovery. It would take some time though, as the venom from the snake was keeping his wounds from healing properly. But Fred stated that the healers were using some muggle techniques to help Mr. Weasley; stitches.

Since their father was on the mend, he could see that all the Weasley children were being their normal selves.

But Harry on the other hand, looked a little worse for wear. He had some bags under his eyes and looked a little more irritated most of the time.

Ed knew it had to do with the Occlumency stuff Snape was teaching him. And knew the potions professor had it in for Harry, and probably wasn't being the best teacher. This caused Ed to glare at the professor every chance he had.

But the break was fast approaching and Ed had important things to get done before everyone left for the holiday.

"Okay," Ed announced. "We only have a week left before you lot are all gone on some vacation or something."

All the students looked very eager at this but continued to listen to their professor.

"So we are going to finish up the basics for deconstruction, then once we get back we will start transmuting."

Ed turned around and drew a few shapes on the board.

"These are some more of the shapes you will need for drawing an array. You've already started practicing circles, semicircles and triangles. But these are also very important. Pentagons, rectangles, squares, and stars show up often in arrays."

Ed pointed at the shapes on the board. "I want each of you to draw me three of each for homework."

Stepping away from the board, Ed stood in front of his class and crossed his arms.

"Also, I'm going to assign all of you a project over the break."

The eight Gryffindor and Slytherin students in the front look extremely dejected at this and a few started to complain.

"Ah come on Professor!" Ron griped.

Ed rolled his eyes a bit. "It's not that difficult. All you need to do is research a specification alchemy has to offer. Like water, fire, or earthen metals. Then write an essay on the subject you chose."
"How long should it be?" Hermione asked.

"About... two to three pages long should suffice. Make sure to include the lists of chemicals you need to transmute, and if you can find an array include that as well. Just write enough so you know what that area of alchemy deals with and some of the work that goes into it."

"And when will it be due exactly?" Harry asked.

"Right after break, when you guys get back. It's not a hard assignment and you could probably finish it before you leave if you work on it."

"And we can do any field?" Neville asked.

"Yes. And I encourage you all to choose a field that will interest you. This is more for your benefit than mine. Learning about the different fields alchemy has to offer will help you chose an area of specification."

"So are you saying we'll be able to learn all different types of alchemy?!"

Ed shook his head. "Not anytime soon. You lot still need to work through the rest of deconstruction and then through all of the basics of reconstruction before you would chose a concentrated area of study."

He then cleared his throat and stated that class was over and reminded everyone of their upcoming assignments, and their due dates.

Once all the students left his classroom, Ed walked back over to his chair and leaned back, closing his eyes for a few moments of rest before his next class.

Hermione

Hermione was staring at the page in the book on her lap.

"Hermione, if you stare at that book any harder it might burst into flames," Harry said.

Hermione sighed a bit. "I know, but this entire section is...unusual."

"What's weird about it?" Ron asked, scooting forward a bit.

"It's this transmutation circle," she said, holding up the book. It had a pentagon, triangles and smaller circles within it. And around the edge of the circle there were weird looking runes and what looked like some type of inscription.

"I've never seen anything like it. It is so much more complex than any other in the book."

"What does it do?" Harry asked.

Hermione shook her head. "It doesn't say! It's here and there is no explanation or anything."

"Ask Professor Elric, maybe he might know what it is," Harry suggested.

Hermione smiled, closing the book and standing up. "I will, thanks Harry."

She then walked out of the common room and down the staircase to the floor where the Alchemy classroom was.
The door was closed so she knocked on it.

"Professor?"

"Come in," Ed called from within.

Hermione opened the door and walked inside. She saw the young alchemy professor leaning back in his chair with a small notebook in his hands.

"What can I do for you?" Ed asked, sitting up a bit as Hermione got close.

"Well I was reading this book and I wanted to ask you a question about something I read."

Edward looked at the book in her hands and nodded. "Okay, what's your question?"

Hermione opened the book and flipped to the page she saw the strange array.

"It's this array, I was looking at it and-"

She laid down the book in front of Edward and pointed at the transmutation circle.

The small smile on his face instantly disappeared and his eyes went wide with shock. He ripped the book out of Hermione's hands and stared in utter shock at the page.

"Where did you get this?" he barked.

Hermione recoiled a bit at the harshness in his tone.

"From the library," she answered, confused as to why her Professor was acting this way.

"Where!?" he snapped.

"T-the restricted section."

Ed's eyes went wide for a moment before a scowl appeared on his face. "This is the book you asked me to sign for," he hissed.

"Yes, but I don't-"

Hermione felt her hands shaking at this point. The rage radiating off Ed was powerful and a bit overwhelming.

He stood up abruptly, causing his chair to fall back.

The book was still in his hands and he roared, "You used me to get this!?"

"I-I'm s-sorry Professor.. I-I di-didn't know."

Hermione took a few steps back as she tried to figure out what on earth had brought on this much amount of anger and rage.

"How dare you try and pull something like this! I thought you were smart!"

Hermione flinched a bit at the intensity of Edward's voice.

"What did I do wrong, Professor?"
Edward's eyes were narrow and she could tell he had an iron grip on the book in his hand. His other hand, looked ready to punch something...or rather...someone.

"Why are you researching this?" he demanded.

"I don't know what it even is!" she cried out.


"B-but Professor I-"

"GET OUT!" he roared.

Hermione felt her heart race as she ran out of the room, tears already forming in her eyes.

She sprinted through the corridors and up the stairs, the tears now streaming down her face. She ignored the shocked expressions of everyone she flew past, and just kept running.

Edward

He was furious.

No..that didn't come close to the anger he was feeling.

He stomped out of the room and all the way to the Headmaster's office. He barked out the password and climbed up the staircase. Once he was at the door however, he turned the knob to see it was locked.

Anger blinding him, he took a step back and raised his left leg and kicked.

The door burst open and Ed stormed into the office.

"What the hell is this old man!"

Dumbledore had been behind his desk at the time, and once his door was kicked in, his attention was placed upon the eldest Elric.

"What is the matter Edward?" he asked in a calm manner.

"This!"

Ed forcefully opened the book and slammed it on the desk in front of Dumbledore and pointed at the transmutation circle.

"What the hell is this doing here!"

Dumbledore studied the array for a few moments before calmly replying, "I am not sure what you mean."

If he could, Ed would have smoke coming out of his ears right now.

"This! This array! This book needs to be burned, then its' ashes scattered to the four corners of the world!"

Dumbledore took a deep breath, his eyes didn't convey any anger or irritation and this only made Ed more furious.
"Edward, I need you to calmly explain to me what the issue is."

"HUMAN TRANSMUTATION!" Ed roared. "This array is for committing one of the worst taboos in alchemy...Actually really the only one. People will get a little angry if you start making gold, but this!? This is playing with life! Something humans should never even think of attempting!"

Ed was breathing heavy after his long rant and Dumbledore only nodded, his fingers laced together.

"I see..so you are saying this array is for trying to create life?"

"Human transmutation uses humans as it's main objects. This is an attempt at the application of transmutation to human bodies and souls, in essence, playing god with human lives."

Dumbledore nodded a bit and stood up, walking out from behind his desk.

"I see...Might I ask where this book was located?"

"The library, one of my students ask me to help her get it out of there and needed my signature to do it."

"Ah.. yes. Then it must have been in the restricted section. Students are not allowed to take any book from that section without the permission of a Professor."

"I don't care if it was behind a six inch thick steel door. This book shouldn't exist."

Dumbledore took the book in his hands and closed it gently.

"I see your concern in this matter, Edward. But I believe that you may be-"

"Don't you dare say overreacting, old man. Don't you fucking dare. If you knew the truth like I do you'd be chucking that book in the fire right now."

Dumbledore's eyebrows raised a bit. "The truth?"

Ed cursed himself internally. His anger had made him stupid, and that had caused him to slip up.

"That this work is evil."

Edward could see in Dumbledore's eyes he didn't fully believe him, but he didn't press Ed on the matter any further.

"I will see to it that this book is properly handled."

Ed glared at the old wizard, the high from his anger slowly but surely wearing off.

"And by handled you mean destroyed beyond repair."

Dumbledore nodded and Ed let out a small sigh of relief.

"Might I ask why you...care so deeply about this, Edward?"

Edward clenched his fists tightly and resisted the urge to break something.

"It's the taboo every alchemist learns to never attempt. No one should be allowed to play god like that. This book...no good will come of it. Ever."

Dumbledore nodded and picked up his wand from the desk, touching the tip to the book.
It instantly turned to ash and Dumbledore flicked his wand once more, causing the dust to swirl in the air and fly into the fireplace.

Edward sighed a bit and ran his hand through his bangs, feeling such a sense of relief that the book was gone.

"I trust you are now satisfied, Edward?" Dumbledore asked, raising an eyebrow.

"Yes," Edward replied, a bit curtly, but he didn't care.

Without saying another word, he turned on his heels and marched right out of that office and back to his classroom.

Once he got back to his room he saw Al waiting for him there.

"Brother? Where did you go? I thought you said you were going to look over your notes."

Ed sighed as he walked over to his desk.

"Hermione came by to ask a question."

"And?"

"She had a book with a Human Transmutation array," he spat out, placing his hands on top of his desk.

Alphonse gasped.

"How? Why?"

"I don't know!" Ed slammed his fists on top of the wooden desk, causing it to shudder.

Ed was breathing heavy and he felt Al's hand on his shoulder.

"It's alright Brother...It's alright."

Ed nodded and took a few calming breaths.

"I know...it's just-"

"I know, Brother."

Ed leaned in a bit to his brother's touch, and wished with all his might that it was flesh, rather than metal that was resting on his shoulder.

"What happened though? Why was she researching it?"

Ed shook his head. "I don't know...I was just so...angry I yelled at her to get out of my sight."

"Brother," Al chided.

"What was I supposed to do Al! She had a book with the array in it and she even used my signature to get it!"

"She's only fifteen."

"We were ten and eleven."
"But we were prodigies! She hasn't finished the deconstruction part of your class, how on earth could she try and attempt something like that?"

Ed sighed and knew his younger brother was right.

"Okay...I'll ask her at the meeting tonight."

"Will she be there?" Alphonse questioned.

Ed shrugged. "I guess there is only one way to find out."

He and Alphonse decided to head to the Room of Requirement early to set up everything they needed. Ed paced in front of the wall three times and the door magically appeared.

They walked in and began getting ready.

Edward stood in the room, stretching his right arm. Alphonse was helping set up a few of the punching bags the room had provided for that day.

The trio entered the room at that moment and Hermione instantly stiffened at the sight of Edward.

Ed noticed this and took a deep breath.

"Hermione," he said in the most even tone he could manage.

"Y-yes Professor?"

"I'm not going to yell at you," he said, walking towards the trio.

Hermione seemed to relax a tiny bit at this.

"I just need to ask you a few questions. And I need you to answer them honestly."

Hermione was chewing on her bottom lip but nodded slowly.

"What are you going to ask her?" Ron prompted, looking a little peeved at the Alchemy Professor.

"She was sobbing her eyes out after you screamed at her today," Harry snapped.

"Screamed? He lost his bloody mind!"

Ron looked like he wanted to punch Edward in the face, and part of Ed couldn't blame him for wanting to do so.

But he needed answers.

Now.

"I'm sorry about that...but I was caught off guard and I assumed some things. I shouldn't have treated you that way and I'm sorry."

"Thank you Professor."

Harry and Ron exchanged a look and it seemed Ed's apology was good enough for them to back off a bit.

"What do you want to ask?" Hermione said, looking still a bit nervous.
"Why did you get that book?"

"I simply wanted to try and get ahead in the class, and study the field a bit more. I thought that because it was in the restricted section it was just very complex."

Ed nodded and continued. "Why were you researching that array?"

"I didn't know what it even was," she admitted. "I was confused because the explanation was worded in a very strange way so that's why I asked you what it was."

"So you have no idea what that transmutation circle is for?"

Hermione nodded at this and Ed let out a small sigh of relief.

"Good. Promise me you never will research it again. And if you ever find a book in any section in the library with that array, bring it to me straight away. I don't care what time of day it is or what I'm doing. Bring it to me."

"I will Professor," she promised. "But I have to ask..what is that array even for? Why is it so dangerous for me to have seen it?"

Ed felt his automail get a bit heavier in that moment.

"It's evil...that's what it is. It's dangerous because of what it can do...what it tries to do...and what it can take away."

He resisted the urge to rub the area around his ports as they immediately became a little sore.

"But what does it do?" Ron pressed.

Hermione looked a little horrified at Ron's question.

"It allows people to try and play god. That's what it does," Ed hissed.

The trio looked a little confused at this but at the same time a bit scared.

"And what happened to the book, Professor?" Hermione asked quietly.

"Destroyed."

Hermione chewed on her lip a bit before saying. "I'm sorry, Professor. I never would have gotten that book if I had known-"

"It's alright, Hermione. Part of me is glad you brought it to me. If not, then it would still be sitting in the library."

Hermione smiled a bit at this and Ed jerked his head towards the changing rooms. "Now you all better get ready. Everyone's gonna be here soon."

The trio nodded and left to go change.

Soon people started to trickle in and once everyone was there and ready, Harry called their attention.

"Professor Edward is going to teach us a couple more defense maneuvers and then we will finish by reviewing all the spells we've worked on the past few times."
Harry looked over at Ed who nodded and began by saying, "Alright! I'm going to teach you all another maneuver and how to properly punch."

"You're teaching us how to punch?" Comac questioned.

Ed resisted the urge to roll his eyes at the arrogant student.

"Yes. Because if done correctly, you will be able to do damage to your opponent. But an incorrect form could cause you to inadvertently break your own hand or even arm."

Ed walked over to one of the bags and motioned for everyone to follow suit.

"You do not want to keep your thumb on the side of your index finger. Instead you want to take your thumb and wrap it down across the bottom of your curled fingers. You also want to keep your fists tight, but not so tight that you start cutting off circulation. It is important, in martial arts, to remain fluid and yet still powerful."

Ed held up his fist for the group to observe. "There are varying schools of thought on whether you should have the knuckles of your index and middle finger out a little farther when punching in order to drive them in farther. I would say this is more of a personal preference issue and you should do whichever feels more natural. Technically speaking though that may work slightly better when punching specifically at certain pressure points as opposed to going for strictly for impact."

Ed then brought his fists in front of his face, so as to block any other attack.

"And this is your resting position. Hands up, so as to block any other attack. When you actually do punch, extend your arm and left your hand twist a full 180. You should throw any punches so that your arms stay level with your shoulders. If you have your chin down and the punch comes out straight, the shoulder will rise automatically and further protect your chin. Throw out the jab but don't throw it too hard, then follow with your cross. Which will be your non dominate hand, and you do the same thing."

Ed threw a jab and a cross to demonstrate and then turned back to the group.

"Okay, everyone get to a bag and start practicing."

They all split up and started hitting away at the punching bags. Ed and Al walked around and corrected everyone's form and encouraged those who were doing it correctly.

"Good job, Ginny. Your cross looks very nice."

"Thank you," she replied with a slight smirk.

Ed looked over at Hermione who was throwing her weight into each of her hits. Edward walked over and nudged her foot.

"Wider stance will keep you more balanced. And even though I like what you are doing with maximizing your power with the rest of your body. You need to hold back a bit. If you swing too wide, then you leave yourself open to an attack."

Hermione nodded and made the change in her technique.

"Perfect."

Ed then whistled to get everyone's attention.
"Everyone seems to be grasping it alright. I'll teach you the Bump and Roll maneuver now. Now you're going to use this technique if the attacker is sitting on your stomach and is choking your throat with both of their hands."

A few of the kids looked terrified at this but Edward pointed at Neville.

"Come up here, and you're going to be my attacker."

Neville nodded and walked up to Edward, looking a bit nervous.

"Don't worry, you'll be fine," he whispered.

"Now!" Ed turned back to the group. Ed motioned for Neville to follow him to the ground.

Ed was laying down now and he instructed Neville to get on top of him. Neville did, but looked extremely nervous doing so.

"Put your hands around my throat."

Neville nodded and did as he was told. The light grip around Ed's throat still allowed him to talk and breathe easily, with no discomfort.

"First, you're going to use your right hand, reach over one wrist and grab their right wrist."

Ed demonstrated as he was talking.

"Grab their right upper arm with your left hand. Then, bring your left foot around their right foot and tuck it closer to your body."

Ed's foot tucked around Neville's foot as he held onto his upper arm.

"Support your body with your legs and shoulders and raise your hips off the ground."

He lifted up the ground a bit and Neville looked a bit shaky.

"Then roll onto your left shoulder bringing their body underneath you."

Ed rolled over and ended up on top of Neville. "Your end position should be with you in between their legs. After that, get up and run, calling for help."

Edward stood up and extended his hand down to Neville who took it gladly.

"It's that simple."

The kids all looked very impressed and a bit eager to do try out the maneuver.

"Pair up and be careful. Me and Al will be walking around and don't let things get out of hand."

Edward instructed a few of the pairs how to improve their technique and watched as Hermione successfully pulled off the maneuver, against her partner/attacker, Ginny.

"Good job you two, really nice work."

Both girls smiled and continued running the drill.

Ed whistled to get everyone's attention once he saw everyone had practiced it a few times.
"Alright Harry, you can take over now."

Harry nodded and instructed everyone to pair up and practice protego, stupefy, expelliarmus.

Ed and Al watched the teens practice their spells from the back of the room and Ed noticed many of them had improved greatly since they had started the DA.

Harry walked around, and helped out a few of the students who were still struggling a bit with the spells and instructing the group when to cast their spells, so as to avoid complete mayhem.

He then called out that the practice was over and for everyone to go change into their school clothes.

Once everyone was back in their regular outfits, Harry cleared his throat and everyone turned to look at him.

"Now, as you all know this was our last meeting before the holiday. Everyone has improved nicely and I couldn't be prouder of you all."

This earned a round of smiles from the group and Harry finished his little speech.

"Please keep safe though, and try not to forget anything we've worked on. Once we get back we'll set a time and check your coins to see when. And...Happy Christmas."

Everyone then left, in small groups to avoid any suspicion and Ed and Al waved goodbye to the trio.

As they started walking back to their room Edward saw Professor McGonagall walking towards him and his brother.

"Ah, Edward, Alphonse. I was looking for you."

"What for?" Ed asked.

"Headmaster Dumbledore wants to see you both in his office to discuss something."

"Okay, we'll head over there now."

McGonagall nodded and walked past the pair of brothers.

"What do you think Dumbledore wants to talk about?" Al asked.

Ed shrugged. "I don't know. It may be about the fact I stormed into his office today and demanded that alchemy book be destroyed."

The Elric brothers reached the statue and stated the password. They climbed up the staircase and knocked on the door.

"Come in."

Ed opened the door and he and Al entered the office.

"Ah, Edward and Alphonse. I wished to discuss something with you. As you may or may not know, there is an upcoming break for the students and teachers."

"Yeah, a few of the students were talking about staying in the castle during it and I assigned my classes a project to complete during it. What of it?"
Dumbledore nodded. "And you and your brother can stay at Hogwarts if you wish, but I would like to extend an invitation to you."

Ed raised an eyebrow at this. "An invitation?"

"For a place to stay during the holiday."

"Where?" Al asked.

"A house that is the meeting place for a special order of which I am the leader. The Order of the Phoenix."

"And what exactly does this order do?" Ed asked, crossing his arms.

"We work to try and stop the forces of Lord Voldemort."

Ed nodded a bit. "Okay, so are you wanting me and Al to join or something?"

Dumbledore chuckled a bit. "I will not force you and your brother will do anything. I simply wish to extend this invitation."

Ed sighed a bit, he knew what Dumbledore was planning but he decided to accept. This castle was big and great and all, but Ed would probably go crazy if he had to stay here any longer. He and Al never had stayed in a place this long before ever. Not since he got his certification had they stayed in one place for that long.

"What do you think Al?"

Al contemplated this for a few moments before saying, "I don't see any harm in at least meeting them. See if we want to join them or not."

Edward nodded and looked over at Dumbledore.

"We'll go."

"Thank you Edward, Alphonse. Tomorrow, simply board the Hogwarts Express and I will have someone meet you at the station when you arrive at King's Cross."

Ed nodded and they left Dumbledore's office.

As they walked back to their room, Ed remembered what Mustang had asked of him before going home.

*Keep an eye on the situation here.*

*Watch out for Harry Potter in particular.*

Ed sighed and said to himself "Order of the Phoenix huh? Mustang, what did you throw me into?"
Edward

Edward looked out the window at the passing countryside and sighed. He looked over to see Al writing something down in his food journal and a wave of sadness followed by fierce determination washed over him. Ron, Hermione, and Harry were all talking about their other classes as they ate some food they had purchased off a trolley that had just stopped by.

Ed looked back out the window and thought about what had happened this morning.

McGonagall had told them that someone would pick them up at the train station to take them to the Order. Ed was a little happy that he and Al would be going by train, as that was something he sort of missed from Amestris. Even though some of the rides were long and boring, and the seats weren't the most comfortable thing ever, it was nice to watch the country pass by the window as they headed off to their next destination.

Al and him had packed his suitcase and Al gathered some of the journals they were working on, along with some of their reference books. They two brothers headed down, following most of the students to the train station. Once they boarded, the Elric brothers quickly procured a cabin and Al put their stuff away.

Both sat down and Ed smiled at his younger brother. "Feels good to be back on a train, huh Al?"

Al nodded. "I don't think we've ever stayed in one place this long since you got your certification."

"Yeah...feels like we've been here forever and not at all at the same time."

"Yeah, but I like it here Brother. The kids in the DA are all really nice to me and there is so much to read in their library!"

Ed chuckled a bit and said, "Yeah, this place is pretty nice considering all the craziness it comes with."

"All of them are full!" Ed heard Ron exclaim and he saw the trio stop by their compartment.

"Oh, hello Professor Edward, Alphonse," Hermione greeted.

"You guys need a place to sit?" Ed asked.

Ron nodded eagerly and Hermione looked over at Edward and asked "If it's alright with you both?"

Ed and Al both nodded and the trio came inside. Hermione sat next to Alphonse and Harry and Ron sat next to Edward.

"Thank you Professor, and Alphonse," Harry said.

"So where are you guys going home?" Ron asked. "Thought you'd both be back at the castle."

"We were going to, but then Headmaster Dumbledore offered us a place to stay during the holiday," Alphonse stated.

"Where?" Hermione asked, intrigued.
Ed pondered telling them about the Order of the Phoenix and decided to go with it. "With some order of his...I don't know where though."

All three eyes go a bit wide.

"A-an order?" Hermione asked, a look of utter shock on her face.

"Yeah...do you three know about it?" Ed asked, noting their expressions.

"What did Professor Dumbledore tell you?" Ron asked.

"Just that this order works to fight that Voldy-guy."

"Dumbledore asked you to join the order!?" Harry exclaimed and Hermione shushed him quickly.

"He made an offer, and I take it you three know about it."

"Why would he ask you!?" Harry exclaimed and Ed frowned a bit.

"Why? Cause I'm in the military and Al and I are both very good alchemists and fighters. And besides, we don't even know if we're gonna join the damn thing. So why are you getting all worked up about it?"

Hermione gave him an apologetic look. "The Order hasn't been very upfront with us and keeping us informed of what's going on. Harry wanted to join, but wasn't allowed."

A look of realization crossed Ed's face. "And since I'm about the same age as him, he's pissed... got it."

"I'm not-" Harry started to protest but Ed raised his hand.

"Look, I don't know much about the situation here. But I'd like to know more. The Order is the best way of getting that information. Al and I discussed it and we're only meeting with them. We are going to wait and see if we want to even join. But they are right to keep you kids out of it. Even though you three are the most experienced probably out of our little DA group, you still aren't ready to get out there and fight."

"But Professor!"

"Harry," Ed said in a very serious tone. "I know you've had to fight this guy before, but you can't go out there unprepared. Use this time to prepare. Get better. Learn how to fight and protect yourself and those you care about so when the time comes and you can join, you'll be more than ready."

Harry seemed to digest this and nodded. "Okay..you're right."

Ed smiled a bit and leaned back in his seat. "I usually am."

Al groaned a bit and pulled out one of Flamel's journals and began to read through it. The train soon pulled out of the station and they were on their way.

Ed smiled a bit and pulled out his travel log and wrote a few notes down and soon saw they were coming up on the station.

"We're almost there," Hermione stated and soon the train was coming to a stop in a crowded station.

Edward pulled his suitcase down from the top shelf and saw that the trio was gathering their things as
well and getting ready to leave. The trio had told the brothers that they were staying with the Order, which was a little shocking but Ed accepted it none the less. It definitely helped clarify some things with the trio and made some sense when he thought about it.

They all disembarked from the train and made their way through the crowd. Ginny, Fred, and George found them as well and followed them through the crowded platform.

Ed saw that a red haired woman who looked a little like Ginny was standing on the platform waving at them. Next to her was a woman with dark, twinkling eyes, a pale, heart-shaped face and short spiky hair which was a bright shade of pink.

The red haired woman and the pink haired one came towards them and the red haired one started hugging all the Weasley children and Harry and Hermione.

"Professor Edward, this is my mum. Mum, this is our Alchemy Professor and his brother."

"Pleasure to meet you, Professor. I'm Molly Weasley."

Ed put up his hand. "Edward is fine. And this is my younger brother Alphonse."

"Hello," Al waved.

Molly turned to the woman beside her and said, "This is Nymphadora Tonks."

"Nice to meet you."

The woman's hair then changed colors from bright pink to a flaming red as the woman glared at Molly and Ed's eyes went wide. Tonks then turned her attention back to Ed and Al "It's just Tonks"

"How did you do that?!" he and Al exclaimed.

She looked a little confused at this but quickly stated "I'm a Metamorphmagus. I can change parts of my appearance."

"But how?!" Ed pressed.

"Magic," she replied.

Ed groaned and rubbed his temple with his free hand. "But- you know what...I'm done."

Al sighed and put his hand on Ed's shoulder. "It's alright Brother."

Ed groaned and looked to a confused Molly and Tonks. "Let's just get going."

Fred and George laughed a bit and smiled at Ed's reaction to magic.

Mrs. Weasley nodded and quickly led them out of the train station, through a freaking brick wall, which caused Ed to curse very loudly. That made Tonks smirk a bit and Molly mortified.

The two women led the group to a secluded alley where Tonks stated that it was a portkey. Ed groaned a bit cause he knew the sensation was not the most pleasant one but they all grabbed on and next thing they knew, they were in front a row of homes.

"Here we are," Tonks announced and handed Ed and Al a small slip of paper as Mrs. Weasley helped Ron, Hermione, and Harry grab their things and lead them towards the houses.
Ed looked at the slip of paper handed to him and Alphonse looked over his shoulder.

*The Order of the Phoenix can be found at #12 Grimmauld Place*

"What the hell is this supposed-"

Ed was cut off from his little rant when a new building slid into place, between the other two.

"To...be..."

Tonks smirked at Ed's shocked expression and walked up to the door, along with Mrs. Weasley, Harry, Hermione, and Ron.

"How do you think they did that Brother?"

Ed sighed and said "Probably some crazy ass spell that if I look into won't make any scientific sense."

"Probably."

Ed sighed and he and Al walked up to the building where Tonks held the door open for them.

Inside, Ed noticed the state of the house was drab and gloomy. It looked like it hadn't been well taken of in years.

"Come on in," Mrs. Weasley said, ushering them in. "I made you all supper. So sit down and Tonks will take your things to your rooms."

"We got ours Mum." The twins said together. "Yeah, we have some work to do as well, right George?"

"Right Fred." he nodded.

Fred and George then apparated to their rooms and Mrs. Weasley jumped a bit. "You don't have to use magic for everything you know!" she then sighed and looked back at the Elric brothers. "Sorry about them. They're so eager to use magic for everything."

Ed heard his stomach growl but he looked at Al he said. "Oh well.. It's fine Mrs. Weasley. And I can take our things to our room."

"Are you sure dear?"

Al nodded, "I had a big breakfast and the portkey made me a bit nauseous."

"Oh, well then if you get your appetite back then let me know and I'll fix you something."

Al nodded and Tonks lead him up the stairs while levitating Harry, Ron, and Hermione's things. Harry was looking around and was beaming when a tall dark haired man approached and hugged him.

"Harry! It's so good to see you!" he said.

"Sirius!" Harry exclaimed and hugged the man. Ed could easily tell that Harry and him were close, and wondered how they were related or knew each other.

Sirius then looked over at Ed and he looked apprehensive. "You're Edward Elric I presume?"
Ed nodded and extended his right hand. "My younger brother Alphonse is putting out things away and turning in for the night."

Sirius nodded and shook Ed's hand. "Well I'm happy you both are staying with us."

Ed still wondered what relation he had with Harry but decided to ask that later.

Mrs. Weasley ushered them all to the dining table and placed a lot of food in front of them. All of it smelled and looked delicious and Ed quickly dug in, not really have eaten all day.

"This is really delicious, Mrs. Weasley." Ed said after clearing his second helping of Shepherd's pie.

"Why thank you dear. You must have been awfully hungry though."

Ed nodded. "Yeah, I usually am."

Mrs. Weasley smiled and both she and Sirius started talking to Harry, Ron, Ginny, and Hermione about different things at school.

"So...Professor, since you're staying with us during the holiday..."Ron started and Ed put up his hand. "Just call me Ed or Edward, Ron. We aren't in school and it feels weird here."

Ron nodded and continued. "So Edward...since you're staying here, I wanted to ask why you or your brother didn't go home."

Ed shrugged. "Dumbledore gave us the offer to stay here and if I went home I'd have to go on missions again."

"But wouldn't you be able to take a break?" Harry asked. Tonks came back down and sat beside Molly.

"No breaks in the military, Harry. Gotta keep moving."

"So it's true...you are in the military," Tonk said and Sirius nodded. "For how long?"

Ed nodded. "Have been for three years."

"How'd you do it? Dumbledore said it was cause you're an alchemist."

Ed smirked. "That's right. I'm a State Alchemist with the Amestrian military. They didn't have an age rule for the test so I was able to get in."

"And your brother didn't join?" she asked.

Ed shook his head. Alphonse was more than capable of joining, but the physical beforehand had prevented that. "No..he's a great alchemist but we decided he shouldn't join."

Mrs. Weasley nodded. "Why did you?"

Ed looked down and sighed. "There was something I had to do."

Mrs. Weasley gave him a sympathetic smile and Hermione quickly changed the subject to some exams they had to take that year.

Edward continued to eat and Mrs. Weasley asked him "Do you like being a professor Edward?"
Ed shrugged a bit "It wasn't as bad as I thought it'd be, to be honest."

"He's a good teacher though," Hermione beamed and Ed chuckled a bit. "Flattery won't raise your grades Hermione."

Hermione blushed a bit and exclaimed "I wasn't trying to Edward!"

Ed laughed a bit and waved his hand. "Just joking Hermione."

She rolled her eyes and they all finished eating.

"Would you like some dessert Edward? I made some chocolate cake."

Ed nodded "Sure. No milk though."

Mrs. Weasley looked a little confused but nodded and served them all a slice, but gave everyone else a glass of milk as well.

"I'm just so happy you're all home for the holidays," she said.

Ed finished his dessert and nodded, his mind wandering to Resembool. He and Al always liked the winter solstice festival when they were kids. There were fireworks and treats, and bonfires. It was usually a pretty fun time. But they hadn't really celebrated over the past few years. But they would sometimes take part in the festivities in whichever part of the country they were in.

"I was told you don't celebrate Christmas, Edward."

Ed snapped out of his thoughts and nodded. "We have something similar in Amestris. It's the Winter Solstice festival. Lots of feasting and fireworks and bonfires."

Mrs. Weasley nodded. "Well I'm happy you're spending the holidays with us. You and your brother."

Ed smiled a bit and knew that he liked Mrs. Weasley. She was sweet and very caring.

But then, Ed heard a door slam and he jumped a bit, his hands moving to clap. A man with a crazy swirling eye and staff came into the dining room.

"Mad-Eye!" Mrs. Weasley exclaimed. "I didn't know you were coming a day early."

"Dumbledore told me there were two others joining us so I came by," he said, the other eye focusing on Edward as he glared at the young alchemist.

Ed returned the strange man's glare.

"Oh, well Mad-Eye, this is Edward Elric. He's the alchemy professor at Hogwarts and will be staying here over the holiday."

He made a sort of grunt and Ed smirked a bit. "It's Major Edward Elric of the Amestris military. Otherwise known as the Fullmetal Alchemist."

Molly's eyes go a tiny bit wide as Ed listed all of his titles, as did Tonks and Sirius's.

"Fullmetal? Is that because of your metal limbs?"

Ed scowls and clenches his fists. "How the hell do you know about them old man?"
Mad-Eye smirks "Wouldn't you like to know?"

Ed growls and grinds his teeth "Well Dumbledore probably told you since he already knows about my automail."

"Automail?" Mrs. Weasley questioned.

Ed looked at her and said "I thought Dumbledore would have told you, but..."

He removed his right glove and showed off the shiny metal. "It's a armored prosthetic for my arm and leg."

"And why would you need them?" Mad-Eye questioned.

"I lost my limbs in an accident. What about you?" he challenges, seeing the missing eye and leg. "Care to share your story?"

Mad-Eye glared at him and Ed smirked a bit as he put his glove back on.

"Mad-Eye. Edward and his brother Alphonse are here as guests of Dumbledore. Remember that."

"Where is your brother anyway?" Mad-Eye asked.

"He's up in our room. Was tired from the train ride today and decided to turn in early." Ed replied smoothly.

Mad-Eye grumbled a bit and replied. "Very convenient."

"I'd say it isn't since you seem so suspicious of us," he countered as he crossed his arms. "But I'm pretty tired as well so if you're done with your interrogation I'll be going to bed."

"I'll show you to your room," said, smiling at Ed and then shooting Mad-Eye a look.

Ed followed her up the stairs and to his room. Mrs. Weasley wished him and Al goodnight before Ed walked over to one of the two beds in the room and sat down.

"How was dinner, Brother?"

"Good. Mrs. Weasley is a good cook."

"Maybe when we come back after I get my body back she can make some stuff for me."

Ed nodded "Yeah, sure."

He pulled off his red coat, boots, pants, and black jacket. He then laid down and put his hands behind his head. "So...what do you think of this place so far Al?"

"It seems nice. I like Mrs. Weasley."

Ed nodded. "There was a guy from the Order that stopped by. I don't like him."

Al sighed and looked at his older brother. "Brother, you can't just hate people who comment on your height."

"It wasn't that!" Ed exclaimed and glared at Al. "But he gave me this look...he doesn't trust us."

"And that's a bad thing? He just met you."
"No...I just got a feeling. Be careful around him Al. He's got this weird eye and I got the feeling he could see my automail despite it being covered."

Al nodded and said "Okay. I'll be careful."

Ed sighed and pulled the blankets over him. "Night Al."

"Goodnight Brother."

Ed then closed his eyes and let himself fall asleep.
Edward

Ed smiled at his younger brother as they ran around their house. It was a beautiful day in Resembool the sun was shining down brightly on the two Elric brothers.

"I'll get you!" Ed yelled as he chased him. Alphonse laughed as he ran to avoid his older brother. Ed laughed as well and smiled as he chased Alphonse. But soon, the picture perfect day turned dark. The sky was now red and Alphonse looked at Edward scared. "Brother? What's going on?"

Ed looked around and soon he was kneeling on the floor of their basement, his and Alphonse's hands were on the array. The large eye opened up and the black tendrils were grabbing Alphonse.

"No! Al! Stop!" Ed cried out and reached out his hand to try and save his brother.

"Brother! Help!" Al cried out as he was broken down.

Ed screamed and fought to grab his brother's hand but soon he was gone, and so was his leg. Ed screamed and cried as he looked at the monster they had created. "No! This wasn't supposed to happen!"

He patched up his leg as best he could with Alphonse's shirt and dragged himself over to the armor. "Give him back! He's my little brother! He's all I have left!" he screamed, tears streaming down his face as he drew the blood seal. "Take my arm! Take my leg! Take my heart! Take anything! Just give him back!"

He clapped his hands together and at that moment was shaken awake. He bolted upright and was breathing heavy as he gripped his chest.

"Brother! Are you alright?" Alphonse asked, concerned.

Ed looked around to see nearly everyone in his room or standing in the doorway.

"You were yelling in your sleep dear," Mrs. Weasley said. "Was it a nightmare? We couldn't understand what you were saying."

Ed looked confused but then realized he must have switched back to Amestrian in his sleep. "Oh...yeah...and um I was speaking Amestrian I guess."

Alphonse nodded and said. "I tried to shake you awake but you wouldn't wake."

Ed avoided his brother's gaze, Al knew very well what his dream had been about and felt a tiny bit of relief that no one else understood him.

Ed's breathing and heart rate had finally calmed down and he looked at the concerned witches and wizards. Except Moody had a suspicious look in his eyes and Ed glared at him before turning his attention to Mrs. Weasley.

"I'm fine. It was just a nightmare."

Mrs. Weasley still looked concerned and Al said "He's fine Mrs. Weasley, really."

Mrs. Weasley nodded and sighed a bit. "Well if you need anything Edward, please let me know."
She looked to all the people in the doorway and shooed them out and back top bed. Mad-Eye was staring at Ed and Al with a scowl on his face before shuffling away.

Ed groaned and fell back against the bed and put his arm across his face.

"You dreamt about it again..." Al stated.

Ed nodded, not replying.

Al sighed and sat by his brother's bed. "I'm sorry...I thought because you haven't had a nightmare for a while maybe..."

Ed shook his head. "They'll go away when you're back to normal Al. I promise." He didn't know if this was true of not, but he hoped it was.

Al nodded and Ed rolled over to look at him. "It's fine Al...I'll be okay. Don't worry about me."

"If I don't worry about you, who will?" Al asked, a little playfully. Ed chuckled and lightly bumped the top of his head. "Okay."

Al chuckled a bit and said. "Are you going to try and go back to sleep?"

Ed sighed and laid back down on the bed. "Yeah...I'll try." He then closed his eyes and felt himself fall back asleep.

**Harry**

"What do you think Professor Ed was screaming about?" Harry asked Ron as they sat on their beds.

"I don't know...it didn't look good though." Ron said. "I mean, he looked absolutely horrified."

Harry nodded. "I wish we knew what he was saying, I've never seen him act like that."

"Except when that monster of a boggart appeared." Ron commented.

"You think the two are connected?"

Ron's eyes went wide at Harry's words. "Bloody hell, I bet they are. I mean, it wasn't even my boggart and that thing gave me nightmares!"

Harry nodded. "He never told us exactly what it was...did he?"

"He said it was a mistake or something like that," Ron scratched his chin. "Looked like a bloody corpse though."

"You don't think we should ask him about it...do you?"

Ron pondered this for a moment. "I don't know, he definitely has a temper. And you saw the looks he was giving Mad-Eye! Mad-Eye of all people! He's got the toughest glares I've ever seen."

Harry laid down on his bed. "I don't know...let's talk it over with Hermione tomorrow. But...if it's something that gives him that bad of nightmares maybe we shouldn't press it."

Ron sighed and nodded as well. "But you have to admit it's pretty suspicious. It feels like he's hiding a lot from us."
"Yeah, it does. But...I still trust him you know?"

Ron nodded in agreement. "Yeah, I mean after all the stuff he's done for the DA. He could have turned us into Umbridge at any time, but didn't."

"Yeah, he and Alphonse seem like good people. So maybe we should drop it?"

Ron chuckled a bit. "Never thought we'd do that."

Harry laughed a bit "Yeah...but I guess let's see what Hermione thinks before doing anything."

Ron nodded and laid back down and both went to sleep.

Everyone woke up the next morning and Hermione went to Harry and Ron's room and the three talked.

"So...should we approach Edward about last night?" Harry asked.

Ron nodded and Hermione agreed. "But we should be careful about it. I don't think we should push it too much, but we should ask him about it."


Both nodded in agreement and the trio headed downstairs for breakfast. Harry saw that Remus had arrived last night and hugged him. Edward and Alphonse came down a bit later. Ed wasn't wearing his red coat anymore, but his black outfit and gloves were still on.

---

Edward

Ed saw a man with a scar on his face next to Harry and wondered who he was as well.

"Reamus, this is Edward Elric. He's the professor Dumbledore talked about." Molly said.

Reamus nodded and said, "Reamus Lupin," and extended his hand.

Ed shook it and said. "Edward Elric, and my younger brother Alphonse."

"Nice to meet you," Al added.

Reamus looked a little shocked at Al being the younger brother and Ed sighed as he went to sit down and eat.

"Mrs. Weasley? Is there anywhere I can go to read and work quietly?" Al asked.

Mrs. Weasley nodded and said, "There's a drawing room down the hall you can use. But do you not want any breakfast?"

"I'm fine Mrs. Weasley, thank you." Al said and walked to the drawing room.

Mrs. Weasley looked concerned as she glanced at Edward. "Is he alright? He hasn't eaten a thing since he's been here."

Ed waved her off. "Al doesn't eat a lot, he's going through some alchemy training right now. But don't worry about it. He's fine."

Mrs. Weasley didn't look convinced but nodded and everyone sat down to eat breakfast. Mad-Eye
was still glaring at Ed who was only happy to return the favor. After breakfast, the trio went off to talk while Ed ventured to go join his brother.

Ed saw Al sitting in the room, reading one of the Flamel journals. "I don't think we're ever gonna break it...maybe they are just journals."

Al shook his head. "I think we're close Brother. I can feel it."

Ed chuckled a bit and asked "How many times have we said that so far?"

"I don't know...seems like a lot." Al shrugged.

Ed smiled and said. "Well we can't give up now. Who knows, maybe we are close to the answer."

Al nodded and continued to read. After a while though, there was a small knock on the door. Both brothers looked up at the door and Ed stood up. He walked over to the door and opened it. Seeing Harry, Ron and Hermione, he opened the door more and said "Hey, you guys need anything?"

"We just came to check on you two...and talk to you," Hermione answered.

Edward nodded and stepped aside, letting the trio inside.

"So...what's up?" He asked.

"Oh, we thought we'd see what you're doing..."Harry said, scratching the back of his neck.

"Oh, just working on these journals," Ed replied, holding one up.

"Journals? Whose are they?" Hermione asked, stepping forward.

"Nicholas Flamel."

The trio's eyes went wide and Harry was the first to speak. "N-Nicholas Flamel?"

Ed nodded. "He was a famous alchemist, Dumbledore gave us his journals to see if we could make anything of them."

The three of them exchanged a glance and Ed's eyes narrowed. "Why do I feel that you're hiding something?"

"It's just...we know the name because of our first year at Hogwarts. There was an incident with Voldemort and the Philosopher's Stone," Hermione replied.

Ed's eyes went wide and he and Alphonse both stiffened. "What?" he asked in a cold voice.

"The Philosopher's Stone. It can grant eternal life or gold," Hermione said, a little confused by the brothers' reactions.

"I know what it is...and it's pure evil," he hissed.

"Evil? Well I suppose if You-Know-Who got his hands on it yes, but..." Ron said.

"It's evil! Where is it? What happened?"

"It was destroyed, at the end of the year. Dumbledore destroyed it," Harry said quickly and both Elric brothers relaxed.
"Good...that's...good.." Ed sighed with relief and turned to his three students.

"Why did you react that way sir?" Hermione asked, concern in her eyes.

Ed ran his hand through his hair. "It's a thing of evil Hermione...you would react the same way if you knew..."

"Knew what?"

Ed shook his head. "It's nothing. It's destroyed and you three don't need to worry about it."

"But..." Hermione started to protest and sighed. "Why is it evil?"

Edward looked at the trio, sure they have all been through things, Harry most of all...but they didn't need to know the horrible truth.

"Eternal Life? That's something no one should have. And the things people will do for it? Even more evil than the stone itself."

Hermione nodded and said. "Oh..I suppose you're right."

Ed smiled reassuringly at them and said. "But it's alright. The stone is gone so we have nothing to worry about."

Hermione smiled back and nodded.

"So..why are you working on the journals in the first place?" Ron asked.

"We're trying to decode them," Alphonse answered.

"Decode?" Harry asked.

"Alchemists hide their research in plain sight. Through a code, only they know. So it would appear to anyone else as a cookbook or maybe a novel."

"Why would they do that?" Ron asked.

"Alchemy is dangerous. If certain information falls into the wrong hands..." Alphonse said and the trio immediately understood.

"So we're trying to decode it to see if there is any useful stuff in these 'journals'," Ed added.

"But what if it's dangerous stuff? Or really powerful?" Ron asked.

Ed and Al shared a look. They hadn't exactly thought of what would happen if they decoded the journals and found it couldn't help them. Well at least not with the possibility the contents could be dangerous.

"I don't know...maybe destroy them...I guess it depends," Ed replied.

Ron nodded and looked over Ed's shoulder at the journal. "So you can really find alchemy research in these things?"

"It's all coded to look normal. So we have to try and find something that might link it to alchemy," Al said.
"And it's taken us months..." Ed groaned a little. "Even with all our knowledge."

"It's that difficult to crack?" Hermione asked and both brothers nodded.

Ron let out a whistle. "Man...I dunno if I could try and solve that for months...I'd go mad."

"Well it hasn't helped having your brothers in my class either," Ed grumbled under his breath.

"Is there anything we can do to help?" Harry asked and Ed shook his head. "No..you three are all beginners at alchemy. We can handle this."

"But thanks for offering," Al added.

"Well...we just wanted to check in.. see how you were doing..." Harry said.

The pieces soon clicked together and Ed shut the book. "And see if I was okay after my little nightmare last night?"

The three sheepishly looked away and Ed sighed. "I'm fine you three. It was just a nightmare."

"But...you looked terrified and weren't speaking english..." Hermione said, twisting her pinky a little.

"I can speak Amestrian whenever I want. It's not exactly strange for me," Ed said in Amestrian and the trio looked at him in shock.

"It was probably because I was sleeping you all hear it. It is my native language after all..."

"Oh..well you seemed awfully shaken up..." Hermione added.

"It was a bad nightmare. I'm sure everyone gets one now and again. I'm fine...really..."

Hermione sighed and nodded. Harry and Ron soon copied her.

"Good. Now if you three need anything else...?"

"No.. we're fine," Harry answered.

"Good," Ed smiled a tad and so did the trio before saying goodbye and leaving the two brothers alone again.

"It's nice that they were worried about you..." Al mused.

Ed rolled his eyes a little at his younger brother. "They're kids."

"You're the same age as them."

"Physically!"

"And younger in maturity it would seem too..."

"TAKE THAT BACK!"

At dinner that evening, Ed was gladly eating Molly Weasely's cooking. "Man this is really good," he told her.

"Thank you Edward," She replied smiling.
He looked at the glass of milk in front of him and grimaced a bit. He simply forgoes the drink and continues to eat his dinner.

Ed then turned to Lupin who had just asked. "So...Edward, how are you liking England?"

Ed shrugged. "It's nice. Way to cold and rainy."

He chuckled at that and nodded. "Yes it would seem so. What is Amestris like?"

"Depends on which part of the country really. The north is all snow and mountain ranges. The East is mostly farms and even desert."

"Very diverse country then."

Ed nodded. "I've traveled mostly in the south, east and some of the west. Don't really go up north though."

"Because you hate the cold?" Remus asked and Ed nodded. "And my work hasn't taken me there either."

"In the military?"

"Yes. I am sometimes assigned to a certain mission but other times I'm able to go around and find research to further my alchemy."

"Very interesting...so you never stay in one place long?"

"Me and Al haven't stayed this long in one place since before I became a State Alchemist."

Remus nodded and smiled a little at Ed. "Well I know that Dumbledore is happy you're here. As are all your students."

Ed looked over at the trio, who smiled at him. "Yeah...you should have seen the way he told off Umbridge that one day!" Ron said and started going into the story of how Ed defended Trelawney from Umbridge.

"That was very selfless of you," Mrs. Weasley said.

Ed shrugged. "She may be a little crazy but she's still a human being and deserved some respect."

Remus nodded and seemed to be contemplating something that Ed couldn't put a finger on. Afterwards, he thanked Mrs. Weasley before heading up to his room.

Mad-Eye watched him and cursed a tiny bit under his breath. *How on earth did he know the vertaserum was in the milk?*
Cobalt

Edward

Mrs. Weasley was cleaning the house up a bit the next day, and Ed and Al were happy to help. "How can there be this much dust?" Ed said coughing a bit.

"People haven't lived here in years," Ron answered.

Ed clapped his hands together and touched the dusty desk, making the dust form into a large pile before brushing it off into a bin.

"Don't you people have a spell that you can use and do all of this for us?"

"We can't use magic outside of school," Hermione replied.

Ed scoffed a bit and said. "Why should that stupid rule stop you? This place is filthy!"

Hermione laughed a little and said. "I don't know if there isn't a spell to begin with."

"What? You people can levitate objects, create light, and stun people but you can't clean a room!?"

"Well I'm sure there's a spell but I don't know it."

"Then look it up! My lungs are killing me here." He said, creating another dust pile from the bookcase.

She laughed again and Ron, Harry, and Alphonse came back into the room. They were cleaning out anything broken, old, or dangerous.

Edward heard a scream and ran to the room. Once inside he saw Mrs. Weasley standing petrified, tears running down her face. Ron was on the floor, absolutely covered in blood. Ed's eyes went wide, but he had just seen Ron...how could he be here and dead? Soon everything pieced itself together and Ed knew what was going on. It wasn't Ron, it was a boggart. The thing that showed your worst fear.

Ed knew what it would turn into and took a deep breath before pulling Mrs. Weasley away and standing in front of her. He was ready to see the thing he and his brother created.

It wasn't their mother. It wasn't their mom. He kept telling himself as the creature shifted into another form. But instead of seeing a broken bloody body or a transmutation circle, something else appeared. A mirror.

Ed frowned and studied the mirror. It didn't look different, and it showed his reflection like any other mirror. At that moment the other's rushed in and looked confused by the scene as well. Mrs. Weasley was pulled away by Remus and left only Ed standing in front of the mirror.

He continued to look into the mirror before his reflection started to shift and changed. He stiffened and froze as someone else took his reflection's place.

Shou Tucker

"You're just like me Edward? Can't you see? We're the same!" the reflection shouted at him.
Ed's body started to shake and his hands curled into fists. "We're not the same... we're not... you're a monster..."

"Oh but we're not monsters Edward! We're scientists! Alchemists!"

Ed scowled and lifted his hands up to clap them together. "You're nothing but a no good bastard."

Tucker smirked before the mirror transformed once again and Ed froze once more. Utter and complete horror on his face.

"Big... brother Ed?" a small voice said.

"No..." Ed said quietly. "Not that..."

The Nina chimera slowly walked to Ed and he was visibly shaking. "Play? Big brother Ed?"

Ed started to back away until his back hit the wall. "I'm sorry... I'm so sorry..."

Alphonse was frozen as well, and couldn't even move. Remus quickly pulled out his wand and stood in front of Edward and the creature started to shift into a moon before Remus shouted. "Riddikulus!"

It soon turned into a balloon and flew back into the drawer of a desk, before slamming shut.

Ed sunk down to the ground and put his head in his hands. Remus turned around and knelt down.

"It's okay... that thing was called-"

"A boggart." Ed replied. "I know... I've seen one before but... it wasn't the same as last time..."

Alphonse soon moved and went to his brother. "Brother! Are you alright?"

Ed took deep breaths and nodded slowly. "I... I think so..."

Remus looked between the two Elric brothers and said. "You encountered a boggart before? And the thing it shifted into was different this time?"

Ed nodded. "Yeah... it caught me off guard."

Remus nodded and said. "Or fears can change all the time. As a child one might fear the dark, but they grow out of it. I'm sorry you had to face yours."

Ed sighed and took another deep breath before standing up. Everyone was looking at him and he just walked out of the room. But Mad-Eye put his hand on Ed's shoulder. "Now wait a second. We need to talk."

Ed scowled and said. "Sorry, but no. I don't feel like talking to you."

Mad-Eye glared at Ed and he shrugged his hand off his shoulder. "You'll be talking even if you don't want to." Mad-Eye said.

Ed's scowl deepened and he ground his teeth together. "No."

"Allister!" Remus said. "I think he should at least be given some time before you try to interrogate him."

Mad-Eye looked at Edward and said, "We will be having a talk." Before walking off.
Ed didn't say another word before going upstairs to his room, Al right behind him and slamming the door behind him.

Harry

Everyone was a little in shock over what had just happened. While Mad-Eye was arguing a bit with Sirius, Remus, and Molly, Harry, Ron, and Hermione split off and stood near the stairs.

"What was that?" Ron asked. Fred and George came down and said. "We just heard, something happened with Professor Ed?"

"There was a boggart," Harry answered.

"Oh...did that monster thing show up again?" George asked. Hermione shook her head. "No it was something different."

"What was it?" Fred asked.

"It looked like a dog...with long hair," Harry said.

"And before that there was a this mirror but it wasn't Edward, it was another man," Hermione added.

"His reaction to them man in the mirror was intense..."Hermione said. "He looked ready to kill him."

"And then when he saw the dog?" George asked.

Hermione shook her head. "He looked horrified and a little scared..."

"I was expecting that...thing...like last time, why did it change?" Ron asked.

"People's fears change...maybe he conquered it. Maybe seeing it, helped?" Hermione sounded more unsure as she went on.

"Still...the first one was definitely scarier," Ron said, shrugging a bit.

Hermione nudged his shoulder. "Ronald! He's had to face two of his worst fears! What if it had been you!?"

Ron rubbed his shoulder a bit and said. "Alright, alright...I get it..."

"Should we check on him?" Harry asked.

"Maybe?" Hermione thought for a bit and said. "Yes...we should."

Harry nodded and said. "Okay, let's go."

The three went up and Harry knocked on the door. "Edward? Are you alright?"

There was only silence before Al said. "I'm sorry...we need some space right now, but thank you for checking in on us."

Hermione sighed and said. "Edward? Whoever that man was...I can tell you that you aren't a monster. And I'm sorry you had to face another fear."

Another moment of silence before Al replied. "Thank you...but he'll be fine soon..."
She sighed more and Ron squeezed her shoulder a bit. "It's okay...he'll be fine. Al doesn't lie to us."

She nodded and they went back down the stairs. Harry looked back at the door a bit and wondered what had happened, and what was that thing.

---

**Edward**

After a while, after much prompting from Alphonse, Edward left the room and went downstairs. Ed sat down at the table and started to eat.

Everyone looked over at him and Mrs. Weasley was the first to speak.

"Edward dear...are you alright?"

He sighed and set his fork down. "I'm fine...It wasn't real and I know that. I don't need to be treated like I'm made of glass." Looking out his gaze seemed to dare anyone to do so.

Everyone was silent and he nodded. "Good. Glad we cleared that up."

He continued to eat and small talk resumed around the table. He didn't know if they were doing it out of respect for him, or in just because they didn't want to push him too much. Either way, he was glad he wasn't hearing that damn concerned tone he hated so much. After dinner, a few of the others left before Mad-Eye turned to him.

Raising an eyebrow he took a sip of his water and said. "What?"

"Now, who are you?" Mad-Eye asked.

"Edward Elric," He answered automatically, as if something compelled him to do so.

"Where are you from?" he asked.

"I was born in Resembool, Amestris."

"What do you do?"

"I'm a State Alchemist. I travel around the country, following leads and sometimes am sent on missions by my superior officer Colonel Roy Mustang."

Ed's brows furrowed a bit as he tried to think about why he felt the need to answer these questions so truthfully, usually he added something about Mustang being lazy or called him a bastard.

"Who's in the suit?" Moody asked.

"My brother, Alphonse Elric."

"Allister! What are you doing?" Remus demanded.

"Getting answers, now be quiet." Mad-Eye said before turning his attention back to the eldest Elric.

"What are you doing here?"

"Dumbledore asked me to come and me and Al agreed to." The words seemed to slip out of his mouth of their own accord and Ed soon realized that something was definitely wrong and he needed to get out of there fast.
"What did you do to me?" Ed hissed.

"Veritaserum boy. Now answer this, how did you lose your limbs?"

Ed's eyes went wide and he clamped his hands over his mouth before he could speak.

"Allister! Stop this right now!" Molly exclaimed. "You have no right to be doing this."

Ed clenched his eyes shut and tried to keep himself from talking, grinding his teeth so hard they hurt. He couldn't let them know the truth...no one could know. But the words were caught in his throat and he didn't know how much longer he could hold them back.

"I have every right!"

"He's just a boy!"

"A boy in the military!"

"Stop this Mad-Eye!"

Ed took a deep breath through his nose and bolted for the stairs, sprinting as fast as he could. Moody drew his wand to stop him but Remus, Sirius, and Molly all stopped him. Ed didn't stop till he was in their room and slammed the door. He leaned his head against the door and slid down.

"Because I committed the taboo...human transmutation..." he said softly and it felt like a weight had been lifted off his chest. He crossed his arms and laid his head on top of his knees, taking deep breaths.

Alphonse rushed over to him. "Brother! What's wrong?"

Ed shook his head. "Al...someone gave me a truth potion and now I can only tell the truth..." He hadn't wanted to say that, but he was forced to.

"Brother...are you alright?"

"I can only speak the truth! I am not alright. I am currently panicking that I'll give something away and everyone will know all of our secrets," he blurted out.

"Okay...I won't ask you anymore questions..."

"I almost told them about human transmutation...I was ready to blurt it out so quickly..."

"It's okay...it'll be okay."

Hermione

Mrs. Weasley continued to lecture Mad-Eye about the veritaserum. "How dare you! Dumbledore trusts him, are you saying we can't trust him Allister!?"

"Of course not! But that boy is hiding something!"

"What is he hiding?!"

Mad-Eye opened his mouth but closed it, glaring at Molly.

"You will not harass him anymore Allister! I won't have it."
He grumbled a bit and said. "You'll all see..."

Molly glared at him and went off once again. Harry turned to Ron and Hermione and said. "We should go check on him."

Hermione shook her head. "No, the serum will last for a bit longer...he wouldn't want to see anyone until then."

"You should tell him that though," Harry stated and Hermione nodded. "Okay...I'll go and tell him..."

She went up the stairs and knocked on the door. "Edward? You don't have to speak to me...but know the potion he gave you will wear off in a bit...and it compels you to say the absolute truth. The fact you were able to resist it even a bit is amazing. I'm sorry he did that...Mrs. Weasley will make sure no one bothers you until the effects wear off."

There was only silence.

She sighed and said. "I'm sorry...Mad-Eye doesn't trust easily...if it makes you feel better, Mrs. Weasley is really laying it on him."

Ed then said to her, through the door. "Thank you Hermione."

Hermione smiled a little. "You're welcome..." She then turned and left, going back to Harry and Ron.
Nickel

Edward

Ed woke up in the middle of the night, his heart racing. He tried to shake the image of Nina out of his mind but nothing would work. After his breathing finally calmed down he noticed Al hadn't come to comfort him or anything. Looking around, he realized Alphonse wasn't in the room.

'He's probably downstairs' he thought to himself.

Running his hand through his hair he thought about everything. Ed had expected to see what they used to think was their mother, but Nina? He knew the whole ordeal bothered him. The boggart confirmed that much. But still.

Seeing her and Shou Tucker felt awful. He had to remind himself that he was not like Shou. What he and Al did, it was selfish but it was because they loved their mother. They only wanted to see her again. Shou wanted to advance his career. He didn't care about anyone, especially his own family.

Looking around he thought about where Al was and knew the events of today didn't sit well with him either. He probably didn't want to bother with it just yet. He got up and decided to go look for him. Alphonse was probably in the library or sitting room.

Edward went downstairs and heard. "Let me go! Stop it!"

He stiffened at the sound of Al's voice and quickly rushed to find him. Once he did, he saw Moody standing in front of Al. But Al wasn't standing. His arms, legs, and helmet were all detached and Moody was pointing his wand at him.

Ed quickly raised his hands and shouted "Mad-Eye! Get away from him!"

"Brother!"

Moody turned and saw Edward and pointed his wand at him. "Not so fast boy."

Ed glared at him and roared. "Get the hell away from my brother!"

His voice was so loud it started to wake the house. Molly was the first to come down and gasped when she saw the sight in front of her. Everyone else slowly trickled down while Edward and Mad-Eye had a sort of standoff.

"Lower your hands." Moody ordered.

Edward looked over at Alphonse and said. "Not a chance you bastard."

"Now!" Moody said and pointed his wand back at Alphonse.

He couldn't risk Al, so Edward slowly lowered his hands. "Let. Him. Go." his voice was dangerously low and his hands were tight fists.

"I told you all he was hiding something! Now, tell me why do you think this armor is your brother?"

"He is my brother! His name is Alphonse Elric, he's fourteen years old! He was born in Resembool Amestris, to Trisha Elric and Van Hohenheim!" He shouted.
"This is a suit of armor!"

"Brother!"

"Quiet you!" Mad-Eye shouted and moved his wand closer to the blood seal.

"No! No! Stop! Don't touch it!" Ed exclaimed, his eyes looked wild and desperate. Half of his mind was already working through what needed to be done to draw another seal and hopefully pull Al's soul back. He was ready to give up his other arm, his leg, whatever that bastard Truth wanted.

"Why?" Mad-Eye said, narrowing his eyes and moving his wand dangerously close.

"Don't! Don't...please I'll do anything," he said. "Please...I can't lose him...I don't know if I can pull him back a second time..."

"What are you talking about? I want answers!"

"I'll give them to you! Anything you want! Just don't break that seal!"

Mad-Eye nodded and put his wand away. "Deal."

Ed let out a sigh of relief and Alphonse said. "Um...can someone put me back together now?"

Edward nodded and rushed forward. Kneeling down he took Al's left arm and put it back in place, before doing the same with the right. Alphonse attached his left leg while Ed did the right. "Everything okay? Nothing missing?"

Al flexed his hands and legs a bit and said. "My helmet?"

Ed nodded and looked around before saying. "Where'd you put it?"

Mad-Eye looked a little shocked before Hermione went over to the table and handed it to Edward. "Thanks."

He handed the helmet to Alphonse who put it on. "Okay, I'm good."

Another sigh of relief rushed out of Ed before he stood up. Brushing himself off, he turned to Moody and said. "Let's get this over with."

Walking to the table Ed stopped and stood beside Moody. "I'll give you whatever answers you want. But if you ever threaten my brother again, I'll break that wand and both your arms."

"You threatening me boy?"

Ed glared at him and said. "It's a promise."

He then turned and sat down at the table, Al following him and doing the same. Everyone else then moved to sit down as well.

"I want answers...now."

"Yeah, I know," Ed snapped a bit. Sighing he ran a hand through his hair. "If I tell you this...you all have to swear not to tell anyone else...I mean it. I can't have anyone else back in my country knowing this."
Moody's eyes narrowed. "Why is that?"

"Just swear you won't. I'll tell you everything...but just swear you won't tell anyone else."

"Dumbledore deserves to know this as well."

Ed glared at him and said. "I'll tell him...but you won't."

Moody nodded and said. "Fine...then I swear." Everyone else did as well and Ed sighed. "Okay."

"Why is that suit empty?" Moody asked.

"Well...it's not completely empty...but to explain that I have to start at the beginning of all of this..." Ed took a deep breath and said. "Our bastard of a father left us when I was 5 and Al was 4..."

"What does that have to do with-" Edward cut him off. "If you want to know let me speak."

He glared at Edward and remained silent.

"So...it was just us and our mom...but...that summer...she got sick and died..."

A few gasped and Molly covered her mouth a bit.

"So we were alone...and...and all we wanted was our mom to come back and for her to smile again. So...we started studying alchemy and...when we were 10 and 9...our pride and arrogance lead us to..."

He clenched his fists a bit and said. "We only wanted her back...we thought because our cause was noble it was okay..."

"What did you do?"

"We committed the taboo...Human Transmutation."

All of the teen's eyes went wide. Edward had mentioned it at the beginning of the year but said it was off limits.

"What exactly is that?" Sirius asked.

"Hermione...what is the main principle of alchemy?" Edward asked.

She looked a little confused but answered. "Equivalent Exchange...In order to obtain or create something, something of equal value must be lost or destroyed."

Ed nodded. "Yes...so tell me this...what equals a human soul?"

Everyone's eyes went wide and it was dead silent.

"Human Transmutation is to try and transmute human bodies and souls, in essence, playing god."

"You...transmuted...people?" Remus looked horrified like everyone else.

"We...we were just trying to bring out mom back...but...it rebounded, and I lost my leg and Al...he lost his entire body."

"Because Brother was able to pull my soul back and bond it to this armor I have a chance...he saved my life."

"How?" Moody asked.
"I used my own blood to draw the seal on the back of the armor. That is the tether that binds Al's soul to it. Gave up my own arm to do it."

Everyone looked shocked and Edward sighed. "So we committed the taboo...all to see our mom smile again...we know what we did was wrong...and all I want now...is for Alphonse to get his body back...so I can make up for my mistake."

"Our mistake, brother."

Ed sighed and nodded, though not really agreeing with him.

"So...that thing we saw...your first boggart..." Harry said.

Ed nodded. "That was the product of our human transmutation."

They all gasped a bit and looked a little horrified.

"That...that was your mother?" Hermione asked, looking completely mortified.

"Wait...what are you all talking about?" Moody asked before Edward could answer.

Hermione looked at Edward who simply nodded.

"Back at Hogwarts...there was an incident with a boggart. It looked like..." her voice seemed to catch a bit and Edward stepped in. "The boggart looked like the product of our transmutation. Instead of it being our mom it was something else...disfigured and grotesque."

"And that was your mother?" Harry asked.

Ed shook his head. "No, it wasn't."

"What?" Hermione and the rest of them looked confused.

"It wasn't our mother...we thought it was for the longest time...but I dug up the body recently and discovered it wasn't. It was a male, who was too tall and had dark hair...nothing like our mom. So what we created wasn't her."

Everyone was speechless. After everything, they hadn't even brought back their mother.

"To tell you the truth...I was so relieved."

"Relieved?" Hermione said confused.

Edward nodded. "Yes...it meant that our mom didn't suffer. And it confirmed that no one can bring back the dead. It's impossible."

It was silent for a few moments before Remus asked. "Might I ask...what your second boggart was?"

Ed and Al stiffened a bit. His hands clenched and Moody raised his eyebrow. "Well?"

Taking a breath he said. "That...that was something else..."

"What was it? Who was the man?"


"What happened?" Molly asked gently.
"He...he was an alchemist...a state alchemist...to get his certification...he transmuted his wife into a chimera...then two years later...he did the same thing to his daughter...Nina...he combined her with their dog..." he said, his voice shaking at the end.

Everyone again looked completely and utterly shocked and revolted.

"His own daughter?" Molly said, covering her mouth a bit.

His hands were shaking and he nodded. "I could have saved her...but it was too late...it's irreversible..."

Al put his hand on Ed's shoulder and he calmed down a tiny bit. "And that's it...there's nothing else..."

"I-I don't know what to say..." Molly said. "You boys...I can't blame you for what you did."

Remus and Sirius nodded.

"How can you say that?!" Moody exclaimed.

Edward narrowed his eyes at Allister. "Listen to me...we know what we did was wrong. Humans aren't meant to play god like that...and nothing can bring back the dead. I know it's not an excuse and we should have known better, but we were kids. Kids who only wanted to see their mother again. We only wanted to see her smile...that's it..."

He sighed and looked down at his automail arm. "And I'll I'm trying to do is make up for it. That's why I joined the military. I only want Al to get his body back."

"And for brother to get his arm and leg back as well," Al added.

Ed nodded and clenched his fist a bit. "Yeah..."

He took a deep breath and said. "I'm not asking you to agree with me here...you asked for answers and I gave them to you."

Standing up he said. "If you need us we'll be in our room." Al nodded and stood up as well, and the brothers went up the stairs and to their room.

Harry

They were all sitting in Hermione and Ginny's room, talking.

"Can you believe all of that?" Ron asked. "I mean...wow."

"We suspected there was something but not that," Fred said. "That was..."

George nodded. "I mean, there was definitely something there. We all could tell. But I thought it was something else. Definitely not that depressing."

Hermione nodded but she remained silent as she thought about everything.

"He gave up his arm for his brother," Ginny said, still sounding like she was in shock.

"I see why they did it," Harry said softly and everyone turned to him. He sighed and added. "I mean...they just wanted to see their mom again. Can any of us blame them for that?"
Everyone shook their heads at that and Harry added. "They were kids. I might have tried to do it too."

Hermione's eyes went wide and she whispered. "The book..."

"What?" Everyone looked at her confused.

"The book!" she repeated, looking to Ron and Harry. "Remember how mad he got?"

They both looked at her confused before Harry realized what she was talking about. "Oh...the book he blew up at you about."

She nodded and covered her mouth a bit. "Oh god...that's why he freaked out...he thought I was trying to...to do that..."

"He knows you weren't Hermione," Ron said and she nodded. "Yes...but...that explains so much."

Harry nodded in agreement. "It does...though I can't say I'm happy about it."

"Well...I know that Ed wouldn't want us to treat him differently because of this. It's probably one of the reasons he tried to keep it a secret," Fred stated and George added. "That and to protect his brother. Can you imagine Umbridge finding out? She'd go mental...well more so than she is now"

"We'll be the only ones who know, outside the Order," Harry said. "And I don't think we should tell the DA about it. It's not our place and he doesn't want them to know."

Everyone nodded and Hermione looked at the door. "It couldn't have been easy for him to talk about...I wonder how he's doing."
Edward

He sighed as he sat down on his bed. "So...we told them the truth." Alphonse said and Ed simply nodded. "I don't think they would have figured it out. Alchemy isn't as present here like it is in Amestris." He knew that when an Alchemist saw Al's blood seal they were able to figure out what had happened pretty quickly.

"Me either, but I think it's okay that we told them."

"I don't know. I don't like that this many people know our secret."

"But they promised they wouldn't tell, do you not trust Harry, Hermione, and Ron at least?" Al countered and Edward sighed. "I trust them, I just-" He groaned and fell back fully onto the bed.

"I know brother, I know."

He sighed and turned his head to look at Alphonse. "Are you okay though? I was so scared he had damaged your seal."

"I'm fine brother, it's still me. If it was damaged well..." Ed shook his head, shuttering a bit at the thought. Even if it was the smallest chance he couldn't bring Al back he never wanted to have to take it. He would give up his remaining arm and leg, his heart, his everything for Alphonse.

"How did he even get you?" He asked, wanting to change the subject a little.

"I was downstairs getting a book from the library to read. He snuck up on me and levitated my body in the air. That's when he took off my arms and legs."

Ed's hands clenched and he scowled a bit. "He ever touches you again I'll take him down."

"I'll be fine brother, I think your threats made it clear."

Edward sighed and ran a hand over his face.

"Go to sleep brother, I'll be alright," Alphonse said softly.

Ed looked over to him and asked. "Are you sure?"

He nodded. "Get some sleep, you need it." Edward pulled the covers over him. "Goodnight Al."

"Good night Brother."

And with that, Edward closed his eyes and went to sleep. He woke up the next morning and went down to breakfast with Al.

Mrs. Weasley smiled a little at him and said. "Good morning dears. I made breakfast."

Ed nodded and sat down next to Alphonse and Harry. She gave him a plate before pausing in front of Alphonse.

"Oh I don't eat ma'am," he said. "I don't have a stomach."
She nodded, and Ron asked. "You can't eat at all?"

Al nodded and Hermione stomped on Ron's foot causing him to cry out a little. "Don't worry!" Al said quickly, seeing the expressions on everyone's faces. "I have a journal to keep track of everything I'm going to eat when I get my body back. Right brother?"

Edward nodded a little. "Yeah Al, I promised you'd get everything on your list and more." In truth he always felt awful whenever he ate something delicious. He knew Al said he would just look forward to it when he got his body back but it had been four whole years now.

"Well come up and visit when you do, I'll make you whatever you want. We'll have a whole feast just for you," Mrs. Weasley said and Alphonse looked up at her. "Thank you Mrs. Weasley!"

Edward smiled a little and gave her a look of thanks and she gave a small nod in return.

He continued to eat his meal and stood up when he was done. "I'll be in the library Brother," Al told him and he nodded. "I'll join you after I take a shower." He then went upstairs as Alphonse went to the library to work.

He took a shower quickly and dried off, taking special care to dry and clean his automail properly. Edward walked down the stairs, braiding his hair as he went to the kitchen and made himself a glass of water and started to drink it. He noticed the trio, in addition to Sirius and Remus were staring at him. He set the glass down when he was finished and raised an eyebrow.

"We're sorry Edward. I've just never seen...that before." Remus said and gestured to his arm. Ed looked down at the automail, shining after just being cleaned after his shower and nodded. "It's fine, I get it a lot and I'm used to it now."

He walked over and sat down. "It really is amazing Edward," Sirius said. Ed smiled a bit and said. "That's cause it's the best in all Amestris. My mechanic designed it from scratch."

"How is Winry?" Hermione asked. "She's doing good," Ed replied smiling a bit. "Winry is your mechanic?" Remus asked and Edward nodded. "And the best one in the whole country. We grew up together in Amestris."

"She's your age?"

He nodded. "She's a little older than me, but we're the same age."

"And she's able to build and design that? That's really amazing," he said shocked.

"She's the best," he said proudly. "But she's still studying and trying to be better."

"She's very nice," Hermione added. "And she's very talented, she's a great mechanic."

"How does it work?" Sirius asked curiously and Ed replied. "It connects to my nerves and allows me to move it just with thought. But it took a while to get used to, the rehab from the surgery is usually three years. I did it in one."

"One?" Remus said in shock and he nodded. "Yeah, automail is three times as heavy as flesh so I had to get strong and get used to walking and moving my arm too."

"Why did you try to do it in one?" Sirius asked. "Al was bonded to the suit. And I couldn't do anything from a wheelchair to get him out of it, so I had to get automail and work hard so he wasn't just sitting around waiting for me."
They all looked at him in a little bit of shock and he sighed. "It was the only option, probably
coughed up both my lungs but I did it."

"You're stronger than I thought Edward," Remus said kindly. "You are truly a remarkable young
man."

He smiled a bit and said. "Thanks Lupin."

"You're welcome Edward, I doubt there isn't a thing in this world you couldn't do without putting
your mind to it."

He smiled more and stood up. "Well right now I have to crack some journals, it was nice talking with
you." He then left to go see how far Al was on his work today.

Harry

"He's definitely something," Sirius said when he left.

"That's for sure," Ron said and Hermione gave him a look. "What?" he said and she rolled her eyes a
little.

"Well I think he's a fine young man," Remus said. "He has a hard exterior but I can see he has a
gentleness in his heart."

"He can be very kind when he wants to be," Hermione said. "Neville really likes him. He yells a lot
but only when he's really angry at you. And even then it's never really if you messed up on
accident."

"I remember Neville was worried about his homework and Edward just gave him a little smile and
told him he should be proud of it, that he did better than last week and that's all that mattered."

Lupin smiled more at that. "He sounds like a great professor. I have to admit when I heard he was
only fifteen I was shocked and wondered what on earth came over Dumbledore."

"He's very talented, you should see some of the stuff he can do!" Ron exclaimed. "They had this
battle when his commanding officer came and it was epic!"

"I would like to see his alchemy in action," Sirius mused.

"He might show us if we ask," Harry suggested and Hermione nodded. "I think he would, or at least
Alphonse."

Harry then stood up and said. "Let's go ask them,"

Hermione and Ron stood up as well and the trio went to the library. Knocking on the door before
entering they saw a few books scattered around the brothers as the were each reading.

Looking up Ed saw them and said. "Hey, what do you three want?"

"Have you made any progress?" Hermione asked and he nodded a little. "Yeah we did, think we're
close this time." And she smiled at that. "Oh that's great! I hope you both crack it soon."

Ed rubbed his temple. "Me too."

"We came here to ask you if it would be alright if you showed everyone your Alchemy?" Harry
asked. "We've all seen it but it would be great if you could show everyone else as well."

Ed nodded and said. "I'll do it, but later okay?"

The trio smiled brightly at that. "Really!?"

"Yeah, but I won't blow up the house or anything. But I can fix a chair or a table or something," Ed replied.

"Thank you Edward," Hermione told him still smiling brightly.

"It's a pretty simple request, but you're welcome. Just don't expect me to transmute my way up the stairs or make a giant statue of anyone."

"Of course, thanks!" she said again.

"Don't worry about it. At dinner we'll do it if everyone really wants to see it."

---

Edward

They continued to work after the trio had left. "It's interesting how eager they are to see alchemy," Al commented.

"Well people back home see it more often in the cities. But out in the country they're just as in awe and impressed."

He nodded at that. "True."

They continued to work until it was dinner time and then they left the study. Walking to the dinner table they saw everyone getting ready to sit down and eat. When they got there Hermione smiled. "Oh good you're here."

Lupin smiled at the brothers as well. "Harry told us you wanted to show us some alchemy?"

Ed nodded and picked up a chair, looking to Mrs. Weasley. "Is it alright if I break this ma'am? I'll fix it right up."

She nodded. "Of course dear."

He then threw it on the ground as hard as he could and it smashed to pieces. Cracking his knuckles he rolled his shoulder and clapped his hands together. The blue alchemical sparks bouncing around them as he reached out and touched the broken chair.

There was a flash as the chair reformed and mended itself and he smirked as he saw his handy work.

"That's nothing like the alchemy I've ever seen," Sirius stated and Ed chuckled. "Well I don't use a transmutation circle so..."

"Why don't you?" Lupin asked as the brothers sat down at the table.

"Well..." Ed looked over at Al and Hermione's eyes widened in realization. "Oh..."

Ed looked over at her and just nodded. Hermione was smart, smarter than most. But he was still surprised when she picked up on things like this.
"What?" Ron asked confused.

"It's because we saw the truth...we committed the taboo." Ed replied looking down at his automail hand.

Everyone looked at them in shock and Harry said. "That's why you got mad at us when we asked why you wouldn't teach us the technique?"

Edward just nodded and Mrs. Weasley set the dinner on the table and changed the subject, seeing how Edward didn't want to talk about it. "Well thank you for showing us dear. It was very impressive."

Ed smiled a little at her as they all started to dig in.

All in all, their time at 52 Grimwald Place was going rather well. Considering they had to tell everyone their biggest secret only a few days into their stay. But a week after they had arrived there it was Christmas. They woke up the Christmas morning and went downstairs. The trio had explained to them the holiday and its' traditions but they knew the Elric brothers didn't celebrate it. But it would be interested to see none the less. It was like their Winter Solstice festival, but they didn't decorate a tree. They exchanged presents and had sweets while festivals happened all over Amestris.

Edward smiled as they all came down and all the other teens rushed to the tree to open their presents. Ed drank some hot chocolate Mrs. Weasley had passed out and liked the taste of it a lot. She had even made his without milk and with the dark chocolate kind.

"Hey Edward, Alphonse," Hermione said. "You both have gifts with your names on them."

Ed's brow furrowed a bit at that and he looked to Alphonse who shrugged a little. Hermione then handed them the presents and Mrs. Weasley said. "It's just a little something for both of you. I know you don't celebrate, but everyone deserves a present on Christmas."

"Thank you so much," Alphonse said and Ed nodded in agreement. "Yeah, but you didn't have to get us anything."

"Oh hush, you two deserve a little something. Think of it as a very late welcome to England present."

He chuckled a bit at that and started to open the gift while Alphonse did the same. Inside was a red sweater he pulled it out to see the flamel cross on the back just like his coat. It felt soft and warm and Edward looked up at Mrs. Weasley a little shocked.

Alphonse then pulled out green sweater with a golden A on it as well as a scarf with the same green color and an A on one of the ends with golden tassles. "I made yours about the same as your brothers, but a tad bit bigger. I figured you might be able to grow into it when you...um got your body back. But I also made the scarf so you could wear something now."

Edward saw how gently Alphonse held the garments and he quickly set them down and pulled Mrs. Weasley into a big hug. "Thank you." he said softly as Mrs. Weasley hugged him back. "You're welcome dear. And you let me know if you're too big for that sweater, I'll knit you a new one just like that."

Edward couldn't express how thankful he was in that moment. For a long time it was just Ed and Al. And that was all that they needed, just each other. But as much as trying to get their bodies back weighed on Ed's shoulders, he knew Alphonse carried some of that weight as well. But the gift of a sweater was much more than a simple piece of clothing.
Alphonse then pulled away from Mrs. Weasley and said. "I promise I will. And when we do we'll make sure to send you a letter right away!"

Mrs. Weasley smiled at that and Alphonse quickly wrapped the scarf around his neck and Ed smiled a little more. Al was radiating happiness, and that meant more to Ed than his own. He then put on the sweater over his shirt and said. "It's perfect, thank you."

"You're both very welcome."

"I just wish we had gotten you something," Alphonse said. Ed nodded at that. They needed to get her something, but what? Ed's mind was already racing to try and figure something out.

"You two didn't need to get me anything," Mrs. Weasley told them. Ed wouldn't accept that, and he kept trying to think of something as the other teens finished opening their presents.

"We need to figure something out," Ed told Al when they got ready for bed. "I'm coming up with nothing..you?"

"We should make her something too. She made these for us," Al told him and Ed agreed. "Okay, something we make...maybe we can make her something she needs? With alchemy?"

"No...not that. We should make her something from the heart."

Ed sighed. "Well I can't think of anything. Why can't I come up with something?!"

Alphonse thought for a moment before saying. "What if we make her a cake?"

"You think she'd like that?"

"Yeah! You always made me the best cakes for my birthday."

"Alphonse, you're a genius!" Edward then quickly went down to the kitchen and made sure they had everything they would need before starting to make a cake. Alphonse watched him as he worked and said. "I still wish I could do something."

"Well we can still think of something else."

"Maybe I could clean up when everyone's asleep? Mrs. Weasley seems to spend a lot of her time cleaning this place."

"That sounds perfect Al," He said as he finished mixing the batter and poured it into the pan. Then putting them in the oven he started to clean up. Al worked to clean up a little as well, using his alchemy to get rid of a few of the bigger messes around the house. They made sure to keep it quiet and not disturb anyone.

"I hope she likes it." Al said looking around for anything else they could do.

"She will Al, trust me."

He nodded a little as Edward pulled the cake out, and let it cool before icing it and putting it on a plate.

"It looks great Brother!"

Ed smiled and said. "Thanks, it's been a while so I might be a little rusty." Al shook his head. "It's great brother, I'm sure she'll love it."
Edward then put the cake up so when it was time they could have it. Al and him then went upstairs and went to bed. The next day they came down and overheard some of the others talking.

"Did you do this?" Mrs. Weasley asked Lupin who shook his head. "I'm sorry Molly, I didn't.

"We did" Al said excitedly as he saw how happy it made Mrs. Weasley.

She turned and looked at the pair of brothers and went to them and pulled them into a big hug. "Thank you, that was very kind of you to do."

"It's the least we could do" Al said, still very happy she liked it. When she pulled away Al added. "Brother also made you a cake!"

"A cake?" She said and Ed shrugged a little. "When we were younger I made Al his birthday cakes. He suggested I make you one too."

"You boys are too kind" Mrs. Weasley said.

"We just wanted to thank you for the nice presents." Edward said, though he doubted he could pay her back for what she's done for Al. He would always be thankful to her for that. And Mrs. Weasley could see that in his golden eyes. "We'll have it after supper tonight," she told them. "And I'm sure it's lovely."

That night Edward laid in bed and looked up at the ceiling. Al was still wearing his scarf, as happy as could be, and in turn Ed was happy for him.

"I can't wait to come back here when I get our bodies back brother," Al said softly.

"Me too Al, me too."
Edward

Edward went down to breakfast that morning and yawned as he poured himself some coffee. Lupin then approached him and asked. "How did you sleep last night?"

Ed gave a small shrug and said. "Pretty good." Taking a sip from his mug he asked. "But I'm guessing you want to ask me something?"

"Correct..now you know Dumbledore invited you here over the holidays to meet with the Order of the Phoenix, and we are meeting today"

He set the mug down and said. "Alright, Al and I will be there then. Thanks for letting me know" He then went upstairs to tell Al about the meeting.

When Dumbledore arrived Ed met with him in a separate study to tell him the truth about him and Alphonse. How they tried to get their mother back through human transmutation. He had promised that Dumbledore would know and he trusted the old man to keep their secret. His blue eyes didn't hold any pity, only a sadness that seemed to hold a kinship with him and Alphonse. He knew Dumbledore must have lost someone in his past, everyone had and especially with his age. Ed didn't ask any questions and thankfully Dumbledore kept his questions brief and didn't pry too much.

When it was time they all went into the room. Ed recognized pretty much everyone there and he sat down with Alphonse and the meeting commenced. Though he was sure he was getting some looks from Mad-Eye as Dumbledore began to speak.

"Our main order of business today is today is to see if the Elric brothers wish to join our cause. Does anyone have any objections?"

"They're children Albus," Molly said. "It's not right." She looked to the brothers with kind eyes and said. "I know you've been through a lot boys, but you're too young for this."

If it was anyone but Molly Weasley Ed was sure he would have yelled about his height or age or both but he didn't. The woman was coming from a place of concern and affection and he didn't hold it against her.

"We're not kids anymore Mrs. Weasley. We can hold our own in any fight and I'm apart of the military, so technically I am an adult in the eyes of Amestris," Ed replied.

"I object," Mad-Eye said to no surprise. "He kept secrets from us, and only revealed them when I forced it out of him"

"A secret that I don't blame them for keeping," Dumbledore said calmly. "I dare anyone at this table to say they wouldn't do exactly what the Elric brothers did if they were in the same position. We've all lost loved ones I know we want to see returned to us. But I can see that they have learned from their actions and I don't see any reason to hold it against them"

Many looked down at that. The first war against Voldemort had been tough and many lives were lost. And with the fact that the brothers were only children when they attempted it made it all the more forgivable.

"I think their skills could be useful to us and with the Ministry refusing to acknowledge what is going
on we need all the help we can get" Lupin stated.

"If we can all agree then I would like to see what Edward and Alphonse think," Tonks said with a smile.

All eyes turned to the brothers and Alphonse spoke. "This isn't our country, this isn't technically our fight. But even with that being said neither I nor my brother can stand by while innocent lives are being lost. As long as we are here I think we should help." He finished with a definite nod and Ed couldn't help but grin a little at his younger brother.

"I agree. If you need us we'll help. We will have to go back home but while we're here we're on your side"

"Then let's put it to a vote," Dumbledore said with a small smile on his lips.

Mostly everyone raised their hands except Mad-Eye which wasn't surprising. Dumbledore then told the group of the latest rounds of attacks on muggles and ended the meeting. Everyone left the room but Ed stayed behind to talk with Dumbledore.

"What you said about me and Al.." He began and Dumbledore raised his hand. "No need. I know you regret your actions and your conviction to reversing your brother's.. condition is admirable. We all make mistakes in life, but the important thing is we learn from them. And I can tell you've learned from yours."

Edward felt his automail get a bit heavier at that, the weight of his mistake always resting heavy on his shoulders. "There's no excuse for what we did"

"I know" Dumbledore replied in a kind voice. "But I cannot honestly say I wouldn't do the same thing if I were in your shoes"

He then put his hand on Ed's flesh shoulder and said. "We cannot change the past, but we can shape our own future." Dumbledore then left and Edward headed out a few moments after him. Alphonse had gone to their room to work on the journals and when Ed got there he saw the other teens in their room with him.

"So you're in the Order now?" Harry asked, looking like he was trying to hide his anger at the fact. Ed nodded and said. "Yeah, but only while we're here. I know me and Al would like to stay here but if the Colonel calls us away I don't know if we can stay"

"You're our age though!" Ron protested.

"I'm also in the military and have had extensive training and experience in the field," Ed countered. "You guys haven't finished school yet."

"But-" Harry began and Ed but him off. "Look I get it, believe me, I do. I'd be just as angry if the roles were reversed. But you of all people have to admit that out there, the stakes are so much higher than you can believe"

Harry sighed and just left the room. Ed knew he needed his space right then and decided to talk to him later. He was finally able to get the others off the Order meeting but then all they wanted to talk about was his automail which was a whole other ordeal. He was finally able to get away when Al was talking to them about Amestris and their traditions.
Harry was sitting in his room when Ed entered. "Hey, you look like you need to talk to someone"

"I'm fine"

"You know I've said that phrase a lot to know that about 90-95% of the time I say it I'm not actually fine," Ed replied as he sat down beside him.

"I-" Harry shook his head. "I'm just... so angry, all the time"

Ed couldn't help but chuckle a bit at that. He definitely could relate. "Sorry I just know how that feels"

Edward then took off his glove and let his automail shine in the low light. "I was angry at myself for a long time, I still am. The important thing is to not let it control you. To channel it into something useful."

"They're treating me like I'm a child"

"You are," Ed stated. "You're so young Harry... and yes you've been through a lot but you're still young."

"But this is my fight! My parents died fighting him! He killed Cedric! He wants to kill me and everyone I love! And all everyone wants to do is shut me out! No one trusts me with anything and I should be in those meetings! I should be fighting him right now!" Harry yelled, standing up his fists clenched.

Edward let him get it out and gave him a look. "Feel better?"

Harry was breathing a little heavy after his explosion and sat down, looking defeated. "A bit...not really."

"Sometimes it's good to let it out like that. It's not good to keep it all bottled up like that, you need to be able to talk to someone. You've got Ron and Hermione, and if you want...me. I know it's frustrating to be at school and feel like you're out of the loop but you're not useless there. You're helping everyone out with the DA remember? And if this Voldemort guy really wants to kill you then the best thing for you is not to give him an opportunity till you're ready to beat him into next week."

"I guess you're right..." He admitted. "It's just hard not to feel angry"

"I know it is, and I know that I'm not the best person on keeping a lid on their temper. But I do know that you are not useless Harry. Everyone in that room wants to make sure that you and your kids can grow up in a world where all this shit doesn't happen and everyone is safe."

Edward stood up and patted Harry's back. "Don't bottle it up all the time though, okay?"

"I'll try" Harry promised and Ed smiled a little. "Good, and if you need me or my brother our door is always open."

Edward then left Harry to his thoughts.

Edward

When the break finally ended, he and Al packed their bags with the others and got ready to go back to school. Ed smiled as he gave Molly a hug. "Thank you for everything Mrs. Weasley."
"Oh, you're welcome dear" She replied and gave Alphonse a hug as well. "You two take care now, watch out for each other."

"We will Mrs. Weasley!" Alphonse promised happily. Edward couldn't be more thankful for the kind woman. She had done so much for him and Alphonse while they stayed at Grimmauld Place he didn't know what he could do to repay her.

Edward saw Harry saying goodbye to Lupin and Sirius, he knew that he was close with both of the men with one of them being his godfather. He saw Mad-Eye glaring at him and had gotten used to it by now. He didn't think he could do anything to win the man over.

They were given an escort to the train station, like their escort to Grimmauld Place. They boarded the train back to Hogwarts and all got in the same cabin together. Edward ended up passing out on the train, using his travel guide/alchemy notes to cover his eyes.

While he was asleep the trio noticed just how young he looked. Even though Edward was their age and sometimes acted a bit childish, he always seemed to carry a certain air about him. They all could tell he was much older than his years and had seen a great deal.

Alphonse enjoyed the train ride back to school. They were no strangers to trains back in Amestris and as much as he liked it sometimes it was a bit boring in other places. But since they had been at Hogwarts they had been pretty stationary, Alphonse didn't think they had stayed in a place that long since Edward joined the military.

The trio talked about classes and different assignments that would be due as soon as they got back. Of course, Ron had forgotten about his Alchemy assignment but luckily Alphonse was willing to help him out and he and Hermione helped him write his paper for Ed's class.

When they pulled into the station Edward woke up and rubbed his eyes. "You sleep too much sometimes brother," Alphonse said, though he wasn't complaining. He just wished that his brother got on a more regular sleep schedule.

Edward waved him off as they got off the train and headed inside the castle. The trio departed for the Gryffindor common rooms and said goodbye to the Elric brothers. The pair headed for their rooms and were greeted cheerfully by Elizabeth.

"It's been so boring around here without you too," she said. "I hope you both enjoyed your holiday."

"We did, thank you Elizabeth," Edward said and the girl then opened her painting for them. The brothers headed inside and unpacked, well mostly Edward unpacked while Alphonse worked on the journals.

They continued to work on them throughout the night and both could tell they were getting close. This had been their hardest project yet, but Alphonse was sure that when they decoded it they would learn so much and might even find out a way to get their original bodies back.

Edward finally went to bed at Alphonse's urgings as he did have class the next morning. As he fell asleep Edward couldn't help but feel a mixture of emotions. He was glad to be back at the castle. It had grown on him considerably since they had first arrived. He had to admit that hanging around other kids their age did help a bit. And he was glad that Alphonse had more people he could talk to. Now that they knew his secret Alphonse could really become friends with them, not that they weren't already.

But still, he couldn't help but feel a sort of dread in the pit of his stomach. It all felt like the calm
before the storm and he couldn't shake the feeling. Maybe because he was a bit pessimistic and thought things had to go horribly wrong eventually but he just hoped that everything would turn out fine in the end.
Everyone turned in their reports the first day back. Ed was curious to see what everyone chose as their specialty to research. His class wasn't really grade based per-say so at least he didn't have to deal with that. Sure he gave grades out as it was required here at Hogwarts but it was more based off if he saw the few participating, working hard and just trying. He didn't care if it meant that someone was struggling more than another. If his students tried and failed that was still fine with him.

Of course, he was a bit happy to be back but as soon as he saw Umbridge's toad face he wished the break had lasted longer. Oh, there would be some things he would not miss about Hogwarts when he and Al went back to Amestris.

He went to dinner that night and smiled a little as he saw Hagrid. "Ed! How are ye? How was yer holiday?"

Edward shrugged a little. "Alright, not used to the whole Christmas thing, but it was nice to experience it. I know Al liked it a lot."

"Well did ye not miss home?"

"We move around a lot; never staying still. But I guess I do miss Amestris a little..." He hadn't thought about his home as often as he used to. Of course, his home was with Alphonse and if they were together he was fine. But he did like Central City and Resembol. It would be nice to see them again after this whole school year was over.

"An' you and Al like that sorta thing?"

"It's not like we have a choice. I go where the military tells me to. It's what I signed up for. And I wouldn't leave Al behind, and I know he wouldn't want me to."

"What 'bout in the future?"

"Don't know," Ed replied, taking a bite of his food. "Anything could happen I suppose. But one day...maybe"

He wouldn't stop until Al had his body back. Once that happened, well he didn't know. Edward didn't think he would stay in the military long after that. But once he left, well he didn't know exactly what they would do. They would have to go back home to Granny's first off. Then maybe make a trip back up to England to see Mrs. Weasley. Al had really bonded with the kind woman and she did promise to make him a new sweater and a feast when he did. But in the long term, Ed didn't know what they would do. He supposed that was just a bridge they would cross once they got there.

"Well I hope yer come back up here sometime, I know I'd like te see you an' Al again"

Ed smiled a little bit at that. "Yeah, we will."

Hagrid also had a big smile on his face at that and when dinner was finished he headed back to their room. Seeing Al there he smiled. Alphonse was sitting, working on the journals that had plagued them for so long.

"Brother! I think I'm close," He said happily.
"Oh really? Let me see," Edward said, taking off his red coat and hanging it up before going to see what Alphonse was working on. "Hmm.. looks promising."

"Maybe we'll finally crack the code!"

Ed couldn't help but chuckle a bit at Al's enthusiasm. "Maybe Al, maybe."

"Do you think the secret to getting our bodies back is in here?"

"If anyone has already figured it out I would bet Flammel," Ed replied.

Alphonse nodded a little and went back to work. Edward sat down beside his brother and the pair continued to work together until Al finally ordered Edward to bed.

"Bed brother!"

"I can stay up a bit longer."

"You need sleep, you have classes!"

"I don't need sleep! Sleep is for the weak!"

"Brother!"

Harry

"One day back and we've already got a mountain of work to do!" Ron protested as they walked to Alchemy.

"It is OWL year Ron, and we are getting closer and closer," Hermione countered. "They need to prepare us."

"Well Umbridge ain't doing much of that and she still gives us a crapload of work to do! I mean honestly, how are we supposed to write a whole essay on the theory of the protection spell?!"

Hermione just rolled her eyes a little and said. "Even though I really don't agree with what she's doing it's not that bad Ron."

"Says you!"

Harry just shook his head a little as the trio walked into class and took their seats. Edward was sitting at his desk with his feet propped up on it reading out of a small book. Once everyone got there Edward put it in his coat pocket and stood up.

"Alright everyone, today is a very important day," He began, walking to the blackboard."Today is the day we really start reconstruction. That means you'll be able to start transmutation."

Everyone seemed really excited and Hermione raised her hand.

"Yes, Hermione?" Edward asked.

"Will we be able to work on any of the specialties we researched over the holiday?"

Edward thought about this and said. "Well we will be working with the basics but if you guys work hard enough I can show you some specialties I'm familiar with. But only the bare minimum. I really
don't think you guys would be able to handle something too complex. But I will try to demonstrate some for you guys."

He then went to write some safety rules on the board. "I really didn't want to have a transmutation backfire today. I doubt anything serious would happen since you all would be working with the basics but still. I do not want Madame Pomfrey to be angry at me for sending you all to the infirmary with cuts and bruises.

"Everyone follows these rules and no ones gets hurt, alright? Very simple." He said and then drew the transmutation circle they would be using for this class.

"This is about as basic as I can make this for you guys. Now everyone grab a plank of wood from the front and some chalk. Draw this circle exactly and when you think you have it right raise your hand and I will come over to check. If it's incorrect it will either fail or worse, backfire and hurt you or someone else."

Everyone went and grabbed their supplies before sitting down. Hermione was the first to raise her hand, and Edward went over to her. "Very nice. Your lines are clean and smooth."

Hermione smiled brightly at that and Edward then went over to help Neville with his circle.

"Good job, just need to adjust the angles here and you should be good to go."

Neville nodded a little and looked a bit sad at that and Edward gave an encouraging smile. "Hey, for your first try at this circle it's very good."

Neville smiled at that and went to fix his circle. Edward went around helping everyone until they were all set. Grabbing his own board he quickly drew the circle and said. "Now here's what you're going to do. You need to concentrate on the structure of the wood. Keep that in your head, then you put your hands on the edge of the circle like this and focus on what you want to create. Comprehend the makeup, deconstruct the wood, and reconstruct it into what you want to make. Which will be this."

He then clapped his hands and touched the plank. In the center, the blue alchemical light flashed as it transformed into a sculpture of a small bird.

"There you go, pretty easy. Just do like I said and you all should be fine"

Everyone then got to work. Edward stayed close to make sure they were all doing it right. Seamus clapped his hands and put them on the circle but nothing happened. "You don't clap and you need to focus on the chemical makeup that we went over," Edward told him.

"Why don't we clap but you do?"

"Cause I'm more advanced and I'm the professor, that's why."

Seamus huffed a bit and concentrated, and the bird then formed. Edward went to the trio's table and saw that all three had successfully performed the transmutation.

"Very nice. Hermione yours is very good. You need to clearly picture what you want for it to work properly." He told them and Hermione smiled more. As Edward went to go see how Neville was doing he didn't see the small, very faint blush on her cheeks. Of course, Harry noticed this but didn't say anything.

"Very good, you guys have done pretty well for your first transmutation now-," He was interrupted
by Alphonse bursting into class and saying loudly. "Brother!"

"Al? What's wrong?" Edward asked, a worried expression on his face.

"I cracked it!" Alphonse said, running up to his brother.

"Cracked it?"

"The journals! I cracked the code! I'm decoding them now!"

Edward looked up at his brother in shock and grinned widely. "I knew we would get them! Come on Al! We can't waist any time!"

He then ran to the door with his brother and Hermione stood up. "Professor?"

Edward looked back at them and said. "Oh-um.. put your stuff away and class dismissed!" He then ran to catch up with his brother as everyone left in the classroom looked at each other confused.

They went on with their day and Harry sat in the common room with Hermione and Ron as they all worked on their homework for the night.

"It was cool to actually do some alchemy today, even though it was cut short," Hermione said as she wrote down something on her parchment.

"Yeah...I can tell you like that class," Harry said, glancing up from his textbook. Hermione turned a bit red and said. "It's interesting...that's all."

Ron, ever oblivious, then said. "I wonder when we'll be able to do cooler stuff like Professor Elric?"

"Not for a while, he is a prodigy and I'm sure his skill level is very advanced. I don't think we could ever catch up to him," Hermione said which garnered a look from Harry to which she ignored.

"Still, would be cool to do all those transmutations..." Ron said a bit wistful.

"Yeah, it would be," Harry agreed. Ron turned in early after Hermione promised to look over his essay, which left Harry alone with Hermione by the fireplace.

"So..." He began.

"I don't know what you're talking about. Edward is just a friend," She said quickly.

"I never said anything about him," Harry countered cheekily to which Hermione sighed, putting down her quill.

"It's nothing."

"Really? Cause it's not looking like nothing."

"I just-" She groaned and said. "I just think he's an amazing person and he's our friend. Both Edward and Alphonse are our friends."

"Look, I'm not here to give you a hard time," Harry said putting up his hands. "But I just don't want to see you hurt."

"I won't get hurt. It's nothing so, therefore, I can't get hurt," She replied, going back to writing on her parchment paper.
"He's our professor, even though he is our age, he is still our professor. And he will be going back home to his country when the school term ends."

"He might come back next year," she said, still not looking up from her writing. Even with the glow from the fire, Harry could still tell that she was blushing.

"Or he might not," he said. "And even then...I don't know. When his mechanic Winry came here I got the feeling there was something between them."

"It's not-" She protested before setting her quill down. She had her hands folded in her lap as she looked down at them. "I don't love him."

"I didn't think you did," Harry said, putting his hand on her back. "I just don't want to see you hurt Hermione."

"It's just a stupid little-oh you know," She admitted, unable to look at him.

"I know," Harry said and thought of Cho. He did want to be with her but she was still torn up about Cedric.

"It hurts when I think about him leaving..." she said quietly.

"Like you said he might come back and even then I think he will write to us."

Hermione nodded a little and asked. "Can you please not tell anyone about this? I don't want anyone to know."

"You got it, Hermione. I won't tell a soul," He promised.

"Thank you, Harry."

"I'm here if you want to talk," He said and she smiled a little at that. "I'm here for you too. I know things have been hard with everything that's been going on."

Harry nodded a bit. He still didn't like to think about his dreams or his Occlumency lessons with Snape but maybe talking to Hermione about it would get this sinking feeling out of his chest.

"I'll do that," He told her kindly and she smiled as they both went back to work.

Edward

Edward went into the hall the next morning looking like he had gotten little to no sleep, which was accurate. They had spent the better part of the night decoding everything and they were almost there. Alphonse promised he would finish up after Edward took a shower, got some food, and taught his class that morning. Ed had protested a little but Alphonse had been firm.

"Blimey, Ed! What happened to ye?"

"Stayed up most of the night working on something," He replied, scarfing down his food.

"Don't eat so fast Edward or you will get sick," Madame Pomfrey said. "And you really should get a proper nights sleep."

Ed waved her off a bit and said. "I'm fine. I don't do that unless I have to, and I won't get sick unless I drink milk."
Madame Pomfrey shook her head at that and went back to her breakfast.

"Well ye really shouldn' do that, but what were ye workin' on?" Hagrid asked curiously.

"We're decoding Flamel's journals. Dumbledore gave them to me and Al a while back and we finally cracked the code."

"A code?" He asked confused.

"Alchemy can be dangerous in the wrong hands. So alchemists put their notes and findings in code that only they know. It's so no one can steal their work." Ed then pulled out his travel journal and handed it to Hagrid.

"See here? You think it's just a travel journal but it's all my notes"

"Merlin's beard Ed! That's very good. I never woulda known"

Edward smirked a bit at that. No one besides Alphonse could really decode his notes. It was all based on where they had been and really only Al knew all of that. Putting it away he said. "And now Al and I have cracked Flamel's."

"Well, congratulations to ye both!" Hagrid said smiling big.

"Thanks." Edward got up and checked his watch. "I got class but I know maybe this weekend Al wants to have some tea? He really likes seeing all your creatures."

"Ye two are always welcome! Stop on by anytime!"

Edward gave a small nod and headed off to teach his class quickly so he could get back to Al. Of course, his class was his 7th years and the twins were in it. Both gave him a massive migraine and almost wanted to chuck the piece of wood he was demonstrating with right at them. But he got through it and headed back to their room to see what progress Alphonse had made with the journals.

Harry

It was their first DA meeting since the holidays and Harry was excited to teach the Patronus to everyone. This was more complicated so they had to have worked up to it. He got everything set up in the room with Ron and Hermione and everyone started to trickle in.

Alphonse came later and Al quickly said. "Sorry I a bit late, we were busy and lost track of time."

"Where's Edward?" Hermione asked.

"Oh, he's finishing up on the journals. We're just about done decoding them all. Only about three more to go."

"Found anything interesting?" Harry asked and Alphonse shook his head. "Not exactly what we were looking for. There are some things we already knew..and there are some neat discoveries but not anything we want just yet."

Of course, the trio knew what the younger Elric brother meant; a way to get their bodies back. But none of them said anything about it.

"But I'm here to help!" Al said cheerily.
"Okay we are going to be working on the Patronus charm today so maybe you can be used as our stand-in for a dementor." Even though he was far from it. Alphonse was definitely the more optimistic and cheery of the two brothers.

Harry then started the meeting. "Hello everyone. I hoped you were practicing over the holiday cause today we are going to learn the Patronus charm. It's essential to fighting a dementor."

He then pulled out his wand and said. "The key is thinking of a really happy memory. The happiest you've ever been. Something really special here. Then you just point your want and say... Expecto Patronum!"

A silver stag then burst out of his wand and stood in the middle of the room before fading away. A few people, mainly some of the girls then clapped.

"So go on and think of your memory. Think hard here, you need to make sure it is strong enough to keep a dementor at bay."

Everyone had their wands out and were thinking of their memories. Some tried to cast the spell but only silver whisps came out.

"That was amazing Harry!" Alphonse said. "It was just beautiful."

"Thanks," Harry replied to which Hermione added. "It's very difficult to produce a Patronus like that, one in the form of an animal."

"Wow that's even more amazing," Alphonse said in awe.

Harry smiled and rounded everyone up into a line. "Now Alphonse here will be our dementor. Think your happy memory and really concentrate on it throughout and say the words."

Alphonse got into position and Fred was the first to go. He produced a silver shield before the next person tried. A few struggled a bit but Ron, Hermione, Luna, and Cho all were able to cast corporal patronuses to their delight.

Once everyone had gone they worked on a few other spells before Harry dismissed everyone for the night. "That was so cool, brother is going to be jealous he didn't see any of that!" Alphonse said. "What was your happy memory Harry, if you don't mind me asking..."

Harry smirked a little and said. "Umbridge getting sacked." Which caused Al, Hermione, and Ron to all laugh.

"If only," Hermione said. "Well, we better get back. Tell Edward we missed him at the meeting and good luck on the journals."

Al nodded and waved goodbye before heading to the door to go back to their room.
Edward walked out along the grounds of Hogwarts, kicking a few loose pebbles as he did. His head was hung a little bit and he just needed some fresh air in that moment. "Professor?" He heard a voice say behind him.

He turned to see Luna Lovegood, standing there with a bag on her shoulder and no shoes on her feet. "Is something the matter?"

"It's... complicated."

"My father says life always looks complicated but sometimes I think you can always break it down into smaller parts," she said softly. "I was just going to feed the thestrals. Do you want to join me?"

"The death horses with wings?" he asked, trying to remember if that was what they were called.

"They get a bad reputation because of that you know. They're actually quite kind," she said and started to walk to the forest. Ed sighed and decided to follow her anyways. He didn't really know why.

"So what's the matter?" she asked as they got to the small clearing.

"It's... me and my brother have been working on this project for weeks... and it just failed."

"Failed how?" She asked, throwing a piece of meat towards the thestrals.

"It didn't have the information we were hoping that we'd get out of it wasn't there." He said.

He couldn't exactly tell her that the Flamel journals didn't hold the key to getting Al's body back. Too many people already knew there secret here and in Amestris. It was a miracle that no one had accidentally spilled their deep dark secret to the higher-ups in the military. Though he supposed with Mustang and Hawkeye in their corner they would be able to try and stop that from happening. Plus he was still the Hero of the People and the military really needed the good press he brought in.

Edward did wonder what would happen if it really did get out. Would they be put on trial? The Colonel and the Lieutenant would get in a lot of trouble for not reporting it if was also found out they knew.

"Things always happen for a reason. You just have to be patient," she said, going to a young fowl and giving him some meat.

"Yeah we've been patient," Ed said looking away. He couldn't stand Al being in that suit for another year with no end in sight. They couldn't use a Philosopher's Stone and that was their best lead before, even if it was incredibly rare. The cost would just be too much. Al wouldn't be able to live in his body knowing lives had been used to get it back.

"My shoes got taken the second week of school," she told him, seemingly randomly.

"I'm sorry?" He replied a bit confused.

"It's alright. My things usually go missing but by the end of the year, they always find their way back to me. Though I might like my shoes back earlier they'll only come back when it's the right time."
"Or...you could just let me knock the bullies around and I can get them back in an afternoon."

"They only do it because I'm different than them. It's alright. It's normal for people to lash out like that when confronted with something that isn't the norm for them."

Edward tried to size her up and failed. "You are a puzzle, Luna."

"Thank you," She said with a dreamy smile on her lips. She handed him another piece of meat and he fed it to another thestral.

"I lost my mother when I was younger. I've been able to see them since before I got here. Who did you lose?" She asked, going up to the horse and patting its side.

"I'm sorry..me and Al lost our mom when we were young. I was just five and Al wasn't older than four."

She looked over towards them with and said softly. "I'm sorry. It's hard when we lose the ones we love but they never really leave us...do they?"

Edward could still remember how good it felt to make their mother smile again with their alchemy. It hurt to relive the few memories he still had of her but he knew that he wouldn't give them up for the world. And neither would Al.

"I guess not...still hurts though."

"A good hurt," She replied and gave out the last of her meat. "Thanks for coming with me. I usually do this all by myself."

"No problem, talking to you...actually helped a little bit."

"I'm happy I could help you," She replied as they started to walk back to the castle.

"You sure you don't want me to rough up anyone that's given you a hard time?"

---

**Harry**

"You see all these new rules, I swear if there are any more 'Educational Decrees' I'll bloody scream," Ron complained as they walked down one of the magical staircases.

"I know but there's nothing any of us can do about that while Umbridge is still here," Hermione said. "Dumbledore can do some things but he has his hands tied by the Ministry of Magic."

"All because they think he's using us to overthrow Fudge," Harry grumbled. "And they still keep blaming everything on Sirius."

As they walked they saw Edward and Alphonse carrying a number of journals in their arms.

"Hey, is everything okay? You said you finally cracked the code right?" Harry asked them.

"Yeah we did but it doesn't have anything useful...at least for our goals," Edward shrugged a bit. "So we're giving them back to Dumbledore."

"But those are Nicholas Flammel's journals. He was a genius in alchemy," Hermione said.

"Yeah I know...but all his work was with the Philosopher's Stone and we can't use that," Edward
replied.

"Why not?" Harry asked confused.

The Elric brothers shared a look between them and said. "Philosopher's Stones could be used to help us but we won't use them because of what it takes to make one."

"It's that bad?" Hermione asked and Edward nodded. "Believe me it is."

If something was that bad to make the Elrics' stomachs churn then perhaps it was better off not knowing what it took to make one. Both seemed desperate to undo the mistakes of attempting Human Transmutation and if it was as bad as they made it out to be then Harry believed them.

"But why?" Ron asked, still curious as to why a Philosopher's Stone was all of a sudden a very bad thing. Harry knew that the stone was dangerous before because Voldemort wanted to use it to come back and eternal life was not something that should exist.

Edward sighed and said. "You know the first rule of Alchemy?"

"Yeah, you can't get something without giving something up in return," Harry replied.

"Well the Philosopher's Stone was thought to bypass that but that is not the case. To make one you need to sacrifice people, and a lot of them."

"You make one by killing people?" Hermione asked in shock.

"Yeah, we discovered that one a while ago. We thought we could use it but now that we know...we can't." Alphonse said sadly.

"Hey it's okay Al, we'll figure this out and we'll do it without using a stone," Edward said a bit encouragingly. Edward looked back at the trio and said. "So...we're returning these back to Dumbledore."

"Do you need any help carrying them?" Hermione offered and Edward shook his head. "Nah, we're good. Thanks though."

The two then headed off in the direction of Dumbledore's office. "See you in class!" Edward called over his shoulder.

"It's terrible they couldn't use what they found. They've been working so hard on decoding them," Hermione said, watching the brothers leave their sights.

"Yeah but they're smart. I'm sure they'll figure out a way to get what they want," Ron said. "I mean I don't think I've met anyone as determined as those too. Especially Edward."

Harry nodded and the trio went on their way, thinking back to his first year at Hogwarts and what the Philosopher's Stone really meant.

Edward

"Are you sure there's nothing of use for you two in these journals?" Dumbledore asked.

"Yeah, we're sure. Thanks for lending them to us though."

"Of course," He replied and waved his wand, sending the books from on his desk into a neat stack
"Is there anything else I can do for either of you?" He then asked.

"Not at the moment," Ed said with a small shrug. "I mean in a couple months I'll need to see my mechanic again to replace my winter automail with my regular ones."

"Just let me know whenever you require Ms. Rockbell," Dumbledore replied with a kind smile.

"Is there anything we can do for the Order of the Phoenix?" Alphonse then asked.

"Right now at the moment, there is not," Dumbledore said, standing up and going to his phoenix, Fawkes. "But I fear that one day the Ministry will try to oust me from my post here at school."

Edward scoffed at that. "Really? They're that afraid of you?"

"I'm afraid so...Prime Minister Fudge grows more paranoid by the passing day."

"Want me to knock some sense into him?" Edward asked, cracking his knuckles and Dumbledore simply chuckled. "That will not be necessary my boy."

"Your loss," He said with a small shrug.

"What I wish is in my absence to make sure that Harry is protected. That he continues his Occlumency lessons and does not try to confront Professor Umbridge."

"So...watch over him? That's it?" Ed asked, confused.

"Yes," Dumbledore said with a nod. "Harry's safety is of the utmost importance. He is the key in the war to come."

"Cause of Voldemort trying to kill him when he was just a baby?" Alphonse asked.

"Exactly."

Edward nodded and said. "Well, we can definitely do that." Alphonse nodded as well and added. "Yeah! We'll make sure he stays safe."

"Thank you," Dumbledore said and sat back down.

Edward turned to head for the door and gave a small wave back to Dumbledore. "If that's it then we'll be off."

He and Al then left his office and started to walk down the corridor. "It must be hard on Harry...all this pressure to fight this great evil. And he's only our age."

"Yeah, he's been dealing with this for a long time though. Still sucks," Ed replied.

"I like Professor Dumbledore though. I don't want him to leave."

"Hey, it'll be alright.. that toad may try but he's covered. He hasn't done anything wrong."

"Yeah, I guess you're right Brother."

As they turned to walk up a staircase they ran into the Weasley twins looking very suspicious with a ladder between them.
"What are you two doing?" Edward asked.

"We want to hex all those decrees Umbridge hangs up so they all say terrible things about her," George said with a grin.

Edward contemplated this for a moment and replied. "Very well continue."

Both grinned widely and headed on their way.

"If she wasn't such a mean person I would try to stop them," Alphonse said.

"She deserves it for trying to act like she's better than everyone else."

As the brothers went back to their room Edward turned in early while Alphonse read beside his bed. In the morning Edward headed down to breakfast and sat down. But before he could even take a bite of food Umbridge strolled up to him with two lackeys behind her.

"What do you want?" Edward asked as he took a sip of his drink.

Umbridge then pulled out a scroll and said. "By Decree Number 183 by the Minister for Magic, you are to be brought in for questioning for conspiracy against the Ministry."

Everyone in the hall had their eyes on them and a few people gasped. There was a tense moment of silence before Edward stood up and cleared his throat.

"Yeah...no I'm not going with you."

Umbridge had a sick smirk on her lips as she replied. "You are to come with me, either way, Mr. Elric."

Edward clenched his fists and let out a low growl. "You can't force me to do anything."

"You will either come with us now or we will drag you and your brother before the Ministry."

Edward stilled and a deep scowl appeared on his face. "Try to harm my brother and I will take you all down."

"Is that a threat?"

"It's a promise," he replied so coolly it probably dropped the temperature in the room by a few degrees.

"Come now or we will use force," she said standing her ground, tilting her chin up to try and look superior.

Edward glanced over at Dumbledore who gave a small nod and Edward trusted him. "Fine," he said curtly.

Umbridge had a triumphant smirk on her ugly lips as she walked with Edward out of the Hall.

"Brother!"

Ed's head turned and he saw Al running towards them. "The paintings told me you were being taken!"

"Al it's okay, I'm fine," Edward said reassuringly.
"You can't take him!" Alphonse protested.

"He is coming in willingly for questioning," Umbridge said.

"Al it's okay just stay here and I'll be back soon."

"No, I'm going with you!"

"Al, don't I'll be okay."

"No Brother! I'm coming too!" Al said, crossing his arms. Edward sighed and rubbed his temple. He really didn't want Al to be dragged into all this and nodded a little. "Fine.. you can come."

Looking to Umbridge he said. "You will not question him."

"Why not?" She said haughtily.

"Because you just want me and Al has nothing to do with any of this. I'll comply with all this bullshit and tell the truth as long as he's left out of it."

Umbridge seemed to contemplate this and nodded. "Very well."

Edward sighed and they all walked out of Hogwarts to a portkey to take them to the Ministry of Magic.
Edward

He looked around the large courtroom and saw all the witches and wizards dressed in robes. He really didn't want to be here but he wasn't exactly given a choice in the matter now was he. If he didn't care about his students and the connections he's made while at Hogwarts he might have been tempted to blast his way out of here and make his way back to Amestris. But as Edward looked over at Al he couldn't help but think of Harry, Ron, and Hermione. He couldn't leave them to fend for themselves against Umbridge and her goons.

He sighed as he looked back to the front of the courtroom where a pudgy looking man in fine robes sat. He must be the one in charge here. The Minister of Magic that Umbridge keeps crooning on and on about. Edward could see her smug toad face and wished he could just punch her grin off her face right then and there.

"I, Cornelious Fudge, Minister for Magic, now bring this hearing of the Wizengamot to order," the man said. He then listed off a few high ranking people, including Umbridge.

Edward crossed his arms and leaned back more in his chair. Al was seated across from him and he could tell his brother was worried. He kept fiddling with his fingers as he sat there impatiently to see what would happen to his older brother.

"We are here to question Edward Elric of Amestris to see if he has conspired against this government," Fudge declared and Edward couldn't help but roll his eyes. At least Alphonse wouldn't be brought into this mess. If they tried to then Edward wouldn't be able to hold back his rage. No one threatened his little brother and got away with it.

"Before we begin with the interrogation I think the accused should be able to say a few words in his defense," A woman said and both Fudge and Umbridge seemed to give her a dirty look. "I second that motion!" Another man said.

Fudge did not seem pleased with this and said. "The accused shall be allowed to say a few words in his defense."

Edward gave a small nod to the woman and began. "First off, I haven't conspired to do anything. I am here under orders from my commanding officer to teach Alchemy at Hogwarts for the year and then return home to carry out another mission. That's all. The only conspiracies I've ever been involved in are in breaking them up and arresting those involved."

Once he was done Fudge then said. "We will now begin our questioning of the accused."

"You are in the military, can you please tell us your current rank?" One man asked.

"Major Edward Elric of the Amestris Military," Edward replied. "I'm a State Alchemist, and all those who receive their certification automatically get the rank equivalent to that of a major." He then reached into his pocket and pulled out his silver State Alchemist watch to show his rank before returning it to his coat pocket.

There were murmurs among the Wizengamot. "You're very young to receive such a position," The
same man commented.

Edward gave a small shrug. "Youngest ever. I got my certification when I was twelve years old."

The woman who spoke up for him, Amelia Bones, he remembered then asked. "Is there no age limit on the State Alchemy certification?"

"Nope," Ed replied, shaking his head. "It's so difficult they thought that the test couldn't be passed by anyone so young. I proved them wrong."

There were more murmurs amongst the witches and wizards in the court.

"Might we see some of your skills?" Amelia Bones then asked.

Edward gave a small shrug and said. "Sure." Standing up he clapped his hands and crouched down to the floor, placing his hands on the ground he concentrated as the blue alchemical light sparked around him.

The marble floor began to move and shift into a small statue of a dragon before the blue light stopped and Edward stood up. He picked up the statue in the middle of a small dent in the floor and tossed it up in the air before catching it.

"That is most unlike any alchemy I have seen before Mr. Elric," Amelia said. The witches and wizards around her in awe of his abilities.

"That was nothing. It was just a simple deconstruction of the marble and reconstruction into a new shape. I was able to do that when I was five," Edward said. He then set the statue back down and clapped his hands once more, returning the floor to normal.

"Mr. Elric," Fudge then said wanting to regain some control of the situation. "There have been reports that your classes at Hogwarts are not in line with Ministry teachings. Is that correct?"

Edward shrugged a little as he sat back down in his chair. "I don't know. I do know that I'm just teaching Alchemy and my students are progressing nicely. It will still take them years to master but I'm teaching them the basics right now."

"It has been reported," Fudge said bringing out a slip of paper. "That you are teaching muggle science to your students."

That caused a wave of whispers through the Wizengamot. "Do you deny this?"

"No, I have to teach them science for them to be able to do alchemy," Edward replied simply. What was it with wizards and this dislike of science. It wouldn't hurt them to branch out a bit.

"How is teaching them muggle science essential in your class?" Fudge asked, sounding a bit outraged at the question.

Edward sighed, he would have to teach these witches and wizards what Alchemy was it seemed.

"Alchemy has three basic components; Understanding, Deconstruction, and Reconstruction," He began. "For me to do that little trick earlier I needed to know what the material was, what elements it was made up of. Then I could deconstruct it and reconstruct it into the form I wanted. My students wouldn't be able to do any of that if I didn't teach them science first. And I don't see what the big deal is. You guys have a Muggle Studies class at Hogwarts, so why is this bad and that's okay?"
Fudge and Umbridge both seemed very angry that Edward had a solid point and the Wizengamot seemed to agree with him on that.

Before another question could be asked the doors to the courtroom flew open. Edward turned to see who had entered to only find out it was Dumbledore, flanked by Colonel Mustang and Lieutenant Hawkeye.

"Professor Dumbledore! This is a private hearing!" Fudge exclaimed.

"And I am a witness for the accused and bring two more with me," Dumbledore said. "Allow me to introduce Colonel Roy Mustang and Lieutenant Riza Hawkeye of the Amestris Military."

"Why is my subordinate being detained?" Roy said, the anger clear in his voice.

"He has been suspected of conspiring against this government," Fudge said, keeping his chin high and trying to maintain some authority in his tone.

"And do you have any evidence?" Mustang asked. "Because if not then I suggest you release him right now."

"We are questioning him right at this very moment."

"Without evidence? You just think he might be conspiring against you? I know you all have a different way of life here but in Amestris we believe one is innocent until proven otherwise. We have fair trials. Is that not the case here?"

"Your subordinate's actions have lead us to believe he may be guilty," Fudge said.

"And pray tell, what exactly has he done to make you think he was staging a coup?" Mustang asked, narrowing his eyes at Fudge.

"He has not complied with many of the Ministry decisions regarding Hogwarts."

Mustang rolled his eyes a bit at that. "Fullmetal is a rule breaker at times but he always has the best intentions. If he's not following your rules it is because he believes they are wrong."

Looking back to Edward he asked. "Is this not true?"

"Yeah, she just doesn't like how I'm teaching my students," Edward said. "That's why they brought me in."

Many eyes turned to Umbridge at this and said. "I have implemented decrees on the behalf of the Ministry at Hogwarts and Mr. Elric has refused to respect my authority."

"Because you don't deserve it!" Edward yelled, standing up. "You think you're better than the rest of us when you're not! You think some fancy title makes you more important? It doesn't! And you obviously only like it because of the power which makes you actually worse than the rest of us!"

"Fullmetal, stand down," Mustang said in a controlled tone. Edward just narrowed his eyes at Umbridge and sat back down.

"As you can see, clear insubordination," She said, very haughtily.

"I have full faith that Edward is simply following his orders and has no ulterior motives here," Mustang stated. "He was instructed to come here at the request of Professor Dumbledore to teach Alchemy. That is all."
"You yourself said that Mr. Elric disobeys orders, why would he not disobey yours?" Fudge asked. "And I remember Professor Dumbledore wished to procure another alchemist so why would you send your young subordinate so far away from home if he is so reckless?"

"The other alchemist was unavailable. I suggested Fullmetal because he is one of the most talented alchemists in the world and I believed this mission would do him some good. His missions take him all over Amestris and he is always moving around, I believed some stability and some interaction with those his own age would be beneficial for him and his younger brother."

"Alphonse Elric is not a member of the military, is that not correct?" Another man asked.

"That is correct," Mustang replied.

"Then why was he sent here as well?" The same man asked him.

"Because I promised Edward when he joined the military that he wouldn't have to be separated from his brother due to his work. Any other questions about him I am not at liberty to answer." Mustang replied.

"And why is that?" Fudge asked indigently.

"You would have to have permission from his guardian," Mustang replied.

"And who might that be?" Fudge asked.

"Fullmetal," Mustang replied coolly.

"But he's just a child himself," Amelia Bones said in shock.

"Fullmetal is an adult in the eyes of Amestris law. He was given custody of his brother once he became a State Alchemist," Mustang explained.

"And I don't give permission for any of you to ask about my brother," Edward stated firmly. He was not going to let them drag Al into all this mess and even more so, he didn't want them to find out about their dark secret.

"And why not?"

"Because you people will try to frame him like you're trying to frame me! He's innocent and I won't let you try and drag him through the mud too!" He said pointing at all of them.

"Fullmetal," Mustang said in a warning tone. Edward glared at him but an additional stare from Hawkeye got him to calm down a little bit.

"I know Fullmetal, and I know he would not try to stage a coup," Mustang said finitely. "Unless you have any evidence I want him released with an apology from your government."

"Excuse me? You cannot dictate our justice system Colonel," Fudge stated.

"If you proceed any further without actual evidence I will be forced to alert Fuhrer King Bradley," Mustang said, his tone steely and firm.

Fudge seemed to pale a bit at that. "This is not a matter to bring to the Fuhrer's attention."

"You're accusing one of our premier State Alchemists of conspiracy. This will warrant his attention, especially since he has a keen interest in Fullmetal's work. He is very thankful for all that he has done
to help the people of Amestris, being called the 'Hero of the People'. If he is not deeply outraged by
then, once the people of Amestris find out they will most definitely be angry."

A few of the witches and wizards talked amongst themselves. There was little evidence to say that
Edward had conspired against the ministry and if he truly hadn't then there would be quite the
international incident with Amestris. No one wanted to start a war.

"If Edward Elric is guilty-" Fudge began before Mustang cut him off. "Fullmetal has not conspired
against your government. Of that, I am very certain. This whole hearing is a waste of everyone's
time. Not only have you pulled Fullmetal away from his mission but you have forced me to leave my
duties in Amestris to come here and defend him. If you have any evidence show it to me now or I
will be forced to journey back to Amestris and bring the Fuhrer here right now."

Amelia Bones then spoke up. "Considering all that has happened I make the motion to dismiss the
charges against Edward Elric and allow him to return to his post at Hogwarts for the time being."

"I second the motion," A woman beside her then said.

Fudge seemed very reluctant to let Edward go but even he didn't want to start an incident because of
this. "Very well. You are free to go Mr. Elric."

Edward stood up and Alphonse did as well. Al quickly went to his elder brother and gave him a big
hug. Edward hugged him back and everyone left the courtroom. They stood outside and
Dumbledore gave them all some privacy, telling them that when they wished to leave to let him
know and he would aparate Edward and Alphonse back to Hogwarts and take Mustang and
Hawkeye back to Amestris as well.

"You just had to stir up trouble, didn't you Fullmetal," Mustang said.

"I wasn't asking for it! You saw how she is, what was I supposed to do?" Edward said throwing his
hands up a bit in exasperation.

"Try not to get arrested for one," He replied in a monotone voice.

"I wasn't arrested and this was all a set up because the Minster has it in his head that Dumbledore is
out to get him and is trying to take him and anyone who sides with him and Harry down."

"Are you both alright though?" Riza asked the brothers.

Edward replied, crossing his arms. "I'm fine, just annoyed."

"I'm okay Lieutenant, thank you," Alphonse said in a much less annoyed tone.

"Well, I would recommend for you both to just try and keep your heads down. What is happening
here is wrong but we can't let this devolve into an international incident," She said.

"You want us to stop? What about Harry and this whole Voldemort mess?" Edward said a bit
indigently.

"We're not saying stop, just try to keep a lower profile. Don't do anything publicly against her or the
Ministry," Mustang clarified.

Edward sighed and shook his head. "This is so wrong. He's just trying to ignore the fact this terrible
person is back and doing evil things in hopes it will become the reality."
"I understand your frustration but you need to remember that sometimes it's better to bide your time and act at just the right moment. Charging in head first may seem like the right action for you but it's not the best one."

"Of course you'd say that. You're trying to become Furhur one day," Edward grumbled.

"And through my actions, I'm now a Colonel and you as my subordinate."

"Maybe the Colonel is right Brother. We can still work with the DA," Alphonse said.

"The DA?" Riza asked, quirking her eyebrow.

"It's this thing to teach the kids how to fight since the toad isn't doing her job as the Defense teacher," Edward explained.

"Well just try to keep it under wraps and keep your head down until this year is over," Mustang said, and then turned away."Now if you excuse us I have to notify the Fuhrer about all of this."

"You're really going to tell him?" Ed asked.

"He does have a fondness for you," Mustang said. "You've done some good work changing the perception of the military and the State Alchemist program. And your exam did make him laugh."

Edward remembers that day very clearly. Everyone had been in shock of how he performed alchemy with no circle and even more so when he put his weapon to Fuhrer Bradley's throat. He still didn't know how the man had been able to pull his sword out and slice his weapon in half so quickly without him noticing.

"Don't start any wars Fullmetal," He said and went to go get Dumbledore to take them back to Amestris. Riza stayed behind for a few moments and said. "Take care, and let us know if you need anything."

Edward sighed as he looked at Alphonse. "Are you alright Brother?"

"I'm okay Al, are you?"

"I'm fine. I'm just sorry you had to go through all of that. She is not a nice woman."

"That's the understatement of the century Al, but I'll be okay once we get back."

Dumbledore quickly returned after dropping off Mustang and Hawkeye and gave Edward and Alphonse his arms. He aparated them all back to Hogwarts and Edward felt a little nauseous afterward but it passed quickly. He would never get over traveling like that. At least Al didn't have to feel that way.

"I am very sorry for what has happened Edward. If I could have stopped it I would have."

Edward waved him off. "It's alright. Thanks for getting the Colonel here."

"It was the least I could do. If you wish you may cancel your classes tomorrow if you need to. I will be in my office if you have need of me," Dumbledore then left the Elric brothers alone and they then headed up to their room.

Elizabeth paced in her painting and looked very relieved when she saw the Elric brothers. "Edward! Alphonse! You're okay!"
"We're fine," Edward said. After all this time it was still weird talking to a painting.

"Thank you for letting me know what was going on," Alphonse said. Elizabeth smiled and replied. "No problem! I couldn't let them just take your brother away. I'm glad you both are alright. I was so worried."

She then let them into their room and Edward collapsed on the bed. Today had been exhausting and now he just wanted to curl up and fall asleep. He stayed up with Alphonse for a bit to make sure his younger brother was okay before sleep finally claimed him.

Harry

Harry was pacing in the Gryffindor common room. "Don't worry Harry, Edward would never betray us," Hermione said reassuringly.

"But what if they force him?!

"Edward is as tough as nails, I doubt they could do anything that would force him to talk," Ron said.

"At least legally," Hermione added as well.

"But still!"

Hermione sighed and said. "If you're worried he sighed the parchment and that means if he does tell then he will pay for doing so. Trust me. But I know he wouldn't betray us like that."

"But what if they find out about...Alphonse?" Harry said and suddenly Hermione started to look worried as well.

"Dumbledore won't let that happen. He'll fix it like he fixed your hearing at the beginning of the term," Ron said.

Hermione nodded a little bit at that. "Yes, Dumbledore is handling it. Edward and Alphonse are members of the Order which means he'll try to protect them as much as he can."

Harry was still pacing in front of the fireplace. He just felt so angry in that moment. It was happening more an more. These strong emotions would come up and he wouldn't be able to control them. Snape was trying to get him to shut his mind off from Voldemort but it wasn't working.

Hermione distracted herself by helping Ron with some potions homework and late in the night, they all went to bed. The next morning there was talk that Edward and Alphonse had returned to school and the hearing was a wash. The trio quickly headed to Edward's classroom to see him.

Edward and Alphonse were both in the classroom reading when they entered.

Hermione was the first to speak. "Are you alright?"

Edward put down his book and took his legs off his desk, standing up. Going to the other side of his desk he leaned against it. "I'm fine. It was just a pain in the ass to deal with."

"They didn't find out anything though?" Ron then asked them.

Edward shook his head. "Nope. The DA is safe."

"And...Alphonse wasn't questioned?" Hermione asked carefully. Edward smiled a little bit at that,
touched they would care about his brother like that.

"No. We're fine."

"Brother made sure they weren't able to ask me questions," Alphonse then added.

"How?" Harry asked, a bit curious. He would think Fudge would want to question Al just as much as Edward.

"Well since I'm still a minor in the eyes of Amestris, Brother is my legal guardian."

The trio all looked a bit shocked at that. "You're his guardian?"

"Yeah, cause I'm technically an adult and Mustang fixed it so I would be Al's guardian. That way we can travel around the country without any issues."

"Well that's nice, and I'm glad you didn't have to be questioned Alphonse," Hermione said smiling a bit, looking very relieved that it all had turned out alright.

"Yeah but Umbridge is not happy so I'm sorry you'll have to deal with that today during your class. But if she tries anything just let me know. She knows she can't touch me without proper evidence or else Amestris will be up in arms about it."

"It's good you have that protection," Harry said, wishing his own government would do something about Voldemort.

Edward pushed himself off his desk and stepped closer to Harry, putting his hand on his shoulder. "It'll be alright. The Order is working to try and stop him and Fudge can't keep denying what's going on forever. He'll have to face the music sooner or later."

Harry sighed and Edward let his hand drop. "I know it's frustrating but you are doing something. You're teaching everyone how to defend themselves and that's not nothing. You're making sure when the fight does come that your friends will be able to protect themselves and those they love."

Harry nodded a little bit at that and said. "I just feel so angry about it all..."

"Anger isn't bad. It shows you care," Edward said.

Ron then checked the time and said. "We have to go now or else we'll miss breakfast or be late to Potions."

"I'll see you later today. Let me know about the next meeting," Edward said. The trio then said their goodbyes and left Edward's classroom.

Chapter End Notes

I am trying to keep to at least 1 update a month. I was going to try to write last week but things came up and life was insane for a while but it's calmed down now. I'm on Spring Break and relaxing so I hope you're all having a great time if you're on break too.
"It's almost your birthday brother," Al told him happily. Edward looked up from his desk and said. "Really?" He checked the date and hummed a bit to himself. "Wow, time does fly here."

He looked at his automail hand and then added. "And it's starting to warm up too, means I should get my old automail back."

"Did you want to invite Winry back up here?" Alphonse asked curiously.

"With everything happening I don't want her near this mess. It was crazy enough the last time she came up here."

"So you'll be going home?" Al asked and Edward nodded. "Guess so, you can join me if you want."

"That sounds great brother!"

"I'll write to her now so she knows we're coming," Edward said getting out some paper to write her a letter. He then called Ferro down from the rafters and gave him the letter to take to Winry before heading off with Alphonse to see Dumbledore.

Once they got to his office they entered and saw him at his desk. "Ah, Edward and Alphonse, to what do I owe the pleasure?"

"I need to make a quick trip home," Edward told him.

"Oh, I can make the arrangements for you to leave for the weekend if that is alright?"

"It's fine," Ed replied with a small shrug.

"If I might ask why?"

"Just need to change out my automail that's all."

"And it's brother's birthday soon too! I know Granny and Winry would love to celebrate with us," Al added happily. Edward sighed a bit when he did, he didn't like people making a big old fuss over his birthday. It wasn't anything big.

"Happy Birthday Edward," Dumbledore said with a small smile on his face.

"Thanks, I'll let you know where we need to go soon. It'll be in Resembool. I got a letter from Winry telling me she had gone home for a bit," He said.

Dumbledore then nodded and said. "I'll make sure to secure transportation for you both."

Edward gave a mock salute with two fingers as he turned to leave the office. As they walked through the grand staircase they ran into the trio.

"Hey guys, how's it going?" Edward asked, putting his hands in his pockets.

"Just got out of Umbridge's class. It's a nightmare," Ron groaned.
"She keeps going on and on about reading the book and it's just infuriating," Hermione added.

"Yeah, I don't know how you guys do it. I'd sock her in the mouth if I had to have class with her every week," he said.

"Where are you headed to?" Harry asked.

"Just got back from seeing Dumbledore, I'm heading to Amestris this weekend."

All of them looked a bit shocked to hear this and Hermione then asked with a worried expression on her face. "Why? Is something wrong?"

Ed waved them off. "No, no, I'm fine. Just going to see Winry and fix up my automail."

"And celebrate your birthday!" Al added with a cheery tone.

Ed really wished he hadn't said that and gripped the bridge of his nose. "It's not a big deal Al."

"It's your birthday?" Hermione asked.

"Yeah, this Friday actually," he said. "Really it's not a big deal."

"Why didn't you tell us? We could have done something," Hermione said looking a little disappointed.

"Again, it's no problem. I don't care about that kind of thing."

"So do you guys just not celebrate birthdays?" Ron then asked.

"No, Brother always does something for me on my birthday but he just doesn't like people making a fuss over his," Al explained.

"Well happy birthday," Harry said and Ron and Hermione echoed the sentiment.

"Thanks, sorry I'm bailing this weekend though if you wanted to have a meeting that is."

"No, we weren't planning one this week anyway," Harry clarified.

Edward nodded, he liked going to the DA meeting and even if they didn't work on physical defense he still liked to attend to help out where he could. "Good. Guess I'll see you guys later then. Let me know if you need anything." And he and Al then went off to go back to his classroom.

---

Harry

"We have to do something for Edward," Hermione said as they sat down at the Gryffindor table for supper.

"He doesn't want anything big," Ron said, grabbing some meat pie to put on his plate.

"We don't have to do something big," Hermione said rolling her eyes a little. "Just something."

Harry thought it over for a bit and said. "I agree with Hermione. I think we should get him something."

"Like what?" Ron asked as he took a bite of his supper.
The trio was silent for a couple moments while Hermione and Harry thought it over.

"Well he's not very materialistic," Hermione said, trying to think out loud a bit. "And it should be something that he could actually use. And not just here, but back home too, when he's on missions and everything."

"He can create or buy whatever he needs for missions," Ron then countered.

Harry continued to think. Ron did have a point there, and if they were going to do something for the eldest Elric brother they had to do it right.

"It should be something magical, something special he can't get because he can't do magic," Hermione then stated. She seemed to be thinking hard for a couple moments before a light bulb seemed to go off in her head. "I got it!" She said and quickly ran off, saying something about the library.

Harry looked to Ron who just shrugged and said. "Don't look at me."

Harry sighed and went back to eating. Later in the common room, Hermione came back very late, barely missing the cut off for curfew.

"Cutting it close tonight Hermione," Ron commented as he continued to work on his Potions homework.

Hermione sat down in one of the plush chairs and let out a sigh. "Finally got the research I needed, I'll have his gift ready by the time he leaves."

"What is it?" Harry asked curiously.

"You'll see. It's something special for him that I think he'll like," She said proudly.

Harry shook his head a bit, a smile on his lips as he too worked on their Potions homework before Hermione started to help them both and they all then headed up to bed.

The week came to a close and when Friday arrived the trio went out in search of the Elric brothers. They found them out on the ground with Professor Dumbledore and Professor McGonagall.

"What are you three doing here?" Ed asked a bit surprised to see them.

"We wanted to see you off, and give you this," Hermione said then pulling a small bag out from her robes.

"I told you guys not to give me anything," Edward said a bit accusingly.

"Take the gift Brother," Al then added and Edward sighed. "Can't have you people ganging up on me, it's not fair." He grumbled.

He then opened the bag and looked inside. "There's...nothing in it?"

"It's magical, you can fit a lot more inside," she said. Edward then pulled out his watch and dropped it into the bag watching it slightly disappear. He then put his hand into it and looked surprised when he had to go up to his elbow to get his watch back. "That's...amazing," He said in complete shock.

Hermione smiled brightly at that and Harry said. "It was all Hermione. She figured it out and cast the spell."
Edward put the bag in his pocket and gave her a hug. "Thank you. Really."

"You're welcome," Hermione replied with the lightest blush on her cheeks when he pulled away.

"You can't put too much in there," Ron then decided to add. "It will get full, but it won't get heavier."

"I'll keep that in mind," Edward replied.

Dumbledore then decided to say. "Your portkey is about to leave."

Edward turned to look at him and gave him a small nod. "Okay then. Thanks again, guys. We'll see you soon."

The trio nodded and then headed back to the castle for breakfast.

Edward

He turned to look back at Dumbledore and McGonagall. "Okay, we're ready."

He picked up his trunk and they stepped towards the old boot.

"Now remember, I was only able to secure this for you if Minerva accompanies you for the whole trip," Dumbledore warned. "And this portkey will reactivate on the last day of your trip bringing you right back here."

"I got it," Edward said waving him off. "Let's go."

Edward, Alphonse, and McGonagall then all took hold of the portkey which whisked them off to Amestris. Once they landed Edward had to fight the urge to dry heave and did so successfully.

"Is this the correct place?" McGonagall asked. Edward was a bit disoriented from the trip but looked around to see Granny and Winry's house. "Yeah, we're here."

McGonagall then nodded and flicked her wand to put a spell around the port key to keep people from messing with it.

Al then started to jog up the small hill to the house."Come on Brother!"

"I'm coming, Al!" He called back and began to walk with McGonagall to the house.

Granny and Den were already out there greeting Alphonse.

"It's been too long," Granny said with a smile and then looked at Edward. "And you've gotten even shorter. If that was possible."

Edward's eyebrow then twitched and he ground his teeth together. "I have not gotten smaller."

"But you clearly have, probably a whole inch this time," She said smoking her pipe.

Edward then dropped his suitcase and flailed his arms around. "I'm still taller than you shrew midget!"

"And I see your temper is still just as short as you!"

"You're so short people need a microscope just to see you!"
McGonagall seemed to be taken aback by the altercation and said. "Edward! Please!"

Both Edward and Pinako looked at her with confused expressions on their faces and Alphonse then clarified. "They're always like this. It's just a joke."

But before anyone else could react Winry came running out of the house and hugged Alphonse. "Hey! Welcome back!"

She smiled at them all and said. "It's good to see you haven't ruined my beautiful automail like last time."

Edward rolled his eyes a little at that.

"Edward, would you care to introduce us?" Pinako said.

"Oh! This is Professor McGonagall from Hogwarts. She's here to escort us back to the school once we're done," Edward said.

"It's a pleasure to meet you," McGonagall said. "And please, call me Minerva."

Pinako blew out some smoke from her pipe. "I'm Pinako Rockbell, Winry's Grandmother. And I assume you two already know one another."

"Yes, we met when I headed up to fix Ed's automail and give him his winter one."

"Let's get you inside and I'll make some tea," She said and turned to walk inside with Den on her heels.

"Your regular automail is ready to go but I will need to make some adjustments after I've taken some measurements from you to make sure it'll fit," Winry explained. "I can get it done tomorrow and you guys can head back home on Sunday."

"Just giving you guys enough time to celebrate my birthday," Edward said a bit accusingly, picking up his suitcase and walking inside with everyone else.

"And so you can rest," Winry said rolling her eyes. "The adjustment back to regular automail is a bit tougher since it is heavier."

"Fine," Edward said and went to go put his suitcase up in their old room.

Pinako came back with some tea and McGonagall sat down, thanking her.

"Any friend of Edward and Alphonse is always welcomed here," she told her as Edward came back downstairs.

"Forgive me for asking, but you're not related are you?" McGonagall then asked and Edward shook his head as he sat down as well. "No, but I've known Winry all my life and Granny too."

"I delivered them both and knew their family well, I helped take care of them when Trisha passed," Pinako further explained.

"And so they stay with you whenever they are back home?"

"Yes, though it's also usually because Edward has broken his automail and needs it to be fixed."

McGonagall nodded as she sipped her tea.
Winry then started to pull Edward to her workshop. "Come on Ed, let's get your measurements so I can start working and you can leave on time."

Edward followed her and took off his coat and shirt, along with his shoes so Winry could get the measurements that she wanted.

"Seems you've grown just a quarter of an inch. I'll have to lengthen your leg and adjust your arm," Winry said as she put her measuring cloth up to write down some things.

"Ha! So I have grown!"

"You're still a pipsqueak and you'd grow more if you drank your milk," Winry said not even looking up from her pad.

"I AM NOT SHORT!"

It was later on in the evening when they all retired while Winry continued to work. The next day Edward got up and Winry replaced his winter automail with his spare leg. He then left while Alphonse played with Den and Pinako and McGonagall were talking.

---

Minerva

Minerva looked around the house when the sun started to set and then asked Alphonse. "Where is Edward?"

"Brother took a walk early this morning."

"And do you know where he is?" She asked.

"Knowing that boy there's only one place he'd be," Pinako interjected. "Go down the lane, about half a mile and you'll find him."

McGonagall nodded and headed out in search of him. She walked down the dirt lane and soon saw a small cemetery. She saw Edward sitting in front of a grave and her heart fell a bit. These boys were so young when they lost their mother. It only made sense that he would visit her grave when he returned home.

She kept her distance, standing a bit behind him to give him some privacy.

"Guess it's time to go back isn't it?"

Minerva nodded and replied. "Yes, it is."

Edward stood up and brushed himself off.

"What was she like?"

Edward paused for a moment and then said. "She was kind, she had the brightest smile. When our father left she didn't smile as often. But at the end she would smile for us, telling us it would be okay. She thought our deadbeat dad would come back for us, for her, in the end, but he never did."

Edward turned to leave and walked away.

Her expression was sad as she pulled out her wand and cast a spell. Suddenly white flowers appeared and twisted themselves into an intricate wreath right in front of the grave. Minerva then turned to walk away, silently vowing to look after Trisha Elric's sons as long as they were at
"Okay, ready?" Winry said as she and Pinako got their wrenches in place to attach the nerves.

"Ready," Edward said through his teeth.

"On the count of three," Pinako said. "One, two," And then both Rockbell women turned and attached the nerve endings.

"Damn it!" Edward cursed as the fire ran through his stumps.

"Three." Winry finished.

Edward let out the breath he had been holding and groaned. "It never gets better."

"It won't," Winry replied as she made some final adjustments.

"It is very remarkable," McGonagall commented. "It's spectacular."

"Thank you," Winry said smiling brightly.

"Okay, you'll need the night to adjust and get used to it before you go back," Winry said as Edward stood up. The weight was familiar but having the lighter, winter automail for so long he saw why he needed the time to adjust.

"Other than the weight it feels good Winry. Thanks," He said opening and closing his fist to test it out.

"Good. I have the bill right here," she said presenting him with the slip of paper.

"HOW ON EARTH DOES IT COST THIS MUCH! YOU BARELY DID ANYTHING!"

A wrench soon came down on his head, knocking him back onto the couch. "It's my fee you alchemy nut. And you can afford it."

"Damn it, woman! You're bleeding me dry here!"

Winry looked ready to hit him again and he put his hands up in surrender. "It's my birthday! You can't hit me on my birthday!"

Winry sighed and shook her head. "Fine."


"Supper is ready," Pinako then said, going to the kitchen. Edward headed there to see some of his favorite stew and a small cake sitting there on the table.

"You guys-"

"Stop, you're going to let us celebrate your birthday. You're sixteen now." Winry said and they all sat down to have a birthday meal for Edward. The night before he was going to turn in Winry cornered him.

"If this is about your fee-"
"It's not!" She said and then shoved an envelope in his hand. "It's your present.

Edward looked at the envelope and opened it to see a couple pictures of Winry in Rush Valley, Colonel Mustang and his group, and even Winry with Pinako and Den.

"You never come home and you two are on the road so much I thought you'd like them."

His expression softened as he looked at all the photos. "Thank you, Winry. They're great."

"Happy Birthday Ed," she said gently and gave him a quick kiss on the cheek before running to her room leaving Ed standing there speechless.

The next morning he, Al, and McGonagall were ready to head back to the school.

"Be careful with my beautiful automail," Winry warned and Ed rubbed the back of his neck. "No promises." Though the murderous look in Winry's eye quickly made him retract. "I mean I promise I'll be careful!"

Winry shook her head. "What am I going to do with you?"

Ed chuckled just a bit. "I'll see you soon. Once the school year is up I'll be back in Amestris."

"It's almost time Edward," McGonagall then added.

Ed gave her a short nod and picked up his suitcase. "Bye Winry. Bye Granny!" Alphonse said and gave both of them a hug.

"Call us as soon as you're back home!" Winry said smiling up at him.

"Bye guys," Edward said turning and walking away.

The group then went to the portkey and when the time came, all took hold and were whisked back to Hogwarts.
"There's a DA meeting tonight brother," Al told him and Edward gave a small nod in reply. "Yeah, I think Harry said he wanted to focus more on defensive magic and other spells. Plus we worked them pretty hard last time with drills."

"So do you want to go? It's still interesting to watch," Al replied.

"Sure, if you want to go, Al we can," Edward replied putting down his travel journal. He had been rereading his Alchemy notes trying to see if there as something he possibly could have missed that would help them. Of course, the Philosopher's Stone would do the trick but Edward couldn't bring himself to use it, and Al wouldn't want to get his body back that way either so it was effectively useless.

He got up and headed to the Room of Requirement with Alphonse; walking three times in front of the wall to reveal the secret room. Stepping inside he saw a couple students standing around and talking as the rest slowly filed in. They couldn't all go in at once or it would be suspicious.

"Alright everyone, today we're going to be working on the knockback jinx and refreshing some of our other defensive spells," Harry announced. As he began to organize everyone and demonstrate the spell a large thunderous noise was heard causing everyone to freeze in their tracks. Edward was immediately on the defensive, ready for any attack. His hands twitched just a little as he kept them close together and ready to clap so he could transmute something.

Alphonse was also at the ready, with both of the Elric brothers standing protectively between the students and the door.

It was silent for just a moment before another large boom which caused the door to shake and crack a little before there was a massive explosion. Edward quickly clapped his hands and bent down, transmuting the ground into a large wall to put up some form of protection between them and whoever was attacking.

"Run!" He yelled as the students screamed and panicked behind him. Luckily the Room of Requirement seemed to know their every need and a small door formed for the students to escape through. Harry, Ron, and Hermione stayed beside the Elric brothers though.

"Get out of here now," Edward snapped at the trio. None of them seemed like they wanted to leave but the look in Edward's eyes told them if they didn't he would transmute a passage out of the room for them if they didn't try to go voluntarily. "You to Al, whatever's coming I can't have you getting hurt."

Alphonse shook his head. "I'm not leaving you, brother."

"Go and make sure the other kids get out of here safely, transmute the door behind you if the room doesn't already close it off. Keep them from getting captured or hurt.

There was just a brief moment of silence before Alphonse gave a short nod and ran to the door. The wall that was created by Edward soon collapsed as Hermione ran to the door with Ron and Harry behind her. Edward then saw who was attacking; it was Umbridge, Filch, and some Slytherin goons.

He saw the self-satisfactory smirk on her toad-like face and had to hold back the growl brewing in
the back of his throat. "Get them!" She yelled and Edward blocked a bolt of red light with his arm, a spell most likely trying to subdue him. Of course, it had to be her. It was always her. Everything bad at this school was because of her. But he didn't have much time to dwell on that as more spells came flying at him. He dodged most but one caught him in the arm and sent him flying back, knocking all the air out of his lungs.

Edward was dazed by the attack but his instincts were screaming at him to move, to do something!

Hermione and Ron had gotten away through the door, with Alphonse behind them. Edward then yelled. "Do it! I'll be fine!" Knowing that Alphonse would transmute the door so it couldn't be opened by anyone and so the students that had gotten away wouldn't be caught. He just hoped everyone had gotten away, but unfortunately, Harry was hit with a jinx that caused him to crumple to the floor. Edward struggled to get up and help him but was dragged up roughly by Filtch. "Got 'em!"

Edward unleashed a string of curses at the old man before Umbridge flicked her wand causing his throat to close up and he couldn't speak.

"Language Mr. Elric," She said in a haughty and smug tone. Edward's glare was then turned on at full power and he couldn't deny the small bit of pleasure he got from forcing her to look away from him and avoid the eye contact.

"Well, well, Mr. Potter. It seems I was right about you all along." She turned to the few Slytherins that had helped her, Edward saw Draco Malfoy grinning among them, and said. "Fifty points to Slytherin, for each one of you!" She said proudly and Edward rolled his eyes.

"Come now," She ordered and he and Harry were dragged to Dumbledore's office. Edward cursed himself for letting down his guard, he should have known that Umbridge would try something like this. But they had been so careful. It meant someone had to have ratted them out and when he found out who he was going to have some choice words with them.

In Dumbledore's office, he saw the Headmaster, along with Professor McGonagall and Fudge along with a red-headed boy and a black wizard in colorful robes. He remembered seeing him at one of the Order of the Phoenix meetings, Shaklebolt.

"Well, well, well," Fudge said in the same smug tone of Umbridge.

"We caught them trying to escape," Umbridge told him proudly.

"Mr. Potter, Mr. Elric, do you know why you are here?" Fudge asked looking at the two of them.

Edward opened his mouth to give him a piece of his mind but nothing came out despite him trying his hardest.

"He was cursing up a storm this one," Filtch told them. "And it appears trying to do so again," Fudge commented as Edward glared at him.

"Mr. Elric, if you promise to keep the harsh language to a minimum I'll reverse the spell," Dumbledore said in a much kinder tone. Edward didn't like it but he gave a small nod and with the flick of a wand his voice returned.

"No I don't know why you dragged us both here and assaulted us," He replied after clearing his voice a little.

"Mr. Potter?" Fudge asked obviously not pleased. Harry shook his head. "No, I don't."
"So neither of you know why you are here?" Umbridge said incredulously. "So neither of you have broken any school rules or ministry decrees?"

"No, I haven't. I thought we went over this at my hearing, or should I call my commanding officer so he can let the Fuhrer know about all of this?"

Fudge seemed to slightly pale at that and said. "No, not at all."

"I think we should bring in our informant," Umbridge suggested. "It might help jog their memories."

Fudge nodded and soon a girl, Marietta, he believed came into the office looking very scared.

"Come on now," Umbridge almost cooed at the girl. "Tell us what you told me."

"Yes now, come on- Galloping Gargoyles!" Fudge soon exclaimed as it was revealed that Marietta had been horribly disfigured with the word 'SNEAK' written across her forehead in purple pustules.

Edward even winced a bit and made a mental note to never, ever, piss off Hermione Granger. Marietta wailed and hid her face once more and while Umbridge tried to coax her to speak Harry and Edward shared a look. Hermione had promised that no one would snitch and if they did it would be monstrous and she definitely lived up to that promise.

"Well fine! I'll tell him," Umbridge said finally giving up on getting her to talk. "Miss Edgecomb came to my office this evening to tell me about this secret meeting Mr. Potter was organizing with the other students. She told me it was on the seventh floor in a hidden room and well...then this happened." She told him, gesturing to an almost quivering Marietta.

"It was very brave and smart of you to come to Professor Umbridge young lady, I'll be sure to tell your mother how good a student you're being here at school. Now can you tell us what the purpose of the meeting was tonight?"

Marietta whimpered and shook her head. Umbridge was looking more and more frustrated at the girl. Edward couldn't help but smirk, her perfect little plan was falling apart right in front of her weird idol.

"Can't you reverse it?" Fudge asked and Umbridge shook her head. "I haven't been able to find a counter-jinx Minister."

Edward's smirk only grew, Hermione was gifted and he was sure it would take a lot to break whatever spell she had put in place.

"It doesn't matter if she can speak, I can tell you what happened. Potter organized a meeting in October at the Hog's Head which we have testimony from one of the few patrons there that it took place," Umbridge told them proudly. "Clearly in defiance of the Ministry Decree."

Edward sighed a bit, he knew that meeting place sucked and told them as much.

"I'll have to stop you there Delorus, that decree did not go into effect until the day after said meeting and so they cannot be punished for breaking it," Dumbledore replied smoothly and Edward had to hold back a laugh at how red Fudge and Umbridge turned.

"Fine," She bit out. "Well in the months since then the other meetings that happened would be illegal even if the first wasn't."

"Well, they certainly would have been if they had taken place. Do you have any evidence that even
one meeting occurred in that time?" Dumbledore asked.

"Miss Edgecombe told me about the meeting tonight herself before the curse set in!" Umbridge protested.

"And no others, meaning you have no evidence that any occurred in that time," Dumbledore stated.

Umbridge then forced Marietta to look at her. "Tell us, dear, were their other meetings? You can just nod or shake your head. I'm sure it won't make the spots worse."

Marietta shook her head with more tears in her eyes and Edward was again thankful. She had snitched but the punishment seemed to fit the crime and at least now Umbridge's whole case was falling apart.

"Why are you shaking your head!?" Umbridge said, her voice showing how frustrated she was.

"I believe she is telling us no unless Miss Edgecomb is using a new silent form of communication we are all unfamiliar with," Professor McGonagall quipped which angered Umbridge to no end.

"Tell us!" Umbridge ordered. "Potter set up the meetings and Potter was the leader with Edward Elric helping him train students to fight against the Ministry!" She started to almost shake the girl causing McGonagall to pull her away and move Marietta behind her. "I will not have you assault one of my students Dolores," She said firmly.

"Calm yourself Madame Umbridge," Shaklebolt also said, standing by McGonagall.

"No-I mean yes, you're right. I forgot myself," She murmured.

"Dolores, the meeting tonight definitely happened though," Fudge said trying to get it all back on track.

"Yes! Yes well..." Umbridge said straightening out her pink jacket. "Miss Edgecombe informed me of the meeting and I went to catch them all red-handed. But we were only able to find Mr. Potter and Mr. Elric here who used his alchemy to try and stop us from catching the other students. And when I sent Miss Parkinson into the room to check if they had left anything behind we found this!"

She then produced the Dumbledore's Army list of names and Edward's heart dropped. He could see the color slightly drain from Harry's face as well. This was not good.

"Dumbledore's Army, eh?" Fudge said looking at the list of names. "And Mr. Potter and Mr. Elric's names along with a number of other students names are on here I see."

Dumbledore was silent for just a few moments before tossing his hands up a little before putting them behind his back. "Well the game is up it seems, would you like a written confession or will my statement here be enough?"

"C-confession? What- I don't-" Fudge seemed absolutely in shock and so was Edward. He hadn't expected Dumbledore to jump straight to that. He had to have something up his sleeve.

"Dumbledore's Army. It's right there at the top of the parchment. Not Potter's. Dumbledore's." "You organized this!?!" Fudge exclaimed and Dumbledore simply nodded. "Yes I did and Mr. Potter acted under my instructions. Tonight's meeting was supposed to be the first. And Mr. Elric I am afraid was quite the shock to see show and interest. I know for a fact his commanding officer told him not to interfere in our affairs but I suppose the military training in him made him try to find out
what was going on so he could report it to the proper authorities."

Everyone looked to Edward who nodded in reply. He trusted Dumbledore and if he wanted to do it this way then he would play along, even though it killed him a bit inside. "Yeah, my main duty in Amestris is to bust up corruption and other crime rings in different cities. I stumbled upon their meeting in Hogsmeade and decided to investigate. This was the first meeting and I thought going and finding out would show you that Amestris is a friend to you and your government."

Luckily for Ed, he was a very convincing liar, years of practice made it so he could lie about his injuries and Al's flawlessly.

"Then you have been plotting against me!" Fudge yelled and Dumbledore nodded in reply. "Yes, I have."

Harry then shouted. "No! No Professor!"

Dumbledore put up his hand and said. "Please, I know you want to try to take the fall for me but it's not necessary."

"Be quiet Potter!" Fudge then snapped, looking like it was his birthday with the happiness on his face. "I knew it! I knew you were plotting against me with all this You-Know-Who's returned business."

He then looked to the red-headed boy. "Weasley? You've gotten it all written down right? You got it all?" Edward's eyes widened a bit, so this had to be the older brother Ron had told him about that was a bit estranged from the family. The red-haired boy was furiously writing all of this down and nodded. "Yes! Yes, I've got it all."

"Excellent," Fudge said rubbing his hands together. "Well then, we can have it in the morning edition of the Prophet if we rush it."

"Now, you will be escorted back to the Ministry where you will be charged and then sent to Azkaban to await your trial," Fudge told Dumbledore, the smug look never leaving his face.

"Ah, you see, I thought we might hit a bit of a snag there," Dumbledore said walking out from behind his desk.

"A snag?" Umbridge questioned.

"Well yes, it appears you are under the impression I am to go... what is the phrase? 'Come quietly'."

"You can't escape Dumbledore," Umbridge said pulling out her wand. Edward's eyes darted around the room, even with McGonagall, himself, and Harry, he knew that they could prevent them from taking Dumbledore but the expression on the man's face told him not to do anything of the sort. Edward didn't know his plan but he trusted him enough to stay silent and not take action, which killed him a bit.

"Enough of this!" Umbridge snapped, with her and Fudge looking like a cat about to pounce on their prey. "Take him!"

Dumbledore winked at Harry and Edward and suddenly Fawkes flew down and Dumbledore reached up to grab him, sending a wave of light and pressure throughout the room, knowing everyone back except for Harry, McGonagall, and Edward. Everyone was knocked out and Dumbledore quickly went to the boys.
"Listen, we haven't got much time. They will wake soon, you need to act like no time has passed like you were knocked out too."

"Professor I-" Harry said, looking like he was trying to apologize.

"None of that. Don't worry about me. You need to continue your lessons and try to close your mind. It is vital," Dumbledore said, gripping Harry's shoulders tightly.

"But-"

"Close your mind Harry," Dumbledore said firmly.

He then looked to Edward and said, "You must keep up the act Edward, and I am entrusting you to look after Harry for me while I am gone."

Edward nodded and snapped his heels together and gave the perfect military salute. "Yes, sir." He never gave anyone that unless he one-hundred percent deserved it. It was a rare gesture for him and he could tell Dumbledore appreciated it.

Dumbledore then gave a look to McGonagall and Fawkes swooped down once more, Dumbledore catching his tail and disappearing in a flash of fire and smoke.

When the others looked like they were stirring Edward pulled Harry down to the ground to look like they too had been knocked out. Ed rubbed his head and let out a fake groan.

"W-what! Where is he!?” Fudge yelled as he woke. "Find him!"

Umbridge looked to Harry and grabbed him. "Where did he go!?”

Edward didn't hold himself back and pushed Umbridge away, standing protectively in front of Harry. "He disappeared. I woke and Harry was still out like all of you, all that was left was some smoke and ash. You all have wands, use them to find him instead of manhandling students."

Umbridge huffed and straightened her horrendous pink outfit out before leaving to try to find him.

"Come along now," McGonagall said, helping Marietta up. "You all should be in bed now."

Fudge gave a dismissive gesture as he left the office. Kingsley got up as well and rubbed the back of his head as he followed him. "You may not like it Minister, but Dumbledore's got style."

And Edward couldn't help the smirk that appeared on his lips.
Edward

Dumbledore's Flight, as it was now being called by the whole student body, was all anyone seemed to talk about the following week. Everyone was amazed at how Dumbledore seemed to vanish and elude capture so easily. Edward would be fine with it all except for the fact of his replacement, Umbridge. Though apparently, the old man's office had sealed itself magically so she couldn't get in which delighted Edward to no end.

But with Dumbledore gone, there was no one to check Umbridge and her tyrannical reign had just begun.

The simmering resentment towards Umbridge had now turned into a full-on raging fire. Without Dumbledore, it seemed like every practical joker and even some of the teachers were determined to undermine her.

Edward was walking through the corridors, it was harder now since it seemed the Weasley twins were going all out to try and force Filtch and Umbridge to both have a heart attack with all the messes they were making. There were a couple swamps scattered around Hogwarts now that Filtch couldn't clean up for the life of him and Edward and since learned to avoid. He made it clear to the twins if they ever needed help to come to him and they did. He had been a lookout for them after they had snuck into Umbridge's office and put a magical stink bomb in there that he was sure was still smelling up the place.

Edward was even able to get some materials for them to make some magical fireworks that they set off in the Great Hall at breakfast. He was able to get the basic materials as he did need some of them for his class, but the rest went to the twins. Edward made sure Al joined him for supper as Fred and George had given him a heads up. Ed tried to keep Al away from Umbridge as much as possible and Madame Pince was a great help at keeping Al hidden in the vast library most of the days.

The fireworks went off, showering the students in fantastical sparks and causing Umbridge to try to get rid of them with her wand. But every time she seemed to wave it they either multiplied or got louder. Sometimes they would spell out 'UMBRIDGE STINKS' in red and gold sparks. Edward was beaming with pride and saw a couple of the other teachers looking rather impressed as well, though hiding it a bit more.

He saw Harry, Ron, and Hermione, and a small smile crossed his face. He had to admit, the trio really had grown on him. Their birthday gift to him was very handy and he kept a couple personal objects in there for safe keeping, including his travel journal.

Though before he could reach them he did see Draco Malfoy standing there with a self-serving grin on his lips.

"And another five points from Gryffindor because I just don't like you, Potter," He added as Ed came up from.

"You can't take away points from us Malfoy, only Professors can," Hermione said.

"The new decree says otherwise, Granger. And I think that will be another ten for the lip and
because you're a Mudblood," He added smirking as Ed came up from behind him.

"Oh really?" Edward said causing Draco to jump ever so slightly.

A look of relief crossed the trio's faces as they saw the young Alchemy Professor.

"Members of the Inquisitor Squad can deduct House Points," Draco said, as Edward saw him puffing his chest just a bit.

"Oh really? Well so can teachers," Edward said. "And I heard those bullshit remarks so I think I'll deduct about ten points for every one of your deductions on Harry, Ron, and Hermione. How many was it?"

"He took about fifty points from Gryffindor, about three for each of us," Hermione supplied causing Draco to glare at her.

"And let's add another fifty on top of that," he said.

"That's one-hundred and forty points!" Draco exclaimed.

"So think twice about abusing your power. Just because some little decree says you are more important doesn't mean it's true. Having a fancy title doesn't mean shit. It's the person behind it that makes it count. I've seen Privates in the military have more character and moral backbone than some of our highest generals." He said. "And if I hear anything about you abusing your power I will start deducting twice that."

The color seemed to drain a little from his face but quickly returned as a bright red formed in a fury. Draco then stomped off in a rage.

Edward turned to the trio and said. "I'm sorry about that. A hundred points to Gryffindor for trying to stand up for what's right."

"I've never really seen you give out or take away House Points before," Hermione said.

"Thanks, now that Umbridge is in charge he's been a right git," Ron added.

"No problem, just let me know if he causes any more trouble and I'll help add back points."

"Umbridge won't like that," Harry said a bit waringly.

"Oh I know, but right now I'm protected by my government and since Dumbledore is the Ministry's fall guy for everything it seems I'm free and clear. And really I don't care if she chews me out. But if she tries to do anything to Al then I'm coming after her hard."

"Thank you again," Hermione said and Edward gave her a kind smile. "You're welcome."

"We better get to Potions," Harry said and Edward gave them a short goodbye before he made his way back to the library to meet up with Alphonse. He alerted his brother to what was going on and told Al to get him whenever he saw any of the Slytherin goons taking away points for bullshit reasons. Al wasn't a teacher so he couldn't do anything about the House Points situation but at least he could tell Ed what was going on and Ed could try to rectify it as best he could. Umbridge was a pain and this was the least he could do to try and help out the students under her thumb.

Ed was in his classroom, grading papers when Umbridge came in still carrying her clipboard and quill. Ed didn't look up from the papers in front of him.
"Hem," Umbridge cleared her throat a little to get his attention. Edward wrote some things down and glanced up at her. "Can I do anything for you? I have about twenty more of these to finish by the end of today."

"I heard you were interfering with the Inquisitorial Squad."

Edward continued to grade and replied. "I stopped a student from abusing his power which he shouldn't have."

"I am Headmaster now Mister Elric," She said curtly.

Edward couldn't help himself. "Yes, I was there remember?"

Umbridge turned about the same shade as her atrocious clothes. "Mister Elric! The Minister did not ring charges against you and one would think you would be more grateful to escape justice."

Edward set his pen down and had to hold back his glare, standing up he said in the calmest voice he could manage at the time. "I am only here for a few more months but I will not let you or anyone else treat the innocent students of this school like second-class citizens. You tell your little Squad to stop acting like spoiled children and grow the hell up because that shit they're pulling won't fly in the real world."

"He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named has not returned," She said firmly, her eyes ablaze with anger.

"I never said he was. As I've said again and again; anyone who died cannot come back to life. That is a fact. None of your magic can do it and neither can alchemy." And that was the truth, but Edward knew that Voldemort hadn't actually died and therefore could be brought back to full strength. But he couldn't lie like that around Umbrigde.

It seemed to work though as Umbridge gave a curt nod and said. "Very well. I would remind you to know your place, Mr. Elric."

Edward shook his head and sat down as she turned to leave. Like hell, he would.

Harry

Harry rubbed his forehead, his scar hurting more and more.

"Harry, you know you shouldn't be in pain because you should be closing off your mind," Hermione chastised.

"It's a lot harder than it sounds Hermione," Harry snapped, feeling the rage boil up inside him. His jaw twitched as he wanted to bite and snap at her but that quickly dissipated as it soon turned to horror.

"Hermione I-I'm sorry-I." Hermione put up her hand and shook her head. "It's fine, but you really need to work on your lessons with Snape. Dumbledore said it was key."

Harry didn't want to though. He hated those lessons in the dungeon. But he had to, it was so important to Dumbledore he made sure to reinforce it in the precious few seconds he had left here at Hogwarts. Harry couldn't let him down like that. So he headed off to his lesson in the dungeon.

As he headed down there he felt dread in the pit of his stomach. But this lesson was not like the others. Harry had stumbled upon one of Snape's memories in his pensive which caused the Potion's
master to become enraged and threw Harry out of his office, and it looked like he wouldn't have
another lesson with him again. With Dumbledore not at the school, he couldn't force Snape to give
Harry the lessons. But that wasn't the thing Harry was thinking about as he sat in the dungeons.

He was thinking about his Dad. He had seen how he had been at Hogwarts and Snape had been
right all along. His father was arrogant and a bit of a bully. He stayed there for a while before slowly
making his way up to Gryffindor tower.

Harry wasn't paying much attention when he bumped into the back of a suit of armor. He stood back
to see it was Alphonse and Edward.

"Harry! I'm sorry, are you okay?"

Edward looked at Harry and saw the look on his face. "You okay?"

"Yeah..I'm fine," He replied.

Edward and Alphonse didn't look convinced. "Where are you coming from?" Edward asked
glancing behind him a bit.

"The dungeons I was with Snape and-" Edward then cut him off. "What did he do?"

"No he-I mean I- it wasn't-"

Edward sighed and stepped closer to Harry putting his arm around his shoulders. "Hey, come with
us." He then led Harry to his classroom and sat down with him. Alphonse had grabbed a tin of treats
that he kept just in case Edward needed to eat something and wouldn't leave to get proper food.

Harry took the biscuit and Alphonse also made them some tea through alchemy. He filled the kettle
and heated it up as well before pouring him a cup. Harry knew the younger Elric brother was more
caring like that, at least outwardly. It didn't mean Edward didn't care, he just didn't show it like his
brother did.

Harry then went on to explain everything that had happened. He told them both about the memory
he had seen and when he was done Edward sighed. "Look, me and Al don't have the best track
record when it comes to fathers."

Harry knew Ed and Al's dad abandoned them and their mother when they were young but he still
listened.

"But from what I've heard, your dad gave his life to protect you and your mom. And the memory
you saw doesn't define who he was. He was a kid, and he was being stupid. That's apart of life. He
didn't remain that way forever, did he?"

Harry shook his head. Everything other people had told him was nothing like the person Harry had
seen in the Pensive.

"See? Everything you've heard about your parents isn't a lie. Your dad was arrogant just like almost
every fifteen-year-old boy is."

"I'm fifteen!" Harry protested. "And so are you?"

"And you don't think Brother is arrogant?" Alphonse said, getting a slight glare from Edward.

"You are too. You set up a whole underground training club to undercut Umbridge," Edward added.
"But that was-"

Edward interrupted him. "You weren't arrogant like your father was, but you are a bit. It comes with being a teen Harry. And most people grow out of it."

"You can't let one snapshot define your view of your dad, especially when he was young and stupid."

Harry sighed and looked down at his cup of tea. "Snape was right though...he was right about my dad."

"When he was at school? Maybe a little. But Snape is holding a grudge and you don't know how your dad acted in his last two years at school too. He might have changed a lot then. And even so, your dad still stood up when it counted. He faced down a mad-man to try and save you and your mother. That doesn't sound like the same man to me does it?"

Harry shook his head. "No..I guess you're right."

Edward nodded and Alphonse gave Harry some more biscuits before they sent him back to Gryffindor tower so he wouldn't be caught out of bed and get in even more trouble with Umbridge. He still wanted to talk to Sirius and Lupin though. They had been there with his dad and while Edward's talk did make him feel a bit better he still needed to talk to them. But with Umbridge looking through their mail and monitoring the fireplaces it wouldn't be easy.

So he enlisted Fred and George to create a diversion to get Umbridge out of her office so he could sneak in and talk to them through the fireplace. He was able to use his invisibility cloak to sneak in and talk to both of them. They had repeated what Edward had told him earlier and explained a bit more about the situation. Harry quickly left as someone was coming.

He saw Filch burst in and grab something before running off. Harry got out and took off the cloak when it was safe and went to see what the twins were doing.

Edward

Fred and George were standing in the entrance hall, surrounded by students and teachers alike. They had pulled off a massive prank, combining everything they had been doing. They had created a few more swamps, more stinky and messy than before and fireworks were going off all over the place while all the decrees had been changed to say hilarious new orders. All of them slamming Umbridge, Filch, or the Inquisitorial Squad while praising Dumbledore.

Umbridge was looking more furious than she had ever been, but also triumphant in cornering the twins. "There is nowhere to run! You two are going to see what happens to rule breakers and troublemakers in my school!"

"It's Dumbledore's school! And you'll never really be Headmistress!" Fred yelled back at her.

"And you know what?" George said looking to Fred. "I don't think we will find out. What do you think Fred?"

Fred gave a nod and replied. "I think it's time we took our talents elsewhere."

"I've been thinking the same thing, Fred."

Both raised their wands and cried out. "Accio brooms!" And two brooms flew into their hands. Both
mounted them and kicked off before Umbridge or Filch could move a muscle.

The pair flew over the crowd of now cheering students, setting off more fireworks and stink bomb over Umbridge and her cronies.

"If anyone fancies buying any of the products you've seen us use then find us in Diagon Alley! Our new shop, Weasley's Wizard Wheezes!" Fred called out, throwing more fireworks.

"And a special discount to any Hogwarts student who promises to use them against this old toad!"

The students and some of the teachers roared. Edward beamed up at the twins, never prouder to know them.

"Stop them!" Umbridge roared, waving her wand to try and get the fireworks surrounding her to back off.

The twins flew around and high fived one another before flying off into the clouds, though not before dropping a stink bomb right on Umbridge's head.

It had been one of the greatest moments of Edward's life.

Chapter End Notes

Please let me know what you liked and what you think will happen next.

Now we are getting a bit to the end, I don't know how many chapters it will take but I am thinking 8 more after this one. That is what I have planned out, now give or take a chapter or two. So if I stick to my plan of 1 a month, then I should finish this series up in less than a year (fingers crossed).

I am debating on writing an epilogue for the story, set after the Brotherhood anime and Deathly Hollows. I know some people wanted me to do a sequel with Half-Blood Prince but I just can't see myself doing that. I do apologize if you wanted that.

I may or may not do some one-shots depending but that's very iffy at the moment.

Well, I just wanted to give you all a little update on where I was and everything. Hope you all like it!
The only thing anyone seemed to be talking about over the next few weeks was what happened when the Weasley twins left. They had left in a blaze of glory so intense that no one would forget it. Edward was sure that it would soon become a part of the legend of the school.

But as the end of the school year drew closer the 5th years seemed to be getting extra stressed. Edward knew this was because of their big, life-determining exams. Their O.W.L.s. Edward tried to give the class less homework over this time so they could concentrate more on studying for their other, more important, exams. Edward knew it was probably most akin to the State Alchemist Exam he had to go through. But that was pretty easy for him, especially the physical part of the exam. The written was a bit hard but he was able to get a fairly high score none the less.

But when Edward was at the staff table he saw Hagrid acting a bit nervous.

"Everything alright?"

Hagrid looked to Edward and opened his mouth before closing it. He then paused for a few seconds before saying, "Come down to me hut this afternoon during the Quidditch match. Bring Al with ye."

Edward gave a small nod and Hagrid stood up to leave. Edward's brow furrowed as he watched him leave the Great Hall. When Edward got back to his empty classroom he told Al and the pair headed down when it was time. They met up with Hagrid who had Harry and Hermione right behind him.

"Come with me," He said, and the group followed him into the forest.

Ed and Al looked to Harry and Hermione but both seemed just as confused and lost as they were.

As they got deeper it got darker and Edward had to struggle to see what was in front of them. Luckily Harry and Hermione were able to light their wands.

Once they got close, Hagrid said. "It's no secret that Umbridge wants me gone…"

"She won't force you to leave," Edward said firmly.

"Look, I ain't gonna fight it," Hagrid said. "I'd up and leave right now if it wasn't for…" He looked down further into the forest and sighed. "Look I need ye to promise me ye'll look after him."

"Who Hagrid?" Al asked.

"Well…" He then lead them into a small clearing with a hill on the side. Edward paused as he heard the sound of breathing, but it was much louder than normal.

"Hagrid what's going on?" Hermione asked.

"This is Grawp, he's my half-brother."

Hermione and Harry's eyes went wide as they looked at the hill but Ed and Al still didn't understand.

"Hagrid no," Hermione whispered, taking a few steps back.

Ed looked to Hermione, automatically moving to her to help calm her down. She looked positively
terrified. Edward followed her gaze to the hill and stared at it for a few moments before his eyes widened in horror. The hill was moving and he quickly put two and two together. The hill was a giant.

His first thought was that this couldn't be possible but then he chastised himself. He had seen a centaur and people using magic, a giant was completely in the realm of possibility.

Alphonse and Edward had instinctively moved in front of the terrified Hermione while Harry stood there in shock. Edward looked to Hagrid and said. "Why did you bring us here?"

"He won't hurt ye, I just…I'll be gone soon and-" He looked to the giant. "He needs company."

"Company?"

"Yeah, come an talk te him."

"Talk?" Hermione repeated, her voice now higher than before.

"Yeah!" Hagrid said now smiling and not noticing the change in Hermione's voice. "And it's not till I leave, right? I'll introduce ye."

"Grawp!" He called out and the giant began to stir. Edward looked to Harry and Hermione who were standing very still. Edward liked Hagrid and trusted him. But this was insane.

The giant was huge and had feet as big as Edward and his teeth looked like yellow bricks. Edward couldn't help but step back a bit and make sure Harry and Hermione were behind him.

"Grawp! I brought some people te see ye!" Hagrid said loudly. "This is Ed! And Al!" He pointed to each of them. "And Harry!" He then looked back at Hermione and asked. "Can he call ye Hermy? It's easier fer him te say."

Hermione gave a small nod and Hagrid smiled. "And Hermy!"

Grawp didn't seem that interested and quickly pulled a tree up by its roots. Birds flew out and he caught a few of them, eating them easily. Edward winced a little at the sight.

Hagrid sighed and went back to the group. "There…now he knows ye."

Hagrid then lead them back through the forest and Edward was very relieved to be heading back to school. But then he heard something in the distance and stopped. Hagrid stopped too, raising his crossbow.

"Hagrid?" Harry asked, looking around.

"Shh!" Hagrid said and looked around as well. Soon the sounds of hoofs were heard and Edward tensed. He and Al both raised their hands and kept them inches apart so as to be ready to transmute.

Soon they saw about five centaurs coming up on them. Three had their bows raised at them. Edward pulled off his glove and transmuted his automail into a blade.

"We told you not to come back Hagrid." One of them said, he had a dark black body of a horse and his hair was just as dark on the human part of him.

"You have no right te keep me out!"

"You made yourself our enemy when you interfered in our ways," He replied.
"I stopped ye from killin' Frienze!"

"And you should have let us!" Another said, he had a grey lower half and his expression was furious.

"Bane," The first said, putting up his hand. "He is with his young." Looking to the group he said. "You may leave now but do not return Hagrid."

Hagrid scowled and said. "Ye don' own te forest!"

"They are not his young," Bane said, stopping his hoof. "And the one in armor is not a fowl either."

"I'm not a fowl," Al said. "I'm fourteen."

The centaurs looked at Al with interest then. Anyone who heard Al was usually surprised to hear a voice that young come from a suit of armor that big. Though they always thought Al was physically in the armor. "You cannot be that young." One protested.

Edward looked at the bows that were still pointed towards them and glanced over at Al. "He's not lying. I'm sixteen and Harry, Ron, and Hermione are kids too. Just let us go. We've done nothing to you."

"Go now." The centaur leader said firmly.

Hagrid didn't seem pleased with how the centaurs were treating them but Edward really didn't want to fight these guys when they were surrounded. He was fast but even if they ran the centaurs had the bodies of horses and even he and Al couldn't outrun a horse. Plus while he could fight them off with alchemy that still left Harry and Hermione. They had their wands but Ed didn't know how effective magic was against centaurs.

"Come on Hagrid," Hermione whispered, tugging on Hagrid's coat.

Hagrid begrudgingly left the forest with them and grumbled the whole way. Once they got back to his hut he said. "Ye don' have te do anythin' less I leave."

"We understand Hagrid," Hermione said putting on a smile.

"Best get up te the castle." The group then left as it seemed the Quidditch game had ended. "I can't believe Hagrid. Bringing a giant back into the country! It's so dangerous!" Hermione ranted.

"It's his brother," Edward countered but then quickly added. "Literally gigantic and his half-brother but still...I don't blame him for trying to help him out."

"What if he got lose and hurt a student?"

"Maybe if we're lucky he'll get Umbridge," Edward replied.

Hermione huffed and said. "Teaching him English and manners...completely insane."

"We don't have to do anything unless Hagrid has to leave," Al added. "And I don't think Umbridge will get rid of him."

Edward scoffed and said. "She wants to get rid of anyone that supported Dumbledore. She just can't because then she'd have an empty school except for some of the Slytherins."

"Al is right," Harry said. "It could be that she'll wait till after exams to sac Hagrid and then the term
will be over and Hagrid can take Grawp somewhere else."

Hermione then looked to Edward and Alphonse. "That reminds me, will you be coming back next term?"

Harry also looked interested to hear their answer. "Maybe not. Not that we don't like it here it's just we have stuff to do and it'll depend on whether or not my commanding officer will assign me here."

While Edward did like Hogwarts and the people he had gotten to know over the year he did miss home. And he and Al needed to get back to Amestris so they could hopefully figure out how to get their bodies back. The alchemy in this country was weird and not all that useful to their goal.

"But if he did, would you want to come back?"

Edward sighed and looked to Al. "I'd like to brother. Maybe we can ask the Colonel."

Edward didn't want to deny Al but it was unlikely they would be reassigned here. "Maybe."

Hermione did look pleased with his answer, though there was a hint of disappointment in her expression. Edward didn't pretend to know what it was. He had been ignoring it in hopes that he was wrong or it would go away but maybe he should address the matter before he had to leave. Though before he could open his mouth Harry and Hermione had to turn to take a different staircase up to their tower.

"See you guys later then," Harry said and the pair of them headed off. Edward sighed and headed to his and Al's room with his brother alongside him.

---

**Harry**

The O.W.L. exams were soon upon them all. All of the 5th years seemed to be constantly living in the library studying. A few people even needed to be sent to Madame Pomphrey for a calming potion. Hermione was frantically studying all hours of the night and he and Ron were beside her for most of it.

Harry was working hard on his Transfiguration and Potions work to try and bring up his grades a bit more to get the acceptable grades for N.E.W.T. classes. He still wanted to be an Auror though he didn't want to be employed by the current Ministry of Magic.

He and Ron poured over their notes for their classes, or rather, Hermione's notes and study guides in preparation for the exams. Class time was devoted to reviewing spells, definitions, and other important subjects that might come up on their exams.

Alchemy, however, did not have an O.W.L. yet and as such many of the students who were not actively taking the class spent the time studying in the back.

Edward wasn't cruel though. He kept his lessons a bit shorter to let everyone study and didn't assign any homework that was too hard.

They had finally moved onto construction and Edward had warned them all to be careful and that the best result sometimes would be nothing happening. He went around the class, checking everyone's transmutation circles before giving them the go-ahead to attempt the transmutation.

Neville clapped his hands and put them down on his chalk-drawn circle where a few blue sparks appeared but nothing really happened.
"You don't need to clap Neville," Edward told him.

"Sorry Professor. It's just- you do it and-"

Edward put a stop to him there. "You don't need to. I clap my hands to start the transmutation without a circle. You doing it isn't necessary. Now concentrate and try again."

Neville nodded and put his hands down on the edge before a small block appeared in front of him where the deformed piece of metal had been.

"Twenty points to Gryffindor," Edward said and then went over to where Harry, Ron, and Hermione were working.

Hermione was struggling to transmute the metal into a perfect cube though Edward told her that her circle was very nice she needed to picture what she wanted to do a bit more clearly before it would happen. When she finally did it, she seemed to get the hang of things finally and was transmuting her metal back to a lump and back to a cube with ease.

Ron, on the other hand, hadn't gotten his angles right and before Edward could tell him not to activate the circle he did. The circle sparked and cracks of electricity were in the air before Ron was launched onto his back.

Edward went over to him quickly, along with Hermione and Harry.

"Are you alright?" He asked, helping Ron up along with Edward.

"You're lucky you didn't set fire to your robes," Edward chastised. "A rebounding transmutation is nothing to scoff at." He then directed his glare to Malfoy and the sniggering Slytherins.

Harry helped dust Ron off who was looking very pink in the face.

"Come on, just redo this line here and make sure it's at the right angle and you'll be fine," Edward said and helped Ron get his circle right before moving onto Harry.

Edward looked over Harry's shoulder at his transmutation circle. "Looks good. You've really gotten better at making sure your lines are straight."

Harry then tried to transmute and focused as hard as he could on making sure it was right. And to his relief, the metal formed itself into a cube. Edward picked it up and looked it over. "Very nice. I can tell it's taller than it is wide but for a first attempt, it's really good. Twenty points to Gryffindor."

It had become more and more common for Edward to hand out points during his lessons, especially now that it seemed Umbridge and the Slytherins were determined that no one except their house should get any points.

The class soon ended and the trio went off to their next lesson. They got their exam schedules too and reorganized their studying to focus more on their first exam.

The exams came and you could feel the anxiety in the air. It seemed everyone was determined to get in some last minute cramming before they had to take their tests.

They went through their exams and Harry was sure he did poorly in Divination but he didn't really care about that subject. He thought he did alright in Potions and Charms and Transfiguration and hoped he would get the necessary grades to take the N.E.W.T. classes next year. For his Defense Against the Dark Arts practical he took great pleasure in seeing Umbridge turn red at how well he
was doing. He even did a Patronus per his instructors request for a few bonus points. And he knew after exiting the hall he had earned nothing short of an Outstanding.

Edward and Alphonse came to check in on the trio and the other 5th year members of the DA who they had bonded with and Alphonse was usually in the library quizzing the 5th years on whatever they wanted at the moment. While he didn't know much about magic, he was able to use their study guides and notes to ask the right questions and correct them when they were wrong.

For their Astronomy practical exam, it was to take place at midnight on the Astronomy tower.

They headed up there when it was time and were told to fill out their star chart. Harry went to work looking at his telescope and putting the moons and stars down in the correct spots when something caught his attention.

He heard something happening down on the grounds and looked down to see Umbridge along with some others flanking her going to Hagrid's Hut. There was a loud bang as a fight ensued.

There was a mighty roar that caught the attention of everyone else around them.

"Cowards!" Hagrid yelled, fighting them off. There was a flurry of red sparks and stunning spells but they didn't seem to affect Hagrid.

No one was looking up at the sky now, they were all focused on the ground below them.

Soon there was a light from the castle and Harry saw McGonagall in a robe quickly moving towards the hut.

"Disgraceful!" She called out. "Leave him alone! What on earth possessed you to think you could attack him like this in the middle-"

She was cut off as four stunning spells had converged on her before she could even pull her want. They hit her right in the chest and she fell to the ground. Lavender Brown let out a scream as even the O.W.L. examiner stopped trying to get them to focus on their exams.

Hagrid let out a thunderous roar. "COWARDS! He swiped at two of the Ministry officials, knocking them out cold before grabbing Fang and draping the dog over his shoulder before taking off.

"Get him!" Umbridge shrieked. "Get him!" But none of her helpers seemed to be able to chase after Hagrid or had the inclination to do so. She shot a few spells at him before he disappeared into the night.

Everyone on top of the tower was in shocked silence.

"F-five minutes to go…." The examiner said quietly.

Harry didn't care about his star chart anymore. He filled in a bit more, even though he had left about a third unfinished and was desperate for the exam to end.

But right as the time started to come to a close two more figures emerged from the castle.

Edward

Alphonse had insisted on waiting up to check in with some of the 5th years after their astronomy exam. Al didn't need to sleep so he could wait for them to finish before giving them words of encouragement or offering to quiz a few of the students before they went to bed.
Edward had decided to stay up too because he didn't want Al to be alone while he waited. But when they heard the commotion outside the castle they rushed through the corridors and down the staircases to the grounds.

Outside Edward saw Umbridge with a few other wizards near Hagrid's cabin. Between them lay a woman, unconscious, on the ground.

Edward's heart sank as he recognized her as McGonagall. He and Al rushed over and Edward felt for her pulse on her neck. It was weak but it was there. He let out a small sigh of relief and said. "She's alive."

"Get her to Madame Pomfrey," Ed told Al. Alphonse easily scooped her up into his arms and quickly but carefully ran back to the castle.

Ed then rounded and glared at Umbridge and her cronies.

"What the hell happened here?" he growled, his fists tightly clenched.

"The half-breed Hagrid attacked us," Umbridge said haughtily.

Edward looked around her and said. "And let me guess, you all thought to preemptively attack him because he's so dangerous."

One of the men behind her was rubbing his arm and said. "We told him to come quietly and he wouldn't."

"Why on earth would you ambush him in the middle of the night!? What has he done!?"

"I am the Headmistress of this School Professor Elric," Umbridge said firmly.

"I don't give a rat's ass if you're the Lord of all Creation!" Edward yelled. "You have no right to go and attack someone who has done NOTHING wrong!"

He then rounded on the men who helped her. Two were starting to come to and sitting up. "And you lot! You all got what you deserved doing that to him! And why the hell did you hurt McGonagall!? What did she do to any of you!?"

"She- I mean she was trying to help him and we all- the stunning spells converged and-" One of the men stammered and Edward let out a low growl.

"You complete and utter morons! You could have killed her! She was trying to stop you and you attack her like that!"

"Professor!" Umbridge yelled. "I will not have you yell at me or Ministry officials!"

"I'll yell at anyone I damn well please you toad!" Edward roared, the fury in his veins was hot and his hands were clenched but moving closer together instinctively.

"You all should be ashamed of yourselves!" He yelled at the men behind her before turning to Umbridge. "And if you don't think I'm not going to tell your precious Minister what happened and my commanding officer than you are very mistaken! You are abusing your powers left and right and I won’t stand it any longer. If this is the way your government sees fit to act then I doubt if Amestris can be allied with you any longer! And if you even think of raising your wand to anyone else while I'm here then I will personally break it into a million pieces before I knock that stupid little smirk off your face and girlish giggle out of you!"
Edward then turned and stormed off, the rage radiating off him turning the cold night air into a warm one.
Harry

Everyone was talking about Hagrid fleeing Ministry officials and how McGonagall was caught in the crossfires the next day. But the more prevalent conversation was how apparently Professor Elric had lost it and yelled at Umbridge and the other officials and threatened to hit her so hard that all her teeth would fall out.

While Harry was pleased that Hagrid had gotten away he was worried about McGonagall. Four stunning spells to the chest was dire indeed while Hermione did assure him that Madame Pomfrey would be able to help her. Especially since Alphonse had gotten her to the Hospital Wing so quickly.

And now Harry was worried he would lose yet another professor before his exams even ended. Edward had barely escaped with his job when the DA were discovered and now he had publicly confronted Umbridge and cursed her out. While as enjoyable as it was to watch it unfold, Harry now partially wished that Edward had been quiet.

"He is going to leave soon anyways," Ron said. "And he might not have come back anyhow."

"That's not the point Ron!" Hermione said. "He could get Court-Martialed back home and get kicked out of the military."

"No way," Ron said. "You see how powerful he is? And he says that the people back home love him. He's the 'Hero of the People' remember Hermione?"

"But what if they find out about Al?" She hissed.

That did cause Ron to pale a little bit.

"He made us all swear to secrecy before," Harry added. "Said if it got out he and Al would be in big trouble. It's one of the three rules remember?"

He looked to Hermione and Ron who were now both looking as worried as he was.

"Dumbledore could help him," Ron suggested hopefully.

"He's having to run from the Ministry Ron, I doubt Edward's government would take much store in what he had to say," Hermione said, chewing in her nail nervously.

But all conversation of Edward and Al's fate had to be put aside as their last O.W.L. was upon them. History of Magic.

Harry and Ron poured over Hermione's 3-foot long study guide as they waited outside the Great Hall. Hermione was quizzing herself under her breath before gasping.

Edward was walking through the entrance hall with his hands in his pockets.

"Professor!" Hermione cried and went to him. All the 5th years seemed to swarm around him.

"Have you been sacked?"

"Did you get sentenced to Azkaban?"
"Are you having to go back to your country?"

The questions bombarded Edward before he brought his hand up to his face and whistled loudly.

"Nothing's happened," He said. "And I just wanted to come and tell you all that McGonagall is okay for now. Madame Pomfrey said she's not out of the woods yet and they may need to transfer her to a real hospital but she thinks she'll be alright."

Most of the Gryffindors and many of the Hufflepuffs and Ravenclaws let out sighs of relief at that.

"Al didn't want you all nervous about her before taking your exams. And I haven't been fired yet. I'm still going to stay here until the end of term. I don't think she wants another brawl right now."

One of the examiners then came out and told them to enter the hall. Edward wished them all luck and headed back up the marble staircase.

---

Edward

Edward roamed the castle after going back to the Hospital Wing and checking in on Al and McGonagall. Madame Pomfrey decided to transfer her to a wizard hospital and they collected her a little bit after he came back.

He knew he had lost his temper at Umbridge and Mustang would criticize him for it but he didn't care. Umbridge had it coming after everything she pulled this year and especially after last night. Most of the other teachers seemed to be in an uproar about it too. Attacking Hagrid and McGonagall like this unprovoked was a step too far. He heard a couple of the other professors in the staff room talking about resigning in protest over this.

He didn't realize how much time had passed when he bumped into Harry, Ron, and Hermione in the corridor.

Harry looked pale and very unwell. "Harry? You alright?" Edward asked.

"Do you know how to contact the rest of the Order?!" Harry asked quickly. Edward frowned, not expecting this question.

"No..the other teachers were my links to the Order. And even then my main job was to stay here and watch over you. I'm pretty powerful with my alchemy but a lot of what they were doing needs magic which I don't have."

Harry let out a string of curses before Edward pulled him into an empty classroom.

"Harry, tell me what on earth is going on right now," Edward said gripping his shoulders tightly. He also looked to Ron and Hermione who were looking very concerned about the state Harry was in right now.

"He collapsed in the exam," Hermione told him.

"He said it was just the heat and he fell asleep and had a nightmare."

"Voldemort got Sirius," Harry told them all. "He has him in the Department of Mystery and is torturing him." He then told them about the vision he had when he fell asleep in the hall while taking his History of Magic exam.
Edward studied Harry and while his first thought was that this couldn't be possible, he had to remind himself of what had happened near Christmas. Harry had seen Ron's dad get attacked and he had been right about that.

But right now Harry seemed unsteady so Edward helped him to a desk to lean against.

"How are we going to get there?" Harry asked them, his hands still shaking.

"Wait-what?" Edward asked, now confused.

"We have to get to the Ministry to save Sirius!"

Edward shook his head. "Nope, no way. You are not going off on some half-cocked rescue attempt. You look like you're about to throw up and if he does have Sirius you need to leave it to the Order."

"No one is left!" Harry yelled. "And every second we spend talking right now is another second Sirius is being tortured!"

"We'll contact them," Edward said. "And besides, the Ministry may not think he's back but I don't think they're that stupid to just let him stroll in. Even if they're not looking for Voldemort they are looking like crazy for Sirius. Not one person raised the alarm and discovered them?"

"What if it was Al?" Harry snapped at Ed. Edward froze for a second. "What?"

"What if you saw Alphonse being tortured…what would you do?"

Edward knew the answer to that. If he thought some sicko had Al and was hurting him then no one on Earth could stop him from going and getting him back.

"He's the only real family I have left," Harry pleaded. "We need to go and save him."

"Harry it was just a dream," Hermione said and Ron shook his head. "My dad's attack was just a dream too. And that was real."

"It's still very unlikely. Sirius can't leave headquarters. How could anyone have got him there?"

"He might have just gone out for some fresh air and someone grabbed him," Ron supplied. Hermione looked at him a bit displeased and said. "Still…why would Voldemort want him?"

"He's trying to use him to get the weapon. Sirius is in the Order and he must know how to get it. And his brother was a Death Eater before he died. Maybe he knew how and told Sirius," Ron suggested.

"Hermione I am going whether you believe me or not!" Harry said firmly. "And if you try and stop me-"

Hermione put up her hands in defense. "I just think-oh Harry…okay we should still check to see if Sirius has been taken. If he is I will help you go and rescue him."

Edward had been silent for a while now. He looked at Harry and said. "Harry….do you really, honestly believe Sirius has been taken?"

Harry nodded and Edward stared into his eyes for a few moments. "Then I agree with Hermione's plan. It's not like with Ron's dad. Voldemort is there and we need to see if this is just a bad dream or if it's real. Once we know he's been taken I'll help you get him back."
Harry looked very frustrated but nodded.

Right then Ginny and Luna had come in. "We heard shouting," Ginny said and looked a bit concerned as she glanced around at all of them.

"It's nothing," Harry snapped. Ginny scowled and replied. "It definitely is. And if you tell us what's going on we can help."

Edward looked to Harry and said. "Look, we need to contact him right now. Owls are being searched and even then it's not quick enough. You know a faster way of communicating? Harry, you need to focus. I know it's hard right now but Sirius is depending on you."

"We can use Umbridge's office," Hermione said. "We'll draw Umbridge away and you can sneak inside."

"We can act as lookouts," Ginny volunteered and Luna nodded, a still dreamy look in her eyes but she looked determined none the less.

"I'll tell Umbridge someone set off a load of dungbombs in one of the classrooms."

"That'll maybe get you about five minutes," Edward told Harry. "You'll have to be quick."

Harry nodded and they quickly ran off to their respective duties. Harry ran to grab his knife that would open Umbridge's locked office and his invisibility cloak so they could sneak in while Ron went to go and lure her away. Ginny and Luna stood on opposite sides of the hall keeping people from going down by lying about some invisible gas. Edward slipped into the office with Harry and Hermione.

Harry threw some powder into the fire and said. "Number 12 Grimmauld place!"

He then stuck his head into the fire while Edward and Hermione stood beside him.

But while Harry was talking to someone the hair on the back of Edward's neck stood up and before he could bring his hands together to clap the door opened and a spell froze him in place. Hermione tried to warn Harry but a large Slytherin girl pressed her up against the wall and took her wand.

Edward couldn't move and Umbridge had a self-satisfying smirk on her toad like face. She then strode over and pulled Harry out of the fire. Edward tried with all his might to move but he could only flex his fingers a little and blink.

"Caught red-handed," She said still smirking, almost throwing Harry into the chair in front of her desk.

The others were brought in; Ron, Ginny, Luna, and even Neville and Al. Edward tried to curse at Umbridge but only a few grunts came out.

"Sorry brother," Al said. "I saw Ron and wanted to help."

"And this one tried to stop us from taking them," Draco said, pointing at Neville.

"So Potter, you stationed lookouts and sent this one to get me away from my office. Who was it you so desperately needed to contact him? Dumbledore?"

"It's none of your business," Harry snarled at her.

Umbridge seemed almost too pleased to tell Draco to fetch Snape. Edward was slowly gaining more
movement in his body. Now he could twitch his eyebrow and move his wrist a little bit.

When Snape came into the office Umbridge said. "Ah, Professor Snape. I require some veritaserum to persuade Potter to tell me what he was up to in my office."

Edward's eyebrows would have shot up in shock as he glanced between Umbridge and Snape.

"I already told you that I ran out of my last batch of veritaserum a few weeks ago. I could brew more if you like but it will take a month to prepare."

"A month!" Umbridge squawked, looking clearly annoyed at this. "I need it this evening! Potter was contacting someone using my fireplace."

Snape clearly looked a bit annoyed with Umbridge for not understanding he couldn't make it any faster than that. "I am afraid I cannot give it to you. I need a full moon cycle for the potion to mature. Any sooner and it would have no affect at all on Potter."

"You are on probation!" Umbridge said and Snape gave a very sarcastic looking bow before turning to leave.

"He's got Padfoot!" Harry yelled suddenly and Snape stopped in his tracks. "He's got Padfoot in the place where it's hidden."

Umbridge looked between them and said. "Padfoot? Who's Padfoot? Where is what hidden?"

Of course. Snape was in the Order too and he could alert the necessary people. Snape turned to look at Umbridge and Harry and said. "No idea."

Edward couldn't see Snape's expression after that as he quickly left. The spell was wearing off now and Umbridge was turning her attention to him and Harry.

With a flick of her wand, Edward felt free to move and she pointed it at him. "What is he talking about?"

"I have no idea," Edward replied. While he didn't know who Padfoot was or what was hidden he could tell that Harry was trying to tell Snape that Sirius was in danger.

Umbridge frowned and flicked her wand once more, forcing Ed to fly back and be pinned to the wall by some invisible force. felt like an invisible hand was crushing his chest and keeping his arms and legs in place.

He couldn't clap like this and even then he wouldn't be able to transmute a way to escape or get rid of Umbridge and the Squad without hurting the other kids.

He looked to Al who seemed to be in a bind with his arms tied behind his back. He didn't seem to see a way out of this either but luckily no one was moving to pull off his helmet. Umbridge and everyone else were fixed on Harry.

"Very well….very well…there's no other option then. I have to…what he doesn't know won't hurt him," Umbridge said, mostly to herself. Edward didn't like the sound of that. She seemed to be talking herself into something and he had a bad feeling in the pit of his stomach.

She had her wand out and pointed it at Harry. "Maybe the Cruciatus curse will loosen your tongue."

Edward's eyes widened as he realized what she was going to do. Hermione then cried out.
"Professor! You can't! It's illegal!"

"You are forcing my hand Potter," Umbridge said, seeming to build up her own confidence in herself.

"You hurt him and I will end you Umbridge," Edward said in a very dangerously low tone. Everyone turned to look at Edward. The power radiating off him was palpable and the rage in his eyes caused a few Slytherins to shrink back.

"Threats Elric?" She said, trying to regain some ground. "You would do well to remember who is in charge here."

"And I don't give a damn about the consequences if you torture him," Edward said venomously.

Hermione then let out a wail and tears started to fall. "No stop! I'll tell you!" The brutish looking girl holding her released her on Umbridge's orders. Hermione sat down, her head in her hands, sobbing.

"Hermione!" Harry called out, looking betrayed. Edward also looked at her, thinking that while she had spared Harry suffering she shouldn't betray them like that.

"We-we were trying to contact Dumbledore," Hermione said between her sobs. Umbridge looked like Christmas had come early. Edward soon realized what she was doing. She was lying and Umbridge was eating it all up because she was hearing exactly what she wanted.

"Where is he?" She then asked.

"We don't know…we were trying to contact him to tell him it's ready." Edward now saw that her sobs were fake and felt a surge of pride in his chest.

"The weapon," Hermione sobbed.

"Weapon? What weapon?"

"We don't know…it's so complicated. We just did as he instructed."

"Where is it?" Umbridge asked, looking half mad with glee.

"It's in the Forbidden Forrest," Hermione said her sobs now slowing down as she wiped away the fake tears. Damn, she was a good actress.

"Tell me where it is," She ordered.

"I don't know Professor," Hermione said glancing around at the Slytherins. "It might be wiser to show you. And so then I can show you how to activate it."

Umbridge seemed to consider the Slytherins for a moment and said. "Yes…yes of course."

"Come now Potter, Granger," She said, then ordering the Slytherins to keep watch on the others.

"We need Professor Elric too, it uses Alchemy and he's the only one who can do it here," Hermione added. Edward caught the brief look in her eyes begging him to trust her and he understood completely. They would go into the forest and lose Umbridge, probably by using Grawp or the centaurs. Since Umbridge hated both it would be easy to just remain quiet and let her dig her own grave.

She released Edward from his invisible bindings but his hands were soon glued to his sides. "I do not
want any funny business Mr. Elric," She said in her same simpering girlish tone that made Edward want to punch her in the face.

He walked out with the, Hermione leading the way with Harry right beside him. Edward wasn't clumsy by any means but if he tripped then he would land face first in the dirt. Luckily Harry seemed to realize this as well and stayed close so he could catch Edward.

They entered the forest and the light faded around them. The dark trees started to obscure the sky and the only light was now from Umbridge's wand.

"How much further?" She asked after a while.

"Not much," Hermione said as they walked through the forest.

Edward's foot caught on a root and he started to fall but Harry caught him and kept him from falling all the way. Harry helped straighten Edward and get him back on his feet.

"Thanks," He murmured.

"No problem."

Harry though did seem lost as to what Hermione was doing. Edward didn't dare risk telling him with Umbridge this close. He just had to hope her plan worked.

"Where is the weapon?" Umbridge asked and Hermione replied. "Not far now. We had to keep it far away from the school so you or any students couldn't discover it."

"Yes, yes of course," Umbridge muttered.

Hermione was good. Edward would have to commend her on this. He would just need the jinx to break and then he could transmute and help them get out of the forest.

There was suddenly the sound of a thunderous herd of horses and Edward tensed. This was it.

They were soon surrounded by centaurs, many of them with their bows drawn and aimed at them. Ed moved instinctively in front of Harry and Hermione. Umbridge seemed to be very nervous as her hand shook.

"Who are you?" One of the centaurs Edward had seen earlier said. Magorian, the thought he remembered Hagrid telling him.

"I am Dolores Umbridge, Senior Undersecretary to the Minister for Magic, Headmistress of Hogwarts and High Inquisitor," She said in her most commanding voice that she could muster at the moment.

A few of the centaurs pawed their hooves at the ground at that.

"Your Ministry dares to tell us what we are and where we can go," another centaur, Bane then said angrily.

"The law fifteen-B clearly states that half breeds-" She was then cut off as one of the centaurs roared. "You shall not call us that human!"

"I am a Senior member of the Ministry! And you are clearly defined as having near-human intelligence-"
One shot an arrow at her and Edward had to push Harry to the side with his shoulder to make sure they avoided the arrow. "Our intellect is far greater than your own you puny human!"

"Filthy half-breeds! Uncontrolled animals!" Umbridge yelled and flicked her wand causing one of the centaurs feet were trapped in vines causing him to fall to the ground and struggle.

The centaurs then charged at them and Umbridge's wand fell from her hand. A centaur broke it in half with his hoof. Instantly the spell on Edward broke. Edward pushed Harry and Hermione back against a tree, shielding them with his own body. He didn't know if he could transmute here and ensure that Harry and Hermione would be safe.

"Stop! Let me go!" Umbridge yelled as Edward looked to see her being dragged off. "I am Dolores Umbridge!"

Her screams and pleas slowly got fainter until they couldn't hear her anymore. Most of the centaurs were gone and only a few remained.

Edward looked at Magorian and said. "I'm sorry about her. I don't think you guys are less than humans. And neither do they. She dragged us out here and was ready to torture him," He pointed his thumb back at Harry. "Please…we're innocent. Let us go and we won't disturb you."

"We told you not to come back," Magorian said looking down on them.

"I know, but she was going to hurt us and I thought-" Hermione said and Edward shot her a look to stop. That was definitely not the right thing to say.

"See!" Bane said pointing at them. "They use us to do their dirty work."

"No, no that wasn't it-"Edward said trying to regain some ground there.

"Do not deny it," Magorian said firmly.

"Please, let us go," Edward said, clasping his hands together to look like he was pleading, while in reality, he was getting ready to transmute.

"We do not obey you human!" Bane roared. But at that moment the ground started to shake and birds flew from the trees.

"Hagger?" A loud booming voice called as Grawp entered the clearing. "Hagger!?"

"Oh shit."

Edward pushed Harry and Hermione back even further. "Stay close." He ordered them.

"Hermy? Where Hagger?" Grawp said as he saw Hermione behind Edward.

"Go away, Giant! You are not welcome here!" Magorian yelled and a few of the remaining centaurs shot their bows at them.

This was it. The centaurs were focused more on Grawp than them. Immediately Edward dropped to his knees and touched the ground. They rose out of the air and away from the fight on a moving platform of transmuting rock. The blue electricity crackling around them.

Once the transmutation ended Edward clapped and lowered them to the ground. It was still dark in the forest but luckily Edward was able to get a fallen branch and handed it to Harry. He took off his glove and transmuted some flames quickly to create a makeshift torch.
"Okay…okay..you two alright?" He asked now that he could see them.

"I'm okay," Hermione said.

"Me too. Now how are we going to get back?" Harry said looking around.

"You two have been here more than me. I say we go forward and keep going where it's lighter."

Edward took the torch and started to walk out of the forest with them. "Good plan Hermione. Though you tripped up a little at the end."

"I'm sorry," She said. "I didn't think they'd hurt us."

"Yeah I thought so too until I saw how pissed they were because of Umbridge. You gotta let an enemy like that think it's their idea to let you go. That they're the ones who decided to be merciful."

Harry was quiet for a while and Edward glanced over at him. "I'm guessing because of your message to Snape that your vision was real?"

Harry nodded.

"Okay…can you tell if he's still alive?"

Harry just nodded again.

"Good. Then we can try and get to him. Do you really think Snape got your message?"

"I don't know. And even if he did he doesn't care about Sirius. Probably be happy he was gone."

"Okay…if we do this-" Harry gave him a murderous look which Edward returned. "IF we do this then you need to be ready. You can't let your emotions about this cloud your mind. You need to be strong and push them away. You need to be focused."

"I am focused!" Harry roared.

"No. You're emotional and that makes you stupid and that'll get us all killed." Edward said firmly coming to a stop. "It will make you sloppy and then you'll be killed and maybe end up killing your friends and your godfather in the process. Now, take a breath. Center yourself."

Harry sighed and took a breath.

"Good. Now I think we're getting close to the edge now." He looked up and could actually see the sky.

"Now what's the plan for getting to London?" Edward asked and Harry paused. "I-I don't…"

Edward groaned and said. "Look the only modes of transportation I know won't get us there in time. You two are the magical ones. Think of something we can do. Can you apparate?"

Hermione shook her head.

"Yeah we were thinking the same thing," And Ron came out of the trees with Al, Ginny, Neville, and Luna.

"How did you guys get away?" Hermione asked as Ron gave her and Harry back their wands.
"Ginny pulled off an amazing bat-bogey hex. Then we were able to snatch back our wands and disarmed all of them. I think Crabbe got a mix of a boil and a slug hex so now there are slugs coming out all over his face. It's nasty," Ron replied.

"Al? You okay?" Edward asked and Al nodded. "I'm fine brother."

"So how are we getting there?" Neville asked.

"We aren't doing anything," Harry said looking at Luna, Neville, and Ginny.

"We're coming too!" Ginny said. "We're in the DA! That's what it was all about; getting ready to fight You-Know-Who."

"Or was that all a lie?" Neville asked looking at Harry.

Harry yelled in frustration. "We're wasting time! We need to get to London now!"

"Well it's obvious isn't it?" Luna asked still having a dreamy look in her eyes. "We'll fly."

"Only Ron, Harry, and Ginny have brooms," Neville said.

"No, not brooms. Thestrals," She then pointed to a clearing where the thestrals were huddled together.

"Do you think they'll support Al?" Neville asked.

Edward looked at Alphonse and knew they wouldn't. The armor was heavy enough and he didn't think the boney creatures would handle his weight.

"I'm not staying behind brother." And Edward knew from the tone in his voice there was no arguing.

He sighed and looked to Neville and Luna. They were the only two that didn't know. He really didn't want to tell them but there wasn't much time.

"Al…take off your helmet."

The golden trio and Ginny looked to Edward in utter shock.

"Are you sure brother?"

"I'm sure. Neville, Luna. You have to promise not to tell anyone about this and please…for now, don't ask questions." He couldn't go through it all fast enough to catch them up.

Neville looked to Luna and both nodded in agreement. Al then took off his helmet.

Luna gasped and Neville pointed at the blank space in utter shock.

"Look, everyone take a part of the suit of armor. Hold onto it as tightly as you can," Edward said and Alphonse was already sitting down so his brother could take him apart.

"I'll take the upper chest," Edward told them firmly. He wasn't going to risk the blood seal being broken.

Ginny took the helmet.

Neville Al's right arm, Luna the left.
Ron took Al's left leg while Hermione got his right.

Harry took his bottom torso.

"Okay, now everyone get on your thestral," Harry said.

"We can't see them," Ginny said looking to Ron and Hermione.

"I'll help you guys get on them," Edward said while Luna had gone to get a couple from the heard.

Edward clapped his hands to make earth steps up to each of the thestrals so everyone could get on. He helped Ron and Hermione onto theirs. Luna got Neville and Harry helped Ginny.

"Okay, everyone hold on tight to your thestrals and to Alphonse," Harry called out.

And then they were off.
Flying through the air was like nothing he'd ever experienced before. Sure, he had launched himself into the air during fights before, or sometimes Al would throw him across their training area, but there was nothing on earth like this.

Edward held on to Al's chest plate, the part that held the blood seal and his connection to their world. That was the part he didn't trust anyone else with.

"You doing good Al?" Edward called over the rushing winds.

"I'm fine brother! This is so cool!"

Ed was a bit glad to see Al enjoying this. Though while this all was an amazing experience, there was still work to be done once they reached the Ministry. Edward still hated the fact that so many more people knew his and Al's secret but then again, he did trust these kids.

Edward glanced around, seeing the others flying on the thestrals and all holding a part of Al's armor. He was a little proud of them, how far they had come and how much they were willing to do for one another. Harry still looked frazzled but Edward couldn't blame him, it was his godfather, one of the last pieces of his family left. Edward would have been losing it a lot more if he thought Al was in that kind of danger.

But as they flew to the Ministry Edward had a pit in the bottom of his stomach. He couldn't shake the feeling this might still be a trap. But he had to remind himself that Harry confirmed Sirius wasn't in Number 12. And the fact Harry had seen a vision of what was going on miles away did lend some credence to the idea that Harry had seen Sirius being tortured.

Still, Edward didn't like the fact all these kids were the ones going to save him. Harry had faced Voldemort before, and this was his family. Ron and Hermione weren't going to let their friend go alone, but Luna, Neville, and Ginny were young. They hadn't really faced these things before. And while they were all very adept in the DA and were progressing rather nicely before it was shut down, they were still kids.

But Dumbledore was gone, McGonagall and Hagrid too. The only person left at Hogwarts was Snape and he loathed Sirius. The time it would have taken to go back to the castle and find him, and then force him to do something, it might have been too late.

Edward still didn't like it though. He felt cornered and that was never a good thing.

But he glanced at Al and vowed that he would do whatever he could to make sure that his brother and everyone else would get out safely. There were worse things to die for.

They landed after a while. Everyone was following Harry's lead. Setting down on a side street, Edward hopped off and helped the others too. Once he gathered up all of Al's parts, he started to put him back together.

"Are you in pain?" Ginny asked Al while Edward reattached Al's right arm.
"Nope, really it just feels weird...kind of like putting on clothes."

"It's really amazing," Neville marveled.

"It isn't," Edward replied bitterly. "He can't sleep or eat. At all. And he won't be able to until I fix the mess I made."

"Brother..."

"Come on Al, let's get going," Edward said as he put on Al's left arm and headed to the phone booth Harry was standing beside impatiently.

They all crammed inside, but it felt like the booth started to expand the more people got in. It was still a little tight but from the outside, Edward would have sworn that not all of them would have been able to get inside.

Harry dialed the number and a cool female voice said, "State your name and your reason for visiting."

"Harry Potter! Rescuing Sirius Black," Harry barked out angrily. Suddenly the booth started to shake and they were lowered down into the ground.

"So you know where he is right? Because I was only here once and it felt like a maze," Edward said.

"He's in the Department of Mysteries. It's in the hall down from where my hearing was," Harry said.

"Lead the way," Edward replied as the booth stopped. Everyone got out as quickly as they could and thankfully, there was nearly no one here. It was probably past working hours and if Voldemort really was here, this is when he would come. And if anyone was here Edward doubted that most could stand up to him.

Edward and the others raced through the large entrance and to the lifts. Squeezing inside Harry pressed a button and the lift shuddered before they started to move. "When we get there we take a right and go straight down the hall," Harry said, rubbing his forehead.

Edward gave a small nod and took that as a sign Harry was still in pain, and thus Sirius was still most likely alive.

The lift stopped and everyone ran down the hall as fast as they could. Once they got to the door Harry opened it and they all followed in behind him.

Inside was a large circular room with doors all along the wall. "Okay...which door?" Edward asked.

"I just usually go straight."

But once the door behind them closed the walls started to spin around them. Edward tensed and he and Al moved into their fighting stances. Edward had his hands less than an inch away from each other, ready to transmute.

Once the spinning stopped Edward looked around. All the doors were exactly the same, and everything went so fast he couldn't keep track of which door was the one they came through, or which was right across from it.

"Everyone start opening doors, don't close them till we find the one Harry's looking for or the way we came through. Then we can go to the one right across from it," Edward said, moving to the one
Everyone started to go to a separate door. Edward tried and failed to open his, even trying to transmute it into dust didn't work. There must be some magic keeping people from destroying the doors or busting their way through them.

"I got one," Harry said. "But it's not the right one..." He moved to shut it but Edward rushed over to him. "Wait!" He clapped his hands together and concentrated, touching them to the smooth wood. The black door then turned red and Edward smirked.

"Can't destroy them but I can change the colors. That way we can move through elimination. I think we can only open one at a time."

Harry nodded and shut the door. The room spun once more and the red door was still red when it finished.

Harry opened the next one after Edward tried. "Guess it only works for wizards," He said, shaking his head.

Edward transmuted the door and the room spun the second it was closed.

On and on it went.

One looked like it was underwater but the water stopped right at the entrance. Edward put his hand in and it was soaked but when he pulled back his hand was completely dry. Another was an icy landscape and Edward closed it quickly, his automail already protesting from the cold rush of wind.

Behind the fourth door was what looked like a giant courtroom. But it was circular and in the center of the pit was a stone platform with an archway in the middle.

Edward didn't know why but he stepped forward. He could hear gentle whispers in the archway. He couldn't place them, but he had heard them before. He stepped down each of the benches lining the pit. It was beautiful really. Edward got close to the arch and reached his hand out.

"Edward! Harry! Come back!" Hermione called.

"It's...beautiful," Edward murmured.

"Brother!" Edward snapped out of his trance and looked around to see Al standing in the doorway. He saw Harry a bit behind him and knew something was wrong in this room. He grabbed Harry and pulled him out. Harry protested until they got closer to the door.

"What...what was that? Who was that? Those whispers?" Edward said as he climbed through.

"I could hear them too," Luna said. "It was beautiful."

"There was no one talking," Hermione said, helping Harry through the door.

"There were. In the archway," Harry protested.

"There was no room. How could people be there?"

"Magic," Edward countered. "You people love that kind of thing. But I did hear someone...I knew I-"

Edward froze when he realized who he recognized. It was his mother, singing. It was Major Hughes going on and on about his wife and daughter.
"I heard them too, Brother," Al said quietly.

Edward looked at the arch one last time before transmuting the door and shutting it. Pushing the thoughts far from his mind. He couldn't be thinking about those things right now.

The room spun and Harry opened another door, looking more desperate than before.

Inside was a dark room with another stone fixture. Edward stared closer at it and realized that it was a door, with stone carvings. He knew instantly what it was. It was a Gate of Truth. Edward didn't hesitate to transmute the door in front of him and slam it shut quickly.

"What was it?" Hermione asked, looking at Edward with concern.

Ed's hands were shaking and Al put his hand on his brother's shoulder. "Brother-" Edward shook him off, marching away. There was no way that was like his own Gate. Truth wasn't there and the room was very dark, not bright white. They probably recreated it to try and figure out if they could create their own. It was stupid. There was no way to go through the Gate without performing human transmutation. You gave up a part of yourself and you see the truth. That was the deal.

When everything came to a stop Edward didn't look to see what was behind the door. He did hear a few exclamations of how pretty it was. And he could tell it looked like a working model of the solar system from what he overheard. But right now he needed a moment to breathe. Al probably took care of the door and the room spun around again.

"There are only a couple more left Harry, we'll find it soon," Hermione said encouragingly. Edward turned to see a very frustrated and anxious look on Harry's face.

When Harry went to open the door he frowned. He cast a spell but it still wouldn't open. Hermione tried a few spells, many of them sounding very complicated, but nothing worked.

"Could this be it?" Edward asked, looking to Harry.

"No..I was always able to get in easy..."

Edward sighed and clapped his hands, trying to transmute the door to open but it was no use. He had to give it a shot though. He then turned it red and when it was time to open the next door Harry's face lit up.

"This is it!"

They all rushed inside and it took a little bit for all their eyes to adjust to the sparkling light. Inside was a room filled with watches, clocks, and hourglasses. Shinning gold dust flew around the room and Edward was very amazed by what he saw. But there was no time for that now.

"It's beautiful," Luna said, looking around and trying to touch some of the dust.

Ginny held her back though. "We don't know if they'll hurt us, Luna," She said and they all went through to the door on the other side.

"Come on!" Harry said, trying to help get the others to also focus and get to the door. Once through Edward looked and checked to see that they could still get back through to the clock room. Couldn't be too careful. It wouldn't matter if they couldn't get Sirius out once they got to him.

There were stacks, and stacks of shelves. Each containing dozens of crystal balls filled with fog. Edward looked around and wondered how on earth a building as large as the Ministry could be
undetected. But then he remembered wizards break all the known laws of physics before breakfast and moved on.

"He was by row ninety-seven!" Harry called back, already running past all the rows. Edward kept pace with him and once they got up to the 70's he pulled Harry back. Harry opened his mouth to protest but Edward covered it with his hand. "Listen..."

Everyone was catching their breath behind them, though Edward noticed how quick they were to recover thanks to his training. Seemed Neville, Luna, and Ginny were all keeping fit even though the DA was over.

"What?" Harry whispered as Edward removed his hand.

"There is no screaming. No one is being tortured here," Edward whispered.

"He could be gagged! Or Voldemort put a silencing spell on him! Or he's unconscious!"

Edward gave a small nod and listened harder. "I don't hear him though...I don't hear anyone casting any spells."

"What if we're too late?" Al said quietly.

"No! No I know he's not dead yet!" Harry hissed.

"We have to sneak up on them then, it's our only chance," Edward warned. Looking over he saw everyone having their wands out and Al gave a small nod.

"Wait!" Hermione said quickly and pulled off Alphonse's helmet. She then waved her wand in intricate motions over the blood seal and the metal around it glimmered. Replacing Al's helmet she said. "I cast a protection charm. I don't know if it will hold but you said as long as the seal isn't broken he's alright and-"

Edward pulled Hermione into a hug. "Thank you."

Hermione was blushing ever so slightly and Edward added another mental note to his ever-growing 'Deal with this shit later' list.

"Come on," Edward said and they all slowly moved forward. Edward made sure to keep track of how close they were getting and when they got to row ninety-seven Edward glanced over to see who was there. No one was.

He looked to Harry and wished he could give him comfort but there were no words right then.

"He's at the end," Harry said, looking very pale.

Harry started to go down the alley. Edward cursed himself for following but Harry had to see that no one was there. Even though in his mind he was screaming at himself to get out now.

They got to the end and Harry was looking around. It didn't look like anyone had been here in ages.

"Harry..." Hermione said.

"No! No! I know I-"

"Harry?" Alphonse said. Edward looked to his brother who was staring at one of the orbs. "This has your name on it."
Harry whipped around and went to look at the orb. Edward glanced over as well and sure enough, there was Harry's name. But before he could warn Harry not to grab it he did. Edward tensed and had his hands ready, but nothing happened. Not a bang or even a whimper.

"Is it supposed to do something?" Edward asked, looking to Hermione.

"I don't know...I thought if it had Harry's name on it then something would have happened when he touched it."

"Let's get out of here Harry, come on."

"Not so fast," A cold voice said from behind them. "You will give me the prophecy right now and I will spare you and your friends."

Edward turned on his heels at lightning speed to see a couple dark cloaked figures standing in front of them. Blocking their way out. They all had their wands pointed at the group and while Edward was confident he could dodge whatever spells they cast he wasn't sure if he could transmute a protective barrier around them in time.

"Give it to me now Potter," the man with platinum blonde hair ordered. He recognized him. He was Draco's father, Lucius Malfoy. The others, Edward had no clue who they were but they were all probably Voldemort's cronies.

Glancing at the orb he knew this was their only bargaining chip.

"Where is Sirius?" Harry asked, looking at them with hate in his eyes.

The woman beside Lucius laughed maniacally. "Where is Sirius? The Dark Lord was right! He is always right!"

"Where is he?" Harry yelled.

"He's not here," Edward. "Isn't that right? It was all just a trap so you could get that?" Edward jerked his head to the orb.

"Ohhh the little muggle thinks he's smart does he?" The woman cooed. "Still fell for the Dark Lord's trap though."

"I knew it was a possibility. I just hoped it wasn't. Now, why do you want this thing?"

"Just give it to me Potter now," Lucius ordered, ignoring Edward.

Edward and Harry's eyes met for a split second and it felt like an entire conversation passed between them.

"No...I won't," Harry said and the woman's eyes flashed with glee. "Give it now or I'll torture all your little friends."

"I'll smash it if you even take a step forward," Harry said firmly.

All the Death Eaters froze. "You wouldn't," hissed Lucius.

"I would," Harry said even more firmly, holding the crystal ball even tighter. "And I bet Voldemort will be very angry with you lot if you come back empty handed."

"How dare you speak the Dark Lord's name!" roared the woman.
"Quiet Bellatrix," hissed Lucius.

"Why do you want this prophecy?" Harry asked once more.

"Dumbledore never told you?" Lucius said, starting to laugh. "That old man has lost his touch. The Dark Lord always wondered why...well Potter let me enlighten you." Looking down at the orb Lucius said. "That right there is the reason the Dark Lord killed your parents. Why he tried to kill you. Why you have that scar?"

Harry looked down at the orb and Edward knew this was a mistake. While keeping them talking was good, and the threat of smashing it was keeping the Death Eaters from trying to kill them, he couldn't let Harry get sidetracked like this.

"He really thinks this will solve all his problems?" Edward said. "That knowing some haiku that could be interpreted a hundred different ways will help him win? You know there are a lot of stories about self-fulfilling prophecies. Maybe your 'Lord' should read some more. And honestly, if this is the only thing that's standing between him winning or him losing then you guys might want to switch sides."

"The Dark Lord is stronger than all!" One of the men beside Bellatrix said firmly.

"Then why didn't he come and get it himself?" Edward countered.

"Stupid muggle!" Lucius sneered. "The only people who can retrieve a prophecy are the people it concerns."

"And your 'Lord' was too chicken to come here himself? Or too lazy?"

"Disrespect the Dark Lord again and I will kill you where you stand muggle!" Bellatrix roared.

Bellatrix glared Edward who had a small smirk on his lips. He just needed to keep them talking for a little bit longer. And he needed them to get angry so they would make a mistake.

"I may not be from around here but I get why you guys don't say it," Edward said. "Volde-what? I mean-" He started to laugh. "It's so stupid! It sounds like a kind of mold or a wart!"

Bellatrix looked absolutely livid. "You filthy little muggle! I will cut out your tongue for that!"

She waved her wand and a flash of light came towards them but Lucius deflected it with his own wand. In that split second, Edward crouched down and clapped his hands. Instantly the floor under them started to move and a wall came between them and the Death Eaters and moved towards them at lightning fast speeds.

But with the disturbance to the floor, the shelves around them shook and started to fall over, clearing a path back to the door. Or at least to the next alley or so.

"Run!" Edward yelled and everyone took off, trying to escape the Death Eaters.
Edward

Edward ran as fast as he could, while still keeping everyone else in his sights. He had to slow his pace to make sure that he was the last of the group ducking through the alleys and stacks of prophecies.

He really should have trusted his gut. He knew better than this. But there was no time to dwell on that now. "Get to the door!" He yelled, stopping to create a giant wall from the ground. He was trying to put as many obstacles between them and the Death Eaters as possible. While they could use their wands to clear it, it would still slow them down.

Edward heard them yelling behind him but they didn't sound too close. They got to the door and Edward slammed it shut behind them. He clapped his hands and tried to fuse the door to the wall but it wouldn't work. Hermione cast a locking spell and Edward looked to make sure they still had everyone.

"Still got the stupid orb?" Edward asked. Harry nodded, looking down at it. "Good. It's our only bargaining chip and even then we can't let them have it." Edward clapped and formed a stone wall around the door just in case the charm didn't hold.

"Come on! We need to get out of here fast," he said. It looked like he was right to get these kids in shape as he was sure they'd all be out of breath now if he hadn't.

"They're in there!" Edward heard someone yell and they all rushed to the other side of the room. But they broke through quickly.

Hermione yelled. "Stupify!" And a Death Eater was blown back.

Lucius raised his wand. "Avada-" But he didn't finish. Harry had his wand raised and yelled. "Expelliarmus!" And Lucius's wand flew out of his hands.

Edward clapped his hands and created large spikes of earth flying towards the Death Eaters coming through the door. "Get out!" Edward yelled to the rest of the group. He saw Ginny casting spells and trying to hold them back as well.

"Go! Get to the door now!" Edward yelled. Neville grabbed Luna's hand and pulled her to the door. Edward saw Harry disarm another Death Eater and pushed him out of the way of an incoming hex.

"We may not be able to beat them but we can't let them kill us or get that damn orb!"

Harry ran to the door and Hermione cast. "Petrificus totalas!" And caused a death eater to land on his face with a sickening crunch.

They had been so turned around Edward forced them through a door to find themselves in the room filled with the weird brain looking creatures. Damn, they were going to get lost in here before they got out.

"Come on," Al said. "The door's over here!"

Edward stood back, letting all the kids get through the door before the Death Eaters burst through the
Edward grinned as he slammed his metal fist against the glass causing it to crack and all the water pour out, along with the brains. He leapt back to avoid them and rushed through the door.

"Don't know what they do but I doubt it's pretty," Edward said, as he formed another barrier between them and the door.

"Oh look!" Luna said smiling. They were in the solar system room now.

"Everyone okay?" Alphonse asked.

"My ankle," Luna said, wincing as she put weight on it. "I think one of them broke it."

Edward nodded and tore off his cloak, using it to fashion a sort of split. "It's not good but it'll do for now."

"Come on, we need to-"

And the few Death Eaters that had escaped burst a hole through the door/wall.

"There they are! They're in the-"

But he didn't finish. Hermione spun around and cried. "Silencio!" And he fell silent.

"Diffindo!" Neville yelled and the two were then blown back.

"Move it!" Edward yelled, pushing them all forward.

Al yanked open the nearest door and Edward got them all through. They were in the weird arch room again. Oh, he really didn't like this one.

"Damn it! Come on, we just need to get to that circle room and we'll be out of here!"

"Be careful of the arch," Hermione said. "It did something to you before. Don't listen to whatever it's saying."

Edward nodded and concentrated on chemical equations in his head to keep him from listening to whatever that arch was saying.

They climbed over the rows of benches when the Death Eaters, a little worse for the wear came through and into the room.

"Potter!" Lucius roared. "Give me the prophecy now!"

"Oh, why don't you stick that wand up your ass Malfoy!" Edward shot back.

Bellatrix looked livid and raised her wand. "We shall see if your tongue is so sharp after I torture you muggle!"

They were near the stone platform and it would take too long to get to the door. Edward looked to Al who gave a small nod. Edward took off his glove and clapped his hands, transmuting the metal bench into a long spear.

"Not if I break that puny stick of yours first!"

"Now, now, Potter," Lucius said, trying to regain control. "You don't want us to hurt your friends."
Just give it here and we won't hurt them."

"Never!" Harry yelled, clutching it tighter in his hand.

"Crucio!" Bellatrix yelled and Edward knew he couldn't duck or move to avoid it as it would then hit Ginny behind him. So he readied himself in the split second.

And then it felt like his entire body was on fire. Every cell was screaming out in pain. He clenched his mouth tight, not wanting to give her the satisfaction of hearing him scream. He fell to his knees and his body shook, but he wouldn't scream.

When it lifted it felt like he could breathe again. He gasped as he took in as much air as he could.

He had accidentally bitten his tongue, he could taste the blood in his mouth now. Using the spear to help him stand he could see the gleam in Bellatrix's eyes.

"Now what do you say muggle!" She crowed, looking elated.

"I've had worse," He said, spitting out the blood in his mouth, and wiping it with the back of his hand. And it wasn't a lie. What happened when he was 11 was much worse than now. He smirked just a little and saw Lucius pale if that was even possible.

Using the shock to his advantage, Edward threw the spear and caught one of the Death Eater's legs, causing him to fall and tumble down.

"Go," He called back and saw Neville helping Luna try to get to the other side. Edward moved, dodging all the curses thrown at him and trying to keep their attention on him before they attacked the kids.

"Get the prophecy!" Lucius hissed, trying to get to Harry.

"Enough of his foolishness!" He then yelled and waved his wand. All the light in the room went out. Edward grabbed who was closest but he couldn't tell who.

He heard shouting and the sound of fighting but when the light came back he saw the Death Eaters all had a hostage.

Lucius smirked as he approached them. Edward noticed they were now in the center, on stone.

Looking he saw Harry beside him. All the other kids were struggling, trying to get out of the Death Eaters holds. But with their wands pointed at their heads, there wasn't much to be done.

"Give it now."

Harry looked to Edward for a brief moment. Any promises Lucius made were hollow. They would kill them all regardless. Harry looked down at the prophecy in his hands. Edward could sense the conflict within him. Maybe that glass ball did hold answers to the questions Harry had. But even if he wanted to know them. Voldemort couldn't.

"Bellatrix," Lucius said and soon the room was filled with Neville's screams.

"No!" Edward roared. "Hurt me! Not them!"

"Back for more?" Bellatrix cooed as she released the curse on Neville who was twitching on the floor.
"Prophecy, Potter," Lucius ordered.

Harry extended his hand, Edward wanted to scream at him to just break the damn thing but right then, high above them, two doors burst open and members of the Order came through.

Edward used this chance to punch Lucius right in the mouth, knocking him back. Ginny elbowed the Death Eater holding her in the gut and stomped on his toe, making him release her before she grabbed his wand arm and twisted it, breaking it.

The others were fighting to get away from their Death Eater captures and Edward had never been prouder to see them use his self-defense techniques.

"Harry, move," Edward then yelled, getting Harry and running with him to the edge of the stone platform.

Tonks, Sirius, Kingsley, Moody, and Lupin were all battling their hardest to get them out and defeat the Death Eaters. Alphonse had gotten back up to the wall and clapped, making large pillars of stone shoot out strategically and knock Death Eaters out or off balance with their duels.

Edward knew they had a chance now which meant they had to just keep the prophecy away from them and so it meant to protect Harry.

Lucius had recovered and was chasing after them. "Expelliarmus!" Harry yelled but Lucius blocked it.

"Accio Proh-" Edward didn't give him the chance to finish, leaping forward and transmuting his arm into a sword. He slashed, causing a cut on Lucius's cheek as he leapt back to avoid Edward's attack.

Edward continued on the offensive, driving him back and giving him very little time to even wave his wand, let alone cast a spell.

"Impedimenta!" Someone else cried out and Edward was frozen, but Lucius moved back onto Harry. Harry cast a few spells as he ran from him.

Lucius grabbed the back of Harry's clothes, and Harry threw the prophecy. "Neville!" Harry yelled. Neville went to catch it.

Edward broke out of the curse and ran towards them, trying to help, but it was too late. It shattered into a million pieces on the stone floor.

A white ghost rose up from the smoke and Edward saw her lips moving. But all the noise and commotion drowned pretty much everything else out.

"seventh...dies...equal...neither...survives."

He was able to catch a few words but eventually, the ghost vanished and there was nothing left.

"No!" Lucius cried, though it was less of rage and more out of fear. Edward suspected that his boss wasn't going to like that.

Grabbing Lucius, Edward tossed him off the platform and helped Harry up.

"No...it's..."

"No time to dwell on that now," Edward said quickly. "Come on."
Edward saw that Sirius had fought to get to them, trying to save his godson. But he looked thrilled to be dueling, to be fighting. After being cooped up in a house for months Edward supposed he’d feel the same.

Sirius was dueling hard against Bellatrix. "You will not hurt my godson!" He yelled.

Harry joined him, causing Sirus to grin madly. Bellatrix was doing everything to block their spells and try to shoot off some of her own. Harry got in a good jinx which caused Sirius to laugh. "Good one Harry!"

"Stupefy!" Bellatrix yelled and Sirius was stunned, he tumbled back. But they were too close to the arch and he fell through the mist, disappearing and not coming out the other side.

"Sirius!" Harry yelled. Edward moved quicker, he transmuted a stone platform to knock Bellatrix back as he grabbed Harry, keeping him from going through the veil as well.

"No! He's not gone!" Harry yelled, fighting to get free.

"He is. Harry, stop, there is nothing more we can do."

"We can get him back just-" Edward just held on tighter.

Edward didn't know a lot about magic but he knew that he heard his mother whispering on the other side. And now he could hear Sirius too. Harry fought hard against Edward, but Ed's hold was stronger. And Edward would be damned if he was going to let Harry through as well. He would not let anyone else die today.

"He's-he's not gone!" Harry cried out.

"He is," Edward said solemnly. "Harry please-"

"No! Sirius! Sirius! Come back! SIRIUS!"
Edward kept a tight grip on Harry. He couldn't let the kid go and get himself killed.

"Sirius!" Harry yelled, still desperate and angry.

Edward may have been shorter than Harry but he was much stronger and had a metal arm and leg. So with all his strength, he pulled Harry away. He needed to get him out of here. If not to get Harry away from the people that wanted to kill him, but to keep Harry from doing something he'd regret when the grief that was consuming him left.

Edward was grateful the others hadn't stopped their fight. He was in no shape to defend himself or Harry right then. While he knew Al would always have his back, he wouldn't want his younger brother getting hurt to save him.

Harry started to go a little limp in his arms, must have realizing that his godfather wasn't coming back.

"I'm sorry," Ed murmured. He knew what it was like to lose someone you were close to. And Harry had lost so many people in his life.

Harry didn't say a word. Edward loosened his grip, holding onto Harry's arm for support and just in case.

He looked around to see that most of the Death Eaters were now tied up, leaning against each other on the other side of the room. Lucius was still battling but it looked like he was going to lose, and soon.

But the one person Edward couldn't see was Bellatrix. That was until he saw her blasting Kingsley aside and running out.

But of course, Harry caught it too. The loud noise had caught most people's attention.

Before Edward could even tighten his grasp, Harry pulled out of it and ran to the door.

"Damn it!" Edward cursed at the top of his lungs. "Al! Come on!"

Alphonse turned to see Edward sprinting after Harry and ran to join his brother.

While Harry had a head start, Edward quickly gained on him. The Elric brothers ran out the door and down the hall, seeing Bellatrix open the door on the other side.

"Stupefy!" She yelled, quickly ducking into the door. Harry threw up a protection spell and didn't miss a beat, still trying to catch up to Bellatrix. Edward and Alphonse raced to catch up right as they all entered the circular room.

Bellatrix was still ahead of them and ducked into one of the flew black doors left. The room span and Edward grabbed Harry.

"Harry, stop this-" Edward began to say but Harry pointed his wand right at him.

"Let me go right now!" He roared. "She killed him! She killed Sirius!"
But Edward wouldn't let go, he wasn't going to let Harry do this. The room stopped and Harry yelled. "Stupefy!"

Edward was too close. He didn't think Harry was actually going to do anything. He was blasted back and Alphonse rushed to his brother's side. Edward rubbed the side of his head and groaned.

Harry ran to the first black door and opened it, running through.

"Don't let the door close!" Edward told Al, who rushed to stop it. Getting up, Edward shook his head and tried to focus. That spell had taken the wind out of him. But it was nothing he hadn't faced before.

"Brother-"

"I'm alright Al. He's grieving...but I may slap him when we get out of this."

He went with Al through the doors. Seeing the corridor was a wonderful sight. They were finally out of that damn department. The elevator down the hall clanged shut and Edward ran with Al to catch another.

Getting in Edward pressed the button and they moved back to the entrance floor.

"We can't let him do this," Edward said.

"I know brother."

"He will bite, kick, scream, probably try to jinx us again. I'll get his wand away from him."

"And I'll hold him back."

Edward sighed and shook his head once more, still trying to right himself after the jinx that hit him.

The elevator stopped and they rushed out to see Bellatrix shooting curses and other jinxes at Harry who was ducking behind the statue to avoid them.

"Crucio!" Harry roared and aimed at Bellatrix. She froze in place and screamed for a few seconds before breaking loose.

Edward's eyes widened. This was much, much worse. Harry knew full well what that curse was for. He hadn't tried to kill her. He wanted to make her scream. While Edward knew that grief could make good people do terrible things, it just meant that they had to act even faster to keep Harry from doing more.

Rushing forward Edward heard Bellatrix cackling. "You are weak Potter! You have to mean it when you use one of the unforgivable curses! Let me show you!" She raised her wand and yelled "Crucio!" Edward was faster though, tackling Harry and putting his body on top of his.

"Oh, the little muggle boys have come to save baby Potter?" Bellatrix cooed.

Harry struggled to get out from under Edward. Alphonse stepped between them and Bellatrix. "You won't hurt anyone else tonight."

"And you're going to stop me!? A witch!" She laughed madly.

Edward had pulled Harry away and behind the fountain. Harry looked pissed but also in pain. But it didn't seem like heartbreak or grief, and he wasn't clutching his arm or his side so that meant...his
scar.

Edward tensed, hoping it was just him feeling Voldemort being pissed his followers had failed. Harry said it always hurt when he was feeling strong emotions or was close. He really hoped it was the former.

Alphonse clapped his hands and touched the marble floor. Flashes of alchemical light moved in Bellatrix's direction as the rock shifted under her. She leapt out of the way, yelling curses while Alphonse dodged them, sending more attacks at her.

"Stay down!" Edward hissed at Harry, who was now looking in more pain than ever. He tried to get up but before Edward could push him down he fell back. Shit. If it was this bad then...

"Master! Please! I tried to get the prophecy but Lucius-" Bellatrix cried.

Harry's eyes opened and he looked terrified. "Shit..." Edward cursed and he didn't waste time, transmuting the ground he sent Harry back towards the elevators and transmuted the ground to create a protective wall in front of him. Then, he slowly moved out from behind the was a man, ghostly pale and thin, looking more like a snake than a man. Alphonse stood ready to attack and glanced back at Edward. Edward moved towards Al's side, also ready to transmute.

"Quiet Bellatrix!" Voldemort hissed. Bellatrix shrank back and said in a quiet voice. "But Master...he is here-"

"I said silence!" He looked to the Elric brothers and said. "You let the boy Harry Potter and these two muggles defeat you?"

"Nice trick getting Harry to rush to save his godfather," Edward said, his fingers twitching a little from the anticipation to fight their way out of this. "Probably would have worked if he came alone. But unlike you, he has friends...actual friends. Not sniveling followers."

"I have heard you were arrogant, even for a muggle. Such fierce words from someone so close to death."

"It's not arrogance if you have the skills," Edward replied with a small smirk. "Which I'm guessing in your case means...the exact opposite."

If this guy was as deadly as people said, then getting him to focus more on him and Al and lose his temper might work. He wouldn't go after Harry and they could hold off long enough for more of the Order to show up and help.

"Insolent boy, Lord Voldemort will teach you respect before I kill you."

"Loads of people have tried. You aren't the first and you won't be the last to fail on that quest."

His red eyes blazed with fury. "Crucio!"

Edward was ready though, clapping his hands and dropping to the ground he created a wall between them. Clapping again, he touched the wall and sent it shooting forward at Voldemort and Bellatrix.

Voldemort destroyed the wall with a wave of his wand. While his eyes still held fury, there was also a calculating look in them.

"You think those wands are powerful? You wizards don't know jack-shit about real Alchemy," Edward said.
Alphonse then transmuted the wall to shoot out spikes at Voldemort, Bellatrix already having disappeared somewhere. But Edward couldn't pay that any mind. Right now he needed to focus on keeping the battle between him, Alphonse, and Voldemort going on just long enough.

Voldemort seemingly turned to smoke, disappearing and reappearing on the fountain. Waving his wand the water turned to ice and shot at Edward and Alphonse.

Edward artfully dodged the attacks, flying through the air. Clapping his hands as he landed, he turned the top layer of water in the fountain to just Oxygen and Hydrogen. Since his gloves were frayed, he was able to pull a Roy Mustang and create a small spark between his fingers.

When they got through this, he was going to have to tell Al to never in a million years let the Colonel know. He couldn't use Flame Alchemy like Mustang. He didn't know the secret for transmuting the air itself into pure oxygen in such a refined way.

Leaping back to avoid getting caught in the small explosion as well he saw Voldemort use his wand to turn the fire around him into a dragon. The fire dragon roared and flew right at Edward. Alphonse was quick to grab his brother, turning his back to the fire beast and shielding Edward from the flames. But Alphonse wasn't quick enough to keep Edward's right arm from catching in the flames. Winry would kill him for the fire damage but it wasn't going to destroy his arm.

Once it died out Edward pulled away to see Alphonse's armor was smoking a little and his hair was singed.

"That is impossible!" Voldemort said, looking at the Elric brothers.

"Brother!"

Edward looked down to see his coat smoking and his right arm was mostly burnt off. He tossed off the coat and gloves. Ripping his black jacket, since that was burnt too, his automail was on full display.

"No muggle could survive the flames!"

"I'm not a muggle. I'm the Fullmetal Alchemist!"

Voldemort disappeared in another puff of black smoke, reappearing off the fountain and closer to the Elric brothers. Edward clapped his hands, transmuting his arm into a blade as he charged the dark wizard.

Voldemort moved back and had conjured a shield with a green snake on the front. Edward slashed and fought, pushing Voldemort back. Alphonse came up behind them too. Edward lept back and Alphonse quickly jumped in the air, smashing his fist down right where Voldemort used to be.

Edward clapped his hands again and made the floor give out under Voldemort. The shield and the wizard disappeared again, reappearing behind them. "Avada Kadarva!"

Edward whipped around to see the green light heading towards him. It was just instinct as he shielded himself with his arm. The green met metal and after a flash of bright green light...nothing happened.

He didn't realize he had been holding his breath, looking down at his arm and back up at Voldemort he grinned. The spells didn't work on automail. It wasn't flesh and blood. It would have probably been the same effect if the curse had hit a wall or any other object.
"How are you still living!?"

"Rockbell Automail, finest in Amestris," Edward replied with a grin, then charging at Voldemort. He sent jinxes at Edward who was able to dodge them all. Though when one did catch him, it sent him back and landing hard on the ground.

Voldemort took the chance to try and kill him but Alphonse was a step ahead. Shielding his brother, Edward saw the killing curse hit Al and...still nothing happened.

"This is impossible! You two are only muggles! No one could survive the curse!"

Edward sat up slowly, seeing Alphonse standing above him. Al could take hits that would kill nearly everyone else. As long as the blood seal wasn't broken, for all intensive purposes, he was basically immortal.

"Are you alright brother?" Al asked. "I'm okay," Edward replied.

Alphonse helped Edward up and the two faced Voldemort once more.

"Guess your wand isn't as all-powerful as you thought. Looks like three people have survived your curse now," Edward taunted.

Voldemort roared and pointed his wand at them, sending green flames at them. Edward and Alphonse quickly moved out of the way. Edward transmuting the floor to try and open up a hole under Voldemort. But he was able to avoid it, sending more curses at the Elric brothers. Edward moved out of the way.

He was knocked back towards the elevators to see Harry. He was still protected but with all the fighting, the marble floor was cracking and it didn't look like the small wall would hold much longer. Transmuting it, Edward made it more stable.

"Let me help!" Harry said.

"No!" Edward said. "He will kill you and my mission is to protect you. Stay here!" Edward then ran to rejoin the fight. He didn't know how long they could keep this up but it had to be just a little longer. Edward vaulted himself up to the fountain and used the golden statue of the elf, transmuting the gold and turning it into a molten stream aimed at Voldemort.

Voldemort called up a wall of water, cooling the gold instantly and then shooting it back at Edward and Alphonse. Both dodged the attack and Voldemort roared with rage, pointing his wand upward, the room was filled with a deafening sound. All the glass in the atrium shattered and flew towards the brothers.

But before they could react or create a barrier to protect themselves, the glass all turned to sand around them.

Looking around, Edward saw Dumbledore, striding across the atrium. Yes! They had done it! Dumbledore was here and now the battle was really over.

"Dumbledore!" Voldemort hissed.

"Hello Tom," Dumbledore said in a much calmer tone than Edward would have expected.

"That is not my name!"
"You shouldn't have come Tom, the Aurors will be here soon. Your followers are all tied up in the Department of Mysteries."

"I will be gone before they get here! They will find your dead body along with these filthy muggles!"

"You won't be killing anyone tonight Tom," Dumbledore said firmly. He waved his wand and golden sparks shot out of it.

"Stand back Edward, Alphonse," Dumbledore commanded, striding towards Voldemort. Voldemort deflected the spell and sent another one towards Dumbledore in return.

Edward wanted to help, but Dumbledore was smart. With how fast the spells flew between the two wizards, Edward didn't know if they could join the duel and not get in the way. As the two wizards fought, Edward and Alphonse still had to move out of the way. Alphonse shielding Edward when a spell came too close to them.

Voldemort sent the water from the fountain right at Dumbledore, who turned it right back around at Voldemort. He was suspended in mid-air, surrounded by water before being dropped to the ground. Voldemort quickly disappeared and Edward grinned, thinking it was over.

"Harry no!" Dumbledore yelled. Edward whipped his head around to see Harry finally getting out from behind the wall. He had climbed over and had his wand at the ready. The smoke then enveloped Harry, but it looked like nothing happened. Harry then stilled for a moment before collapsing to the floor.

Edward, Alphonse, and Dumbledore rushed towards him.

Harry thrashed on the floor, looking like he was in unbelievable pain. When Harry opened his mouth, Edward expected him to scream, but he didn't.

"Kill me," he said in a hoarse voice that was not his own. "Kill me Dumbledore."

Edward looked in horror to Dumbledore. He didn't know what was happening but he was not going to let Dumbledore kill Harry.

"End the pain..." the voice seemed to taunt. "Kill me..."

But Dumbledore didn't lift his wand, he only knelt by Harry's side. Harry's eyes seemed to flash red for a few moments. "Kill me..." But soon the trashing stopped, Harry became still once more. He arched his back and screamed before going limp on the floor.

Edward looked to Dumbledore and put his fingers to Harry's neck. There was a faint pulse, but a pulse nonetheless. Harry's eyes fluttered open and they were bright green once more. "D-dumbledore?" Harry croaked, in his normal voice.

Edward moved to help Harry up slowly, letting the teen lean against him for support. "You alright?"

Harry nodded a little and gripped the side of his head. "I-I think so..."

The fireplaces along the walls began to burn with green flames. Witches and Wizards came pouring out of them and Edward sighed in relief. It was finally over.
Edward

Edward's muscles started to feel heavier every second they stayed there. The adrenaline was leaving his body and now his body was feeling the effects of everything that had happened. But he had been through worse. Though Ed was sure he was going to sleep for at least 48 hours after this.

Though rest had to wait. Right now they had to deal with the Ministry showing up after everything.

Seeing Fudge look like he had seen a ghost and realize Voldemort was back, did help him feel a little better.

But Edward would let Dumbledore sort that whole mess out. Right now, Edward just held Harry who looked like he had also been through hell. He doubted the teen would be able to really stand on his own two feet for a while.

Ed glanced at Alphonse who gave a small nod. While Edward knew Al could take anything as long as his blood seal wasn't damaged, he still wanted to make sure that his younger brother was okay.

Dumbledore came back to them. He turned a broken piece of the fountain to a port key. "I will join you in a few moments."

"The others?" Ed asked.

"They will return to the school shortly after."

He looked to the young alchemist who seemed to find that acceptable and then they all took the portkey.

Edward would have thrown up if he had anything on his stomach. He still hated that mode of travel. Once he got his bearings, Edward realized they were in Dumbledore's office. Al pulled up a chair and Harry sat down, a blank stare on his face.

Edward sighed and crouched down in front of Harry. "Whatever you're feeling right now...don't bottle it up. It won't do anyone any good."

Harry's hands were clenched so tight his knuckles were white.

Edward was too tired for this but it would help Harry out.

"Can you stand?"

Harry stood up, shaky at first but then steady, and looked as if his entire body was shaking.

Edward cracked his knuckles and moved to his fighting stance. "Come on. I can tell you want to punch something or someone, so let it be me." Harry would probably end up hurting himself accidentally if he tried to fight Al.

Harry threw a punch which Edward blocked. He quickly threw another and Edward ducked to avoid it. Harry screamed in anger as he proceeded to send a flurry of punches and kicks Edward's way. Edward let Harry get a few in and blocked or dodged the rest of them.

There was soon a rush of green fire in the fireplace and Dumbledore stepped out.

Molybdenum
Edward dropped his hands and Harry turned on the old man.

"Now Harry," Dumbledore started in a calm voice.

"Don't you dare!" Harry yelled at Dumbledore. Edward sighed as he collapsed in the chair next to Al. All this fighting had worn him out.

"Harry please let me explain-"

"You're the reason he's dead!" Harry yelled even louder. "You kept him locked up there so of course he'd go charging out the first chance he got!"

Dumbledore's expression did not change, he simply walked and sat down behind his desk. "Harry, I will explain to you everything I should have told you so long ago. Then you can yell at me all you wish. I will not stop you. I deserve it."

Edward perked up a tiny bit at that. He wasn't expecting that. Even though Dumbledore put on a calm air around him, everyone had their limits.

"Edward, Alphonse...I thank you both for helping secure the safety of my students. The others are in the hospital wing, if you would please go and join them."

Harry seemed to be caught off guard at that and looked to Edward and Alphonse.

"Wait a second, I want to know why the hell that prophecy was so important too," Edward said. They had risked their lives over the damn thing, they should at least know why.

"Harry can tell you all this if he wishes. It is not that I do not trust you, but this is only for Harry."

Edward looked to Harry and said. "Only if he wants us to go." Looking back to Dumbledore he said. "If this is about him then he had the final say."

Dumbledore gave a small nod and looked to Harry.

"I-I-" Harry didn't seem to know what to even say then. But before he could Alphonse picked Edward up. "Al! Stop it!"

"We'll leave you to talk."

"Al! Let me go!" Edward protested as Alphonse left the office and to Edward to the Hospital Wing. "Why did you do that!?"

"He was uncomfortable and right now this is between Harry and Dumbledore. He can tell us when he wants to."

Once there, Edward saw Madame Pomfrey fussing over Hermione, Ron, Neville, Ginny, and Luna. All of them looked alright but Edward was still glad to see them getting taken care of.

Alphonse set Edward down and Hermione came rushing over, with the others right behind her. "Are you alright!? What happened!? Is Harry okay?"

"We heard You-Know-Who showed up!" Ron said. "Did you really fight him?" Ginny then asked.

"Calm down, calm down," Edward said. "We're okay and so is Harry. He's with Dumbledore right now."
Everyone seemed to let out a sigh of relief at that. Madame Pomfrey came over and fussed at them all for being out of their beds.

Edward went to his bed and let Madame Pomfrey give him a multitude of different potions while running her wand over him and muttering charms. Once she was satisfied she let the others pull up chairs around Edward's bed. Alphonse sat down as well while Edward relayed everything that had happened.

"You really fought him? Without a wand!" Ron said in awe.

"You survived a direct killing curse?" Hermione said looking very scared.

"Well...sort of," Edward said, rubbing the back of his neck. "It hit my automail so I think it didn't work because it's just metal. But it was a close call."

Hermione nodded, but still looked very worried.

"You took the cruciatus curse for me," Ginny said softly. "I know you could have avoided it but it would have hit me."

"I know, and I'd do it again...for any of you."

"You really mean it when you said you've had worse?" Neville asked.

"Yeah, I did...when I lost my arm and leg."

Ron, Hermione, and Ginny knew what he meant but the others did not. While Edward did trust them and they knew that Alphonse did not have a body it wasn't safe for him to tell them now.

"Is that when..." Neville asked glancing over at Alphonse who nodded.

Madame Pomfrey was cleaning and restocking some potions at the other end of the room. Hermione pointed her wand and whispered a spell before saying. "She won't hear us now. You can tell them."

Edward did not want to do this now but they deserved the truth. So Edward went on from the beginning, how their dad had left them and then they lost their mom, how they tried and failed to bring her back and just what it had cost them.

"And that's why you're..." Neville tried to find the right words but Edward beat him to it. "His soul is bonded to the armor. As long as the blood seal is intact he'll be okay."

"I'm sorry you lost your leg and your body," Luna said a sad expression on her face.

"It was our own fault," Alphonse replied. "It's why we work so hard and research so much. So we can get our bodies back."

"And we will," Edward promised.

"Is there any magic that can help you?" Neville asked.

"I don't think so...all the research we've done shows that the magic wouldn't work too well on us. Plus...I think my injuries are like the ones sustained by dark magic."

"Like Harry's scar," Hermione said.

"Exactly. I think Alchemy is the way we get out of our own mess. It's what got us into it in the first
"I'm sure you'll figure it out soon!" Neville said. "You two are so smart!"

"Thanks, Neville," Edward replied, a small smile on his lips.

When Madame Pomfrey came over she put everyone back in their own beds. She gave Edward a sleeping potion and he waved her off. "I'll be okay. I'm tired enough without it." She nodded and set the potion to the side just in case.

When she turned off the lights, Edward laid down and let his eyes close.

Edward rested in the Hospital Wing with the others. Madame Pomfrey gave him some sleeping potion and he was out like a light.

When he woke, Edward rubbed his eyes and looked to Al.

"You slept for nearly two days brother."

Edward stood up and stretched, his muscles sore and aching.

"Is everyone okay?"

Al nodded. "The others rested and then went to their dormitories. Harry has been avoiding everyone..."

Edward sighed and slipped on his clothes, happy to see that Al had folded them up by his bedside.

"How do you feel?"

"Alright, I'll be sore for a bit but it'll pass."

"Are you going to find Harry?"

Edward nodded as he put on his gloves.

"Want me to join you?"

Edward shook his head. Al stood up with the book in his hand and replied. "I'll be in our room if you need me."

Edward then headed out in search of Harry. It took him a while, asking all the paintings he could before he found Harry at the top of the Astronomy tower. He was looking out over the grounds and the lake.

Edward slowly approached him and sat down beside him.

"I want to be alone."

"I know, but you shouldn't."

"I thought you said I shouldn't bottle up my feelings?" Harry snapped back.

Edward kept his tone calm and steady. "No...but shutting yourself off from everyone isn't good either."

"No one gets it," Harry said bitterly. "Everyone thought he was evil and even Ron and
Hermione...they weren't close with him."

Edward leaned back a little and looked up at the bright blue sky. "And now you're angry. You look around and see other people happy and you want to punch them or scream, or even both. And even this weather...you hate how bright and sunny it is."

Harry looked back at Edward a tiny bit surprised. "Yeah...how did you know?"

"I went through it too, though I was only five at the time," Edward said. "Sirius was the only real thing like a father to you right? Well, once my deadbeat, good for nothing father left us all me and Al had was our mom. She was the only real parent we had. And when we lost her..." Edward shook his head. "Everyone had this look of pity on their faces when they talked to me. I hated it. They said they were sorry but sorry wasn't going to bring her back. They told us about how they had lost someone but they didn't get it. None of them had gone through what we had so it just made me angry whenever they said they 'understood' what we were going through."

Edward glanced over at Harry. "It's why me and Al tried to bring her back."

"You said that didn't work, right?"

Edward nodded in reply. "It didn't. Our teacher even tried it too...but we didn't know it at the time. She and her husband tried for years to have a kid, and when she finally got pregnant, she lost the baby. In her desperation, she tried to bring her child back."

"Is she like you or Al now?"

"Sort off...while I lost my leg she lost some of her internal organs. So now she throws up blood a lot and can never conceive a child ever again."

Harry grimaced a little. "That's terrible."

"It's what happens when you try to go against nature, try to be God. You lose parts of yourself."

"But-"

"No," Edward said firmly. "Listen to me very carefully. It. Is. Impossible."

"But-"

"No buts," Edward said, turning to face Harry fully. "I checked and I had our teacher check too...there is no possible way the things we created were our mother or her baby. It is impossible. And from what Dumbledore has told me it's impossible with magic too."

Harry looked down a little, a sad and ashamed look on his face.

"I don't blame you for wanting to though, it's natural," Edward said in a much softer tone than before. "The important thing is not to dwell on it. To move on."

"I don't feel like I can though."

"You will, time will help," Edward said. "I know it feels like this will never end but it will. No matter what is going on or how badly you're feeling, this too shall pass." He glanced back over at Harry. "So what did the old man tell you?"

Harry told Edward the overview of what Dumbledore had explained; how Voldemort had targeted him because of the prophecy and what exactly it all meant for him.
"One of us had to kill the other."

"Well...he will keep trying to kill you. And you're too good to not want to fight him too."

"You said you don't kill...why?"

"Killing is so absolute and no one is truly all good or all evil."

"You think Voldemort has good in him?"

"Maybe at one point...but he's so steeped in dark magic I don't think he's really human anymore. You said he possessed you right and that he couldn't handle it?"

Harry nodded in confirmation. "Well, that's your answer. If he couldn't handle feeling what you felt for a second then he's not really human."

"So..it's okay to kill him?"

"I'm not the person who decides that Harry," Edward said softly. "With how he is and with this prophecy, it would be self-defense if it gives you any comfort."

Harry turned away a bit and asked. "Would you do it? Could you do it?"

Edward paused for a moment. If he was in Harry's position he didn't know what he would do. But he did know he wouldn't run away from a fight, no matter what. "I always try to find another way."

"You'd let him go!?"

"I didn't say that," Edward said, giving Harry a look. "I mean...you can disarm them, trap them, do something that isn't killing them."

"I don't know if I can though; if that would even be an option."

"You can, and you already showed that you could."

"How?!"

"You said you fought him last year? Did you try to kill him then?"

"No..I tried-" Comprehension dawned on his face. "Disarm him."

"Exactly. Even when those Death Eaters were chasing us down and trying to kill us you didn't try to kill them. Hurt them...yes, but not kill."

Edward put his hand on Harry's shoulder. "You have time now, he won't attack you now while he's dealing with the mess that was the fight at the Ministry. Plus, didn't Dumbledore say you're protected at your home with your aunt and uncle?"

Harry gave a small nod. "I don't want to go back to Private Drive...but I have to."

"I know, and if you want to send letters to me and Al you can," Edward promised.

"You guys will come back next year though right?"

"Maybe, I don't know. It all depends on what's going on after the summer is over. I get sent all over Amestris and even then...if I can find a good lead on how to get me and Al's bodies back then we
have to follow through on it."

"So you might not be back...Have to admit, I liked your class a lot this year."

"I did too, I really didn't think I would. I'm going to miss this place. I know Al will too. But don't worry, we'll come and visit if we can. And I promise I'll send a letter to you guys as soon as Al get's his body back."

"And you'll come back up here?"

"First thing we can," Edward replied. "I can't deny Al the feast Mrs. Weasley promised him."

Harry had the smallest hint of a smile on his lips. "Maybe we could come down to Amestris sometime after...all of this is over."

Edward knew that Harry couldn't leave until Voldemort was defeated. Plus Harry wouldn't want to have Voldemort try and attack him while he was abroad anyways. Edward didn't know how much longer it would be until their final confrontation, but with how Voldemort was acting he didn't think it would be too long. Plus Harry wasn't the kind of man that would sit back and wait while someone like that was doing terrible things across the country.

"Anytime."

Harry looked back out across the ground and Edward did too.
Edward

With Voldemort's return made official to the public, things around Hogwarts changed. Most of the students looked nervous and scared and mail arrived more regularly in the morning. Edward supposed families wanted to make sure their children were alright and vice versa.

But the best in Edward's mind was Umbridge getting chased out of Hogwarts by Peeves. With Dumbledore back and the toad gone, Edward was starting to feel a little sad he and Al would have to leave soon.

But it couldn't be helped.

Edward and Alphonse spent most of their time with those they had gotten close to over the year. Harry seemed more withdrawn but it wasn't as bad as before. Edward knew that time would help him recover from what he had lost in the Ministry.

Dumbledore did call them up to his office a few days before the train to take the students back would leave.

"I wanted to thank you both for what you've done this year," he began.

Edward gave a nonchalant shrug. "You really don't need to thank us."

"But I do. You helped ensure that the students were protected in my absence and looked after Harry. I am in your debt."

"We would have done it regardless. That Umbridge was a mean old lady," Al said.

"I also wanted to give you this," Dumbledore said, giving Edward a letter. Edward looked it over and saw the wax seal on the front. "It's a request that you both come back to Hogwarts next year if you wish."

Al looked to Edward and he nodded, putting the letter in his coat. "We'll try to make it. But I can't make any promises. If we're on a long mission or find a good lead we can't come back here to teach." And while it would make Al happy, Edward couldn't see spending another year here. He would feel guilty as he did not see the path for getting Al his body back here. Al would be stuck in that suit of armor for another year at least if they came back.

But if Al really wanted to come back Edward didn't think he would deny him. Maybe after using the summer to reflect he could see a way to use the magic here to reach their goal.

"I understand," Dumbledore said with a kind smile on his face. "If you cannot return, please know you will be greatly missed."

"We'll miss it here too," Edward replied.

"And even if Brother can't come back to teach let us know if you need our help!"

Edward gave a short nod. "Yeah, we'll be there if you need us."

"Of course," Dumbledore replied. "I also wished to ask how you want to return to Amestris? I can arrange a portkey on the grounds."
"Can we ride on the train?" Alphonse asked.

Dumbledore nodded. "I'll have one of the Order apparate you from Kings Cross Station back to Amestris."

"Sounds good to me," Edward stated and the brothers headed out of his office.

"I am happy we came Brother," Al said softly.

"Me too...it was an interesting year, to say the least."

"Do you think the Colonel will give us another mission once we get back home?"

"Ugh knowing that slave driver he will and will want me to complete a huge report on my year here," Edward groaned, already dreading it.

They headed back to Edward's office where Harry, Ron, and Hermione were.

"What are you three doing here?" Edward asked.

"Classes are done and exams are canceled," Ron replied with a shrug. With all the fear and uncertainty in the air, Dumbledore had elected to cancel any exams and classes to let the students enjoy their last few days at Hogwarts.

Edward went and leaned against his desk. "And you three don't want to be mobbed by everyone so you hid out in here?"

Hermione nodded and asked. "So when will you be leaving and going back to Amestris?"

"Al wanted to ride on the train with you so we'll be leaving right after that."

"Oh! That's nice," Hermione replied, smiling a bit.

"And you don't know if you'll be back next year?" Ron asked to which Edward nodded in confirmation.

"Hopefully we will," Alphonse interjected.

"We'll send you a letter if we can't," Edward also added. "And don't get me wrong, this year has been crazy at times but it's also been fun, and with the military, I don't get to choose where I'm sent sometimes and even then...if we find a potential lead, we can't pass that up either."

"We understand," Hermione said, still looking a little sad at the idea.

"You'll still send letters though?" Ron then asked.

"Of course, I got an owl don't I?"

Ron smiled and said. "Well I know Mum still has her open invitation to you both, so let us know if you get your bodies back and we'll throw a huge party when you come up."

"We will," Edward promised. The list of people they would have to tell was getting pretty long now. Ed supposed there would be lots of parties thrown.

"How are you three doing though?" Edward then asked them. He knew that what happened at the Ministry didn't just affect Harry.
"Alright," Ron said. "I mean...we did know You-Know-Who was already back and thanks to you none of us got extremely hurt."

"It is hard to adjust though since everyone knows he is back it's going to get dark again. He won't be moving in the shadows anymore. Everything that happened last time will happen again," Hermione said quietly.

Edward knew as a Muggle-born she was in more danger than most other wizards and witches, and especially since she was friends with Harry Potter. "You guys are tough and you'll make it through all of this. The important thing is to make sure you stay together."

"Even though you might not come back to teach, can we count on you to come back and help?" Harry asked.

"Don't worry about that, just send a letter and we'll come," Alphonse said and Ed nodded as well.

"Yeah, can't miss a chance to give it to that bastard again," Edward said with a grin.

Harry looked out the window and Edward knew he was thinking about the prophecy yet again. Edward didn't blame him, it would be hard to think of anything else. Alphonse changed the subject to something more light-hearted and Edward glanced over at Hermione. He supposed now was as good a time as any to do this.

"Hermione? Can I have a word?"

Hermione nodded and followed him to another empty classroom. "What is it?"

Edward sighed and rubbed the back of his neck. Winry may say he is an idiot when it came to things like love but he wasn't blind. "Look I've noticed that you've..." This was becoming more painful by the moment.

Hermione turned red and stammered. "N-noticed what?"

"I'm sorry, I just-I don't feel the same way," he said. "I'm really sorry."

Hermione ducked her head and Edward sighed. "You're a really nice girl and one of the smartest people I know. You'll find someone who'll worship the ground you walk on."

"I-I wasn't...it-"

"Hermione," he said in the most gentle tone he could. "You're a great friend and I'm glad we met this year."

Hermione looked up, a dusting of pink still on her cheeks. "How long have you known?"

"I suspected it a while ago, but I didn't say anything because I wasn't sure. And then with everything happening...I'm sorry."

"Why are you the one who is apologizing?"

"Because, I never wanted you to be embarrassed or in any kind of pain."

"It was just silly of me," she said, looking down again.

"You are many things Hermione Granger but silly is not one of them."
Hermione smiled a little at that and Edward felt a little bit better.

The days flew by and next thing Edward knew, he and Al were packing up their things. It didn't take them long and once they stepped out of their room Edward set his suitcase down.

Elizabeth stood from her piano and smiled at them. "It was nice having you this year. I hope to see you again soon."

"You were the best painting we could have hoped for...if that makes any sense," Edward replied.

"We'll miss you," Al added.

Elizabeth smiled a little and waved as they left. Edward walked to the main entrance with Alphonse and saw Dumbledore, McGonagall, Hagrid, and Madame Pomfrey standing there.

"You two take care now," Madame Pomfrey said. "I'm afraid I can't give you anything to take...just in case."

"No worries," Edward said. "Thanks for taking such good care of me." Madame Pomfrey had a small smile on her face and she said her goodbyes before departing.

"I'm gonna miss ye Ed, ye too Al," Hagrid said.

"We'll miss you too Hagrid," Al said, giving the half-giant a big hug.

"Hope ye can come an' teach next year."

"Us too," Edward said and let himself be hugged as well, feeling all the air get knocked out of his lungs.

Hagrid pulled out a big handkerchief and dotted his eyes.

"Don't cry Hagrid, we'll be back...one day," Edward said. Even if it was years from now, they would definitely come back.

"Sorry," he murmured and stepped to the side so McGonagall could say her goodbyes.

"It was a pleasure to have you with us Edward, Alphonse."

"It was an absolute honor to meet you," Edward replied. McGonagall gave him the smallest of smiles and said. "Please give Miss Winry and her grandmother my regards when you see them next."

Edward gave her a mock salute and replied. "Yes, ma'am."

McGonagall looked the tiniest bit amused before Dumbledore approached them. "You two best be off with the rest of the students."

Edward extended his hand to Dumbledore and said. "Send us a letter if you need us. We'll be here."

"I have no doubt about it," he replied with a smile. "I wish you luck on your endeavors. If there is any way I can be of assistance please let me know."

"Will do old man," Edward said and Dumbledore laughed a little at that.

"Thank you for letting me come to Hogwarts too Professor," Alphonse added.
"Of course," Dumbledore replied. "And you both are forever welcome here at Hogwarts."

Edward picked up his suitcase and looked to Al. The two waved and said goodbye once more to the professors that they had come to know over the year and headed out with the rest of the students.

On the train, Edward leaned back and looked out the window. He and Al would be back on the road again soon. It was odd staying in one place for so long and now they'd have to readjust to hopping all over the country again.

The others talked about summer plans and played games of exploding snap. It was much more light-hearted and a nice breath of fresh air with all the doom and gloom that seemed to hang over the castle since the Ministry.

Once they started to get closer to London, many changed back into their normal clothes. "Oh! I almost forgot," Hermione said, getting something out of her bag. "We got you two something."

"You guys didn't have to do that," Edward said, accepting the small parcel that Hermione had handed to him.

He unwrapped it and saw it was a small photo album. Opening that he saw moving a moving picture of Harry, Ron, and Hermione waving.

"It's just a couple pictures of all of us and Hogwarts. Something to remember us by when you're back home," Ron said.

Edward flipped through the album and smiled when he shut it. He was at a loss for words, which was not something that happened...ever really.

"Thank you," Al supplemented for him.

"Yeah...thanks," he said when he finally got his voice back.

He put the photo album in his suitcase and while he knew he really couldn't show them to just anyone, it was something that he would carry with them everywhere. Edward wasn't much for sentimentality but he could make an exception for this.

Getting off the train, Edward smiled when he saw Mrs. Weasley with Fred and George along with a few other Order members. Going up to them he said. "How's life outside of Hogwarts?"

"Amazing, business couldn't be better," Fred replied.

"Did ya miss us Ed?" George asked with a smirk.

"Have to say things were much less interesting without you two around. But that exit...It was mighty impressive."

Fred and George both grinned and high fived one another.

"You two are legends at Hogwarts, can't think of a more fitting way to honor you both."

"You're going to make us cry."

"Yeah, never seen you this sentimental, you sure you're Edward Elric?"

Edward rolled his eyes and lightly punched George's arm. "You two take care now."
Mrs. Weasley, after greeting Ron, Hermione, and Harry came over to Edward and Alphonse. "Dumbledore wrote and told us of what was going on. Once we send Harry off then Tonks will take you back to Amestris."

The pink haired witched turned at the sound of her name and smiled, waving at them before returning to her conversation with Ginny.

"Why are you all here?" Edward asked her.

"Oh...well we wanted to have a little conversation with Harry's Aunt and Uncle before he went home with them," Mrs. Weasley said delicately.

Edward had a grin on his face and asked. "Might I join that conversation?"

They went through the barrier, Al staying behind as his armor would draw too much attention. They approached a very fat looking man and his son, along with an abnormally thin and tall woman.

"Good Afternoon," Mr. Weasley said with a pleasant smile on his face. Harry's Aunt and Uncle looked very displeased that he was even near them, let alone talking to them.

"We wanted to have a conversation with you about Harry," Mad-Eye said, glaring at them.

"How he is treated when he's in your home," Tonks added.

"H-how...it is none of your business what goes on in my home," he stammered.

"Oh I think it does," Edward interjected.

"Who are you?" He asked, looking Edward up and down and having a displeased look on his face.

"Oh, a friend of Harry's," Edward said taking off his glove and pushing his sleeve up. The glint of metal made Vernon, Petunia, and Dudley all look rather pale. Edward straightened himself up and said. "Harry told me what it's like living with you and I have to say...I don't like what I'm hearing. So here's the deal. You're going to treat him with respect. You are not going to starve him. You are going to give him clothes that are new and actually fit him."

Vernon seemed to stammer a bit, not liking that someone who looked so young was giving him orders.

"So if we find out you are treating Harry in any unpleasant way," Mr. Weasley said.

"And we will hear about it," Mad-Eye growled. "We will be having another chat...one much less delightful than this one."

"Is that a threat?"

Edward had a very devious grin on his lips. "Yes, it is actually. Good to see we're all on the same page."

Edward turned and smiled at Harry. "Have a good summer Harry Potter. I have to say...it was very nice meeting you." He extended out his hand and Harry shook it.

"You too...Edward Elric."

Harry said goodbye to the rest of the group before heading out with his Aunt, Uncle, and cousin.
And yes this is posted on my fanfiction.net account. All the chapters are there but I will be posting them all here as well

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!