Time Travel? Really!

by animeotaku20

Summary

Rose Potter, trouble-magnet extraordinaire, finds herself waking up in the past after an accident at work. Deciding to do what Dumbledore should have, Rose decides to fix the timeline seeing as she's stuck. Everyone had better watch out, because this Rose Potter isn't what they were expecting - at all.
Time Travel? Really!

Chapter Notes

I don't own 'Harry Potter'.

Slight AU before time travel.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Rose Potter, age thirty, The-Girl-Who-Lived turned The-Witch-Who-Won, Unspeakable and all-around trouble magnet, groggily opened her eyes and lifted her head, peering around her surroundings to see herself once more in the pits of hell … also known as 'The Cupboard Under The Stairs', Number Four Privet Drive, Little Whinging, Surrey.

"FUCK!"

Now, to fully comprehend just how Miss Potter once more found herself in a situation of total and utter incomprehension (not that this was a strange thing, to be honest), we must first turn back to the beginning of this awful day …

Groaning and rolling over to the sound of loud beeping filling the room, Rose rolled out of bed and flung her hand in the general direction of her oh-so-hated alarm clock. The resulting smash was both a soothing balm on her annoyance and a sound that had become a daily habit to her morning routine ever since she'd bought the crappy thing. Squinting over at the mess of broken and crushed pieces of plastic covering her bedroom floor she waved a wandless Reparo at it and watched her clock fix itself neatly before levitating it back to the bedside table, where it would be broken and destroyed once more the following day, as was her daily routine where the blasted contraption was concerned.

Rose's exploits with wandless magic had begun not long after the Second War when she was finally learning how to settle down and enjoy life without an insane madman trying to kill her at every turn. Her beloved holly and phoenix feather wand hadn't quite been a fit anymore after the destruction of the disgusting Horcrux within her; the idea that the wand she loved and adored, had trusted to save her life on numerous occasions had only needed her when she still had the parasite within her had devastated her. The turmoil had caused her magic to violently react, breaking numerous blocks on her magical core and making her wish that she could resurrect Albus Dumbledore and kill him all over again by herself.

The fact that someone she had trusted so much had abused her in such a way made her want to cry and scream at everyone and everything she could; she had trusted him so implicitly after being betrayed by so many others, yet he had still had the audacity to use her in such a way. He had blocked both the amount of magic that she could use and some innate abilities that she'd had, leaving her feeling volatile and having trouble with all manner of spells. (It had certainly given her a new perspective on her volatile teenage years.)

The upside to this situation had been a natural progression to wandless magic which simply responded to her will, and soon she'd been able to perform all manner of spells from pure need or want; she'd bought a new custom-made wand but it hadn't been a necessity to use one anymore. The books that she'd found in the Chamber of Secrets were a massive help once she raided the place,
taking pride of place in her personal library of questionable materials.

After doing her morning ritual and having a light breakfast made by her faithful elf and friend Dobby, Rose made her way to the Ministry in her god-awful (in her opinion) Unspeakable robes and flooed into the Atrium with the rest of the employees. Already in her customary foul mood for the morning, Rose's day took a dive for the worse after her ex-boyfriend and general tosser got in the elevator with her. Zacharias Smith

*Ugh.* She could feel herself physically shudder in revulsion at the mere thought of his name. Both at the wanker standing next to her and herself for sleeping with him – more than once. Since the war Smith had actually gotten a lot better as a person and became a magical lawyer, helping all manner of people regardless of blood purity or race. Unfortunately, he had still been a wanker. Pedantic, rude, and so patronising that it was a miracle he didn't get hexed whenever he spoke to someone. But the sex had been good. *Really* good. Good enough to put up with him for an entire year, until he'd decided that sex with others was also really good. *Prat.* Rose couldn't be more thankful that the robes of the Unspeakables hid the wearer's identity so thoroughly or they'd probably be in a screaming match in the middle of the elevator for all the public to see. She was sure that people would be delighted to see her lose her composure so badly. *Bunch of arseholes.*

As she exited the lift at the Department of Mysteries she realised that she missed having crazy and inane fights (verbal or physical), even if they were in public for every single nosy bastard to see and comment on. Not that she cared all that much about her reputation anymore, even if people were constantly speculating about why she hadn't yet provided an Heir for her families, or if she was going to let them die out like the irresponsible and flighty woman she was – Ignoring the fact that she was considered a respected Ministry employee. God forbid she actually live her own life and remain single for now. She wasn't even middle-aged by magical standards, for crying out loud!

Rose was glad for the anonymity of the Unspeakables. The public spotlight had been such a bitch to her ever since Voldy bit the dust: 'Come to this party', 'Sponsor this project', 'Will you marry this person?' Rose could feel her blood pressure rising at the memories as she stalked through the department towards her office. She opened the door and let herself in, before closing the door and locking herself in her personal sanctuary. Her eyes immediately went to the enlarged picture on the wall of her and Teddy taken just a month ago.

Teddy. Just the thought of her beloved godson had the power to immediately calm her down and cheer her up. He was so adorable, beyond mischievous, and the best thing that had ever happened to her. Tonks may have birthed him and shared his blood but Rose considered him something like a son to her. Between her and Andromeda he had grown up wanting for nothing but learning how to be the best he could possibly be. He was the perfect blend of his parents, with Tonks' enthusiasm for life and Remus' gentle kindness. Now in his second year at Hogwarts Teddy was the only reason she hadn't left Britain behind already; if she didn't have him she would have told all of magical Britain to go fuck themselves by now.

Her so-called 'friendships' with Ron and Hermione had all but crumbled under the weight of Ron's pitiful jealousy, Rose's stubbornness, and Hermione's unwillingness to ever go against her eventual husband, even if he was clearly in the wrong. She knew full well she hadn't been entirely innocent in the arguments, but those two hadn't seemed to understand how the war had changed her. When Ron had revealed to her that he wanted nothing more to be with Rose as Lord Potter and have her fame and money behind him, well, let's just say that his stay at St Mungo's hadn't been pleasant in the slightest. (The Healers weren't exactly welcoming to someone who'd treated their saviour in such a way, and it was one of the only times she'd been glad for her fame.)

Hermione had also been pissed that Rose had hurt Ron so bad, ignoring the reason why she'd hurt
him in the first place, and they'd finally gotten together after bitching together about Rose. They didn't seem to realise that Rose had no desire to let anyone else walk all over her like she had when she was younger; she'd been tired of letting others dictate her life and she was going to live for herself. And Teddy. The rift with the Weasley family had been heart-breaking for the girl who had always considered them to be a pseudo-family to her, but frankly it had also been relieving to be removed from Molly Weasley's overbearing nature. Bill, Charlie and George all still regularly contacted her if nothing else, and she and her favourite Weasleys still got together often. She was even Roxanne's godmother.

After reviewing some of the never-ending paperwork stacked on her desk (she was convinced paperwork was the ultimate enemy of mankind) about her newest project, Rose got up and made her way to room housing the Veil of Death. Speculated to be a pathway to the realm of death, or to another world, nobody had ever fully comprehended the intricacies of such an artefact despite the centuries of research on it. Rose herself was currently working on the Veil under the assumption that it may be a portal to another place, and she was using countless mathematical formulas and obscure runic alphabets to research how to use the archway. The dangers of working with such a thing meant that she'd had to write a will before even starting the project, as did many Unspeakables in the department, such as those creating new Time-Turners.

As Rose paced around the Veil writing numerous calculations in a small notebook, she began to consider just how much her life had changed in the years since the war. She may have always been slightly cynical as a child because of her relatives' treatment of her, but ever since the war she had become downright jaded. Her attitude was crass and blunt, her relationships – both platonic and romantic – were doomed from the very beginning, and her aversion to the public eye made her seem like a bitter old woman. At thirty. 'Depressing' didn't even begin to describe the tragedy that was her life.

As a young girl who'd grown up knowing that she was completely unloved, the one thing she had always wished for beyond everything else was a family; she'd wanted a partner to love and cherish her, children who she could raise to become good adults, and a home that she and her family would build together – a home that was hers. When she'd looked in the Mirror of Erised as a child she had seen generations of Potters stood behind her, and while the romantic partner had been added to the fantasy later she had never stopped yearning for a simple family. She didn't want endless wealth, or fame, or even for everyone to like her. Her most fervent wish was for a close family to care for beyond all measure.

She sighed heavily, rubbing her face tiredly as she did so. She couldn't go on like this anymore; becoming exhausted with life before she was middle-aged had not been her plan in life. She had fought desperately to change their messed-up society, not to become a reclusive, bitter woman who despised other people. If only she could go back to the beginning, she would have changed everything. Hindsight was 20/20, after all …

"SHADOW!"

Hearing her code name being screamed at the same time as a massive explosion in the next room over, she turned just in time to see a massive hole form in the wall in front of her with numerous objects and bodies coming at her with breakneck speed. She rapidly threw up a shield which proved to be totally ineffective when she was hit and launched through the air towards the Veil.

"DOBBY!" she screamed. The usually comforting crack of elf Apparition was lost in the surrounding chaos, even as the small elf dived towards his master frantically and grabbed on to her robes as she fell backwards through the Veil.
"MISS ROSEY!"

Chapter End Notes

In case anyone has noticed, this is my story from FFN. It hasn't been stolen it's actually mine :)

Rose Potter sat up in the disturbingly familiar dark and surveyed her cramped surroundings, after which she calmly – after uttering a string of expletives which a Lady should never use in public under any circumstances whatsoever – considered her situation lying in her dark and dismal cupboard. The cupboard which she’d hoped to never see ever again. Ever. She fervently wished that she wasn’t actually dead, because if her afterlife consisted of one of her most hated places on Earth, especially after all the crap she’d gone through in her life, she would destroy Death itself. (She didn't know exactly how she would do that, but that wasn't really the point at this awful moment in time.) If she assumed that she was in fact alive, then the facts would need to analysed carefully before coming to any conclusions.

First fact: she was now in a body that appeared to be of a pre-Hogwarts age, her obviously malnourished body not telling her exactly how old she was. Second fact: the magic that she could feel within her was partially blocked. Third fact: she was back with the horrid people that Albus too-many-names Dumbledore had somehow considered to be a loving family to grow up in. (She snorted at the thought.) From these facts, Rose could tentatively conclude that she was definitely alive and had somehow time travelled, though this particular instance of time travel had seemingly only displaced her adult mind and memories.

This led to another conclusion: she now had the ability to change and fix the timeline.

As an Unspeakable Rose had extensively studied both magical and muggle theories pertaining to time travel and the supposed rules associated with it. The methods, circumstances, the issues that would result from it ... Rose had researched it all, as the Unspeakables had long since discovered that the occurrence of time travel was indeed possible, it was just impossible to control and direct. At the moment it was, anyway. However, all the scenarios that Rose had imagined generally conformed to the idea that two copies of the same person, as in two separate and distinct bodies, would exist in the same time and place simultaneously. Such a situation would cause all manner of paradoxes and untold nightmares, which was generally why the sane witch or wizard - as in, nobody at all in the Department of Mysteries - vehemently stayed away from attempting to understand and direct time travel.

But as of right now she was an adult mind in a child's body. One single body. She could act without fear of acting against herself as there was only one version of her right now. (And yes, she knew full well how convoluted that explanation sounded.)

She felt a stir of excitement from the thought as a shit-eating grin worthy of the Weasley twins overtook her face. She could save people from being murdered by an insane wannabe dictator. She could free Sirius from both the physical and mental prisons he was currently trapped in. She could fuck with Dumbledore to her heart's content. Her grin shifted to a Slytherin-worthy smirk at that last thought; Dumbledore wouldn't know what had hit him after her magic was unblocked. Rose now had the ability to legitimately deal with Voldemort while messing with the old goat for everything he had done to her.
She sat up quickly and cursed under her breath as she smacked her head on the low ceiling, wishing desperately for a light in the dismal space. When her magic responded and a small but noticeable *Lumos* activated she could have cheered. Her magic, while still blocked, could be used wandlessly, and with no method of tracking wandless magic she was going to have an easier time when it came to using it. It seemed as if that her magic still responded to her memories; she had the knowledge of how to use her magic in the most efficient manner and using it was like muscle memory. She instinctively knew how to harness and direct her magic, even if she currently only had the blocked core of a child.

As Rose lay back on the ratty mattress beneath her she thought about the events that had managed to send her here. *Time-Turners*, she thought. Using her Occlumency she went over her memories of the explosion with a fine-toothed comb. *They were the ones building the new Time-Turners for the department. Were the objects that hit me part of the Time-Turners?* Her musing of the explosion was cut short by a horrific realisation.

"Dobby!" she gasped. She instantly sat up and didn't even bat an eye as she once more managed to hit her head in the same exact spot on the low ceiling. Her eyes welled up with tears at the thought of her faithful friend dying in that accident. Years before he had narrowly escaped death in both Malfoy Manor and the Battle of Hogwarts where he had helped lead the Hogwarts elves into battle. Her other elf Kreacher hadn't been so lucky but he was remembered as a hero for fighting the Death Eaters and protecting the students with his magic, managing to take down a dozen enemies before falling himself.

A loud and familiar crack permeated the air of the cupboard, and right before her at her feet stood Dobby, clothed in his old dirty pillowcase from the Malfoys. His tennis-ball green eyes however shone with confidence and happiness when his eyes met those of the young girl in front of him.

"Miss Rosey Potter!" the elf exclaimed as he jumped forward excitedly, and the two met in a warm embrace which reaffirmed the master-servant bond between them immediately.

"Dobby? I don't get it. How are you here? What about the Malfoys?" Rose reeled off question after question hoping that this wasn't a dream, that she had at least one friend with her during this crazy adventure.

"Dobby was with Miss Rosey when she fell through the curtain, then suddenly Dobby is with bad masters again, and Dobby remembers Miss Rosey being Dobby's master. Bad masters seem younger than before, so Dobby thinks time is different, then Dobby hears Miss Rosey calling for Dobby, so Dobby comes here." Dobby explained quickly, looking inordinately proud of himself.

"Dobby, I think we've time travelled. We're back to the period before I went to Hogwarts. Will you help me change things?" she asked her friend seriously.

Dobby straightened up and lost his dopey smile. He had come a long since the war, she thought; he had always tried to help her to the best of his ability but after the war he had started to think things through a little more (which she was extremely relieved over). "Of course Miss Rosey! Dobby is a loyal elf of The Noble and Most Ancient House of Potter, and Dobby will serve Miss Rosey always! Dobby's bond with the bad masters is gone now!" Dobby stood proud and happy, and Rose couldn't help but think of the look on Lucius Malfoy's face if he ever found out that he'd lost an elf to The-Girl-Who-Lived. She'd pay good money to see that.

She inwardly snorted at the mental image and said to her faithful elf, "Thank you Dobby, I'm honoured to have you as my elf again. Firstly then, I want to get away from this house as soon as possible and go to Gringotts, so can you help me with some compulsion charms on my relatives and then Apparate me to Gringotts? After that I would like you get a Potter uniform as before and start
getting The Pottery ready, but don't work too fast, I don't want you to rush yourself. I may need to call you from Gringotts or sometime after, so the same rules as before about breaks and punishments, okay?"

Dobby beamed at her and nodded his head up and down so fast it looked as if it would fly off. "Yes Miss Rosey!"

"Great! So first, what's the date?" Doing a quick Tempus charm she started laughing when she realised it was once more Dudley's birthday and the day of the ill-fated trip to the zoo. Not if I can help it. She considered the pros and cons of going or not, but realised it was the best time to sneak out and leave for good. It might have been entertaining to set a boa constrictor on her family like before but it wouldn't really serve any purpose. Other than her entertainment, that is. Today was the day that her Hogwarts letter would be coming and she could finally leave for her family's ancestral manor. A few minor compulsions on her relatives and no-one would know anything at all about the whereabouts of Rose Potter.

The tell-tale stomping of one Dudley Dursley on the stairs above her was the signal for the beginning of the end of the Dursley household for Rose.

"Dobby, listen carefully okay? I need you to become invisible and then compel my relatives to completely agree with all of my suggestions. Then after I leave the house, make them think that I have gone to live with a random cousin but don't give them any information on the 'cousin'." She glanced at him seriously and made the floating ball of light disappear, leaving the sad space in dank darkness once more. (How anyone could think that this was a suitable place to have a child sleep was beyond her. The Dursleys should be glad she wasn't going to have them arrested for neglect and child abuse.)

The elf nodded furiously at her – not that she could see him – and with a snap of his fingers he disappeared from sight just as Rose's horse-faced aunt opened the cupboard door shrieking about "Diddly's birthday" and "breakfast" or something. As someone with a long history of listening to and expertly ignoring bullshit, Rose immediately tuned out her relatives and went to the kitchen to cook a heap of greasy food that perpetuated her relatives' obesity. (Later Dudley's foray into boxing and other fighting would help him somewhat, but Rose wasn't going to help him get to that point by herself.)

After cleaning up a disgusting breakfast that she was once again denied and watching Dudley being spoilt into oblivion once more, the news came to the Dursley family that Mrs Figg had broken her leg and couldn't take care of Rose while the Dursley family had a fun day out together.

"I could go to the public library if you want. That way I won't be at Dudley's birthday with you and I won't be in the house by myself either." Rose thought that the reasoning was sound and wondered why she hadn't considered this plan of action the first time around.

Vernon's eyes narrowed and his mouth started to open before his eyes glazed over. Rose sneaked a glance at Petunia and saw the same expression mirrored on her face. They both opened their mouths and simply said, "Okay, then." Then they both turned around and chivvied Dudley out the house where they met his brat of a friend Piers.

"Well girl, off you go," Vernon threw at her irritably, coupling it with a glare. Even when she was leaving them for good he couldn't muster up the slightest attempt at civility. Wanker. Rose simply nodded at the arsehole and set off down the street with her hideous hand-me-downs and eighty pounds that she'd swiped from her aunt's secret stash earlier.

"Now, Dobby." She whispered to her invisible companion and knew that her relatives now no
longer considered her a member of the household, thinking she had gone off to live with a random cousin. With every single one of them considering Rose to no longer be a part of the family, Dumbledore's blood wards would probably wither and die very soon. A moment later in an alleyway she and Dobby had Apparated into London near King's Cross, and Rose quickly went and bought some trousers, a shirt and some shoes. The outfit screamed 'boy', but considering she still had short hair from when Petunia had tried to shear it off it was probably for the better. With a cap to push her hair over her scar Rose thought that her disguise was as good as it was going to get at the moment, and walked casually over to the Leaky Cauldron.

Before she went in she removed her infamous and way-too-noticeable glasses, then she opened the door and crossed the bar at a leisurely pace so as to not draw any attention to herself, then waited patiently for someone to open the wall to Diagon Alley. After a few minutes a group of elderly witches came through from the alley and Rose slipped through the archway unnoticed as they walked through gossiping.

She looked around at the magical madness, grinning despite her blurry eyesight. She was back.
Cynical she may have been, but even years and years of things going sideways and screwing up in the worst possible way for her couldn't erase the childlike glee she felt at entering such an iconic place of magical Britain once more.

Surrounded by a cacophony of bustling noise, moving bodies and mismatched buildings, Rose allowed herself a brief moment of respite to appreciate the spectacle that was Diagon Alley as she once had as an innocent child. Blurry it may have been at the moment, but she could already feel the ambient magic in the air, welcoming her into the busy streets as a member of the magical community. She smiled softly as she listened to the busy foot traffic surrounding her, the multitude of voices blanketing the streets, and the faint noises emanating from the various unique creatures that took up residence in the cobbled, winding alleyways of the historic location.

Diagon Alley was a place which had always represented the sheer magic of their world to Rose. The area held no true personal meaning to the girl, but this was a place where she had realised for the first time that she was truly normal. Her relatives had always gone out of their way to tell her just how much of a freak she was, how different she was to the other 'normal' children, and how she was a strange, unwanted girl who put so much of a strain on their 'perfect' family.

When Hagrid had brought her to this wondrous alley she had come face to face with hundreds of other people who could do the same things as her. Different ages, men and women, children, non-humans, big and small ... they were all able to do magic, and she had been struck with the knowledge that she really was a normal girl.

This time around she had the chance to live a happy life while stopping people from being mindlessly murdered. Once upon a time she would have bemoaned the fact that she seemed to have the responsibility of such a thing, but she had long since learnt that doing things yourself tended to get things done quicker and better. With that in mind, she stopped admiring the streets and turned around.

Making sure to walk at a slow pace so as not to seem suspicious, Rose carefully made her way past the various businesses lining the street and headed straight towards the gleaming white monstrosity that housed her future ticket to freedom. Gringotts' formidable-looking exterior was for once a welcoming sight to the small girl who hadn't exactly been a welcome face after the infamous break-in all those years ago. (Which was really putting it lightly considering the numerous death threats.) It was certainly a refreshing change of pace to feel excitement over visiting instead of dread at the mere sight of the famous bank. Hopefully this time we can talk civilly to each other without the threat of immediate death hanging over my head. Don't worry Rose, these goblins don't know that you broke in and robbed them. What they don't know won't get you killed.

The girl slipped her glasses back on as she came closer to the building so she wasn't squinting or glaring at the shrewd bankers, and paying barely a glance to the warning of thievery at the doors she entered the establishment with a respectful nod to the guards stationed outside. She noted the brief looks of surprise she caused at her respect and internally smiled. Small though it may have been, her
acknowledgement of the warrior race as beings worthy of respect was more than enough for the goblins of the bank to see her as someone to keep an eye on.

Rose made her way over to the closest teller who currently only had one client to deal with, and stood patiently in line while surreptitiously flicking her eyes about, gauging her surroundings. There was no one of note in the bank as of right now if her identity happened to be revealed, except for the 'suspected' Death Eater in front of her who appeared to be leaving. Caius Nott, Theodore Nott's father, was apparently finished with his arrogant ranting and rude dismissal of the teller and strode out the building with an arrogant sneer pasted on his face. *Seriously, why do these people not even think things through? Exactly what purpose is served by treating the people in charge of your money like utter shit? Goblins aren't exactly known for peaceful revenge, you know. Stupid pure-bloods.*

She walked up to the now-free teller and waited patiently with a blank face while the goblin decided to make her wait for no apparent reason. *Probably Nott's fault. Twat.* Finally the goblin peered over the counter with an expression of disdain and a bored, "Yes?". It was actually rather amazing just how much loathing could be conveyed through one simple word, but Rose had to give it to him. It was definitely impressive.

"Good day, Teller Gornak. May your gold be ever-flowing and your enemies lay dead at your feet. If it pleases Gringotts, may I speak with the Potter account manager at your earliest convenience." After making reparations for the dragon damage Rose had made sure to study up on Goblin-human interactions, and discovered that there were three major aspects to a successful discussion with goblins. First point: be respectful and treat the goblins as equal beings (which was common sense if you asked Rose); second point: be polite to them and do not make demands of them (also rather obvious); and the third point: get straight to the point of the visit (and how people couldn't remember these facts was beyond the last Potter). Goblins hated it when people messed around and tried and disguise their intentions, it made them very suspicious and they were more likely to make things harder for you in response.

"I am Rose Potter and I am willing to take a blood test to confirm my identity," she replied placidly, understanding his issue well. She'd be more concerned if he just accepted her claims at face-value.

"Oh, really? Just like the others who visit this establishment, claiming to be the Potter Heiress? Oh well, I guess we'll see." Gornak eagerly handed over the dagger with a vicious grin on his face, probably imagining how he would punish her for lying to him – she had no doubt that it had happened before.

"Cut your finger and add three drops of blood to the parchment."

Rose followed his instructions and watched as her information appeared on the parchment as her finger magically healed itself.

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**Rose Lily Potter**

**Date of birth:** 31st July 1980

**Parents:** James Charlus Potter (deceased), Lily Marie Evans Potter (deceased)
"It appears you were telling the truth Miss Potter. I apologise for my actions before." Gornak had finally shifted to a neutral face and spoke to her as an actual person and not as an inconvenience at best. *Progress.*

"There is nothing to apologise for Teller Gornak. I appreciate the security measures that go into protecting my assets. I am glad that Gringotts does not simply accept such claims at face-value," Rose replied with a pleased look on her face. Mentioning their security in such a positive manner was simply a further step towards gaining the goblin's respect and future compliance.

Gornak's face took on a pleased and proud air and he nodded once to her, gratefully accepting her praise. He then turned and called over another of his colleagues, then turned back to Rose. "This is Griphook. He will take you to your account manager Sharpfang." With the clear dismissal, he lowered his head and returned to his work.

As she turned to Griphook she thanked Merlin for her Occlumency training. *Bloody backstabbing traitor.* It took a lot of effort not to just blast the shitty bastard across the bank for the sword incident. Instead she pasted a small smile on her face and followed him when he turned and walked off without any acknowledgement. *What a charming attitude,* thought Rose.

"In here," he bit out when they reached Sharpfang's door.

"Thank you for your help," Rose answered calmly with a nod. Just because he couldn't be polite didn't mean she had to reciprocate in kind.

Griphook look startled at her respectful words and jerkily nodded back, then stalked off down the hall back to whatever it was he did. Rose's serene smile was at odds with the very colourful inner monologue she had going on about what she would do to Griphook if he ever again double-crossed her in such a way.

She turned to the door of her manager and knocked once, entering when told to do so.

She stood in front of the desk watching as Sharpfang looked over some of the documents he had before he gestured to the chair in front of the desk. "Please take a seat Miss Potter." She was a little surprised that he was so polite with her before she realised that he'd clearly heard about her manners with Gornak already. *Who knew goblins were such gossips?*

"Thank you Manager Sharpfang." She sat down with grace and once more mentally catalogued her points as she looked the goblin in the eye.

"What can Gringotts do for you today?" Sharpfang looked at her seriously, obviously noting her more adult demeanour and adjusting himself accordingly. *Excellent.* She was grateful that the goblins tended to treat children with more respect, knowing that they weren't completely unable to comprehend adult matters. For goblins, customers were customers, and as long as they had the ability to handle business they didn't really give two shits about their age or personal circumstances. This fact would be very helpful right now.

What many were unaware of outside of the Department of Mysteries was exactly how often time travellers actually appeared. Not common at all, but certainly not a rare circumstance either. When any occurrence of time travel happens, the one who has been displaced through time must reconfigure their entire lives and often adopt a new identity to prevent massive disasters from happening. The many different services provided at Gringotts bank often help in such unusual circumstances. The goblins often didn't care *when* their clients were from as long as they made them money. As such, revealing such a dangerous secret to the goblins was far less of a risk than it may have been to tell others.
"Tell me Manager Sharpfang, what are your experiences with time travellers?" Rose enquired with a small smile playing across her lips.

The grin on Sharpfang's face would have usually been enough to have grown men running for the hills screaming in terror, but Rose Potter was a second generation Marauder and had been through enough in her life that she only found the look amusing. Then again, her sense of humour was somewhat warped in comparison to others.

"Well I was wondering why your magic seemed to be more mature than your appearance. Accidental or deliberate?" Sharpfang's amused grin relaxed Rose who settled back in her chair with a wry smile.

"Accidental, unfortunately. However now I have the ability to fix the mess that Dumbledore and Voldemort have made of things."

"Oh?" Sharpfang looked very intrigued at the statement but didn't look disapproving of her view on Dumbledore which reassured her in her plans to explain things to him.

"Dumbledore has lost touch with things. While I do believe he genuinely wants to help people, he sees everyone as young children who need to be guided by him, while Voldemort is just like a child with a temper tantrum who destroys things without reason when things don't go his way." She tried to control herself before she started to rant about the two idiots who'd caused so much trouble. Honestly the two of them together pissed her off beyond all reason.

Sharpfang let out a deep laugh at her words and smiled at her sharply. "Miss Potter, how apt your words are, and from them I suspect that you will require the help of Gringotts in some manner other than your account." How shrewd, she thought. Sharpfang deserved even more credit than she initially thought. She lent forward slightly.

"Indeed Manager Sharpfang. Tell me, what do you know of Horcruxes?"
"Indeed, Manager Sharpfang. Tell me, what do you know of Horcruxes?"

Immediately Sharpfang's countenance changed and his eyes narrowed into a sharp glare. "How do you know of such vile objects, Miss Potter?" His tone was measured but the warning tone could not be missed. It said, 'explain everything right now or find yourself in a world of unimaginable horror and trouble'. Rose knew that Horcruxes were seen as vile abominations of nature to the goblin race, and that any mention of the disgusting objects was enough to draw their ire immediately.

She decided that a quick and concise explanation was the way forward in this situation; she had no desire to be run through with one of the many weapons mounted on the wall in the office. "In my previous life I discovered that Horcruxes were the reason that Voldemort managed to survive after he killed my parents. As of this moment there are six Horcruxes in existence, two of which are currently in this bank as we speak: one in the personal vault of Bellatrix Lestrange, which is Helga Hufflepuff's cup, and the other is embedded in the scar on my forehead and has been since the night of my parents' murder. I ask for Gringotts' help in cleansing the items of their taint and helping to rid the world of Voldemort for good. I am of course willing to pay for services rendered."

A moment of silence then Sharpfang let out a sharp breath at the knowledge of so many Horcruxes from one individual. "On behalf of Gringotts I thank you for bringing this knowledge to my attention Miss Potter." Sharpfang barked in Gobbledegook at the door and another goblin entered. They conversed briefly but tersely and the other goblin left hurriedly, presumably to Bellatrix's vault to rid it of the Horcrux.

"The cup is being dealt with as we speak, however we can do nothing of your scar until our Curse-Breakers are finished with the Horcrux in the cup. How would you like to proceed?"

Rose was ecstatic. Simply offering knowledge and help for a problem in the bank and she was thanked and respected and even given a choice in their proceedings. It was so ironic that the 'bloodthirsty beasts' were actually so much easier to deal with than the majority of witches and wizards. It really shouldn't surprise her that she was getting even more evidence that humans were hypocrites.

"I would like to explain about the other Horcruxes after my scar is taken care of if it pleases the bank. Concerning the scar cleansing, would it also be possible for my magical core to be unblocked, as well as obtain potions for past injuries and malnutrition? And I believe that I currently have an owl-redirection ward on my body which I would like removed." She tried to appear nonchalant and unaffected while she asked, but she would never be completely at peace with the treatment from her relatives.

It had taken a long time for Rose to be able to admit that her relatives had been abusive towards her, rather than just being kind of mean as she had convinced herself. The damage was a mixture of psychological, emotional and physical, but she didn't like admitting out loud that she had been abused. The word 'abuse' made her shiver in revulsion. It made her feel weak and pathetic, and while
she knew logically that that wasn’t the case it was still difficult to think otherwise. Being told she was 'brave' and 'The Chosen One' hadn't helped. After all, what sort of hero allowed herself to be abused by muggles?

The manager narrowed his eyes at the words of the young girl sat in front of him. While he could tell that her magic was mature and strong he wasn’t blind. She was small in stature and vastly underweight, almost dangerously so, and when she mentioned her magical core it clicked just why her magic was somewhat volatile. He also pondered exactly where her mail was being redirected to. He wasn't cruel though. Her unease at the situation was obvious if you knew where to look, so he decided to not pity her or draw attention to it, and instead moved on.

"Do you require a list of what we find to use as evidence?" he asked neutrally, praising himself inwardly at the relieved look on her face.

"Yes, please. While it is perhaps not useful immediately, you never know when certain information will be useful in the future." Her somewhat feral grin amused the goblin; it was not often he interacted with humans who were intelligent enough to understand the value of information and when to use it.

"Very well, Miss Potter. That will be handled in due time. Meanwhile, what can Gringotts help you with concerning the Potter account today?"

"I would like to take an inheritance test to ascertain my exact assets as of this moment and take up my position as Head of House. It will gain me unwanted notoriety if word gets out, but it will also offer me some form of protection against those who would want to use me. I think I would prefer it if it remains secret for now, though. I would also like to visit some of my vaults, and to have new keys made up for my vaults to stop unwanted access, and a card and a money bag to use."

The girl sat calmly on the chair as she recited her needs. Sharpfang couldn't help but appreciate her poise and how she was respectful but not deferential towards him. \textit{She will be a force to be reckoned with, and I pity anyone who tries to mess with her}, he thought. Rose Potter was not arrogant but knew how to convey her thoughts carefully. \textit{Then again, she is a time traveller}. It had been decades since Sharpfang had experienced this phenomenon, and he was just as excited for the mischief to follow as the last time.

"As you wish Miss Potter. If you could take the dagger and cut your finger, allowing five drops of blood to the parchment and we shall see to your inheritance."

She followed the instructions as before and saw a much more detailed version of her life appear on the page.

\textit{Rose Lily Potter}

\textit{Date of birth: 31st July 1980}

\textit{Father: Lord James Charlus Potter, of The Noble and Most Ancient House of Potter (Deceased); Lord Sirius Orion Black, of The Noble and Most Ancient House of Black (Blood-adoption; incarcerated)}

\textit{Mother: Lady Lily Marie Evans Potter, of The Noble and Most Ancient House of Potter (Deceased)}

\textit{Godfather: Lord Sirius Orion Black, of The Noble and Most Ancient House of Black}
Godmother: Lady Alice Heather Smith Longbottom, of The Noble and Ancient House of Longbottom (Incapacitated)

The Noble and Most Ancient House of Potter (Head)

The Ancient House of Peverell (Head)

The Noble and Most Ancient House of Black (Heiress)

House Potter (Head)

Properties: The Pottery; cottage in Godric's Hollow; chateau in Cannes.

Vaults: Family vault 17 (314,684G, 10,027S, 2,593K, assorted heirlooms); Lily Potter personal vault (50,581G, books); Trust vault 687 (10,000G)

Investments: Daily Prophet – 11%; Quality Quidditch Supplies – 8%; Honeydukes Sweet Shop – 6%; Flourish & Blott's – 6%.

House Peverell (Head)

Properties: Peverell House; The Hills cottage in Cardiff

Vaults: Family vault 9 (119,347G, 24,730S, 1,006K, assorted heirlooms)

House Black (Heiress)

Properties: cottage in St Andrews

Vaults: Sirius Black personal vault 615 (2,552G, trunk)

Rose perused the parchment and carefully pondered the, quite frankly, ridiculous amount of assets that she now had access to. She knew from before that there were many other things from the Black family that she couldn't touch as she was only the Heiress, but even in that position she had an entire property to herself. (The House of Black never did subscribe to basic common sense.) When she eventually got Sirius out of Azkaban he was going to have a lot of work to do with the assets of his godforsaken family; she spared a brief moment to pray for his sanity.

"I almost forgot how ostentatious the House of Black was," she mused, considering how even as the Heiress she had plenty to herself. She also vaguely remembered the assorted personal vaults that had been seized from the disinherited members when they had proved to be 'impure' to the family. They were currently under the control of the Head of the family, as was the traditional Heir Vault, which would even more paperwork for Sirius. Good luck Siri.

Sharpfang laughed in a guttural manner at her words. "Indeed, they don't shy away from making a
point of their superiority. However, you understand that you cannot access the majority of the assets from the House of Black at this moment in time. You currently only have access to Sirius Black's personal vault and the cottage as his blood-adopted daughter and Heiress. Access to the usual Heir Vault for the Blacks must be arranged by the Head of the family, and considering he is currently in Azkaban you can't get in. Then again, once you become the Head of House Potter and House Peverell you won't really need it."

"Quick question, Manager Sharpfang. I am only ten years of age, yet I have the ability to become a Head of an old House. I may be a time traveller but any child in my position could take over their family. Isn't it counter-intuitive to give such power and responsibility to mere children? Granted I'm not technically a child, but you see the issue. I mean no offence to Gringotts, of course, I'm just curious concerning your stance on this matter."

"To put it bluntly: wizards are generally stupid. Those with money even more so. Centuries ago those who had money wanted to have power, so they decided that those of a similar station would also have power. They created an alliance to support themselves and each other to make sure the wealthy families kept a hold of their power. The idea that those families could lose power – families like themselves – was frightening to them. To maintain their numbers they issued a decree that allowed children to gain control of that power so it wouldn't disappear. Apparently the idea of a child in control of that much wealth was a good idea to them. No offence to you, Miss Potter." He offered a toothy grin and she smirked in response.

"None taken. In my previous life the majority of the witches and wizards in Britain proved to be nothing but stupid, passive sheep who followed the person with the loudest voice and the most money." Scowling in remembrance she conceded that wizards were generally stupid. Money doesn't always equal intelligence, unfortunately.

As she lost herself in memories of the past Sharpfang spelled a box on to his desk and when he opened it three smaller boxes were visible inside.

"Your rings, Miss Potter." He gestured to the boxes.

"My apologies, Manager Sharpfang. I lost myself for a moment then." Rose shook herself. She could think about her past-future later. Stupid time travel.

"No matter. Here are your House rings. As per the rules of inheritance, when you become a Head of House, no matter your age, you are emancipated without needing a magical guardian to make decisions concerning your life, magical or legal, although usually a child in your position will appoint a proxy for such decisions. Will you do the same?" Sharpfang was admittedly curious about her future plans.

"Yes, I will. I want to be seen as a mature person, but not so arrogant that I will not listen to the advice of my elders. Appointing a proxy will give the impression that I am aware of the limitations of my age, but acknowledge the responsibilities of my station. I will be focusing on school and my learning whilst my family's power will not go to waste. That is, of course, if anyone figures out that I am Head; seeing as how it won't be discovered unless I say anything I should be fine. One more thing, I would like Albus Dumbledore's access removed from all vaults I have access to. He will no longer be my guardian and as such will not receive the benefits of the position."

Sharpfang's grin resonated with Rose's inner Slytherin. "It will be done. But first..." he handed over the ring boxes. First Rose opened the Potter Head ring box, examining the gold band with a simple trio of garnets in the centre before slipping it on to her ring finger. The Potter magic swirled around the room before flowing back into her, and settling in her core as the ring resized itself to fit. She
repeated the process with the Peverell ring, a silver band with the symbol of the Deathly Hallows carved into it, watching it flash before being absorbed into the Potter ring. Finally, the Black Heiress ring was white gold with an ivy-patterned engraving covering the band, embedded with tiny diamonds. Slipping it onto her ring finger, it too was absorbed and she flashed through all rings with just a thought before making them invisible.

"Congratulations Lady Potter-Peverell, Heiress Black."

"I don't suppose I could convince you to call me Miss Potter again, could I? Or just Rose?" She pleaded with her eyes at the goblin.

"I'm afraid not, my Lady. You know the protocol." Sharpfang could sense her distaste at the formality and chuckled. "I will start drawing up your paperwork for your investments and access to your vaults. In the meantime, do you wish to visit your vaults now?"

"Yes, please."

Sharpfang pressed a rune on his desk and soon another goblin entered the room.

"This is Grungor. He will take you to your vaults."

"Thank you. I will return shortly."

As Rose followed the goblin to the carts she couldn't help but grin. *Treasure-hunting time.*
Rose decided to first visit the Potter Family vault, and after looking through the contents for a while she decided to examine the old wands from previous generations that were held in the vault. It didn't happen all that often, but sometimes the new members of old families discovered that an older wand would bond to them as their new user. Buying a newer wand that reacted specifically for you was still a good idea, but older wands stored and maintained the residual magic from their previous users so some people considered them superior to use. To be honest it was more of a personal preference, and some people actually chose to have one of each. Like Rose was probably going to.

The last Potter looked through the old wands in the cabinet for a good ten minutes before she decided to pick one to use as a back-up. She was going to buy one for herself, but a Family wand would probably help her if she performed any Family magic. (Not that the Potter magic was all that wand-based being primarily focused on Potions; maybe that was part of the reason Snape hated her family so much?) She cycled through some wands until she came across her great-grandfather Henry's wand. It was a walnut and phoenix feather combination, not quite a full match but good enough to use for the moment and as a future second. She checked for any unwanted spells in the vault then started gathering a few items to take with her, her parents' portraits and wands for one. The family Pensieve, and a ton of books on defence, potions, wizarding law and others were also taken; now she needed somewhere to put them.

She found an old family trunk with an extended – and probably illegal – interior of four extra compartments. Aside from the regular slightly extended compartment for clothes, it had a small living space, complete with living room, kitchen, bathroom and bedroom in one compartment, extended library in another, and the last two compartments were divided into an extended sectioned-off compartment for miscellaneous items, and the last was a personal potions lab. On the outside it looked like a traditional family trunk with beautifully crafted wood and a glossy red crest on the front with a lion and sword, but on the inside it was a place to escape if needed. She remembered the trunk from before and vowed to set up a Parseltongue and blood-based password as soon as she could.

After putting all the items she wanted in the trunk she filled a bottomless bag with about 2000 galleons and then shrunk the trunk, put it in her pocket with the wand and bag and left.

After clearing the Peverell Family vault of all of the books she made a quick stop at her mother's personal vault. She found her school trunk and Lily's own personal potions kit, and she shrunk the two down before getting back in the cart with Grungor. It was definitely an exhausting time going to three different vaults and being constantly smacked in the face with history, some of it not so nice.

Another ride in the cart and she finally got to Sirius's personal vault. Sirius Orion Black. Her dad. James Potter may have been her father but Sirius had blood-adopted her as a baby, making her his daughter by blood. He had never told her about it after they'd met again because he had assumed that she knew and that she was ashamed of him. Stupid mutt. If he even tries to act that self-sacrificing again I'll hex his balls off! It was why his death had been so hard on her, because their underdeveloped father-daughter and godfather-goddaughter bonds had snapped and the magical
backlash had hurt her terribly.

She blinked back tears. *I'll get him out soon. There's no way he's going to stay in that hellhole while the rat is living carefree as a pet.* She breathed deeply and reaffirmed her plan in her mind as she stepped into his vault. His battered old school trunk was tossed haphazardly into the corner and piles of gold sat in the middle of the vault.

With another bottomless bag from Grungor she cleaned out the money from his vault and took his shrunken trunk and made her way back to Sharpfang's office.

She found him in his office with another different goblin. They both turned to her as she entered the room, and after greeting each other Sharpfang revealed the success of the Horcrux purification of the cup.

"Lady Potter-Peverell, this is Blodrik. He is the Head Curse-Breaker at Gringotts here in London and is the one responsible for destroying the Horcrux in the cup."

"A pleasure to meet you Curse-Breaker Blodrik, and thank you for your actions on the cup." Rose was glad things were starting to move into place. She could now begin finalising her plans to destroy the others, hopefully with the goblins' help, and then Voldemort would be gone for good.

"It is no problem Lady Potter-Peverell. As finder of the item I must inform you that the contents of Bellatrix Lestrange's vault, cup included, have been awarded to you as a finder's acquisition."

Blodrik looked at her in equal disgust and anticipation. *He expects me to be greedy,* she realised. Wizards were usually seen as greedy bastards by the goblins – and with some of their clients, she could definitely see why – and Blodrik's expectations of her behaviour were no different.

"Thank you for informing me of this matter. Manager Sharfang, does this vault now come under my assets for the Potter account?" she enquired politely.

"Yes it does, my Lady."

"Well then, I would like all personal items pertaining to the House of Black to be relocated to Sirius Black's personal vault, and any items not of goblin origin or of black-magic also transferred to the same vault. Black-magic items can be disposed of and any goblin-made items can be returned to the goblin nation. I would like for the fee for the Horcrux destruction to be deducted from the funds available in the vault. Then the fees for the Horcrux removal from my scar and subsequent destruction, the removal of the blocks on my core and the owl-redirection ward, and the Healer consultation and treatment will also be deducted from the vault. If there is a lack of funds they will be deducted from my trust vault. If there is an excess remaining, then the funds will be returned to the goblin nation in recompense for Bellatrix Lestrange's actions against Gringotts."

She knew full well that she was rich enough without Bellatrix's vault and Sirius wouldn't want his crazy cousin's shit. Rose wanted the family heirlooms and personal objects, but if Blodrik wanted the money he could shove it up his arse and start spitting gold for all she cared.

At the end of her little speech Sharpfang was trying his hardest not to break down in hysterics at the polite yet irritated look on the girl's face. He had told Blodrik explicitly that the girl was not the same as other arrogant humans but he had refused to listen. Now after offending her, she's proved to be intelligent, rational and selfless. A rarity for goblins to encounter indeed. The look on his colleague's face was priceless.

"Well … we shall proceed to the chamber for the Horcrux destruction then." Blodrik looked completely out of sorts but managed to muster up enough sense to lead the party of three through the
winding halls of the bank to the cavernous ritual chamber, and direct Rose to the raised altar in the centre of the room.

Lying down on a stone altar surrounded by extensive rune arrays and stern-looking goblins wasn’t the most calming atmosphere by any means, but when they started chanting rhythmically she tensed. Her life had not been a pain-free one by any stretch of the imagination, but with the amount of times that she’d been hit by her uncle, or tortured by Voldemort, she was ready for the pain.

She wasn’t ready for the pain at all. It was even worse than being hit with the Cruciatius Curse for minutes on end. It felt like she was simultaneously being set on fire and freezing to death. Every single nerve ending in her body was screaming in agony; it felt like needles stabbing into her flesh, over and over again in every inch of her very being. Her muscles seized up from the excruciating pain and she tried to scream, only for her to realise that her voice had stopped working. The pain spread throughout her body before it centred on her scar, digging deep and pulling. The Horcrux, the tiny piece of Voldemort's twisted soul, didn't want to move though, and she could feel it resist, grabbing on to her and refusing to leave. She didn't know how long she lay there on the altar, dizzy with agony and unable to move. The Horcrux clung to her and held on, and just as she felt like she was going to black out the pain suddenly stopped.

Through blurry eyes she watched as a black shadow was violently ripped from her scar, faintly screaming as it was forced into a nearby pig. The animal squealed and resisted but was soon put out of its misery by the goblins, and Tom Marvolo Riddle was down one more piece of soul.

Rose was barely coherent, only paying the barest attention to the sickly blood dripping down her face, but she faintly registered a goblin in a white robe walk over to her and wave his hands around. A piece of parchment appeared in front of the goblin that made him scowl heavily before barking orders at one of his companions. He turned back to her and waved his hands towards her face; she could feel the wet feeling of blood disappear and the goblin looked her in the eye, his features softening slightly.

"Lady Potter, my name is Healer Grimjaw. I have fully removed the Horcrux from your scar and I have diagnosed all of your injuries. You will be given a potions regime for three times a day for the next two months to counteract your small size. After that your growth will resume to what it should have been. Do you understand me?"

"Yes, thank you." Her speech was somewhat slurred but thankfully still comprehensible. "Have the blocks and owl ward been removed yet"? She was feeling better by the minute without the Horcrux tainting her, and she was ready to feel her magic free and unbound.

"Not yet. We will be starting in a moment. It will not take as long as the Horcrux removal and shouldn't hurt nearly as much. Are you ready?"

"Yes. I'm ready." Her mind was already feeling clearer and the anticipation for unimpeded magic was enough to energise her.

Healer Grimjaw stood over her, one hand over her head and another over her stomach and began chanting in Gobbledegook. It felt like there was a tight knot in her stomach, though it was more uncomfortable than painful, the small amount of pain easy to ignore. It was as if there was a build-up of pressure trying to escape. The knot was slowly unravelling, allowing more and more of her magic to spread through her body and fill her, before a small jolt of pain signalled the end of the process.

She felt light. And free. And kind of unbalanced. Her magic swirled and filled the chamber before settling once more inside her. It flowed and ebbed unencumbered, easily accessible with a mere thought. It was obviously going to be difficult to use wandless magic again with her magic so wild at
the moment, but with the memories of her skills and a more responsive magical core she would finally be able to grow with her potential naturally as she should have if not for a certain manipulative old man.

"Thank you." She stood and bowed slightly to all those present. Goblins may have a bad reputation but if not for them she would certainly be worse off. She would have had to break into Gringotts again for the cup, and it was harder for human Healers to unblock cores. Not to mention the Horcrux problem.

"Do not mention it child." Healer Grimjaw had a hard face but was inwardly seething. This tiny child had been left in an awful state by those who were supposed to protect her. For goblins, children were a gift to be protected and he sincerely hoped that those responsible got what they deserved.

"Perhaps a mirror my Lady?" Sharpfang was grinning in an unsettling way, and if she didn't already have an idea what was happening Rose would be terrified of what that expression meant.

She slowly walked up to a mirror at the side of the chamber and peered into it cautiously. Sure enough, her hair, eyes and skin tone were slowly cycling through random colours with her newly free magic.

She closed her eyes and reached inwards for her magic, and guided it to a fixed path. When she opened her eyes she no longer had scruffy short midnight hair or sparkling emerald eyes. Her hair was down to her hips in a curly light blonde reminiscent of her grandmother Dorea or Narcissa Malfoy. Her eyes were bright blue, similar to her aunt Petunia but a more vibrant shade. She adjusted the skin on her forehead to cover her rapidly-fading scar and looked at the final result.

Nobody could use the patented, 'You look like your father with your mother's eyes' anymore.

She had her Metamorphmagus abilities back.
Metamorphmagi. Witches and wizards that had the innate ability to change their physical appearance to whatever they wanted at will. It was once a fairly common ability within the House of Black and others centuries ago, before the oh-so-brilliant pure-bloods decided that marrying their cousins instead of other families was a good idea. Which everyone knows turned out so well for them.

Rose Potter was originally only a quarter Black; her grandmother Dorea Potter nee Black was indeed born into the House of Black, but she did not possess this now-rare gift in the slightest. Her blood was not nearly enough to bring out this long-lost ability in Rose Potter, and Rose would have never become a Metamorphmagus if James Potter and Sirius Black had not drunkenly decided to have Sirius blood-adopt young baby Rose at the tender age of six months old in case he ever needed an Heir. (Lily Potter's resulting fury at their spur-of-the-moment decision instilled an everlasting fear of red hair in the two idiots that would never fade entirely.)

With the influx of blood from a full-blooded Black (made more potent by the fact that Sirius' parents were both Blacks too) combined with the preexisting blood of her Black grandmother, Rose gained the famed ability to morph her appearance at will. However with the small existing block on her core from James Potter, used on children with an excess of magic that can be harmful to them, the discovery of such a gift was not to be before they were killed. Rose herself did not find out about her abilities until after the blocks were removed originally, which didn't happen until after the war. As her core had already grown with the blocks on them, she'd had to live with the knowledge that it was one more thing Dumbledore had taken from her.

Her childhood block would have gradually dissipated as she grew, hence why it wasn't dangerous to use on children. However the secondary blocks that Dumbledore had put on her smothered the first block, as well as caused irreparable damage to her core that couldn't be fixed by stunting its growth and limiting its capabilities. By the time the blocks broke she was too old to fully develop her abilities and could only shift minor details of her appearance, as the ability had to be trained before maturity to get the full range of use.

This time I will use it properly, she vowed, tilting her head side to side, examining her newly-found blonde locks. An evil smirk graced her features. I wonder how many people I can screw around with using this.

"Lady Potter. All blocks have now been removed. As for your injuries, the potions will serve to fix your malnutrition and broken bones, and a salve will be prescribed to deal with residual scarring. The scar from the Horcrux should fade and disappear within a week at most. Without the Horcrux you will not need glasses anymore, either." Healer Grimjaw explained professionally even though he wanted nothing more than to eviscerate whoever was responsible for her condition. He may have been a Healer but goblins were considered a warrior race for a reason. If she weren't as strong as she was she would have died as an infant, no doubt about it. As it was, she was lucky that she hadn't yet gone through puberty as it would have affected her healing and led to her never fully recovering.

Rose turned to the goblin Healer and inclined her head in thanks. "Thank you for your help in this
matter Healer Grimjaw. It has been quite some time since I have felt this free." She beamed at him, unaware of his murderous thoughts.

"Yes, well. The only thing we have not done is remove the owl redirection ward. I can feel a large quantity of mail that is being redirected. Do you want all of this sent to you?"

"If I may offer a suggestion?" Sharpfang looked over at who was quickly becoming his favourite client with a toothy grin.

At the girl's answering nod he continued. "For a fee, we at Gringotts can sort through any mail sent to you and remove any with curses, compulsions and the like, and any such dangerous items can be forwarded to the DMLE. Anything that deals with donations and money can be dealt with by us, and anything safe and personal can be then forwarded to you. If that is acceptable?" Considering how busy the girl was going to be with everything in her life, he was happy to help further her mischief. That, and it would make them more money.

The not-child looked at him bemused as though she could read his mind. "That sounds wonderful Manager Sharpfang. Please take the fee from the Potter Family vault, and send all mail once processed to The Pottery. I also have ten years of backdated mail to sort through. Will that be too much of a challenge for Gringotts?"

If any other human were here they would be whimpering in fear and planning her funeral at her cheek, but the surrounding goblins all broke into guttural laughs and smirked at her.

"I think we are up to the challenge Lady Potter-Peverell!" Sharpfang was still laughing at the girl's audacity. *She's got more balls than all the wizards in the Wizengamot put together.*

Healer Grimjaw then walked over to her and waved his hands over her and chanted. A minute flutter of her magic signalled a modified owl-redirection ward.

After thanking the Healers once more, Rose collected her new medication and followed Sharpfang back to his office to discuss the rest of the Horcruxes. She hoped that he would help with cleansing the cursed objects so that such priceless artefacts wouldn't be forever destroyed.

"Well then Lady Potter-Peverell, why don't you explain to me about the rest of Voldemort and the Horcruxes?" Sharpfang was very interested in what the stupid human had done in his useless quest for immortality. Among goblins it was widely known that such vile objects only served to make a person insane and drive them to death even quicker. Their soul may be tied to the mortal plane, but without adequate knowledge of necromancy one cannot be fully resurrected with a Horcrux. Anything brought back wouldn't even be half-human.

Rose sobered for a moment thinking of Tom Riddle. Riddle, not Voldemort. While he may have been a little cold as a child, he was not evil. Problematic doesn't equate to evil, and she couldn't quite understand deeming an eleven-year-old child evil just because they were unsettling. If only someone had looked after him things may have gone differently …

"Voldemort, also known as Tom Marvolo Riddle. He was the son of muggle aristocrat Tom Riddle and near-squib Merope Gaunt, conceived using a love potion. He was born in an orphanage where his mother died giving birth to him, and he grew up there to be a cold and controlling, yet curious boy. When Albus Dumbledore delivered his letter, he was immediately suspicious of the boy because of his bullying nature, control of his wandless magic and Parseltongue abilities. He didn't even share his suspicions about the boy being the Heir of Slytherin. This suspicion of Tom never ceased and I believe it caused him to act even colder in retaliation.
"I'm not defending him of course, but up until his mid-teens his goals were to advocate the separation of the muggle and magical worlds, and to ensure the care of magical orphans, things I myself agree with. Of course, his foray into Horcruxes doesn't speak well for his mental stability, but I believe that he jumped into that course of action without enough research. He planned to execute his 'brilliant' plans of immortality carefully … until his accident with the basilisk.

"When he discovered the Chamber of Secrets and the basilisk within, he originally wasn't going to use it to kill muggle-borns. He had guided the basilisk out the chamber where it accidentally killed Myrtle Warren. While Tom had planned to make a Horcrux with a murderer at the school, he wasn't prepared to do it at that exact moment. He did the ritual anyway, and in his panic tore his soul in half. Instead of removing a small part as was the plan, half was torn away and hidden in his diary. From then on Tom Riddle was insane and he slowly devolved into Voldemort."

Rose went onto to explain Voldemort's later life, including the murder of his muggle relatives, Hepzibah Smith, hearing the prophecy and how he was defeated by Lily Potter's magic.

"As of now there are four Horcruxes in existence. One is Slytherin's locket which is currently in Grimmauld Place, one of the Black properties. It was stolen by Regulus Black when he sacrificed his life to overthrow Voldemort. Another is the aforementioned diary which is in the possession of Lucius Malfoy. Third we have Ravenclaw's diadem, hidden in Hogwarts of all places. And finally the Gaunt ring in the Gaunt shack. I have plans for the diary and can easily destroy it, but I would rather the others be cleansed considering their historical value. The spirit of Voldemort himself is residing in the body of soon-to-be DADA teacher Quirinus Quirrell, who I wish to send to you for an exorcism after the Horcruxes are destroyed.

"Oh, and speaking of Quirrell. I should warn you that he's planning on robbing the bank, vault 713, on the thirty-first of July for his master. Also, about the ring, there is a stone on it which belongs to the Peverell family which I would like back once the ring is cleansed."

Sharpfang looked contemplatively at the girl. She was definitely a warrior, someone the goblins could work with and perhaps even like. She didn't shy away from conflict and even sought it out if she felt responsible. Even though she might have devious plans for her enemies that didn't stop her from fixing all of these problems. Problems not even of her own making. She could have easily said 'fuck you' to the wizarding world and he wouldn't have even begrudged her, not after everyone had screwed her over first.

The goblin opened one of the desk draws and pulled out a shrunken box which he resized and pushed across the desk.

"This is a communication box, usually used to send packages and sensitive materials internationally. Place something in the box, push some magic into the rune here and the package will be sent to the matching box in the bank here." He indicated the box and its rune while Rose studied it. It was a deep mahogany with the Gringotts emblem in gold on the lid. What an ingenious device. Something for the twins to look at, perhaps?

"It is yours, for a price." He smirked at her grin. "It can transport Horcruxes here for cleansing, which I can then send back to you once the ritual is completed. This box is linked to my personal office box. You can send me the locket and the diadem. I will trust you with the diary. For a price, Gringotts can remove and cleanse the ring, and send it back to you."

She looked him the eye seriously. "In no way am I doubting your abilities, but I feel I should warn you that there is a vile curse on the ring which compels someone to wear it then rots the person's flesh away. Loath as I am to admit it, but Albus Dumbledore is a very skilled wizard and even he fell prey to this curse. I do not wish for any from Gringotts to be cursed in such a way."
If this were anyone else Sharpfang would have killed or at least maimed them for their words, but the manager knew the girl/woman was serious. If even she was serious about the ring then he would take heed of her words. He'd known as soon as she had walked in the bank that she was older than she appeared to be, and her words had rung true with her adult magic. This wasn't a child scorning a goblin, this was a woman who was warning someone of a terrible death.

He nodded at her to show no offence. "I appreciate your help Lady Potter-Peverell. As for Quirrell we can send you a portkey which you can attach to him for sometime near Yule. It will send him here and we can then be rid of the vermin.

"Well then, to surmise: you have taken up your Head of House rings for two Houses, visited your vaults, had a Horcrux cleansed, been cleansed of a Horcrux yourself, had your core unblocked, and had an owl-redirection ward modified. And of course, devised a plan on dealing with Voldemort and his Horcruxes. Can Gringotts help you with anything else today, my Lady?" Sharpfang's grin was, quite frankly, maniacal at this point.

Rose huffed amusedly. "No thank you, Manager Sharpfang. I believe that will be all for today. If I have any other business I will owl you or contact you with this box." She used a small rune on the box and shrunk it, and put in her pocket with her other things. *Hmm, need to get a wizarding bag before I get mugged.*

"May your vaults overflow with gold and your enemies cower in fear at your name, Manger Sharpfang," she stated with a nod.

"And may your enemies weep with fear when they discover your true nature".

With a smirk to her manager Rose Potter turned and exited the bank, leaving behind a goblin ecstatic with a human for the first time in years.
Nothing's illegal for the right price

Chapter Notes

I don't own 'Harry Potter'.

Walking out of Gringotts bank into the summer sunshine, Rose briskly walked down the alley ignoring the odd looks from the various patrons of the street. Granted, having waist length blonde curly hair paired with a boy's shirt and trousers was a little odd, but compared to some of the things that witches and wizards wore on a daily basis she was downright boring. (She had never thought about trying to fashion tie-dye into wizarding robes. She shuddered at the memory.) She made a brief stop at the post office and sent off a quick reply to Hogwarts accepting her place at the school and stating, politely but firmly, that she wouldn't need any help getting her things. She couldn't deal with Hagrid's 'help' at this moment in time. She knew that he couldn't help it, but he was firmly with Dumbledore and she wasn't ready to deal with him yet. Her plans were more important than trying to reassure Dumbledore that she wasn't an evil 'dark' witch.

Finally reaching Madam Malkin's, she ducked into the shop and thanked Merlin it was empty of any customers. She desperately needed both wizarding and muggle clothes, but Madam Malkin's understanding of muggle clothes was a bit … off, and she tended to sell things that made everyone look at you for all the wrong reasons. (Considering she could currently see a section that looked like muggle sixties fashion on acid, she would avoid any and all muggle clothes from the woman.) As long as she could outfit her wizarding wardrobe today she would be happy, and she'd get her muggle clothes later, preferably from someone who knew what actually looked good. Personally, she was looking forward to post-two thousand fashion again; she wanted her good skinny jeans back.

"Hello, dear! Hogwarts, dear? What can I help you with today?" Madam Malkin, squat, smiling and utterly enthusiastic, descended on Rose with an almost manic glee, interrupting her internal musing with her in-your-face 'help'.

Rose looked warily at the older witch. Bloody hell, I hate smiling people. Why is she so happy? Thankfully the shop owner stopped the girl's descent into cynical bitch quickly enough with a simple, "Why don't you tell me what you need, dear?"

"I need a complete wizarding wardrobe with multiple sets of day robes, formal robes and dress robes. I want a range of colours, mainly dark shades of blue, purple, green and red. Some black of course, and shades of silver and pewter for dress robes, and some ice blue. Your opinion would be greatly appreciated in that regard. At least four pairs of shoes and an expanded password-protected bag. Regular day and evening outfits, in the same colours as before, and some hair accessories to go with everything. And, of course, a full Hogwarts wardrobe." The girl walked around the shop gesturing at what she wanted.

"To wear out the shop today this indigo dress with these dragon-hide boots will do." The dress was quintessential pure-blood, with a corseted waist, long sleeves and ankle-length skirt, and covered with discrete lace and bows. It was feminine but gave off the aura of a powerful girl, and it was rather stunning. Rose was still glad she had been born a girl and could therefore get away with wearing dresses all the time, instead of robes that tended to have no shape whatsoever.

"Finally Madam Malkin, and I would appreciate your discretion for this, but I would like to have my
family crests stitched on to my robes." At the woman's bewildered look, Rose lifted her hand and cycled through her rings rapidly, showing her Head of House and Heiress status for the Potter and Black families respectively. She kept the Peverell ring invisible though; that family was something she'd be keeping secret for as long as possible. It was a calculated risk to reveal her status like this, but Madam Malkin had never come across as someone that gossiped too much, and she would probably understand the benefit of keeping quiet about her status. Rose would probably still get her lawyer to pay the woman a visit later to make sure she didn't say anything.

A slight widening of the eyes was the only break in professional attitude before the woman got a shrewd look in her eyes. "Of course, my Lady! If you would like, I can take your measurements today for the dress, and we can choose colours and materials for your other clothes. After that you can leave and I can send the rest of your clothes to you tomorrow after I've finished them." Rose inwardly sighed and was thankful that she wouldn't have to spend so many hours in the shop. She didn't mind shopping for so long, as long as she got to walk around and explore instead of being stuck in one place for hours.

She stood calmly on a stool, looking in the mirror as the (slightly) extravagant dress was fitted to perfection. After she was wearing her new clothes, Rose spent another thirty minutes with Madam Malkin matching colours to clothes, choosing which ones would be best so the woman could go ahead with creating Rose's wardrobe. Once done she left the shop with a promise to send Dobby to collect all her clothes the following day, and she put her things from Gringotts in a shrunken bag hidden up her sleeve. The looks she garnered now ranged from appreciative – which edged very close to creepy from some of the older men – to wary of her obvious wealth and confident nature.

Rose then wandered to a small café and ordered some juice and a sandwich, taking a quick break to peruse the items on her Hogwarts list. *I've got my wardrobe sorted and a trunk from Gringotts. I'm pretty sure a few of the books I need were in the vault, too. She looked calm and carefree, but was constantly eyeing her surroundings. You couldn't live through a war and come out relaxed, after all. Hmm … need to get a cauldron and vials, and potions ingredients, too. Pretty sure Dad had an expensive Potter telescope and scales at the manor. Also, wand. Definitely going to Knockturn. Want to go to that bookshop too. Maybe get the cabinet from Borgin & Burkes too? Hmm … no, I can just blow up the one at school instead. The angelic looking child gave no indication that her thoughts were on death and destruction as she daintily finished her food.*

After buying a good quality cauldron and phials and enough quills and parchment to last years, the last Potter made her way to the apothecary and disregarded the pre-made packs of ingredients for first years and picked her own, better quality ones. *Maybe I'll even impress Snape.* She snorted at the thought. Snape would always be an arsehole. Just because he was in love with Lily Potter didn't excuse the fact that he was a man in his thirties who had fun bullying eleven-old-children just because his life was shit. She wasn't excusing her parents – God knows they hadn't been saints as teenagers – but not everything that went wrong in Snape's life had been because of the Marauders.

Not to mention his disgusting treatment of the students, her and Neville in particular. They had only been a year old when everything went to shit, and were clearly in no way responsible for what happened. He was more at fault for telling Voldemort the prophecy, yet he blamed them for Lily dying when their only crime was being born.

He became a Death Eater of his own accord, and while he may have been enticed no one forced him to join up. He may not have fired the Killing Curse, but he was the one who put a target on her parents' head by relaying the prophecy. Lily hadn't wanted him so he deliberately turned to a life of killing. Rose had no sympathy for a man who couldn't take responsibility for his own actions and instead blamed them on a child who was obviously not at fault. It didn't say much for his maturity –
or lack thereof, as the case may be.

She shook her head as she left the apothecary. Even with her current appearance she would probably still be hated by the petulant man just for being a Potter. After putting her purchases in her bag she glanced over at the dark entry to the infamous Knockturn Alley.

Rose squared her shoulders and strode determinedly through the entryway into the home of barely-legal magic. After getting some calculating looks she flared her magic around and put the fear of god into the alley's inhabitants, who then and there decided to pretend the devil in an angel's guise didn't exist. Seeing her destination the girl strode over grinning inwardly at the scared criminals around her.

Looking at the peeled purple paint on the creepy door and the desolate swinging sign that pronounced 'Shiki Wands', Rose pushed open the creaking door and eyed the dim lighting in the small cramped store. She couldn't see Shiki inside but that didn't mean that Shiki couldn't see her. Shiki was a Japanese wandmaker who had appeared sometime in the sixties, and even after all this time no one knew his real name, his age, or even where the hell he had come from. He was a custom wandmaker who used the biggest range of woods and cores she'd seen, and best of all his wands didn't have the trace. And they were expensive as hell.

"How can I help you, young Miss?" The gravelly voice of the Japanese wizard permeated the shop as he slouched into the room from the back. He was small for a man, about 5'6", with short black hair and small, hazy brown eyes, and looked like a strong breeze would blow him over. Rose was also aware that he knew a plethora of defensive techniques and could kill her before she even knew he'd moved.

"I require a wand without the trace. Money isn't an issue." She knew straight to the point was the way forward with Shiki, which proved to be right with his quick nod and movement towards his cabinets.

Pulling out two trays he gestured to the contents. "Each tray contains one element of a wand. The first has the wood, the second the cores. Focus your magic in your wand hand and hold your hand over the elements and select the correct one. First the wood, then the core."

Quick and to the point. It might be ridiculously expensive here but there was a reason the strange man kept in business. He didn't mess about or talk circles about his clients. He knew his stuff and just wanted to do his work quietly. Or maybe he just wants to go back to bed. She glanced warily as the man let out a huge yawn, seemingly not giving a shit about maintaining a professional attitude.

Rose closed her eyes and focused her magic over the wood samples in the tray below her hand. She directed her magic to spread out over each individual wood sample, making sure that she got the feel for each of them. One of them felt much warmer than all the others so she pulled it out and handed it to the man. She opened her eyes.

"Huh, birch. The wood of new beginnings and purification. Associated with creativity and renewal." Honestly, she was starting to wonder if he was high or not; he didn't seem to be all there at the moment going by his dazed expression.

She repeated the process with the tray of cores and felt which one resonated with her core. Shiki now had a flicker of comprehension in his face, thankfully. Just because she respected the man for his abilities – thanks to some surreptitious visits to Knockturn Alley as an adult – didn't mean she wanted her wand to be made while the man was out of it.

"A basilisk fang." She nearly burst out laughing when he said that. "Symbolises strength and longevity. Associated with healing and defensive magic. I can have this done in an hour." He looked
up at her with his sleepy expression.

"That's fine. I would also like two holsters. Do you want me to pay now?"

"Ah … That'll be 60 galleons."

She handed over the money and told the man that she would be back in an hour. To be honest, she was desperately resisting the urge to shock some emotion into the disoriented man. It would have been more than a little suicidal to attack him, but no one could accuse her of being perfectly sane either. Especially after some of her projects with the Unspeakables. There was a reason the rest of the Ministry avoided them like the plague. *I wonder if I could infect Voldy with the plague?* Her murderous musing was put on hold when she came to Knockturn's bookstore, which she decided to pilfer of anything useful she could find.

She knew that Shiki would never say anything about her presence in his store, but the owner and patrons of the small bookstore were a lot less reliable. Ducking into an alcove, she transfigured her dress into a different design in a dark shade of green and morphed to have shoulder length brown hair before entering the shop.

Fifteen minutes, nearly a hundred galleons, and over seventy books (of varying legality) later, she decided to morph back to her previous appearance and browse Diagon Alley again. She made her way down the street until she reached Flourish & Blott's where she decided to stock up on books that she could actually show off without getting arrested. She was in a great mood and nothing could bring this day down.

Until she laid eyes on an eleven-year-old Ronald Bilius Weasley. *Well, fuck my life.*
Ronald Bilius Weasley. Also known as the jealous little git who'd never matured past being an overly-mothered teen, and had grown up wanting to marry her and steal her money because he thought he was entitled to it after being 'friends' for so long. The little shit never got any better with his jealousy, even when Fred died in the war. He'd grown up with six siblings so he had never been alone, and he'd always had loving parents who were there for him unconditionally. Molly and Arthur may have had their faults but they were parents who would do anything for their children. And by anything I mean encourage a marriage with me that was never going to happen.

Right, so I can hex him, or I can pretend he's not here and buy some books. Hmm … Rose's musing was cut short by the sight of Bill Weasley walking over to his youngest brother from the other end of the shop. Ah, bollocks! Ignoring it is. She picked up a feather-light and expanded basket and began perusing the isles, keeping an eye out for anything that looked interesting. She wouldn't cause a scene here; not only did she herself own shares in the store but Bill was someone that she respected enough to leave alone. And this way I can admire him from afar. She picked up a random book and glanced over the edge at him with a leering look that should never be seen on a ten-year-old's face. Just because she had a child's body didn't mean she had forgotten what she found attractive as an adult. Bill had been a childhood crush of hers (his long hair and pierced ear being a metaphorical smack in the face with crazy hormones) and he was still unfairly hot. Wait. Still? Yet? Was? Merlin, time travel is confusing. She put back the book and continued with her book list.

"Right. Already got The Standard Book of Spells and A History of Magic. Pretty sure the others titles have new editions I need to get." Rose muttered to herself as wandered around the shop picking up the books she needed. She had a feeling that she already had some of the titles at home, but only in older editions that were out of date.

After completing the list she decided to get some supplementary books for her inevitable boredom. A copy of Book of Potions and Potion Opuscule made their way into her basket, along with a dozen more books on Arithmancy, Runic magic and Divination. She was planning on starting early with her classes and taking all the OWLs at Hogwarts to help her out later in life. On the one hand she kind of felt like a cheater, but on the other she really didn't care. There was a reason the Sorting Hat had nearly put her in Slytherin the first time.

She made her way over to the second-hand section and came across an immature, annoying brat whining to a certain sinfully attractive man. Also known as Ron and Bill. Apparently it was embarrassing to have second-hand books or something. Idiot. (It still baffled her how two siblings could be so different from one another.)

Rose reached up and pulled a battered copy of Pure-Blood Directory off the shelf. She looked at the gold-embossed cover and snorted quietly. She herself as a Potter and a Peverell was excluded from the Sacred Twenty-Eight; the Peverell name had already disappeared at the time, and her great-grandfather Henry had pissed off the Wizengamot so much that the Potters had been excluded from the list. Not that too many people paid that much attention to the list considering the amount of
respected pure-blood families not present on it. She shook her head and put it in her basket anyway. No information was useless after all.

"What the hell's your problem?" – "Ron!" – "You think it's funny, do you?"

Rose turned bewildered to an angry Ron Weasley whose face had turned an unattractive shade of red that clashed badly with his hair. Very badly. His attempts at glaring were making her want to burst out laughing, and it was taking all her Occlumency training to maintain a blank face. Behind him Bill was vainly attempting to pull his younger brother away from her, looking as if he'd rather be anywhere else at that moment.

"Excuse me? I'm not sure what you mean." She adopted an innocent tone and face, tilting her face slightly to the side to appear more like the child she should be.

"You were laughing at me." Petulant be thy name.

"I was laughing at this book. I'm sorry if you thought I was mocking you, but honestly I'm just shopping. If you'll excuse me." With a quick nod at the two she walked a few paces away and quickly grabbed a few extra healing books before moving to the cashier. She really needed to stop splurging on books.

Rose Potter wasn't known for her luck however, and so while waiting for the queue to shorten the redheaded menace ended up standing right behind her.

"It's not fair. I want new stuff. Why can't I get a new broomstick. Look at her, she's spending loads. I bet her parents let her buy anything." Ron had never been known for his tact and that comment destroyed any semblance of patience that she had. Today had been stressful as it was. She had time travelled, already destroyed two Horcruxes, and was making plans upon plans for her future, and this brat was so ungrateful.

She spun around and glared. "Not that it's any of your business, but the only reason I have this much money is because my parents were murdered and I have no siblings. I literally have no other family, so yes I have money in place of family. Do you have any idea how lucky you are?" Rose's hissing tone combined with blue eyes that looked like ice and oppressive magic made her look like a vision from a nightmare.

Ron was whimpering and trying to hide behind Bill who felt his stomach drop. This little girl was an orphan who obviously desperately wanted a family, and his stupid brother was going on about money. Before he could apologise she whirled around to the cashier, paid for her books and strode out the shop. He fixed Ron with a glare that promised pain and went to pay.

Rose was internally fuming at the brat's audacity. Does he not realise what he has? Arrogant little prick, bastard … Suffice it to say that Rose's vocabulary was quite varied and colourful, and it was lucky that her rant was completely internal as she strode down the alley, especially because of the person that she bumped into before she fell on her arse.

"Oh, I'm sorry! Are you okay, Miss?" Rose looked up into the concerned visage of Amelia Bones who stood in front of her with an outstretched hand. Accepting her hand the girl got to her feet and brushed some dirt off her dress before the blonde woman spelled it off.

"I'm fine. Thank you for helping me. I'm sorry, I wasn't paying attention to where I was going."

Madam Bones waved her off. "It's fine. Are you okay now?" The head of the DMLE looked like she was preparing to leave, so Rose pounced on the opportunity to start Sirius' (legal) escape from
Azkaban. Not that she wouldn't have broken him out illegally, but it was certainly easier in the long run to play by the law.

"Excuse me, but you are Madam Bones of the DMLE, are you not?" She pasted an innocent and nervous face on and prayed for the famous Potter luck to leave her alone for the moment.

Seeing the nervous child, the woman immediately sobered. "Indeed I am. Do you require my help, Miss?"

Scanning her eyes quickly around Rose lifted her hand to Amelia's face and showcased the Potter Head ring. "My name is Rose Potter, Madam Bones. I need to speak with you concerning both professional matters and matters concerning the alliance between the House of Potter and House of Bones." Her countenance was calm and serious but she kept her voice to a minimum to not draw attention to them.

Amelia was floored. This girl looked nothing like James and Lily's girl that she'd seen as a baby. But the Potter ring couldn't be worn by anyone other than a Potter and Rose was the only one left. The girl wasn't wearing a glamour or any other appearance-altering spell that she could feel. Then again, she didn't get to where she was by being lax.

"Perhaps you should explain who you are, Miss. Rose Potter has black hair and green eyes."

Rose was torn between praising her caution and rolling her eyes. Instead she morphed her eyes back to the Killing Curse green that she had been born with. "I am a Metamorphmagus, Madam Bones. I am using this appearance so that I don't draw attention to myself." She quickly changed back before anyone else could notice.

Amelia's face didn't change but her mind was racing. Since when was Rose a Metamorphmagus? James and Lily didn't say anything, but she's not lying. She didn't so much as twitch. Amelia had been trained to spot liars a mile away, but Rose was clearly only concerned with keeping their conversation private from eavesdroppers.

"Miss Potter, it seems we have much to discuss. Where would you like to meet?"

"I am currently at The Pottery. Would two days from now be acceptable for you?"

"That would be fine. How about 10 o'clock?" Amelia hadn't been at the Potter ancestral manor since Sirius … She mentally shook her head and refocused on the tiny enigma stood before her.

"That's perfect. The floo address is 'Pottery'. Your name is still in the ward book." Rose remembered that Amelia's name had never been crossed out before her murder. "One more thing if possible, Ma'am. If you could avoid mentioning anything about me or our meeting to anyone, especially Dumbledore, it would be much appreciated. I will explain further when we meet."

That caused a brow to raise. She herself wasn't the Headmaster's greatest fan considering his reluctance to commit to certain decisions, but she wondered what he had done to earn the young girl's ire. "That won't be a problem. Well I have work to do now, but I will see you in two days."

She nodded at the girl and got one in return, after which Amelia Bones turned away and walked down the alley to the Apparition point and disappeared with a crack.

Rose was currently trying to restrain her manic Unspeakable grin. You'd better be prepared you stupid dogfather. She turned and had to subdue the urge to skip merrily down Diagon Alley. She instead walked back down Knockturn and went to collect her new wand.

When she entered the dismal shop she looked at the owner and noticed that Shiki looked even more
tired than before if it were possible. He wordlessly held out the completed wand and she gently took it, admiring its' smooth finish and light ash colour.

A shower of blue and green sparks erupted from the tip as a warmth travelled up her arm, circulated around her body, before settling deep in her core. It was a much better fit than her holly and phoenix feather wand had ever been. This was hers. It didn't depend on a tainted soul fragment or bound magic, this wand was bound to her.

"For another ten galleons I can bond it to your blood so that you're the only one who can use it. You just need a drop on the wand." Seriously, he must be high. He's swaying.

Rose wordlessly handed over the coins and her wand. She used her spare wand to make a small cut on her finger and let a drop of blood fall where Shiki indicated, and watched the man as he chanted and her wand glowed brightly. The girl healed her finger and watched as the man's magic flooded the small room, completely at odds with his unassuming appearance.

When he stopped he handed the wand back to her and gave her the holsters she'd asked for earlier. They were extremely useful, and extremely illegal. He nodded at her and walked back through the shop out the back before she'd even turned around.

She shook her head and left after holstering her wands on her arms. "Why are wizards so strange? Then again, look at me. Then again I'm talking to myself." She decided to stop displaying her mental instability so openly and browsed the other shops around her.

Rose wandered past a small Native American shop and decided to look around. She was about to leave when she saw some dream-catchers hanging on the wall. The blonde girl had nothing but respect for foreign branches of magic, and she knew that dream-catchers were infinitely difficult to create. After buying a few she left the shop and ducked into a small alcove.

"Dobby?"

Said elf popped in wearing a tiny shirt, trousers and shoes with the Potter crest on his chest, and looking utterly proud of himself. "Miss Rosey! Is Miss Rosey being ready to go home?" He was desperately trying not to bounce around.

"Great uniform Dobby. Yes, I'm ready to go home now."

Dobby beamed at her, took her arm and the two disappeared from Knockturn Alley.

With a resounding crack, Rose once more laid eyes upon a certain distinguished manor house that she knew intimately. Home.
From the front, The Pottery was a beautiful three-story manor house in off-white surrounded by miles and miles of open fields. Around the back of the property there were extensive gardens and plenty of space for farming and plots to grow produce. In the distance Rose could make out the large hedge maze and the horse stables which were currently empty.

Rose and Dobby made their way up to the front door and walked in together. Dobby began excitedly describing all the cleaning he had done since that morning. Apparently everything was done except the attic which she wasn't too bothered about, though she was baffled how he'd done so much in such a short amount of time; he was unnaturally hyperactive, she supposed. Though at the moment she was more concerned about updating the ward scheme around the property.

"Dobby, can you set up the master bedroom for me, and another two rooms for Sirius and Remus please. Then could you make me a snack please? I'll be fine to explore by myself, you've done a great job with the house. Also, tomorrow I need you to collect my clothes from Madam Malkin's if that's okay?" She smiled gently at her friend.

The elf was nearly bouncing on the spot with how happy he was. She had long since given up trying to get him to stop doing things for her when she'd learnt the truth about how the house-elf bond needed to exist for the elves to live. She just wished that this time Hermione researched the elves before trying to 'help' them and stopped trying to force them to adopt her views instead of keeping their own. The girl might have had her heart in the right place but she didn't think things through enough before charging ahead.

"Miss Rosey is too kind! Dobby will do that!" With a crack the crazy elf was gone and Rose went to explore her family home once more.

The first floor consisted of what she personally thought of as the 'pure-blood' rooms. They were primarily used for formal functions and meetings, so weren't really used that often considering the Potter family had never been the most formal. There were a plethora of parlours decorated with varying levels of opulence, a small hall for hosting events, a small kitchen, a couple of dining rooms and a few bathrooms.

Thankfully nothing was too extravagant; it was obviously expensive but tasteful. The rooms were open and airy with light colours and large windows making the rooms seem even larger than they were. The hints of red gave an inkling of the Potter affinity to Gryffindor but the colours were varied and mostly neutral. She might have been biased, but she definitely preferred The Pottery to the other manors she'd been to. Black Manor was sprawling and made her skin crawl with the remnants of extremely dark magic clinging to the walls, and Malfoy Manor was cold and clinical, like a disturbing hybrid of a hospital and museum. Neither of them actually felt like a home like her ancestral manor.

The second floor had fifteen bedrooms (each with their own ensuite), three sitting rooms and three
bathrooms, and was generally left unused unless the family was big enough (which it hadn't been for over two centuries), though in the past others had converted some of the spare rooms for personal use. Guests used these rooms during visits, though they were usually held under stasis when not being used.

The third floor was the family floor where random guests weren't generally allowed. There were eight large bedrooms each with an ensuite used for the family, three smaller bedrooms which were the right size for nurseries, a bathroom, a family sitting room, a small kitchen, the study and the library, which were both warded to high hell.

Finally, the attic was home to a few trunks and pieces of furniture not in use. The basement was a functional potions lab that Rose intended to make use of soon. There was also space Remus could use on the full moon if he decided locking himself away was the best course of action. Not that she wouldn't try and convince him otherwise.

She made her way to the master bedroom and looked around at the emptiness. Her parents had never used this room as they preferred the cottage in Godric's Hollow. The bookcases and closet were bare, and the desk was empty of personal effects. The room seemed completely bare of personality except for the four-poster bed covered in a new blue and cream bedspread. Thank you, Dobby.

Rose unshrunk her purchases and levitated all her books onto the shelves before putting everything else she bought away. She unshrunk the Potter trunk and Sirius' trunk before moving her things from the Potter and Peverell vaults, and her mum's vault, to her shelves before levitating Sirius's trunk into his soon-to-be-bedroom, and affixing a dream-catcher to his bed. She did the same thing for Remus' room before going back to hers. The only things left were her parents' portraits and wands. She wanted a case for the wands, but she wasn't sure if she was ready to deal with her parents' portraits yet.

She picked them up and made her way to the study. Once she saw the desk she froze. There on the desk was an unmarked envelope which contained her parents' wills. She remembered when she'd originally found them and nearly blew up the room in anger.

The girl took a deep breath and instead picked up the deep red ledger which contained the ward list. To allow someone entrance to the manor she need simply write their name and cross it out to remove access. After her parents died the Potter family had had no Head so access had been automatically closed for all the properties, but now she was the Head they were open to anyone in the ledger.

She flipped it open to the last page and eyed the list:

___

**James Charlus Potter**

**Lily Marie Evans Potter**

**Sirius Orion Black**

**Remus John Lupin**

**Peter Patrick Pettigrew**

**Albus Percival Wulfric Brian Dumbledore**

**Rose Lily Potter**

___
Her parents' names were faded indicating death, but Remus' was crossed out and the others still had access. She picked up the accompanying blood quill – *disgusting things, that reminds me, Umbridge needs to die* – and gleefully crossed out Dumbledore's name and re-entered Remus. She flicked back and looked to see which others had been crossed out and which were remaining. Madam Bones was still there, but she had to re-write Augusta Longbottom and the Tonks family in preparation for potential future visits. She left Pettigrew for now as she didn't want the wards to kill him yet. Yet.

She put the quill and ledger down and glanced down and glanced around at the frozen portraits of her family. She could see her grandparents Charlus and Dorea, her great-grandparents Henry and Eliza, and her great-uncle and great-aunt Fleamont and Euphemia.* There were others of course, but for now she really needed to read the will. "Not that I don't already know what it says." Glaring at the parchment she tore it open and started to read.

---

**The last will and testament of James Charlus Potter**

*I, James Charlus Potter, being of sound body and mind, do declare this to be my last will and testament.*

*In the case that I pre-decease my wife, ownership of all my worldly possessions and estate will pass to my wife, Lily Marie Evans Potter.*

*If my wife has pre-deceased me at my time of death, my assets will be divided as such:*

*Guardianship - legal and magical - of my daughter Rose Lily Potter will go to these people in this order:*

*Sirius Orion Black (godfather, blood-adopted father)*

*Alice Heather Smith Longbottom (godmother)*

*Remus John Lupin (unofficial uncle)*

*Amelia Mary Bones (unofficial aunt)*

*Minerva McGonagall (unofficial aunt)*

*Under NO circumstances is my daughter to be placed in the care of Petunia and Vernon Dursley.*

*To Sirius Orion Black I leave 10,000G with a message to be yourself, you stupid dog! You're not just a Black, you're Sirius as well mutt, start acting like it!*  

*To Remus John Lupin I leave you 10,000G with a hope that you get it through your thick skull that you are a decent man and you deserve a happy life.*

*To Peter Patrick Pettigrew I leave a curse on your life if I die of anything other than natural circumstances. If not 5,000G and a reminder that you were in Gryffindor for a reason.*

*To any guardian of my daughter I leave 50,000G and use of the Potter properties to raise my daughter.*
Let it be known that the Secret Keeper of our family was Peter Patrick Pettigrew, NOT Sirius Orion Black.

I leave everything else to my daughter Rose Lily Potter, with the hope that she will understand that I am sorry that I can’t be there for her, but I am not sorry for saving her. Sorry Bambi, I love you too much to let you die. Live a long and happy life and Daddy will see you eventually.

James Charlus Potter, Lord of the Noble and Most Ancient House of Potter

Witnesses: Albus Percival Wulfric Brian Dumbledore & Frank Geoffrey Longbottom

The last will and testament of Lily Marie Evans Potter

I, Lily Marie Evans Potter, being of sound body and mind, do declare this to be my last will and testament.

In the case that I pre-decease my husband, ownership of all my worldly possessions and estate will pass to my husband, James Charlus Potter.

If my husband has pre-deceased me at my time of death, my assets will be divided as such:

Guardianship - legal and magical - of my daughter Rose Lily Potter will go to these people in this order:

Sirius Orion Black (godfather, blood-adopted father)

Alice Heather Smith Longbottom (godmother)

Remus John Lupin (unofficial uncle)

Amelia Mary Bones (unofficial aunt)

Minerva McGonagall (unofficial aunt)

Under NO circumstances is my daughter to be placed in the care of Petunia and Vernon Dursley.

To Sirius Orion Black I leave 5,000G with a warning to be a good role model or I will haunt you, you stupid mutt!

To Remus John Lupin I leave you 5,000G with a message that you are one of the most decent men I have ever met, don’t forget that.

To Peter Patrick Pettigrew I leave warning that I will enact revenge from beyond the veil if I have to if I die of anything other than natural circumstances. If not 2,000G and a proverbial smack across the face. Be a man Peter!

To any guardian of my daughter I leave 50,000G and use of the Potter properties to raise my daughter.

Let it be known that the Secret Keeper of our family was Peter Patrick Pettigrew, NOT Sirius
Orion Black.

I leave everything else to my daughter Rose Lily Potter. My darling baby, I am so sorry that I can't be there for you. I've never wanted anything more than to watch you grow into a woman. If your father and I aren't there I can only hope that you don't hate us for leaving you alone, but I wouldn't blame you if you did. I can only hope that you grow into a woman that you yourself can be proud of. Grow up, be happy, and screw everyone else. I love you baby.

Lily Marie Evans Potter, Lady of the Noble and Most Ancient House of Potter

Witnesses: Albus Percival Wulfric Brian Dumbledore & Frank Geoffrey Longbottom

She dropped the parchment and curled up trying to stop her tears. She'd known about the will, she'd known what it said, and she'd known that there wasn't anything that she could do for her parents, but that didn't mean it didn't hurt. These were words written by her parents, the two people who'd put her above everything else. They'd made her their whole world and they weren't here anymore. They may have had their bad points, James had been a teenage bully and Lily was petulant and stubborn, but they were her family. It hurt.

Rose breathed deeply and stood up blinking back tears, making a few copies of the will. She hid the original in a drawer which she warded with Parselmagic and carried the others to her room. She penned a quick note to Sharpfang asking about the cost of updating the wards and about the will, attaching a copy to it and sent them to Gringotts.

Two copies left. One she would give to Amelia. One … she may use as blackmail. I wonder what Rita Skeeter would think of this? It was a good thing no one could see her face as she would probably be shipped to the closest psychiatric hospital with the manic grin she was sporting. (She preferred to grin rather than cry; if she started to cry she wouldn't stop any time soon.)

She wandered off to have a snack and spent the day re-reading her first-year Potions books before eating dinner and going to bed early. Luckily there were some clothes in one of the bedrooms which would do for now until she had her own wardrobe.

The girl lay down with an angelic smile on her face which was completely at odds with her thoughts of killing a certain rat.

Chapter End Notes

I know the real Potter family tree has been revealed but I have changed some things. For this story Charlus and Dorea are James' parents, and Charlus' younger brother is Fleamont who had one son. Charlus and Fleamont's father was Henry.
That was anticlimactic

Chapter Notes

I don't own 'Harry Potter'.

"Time to hunt a rat. Time to hunt a rat …"

It was a good thing that the area was completely devoid of human life this morning, as the murderous looks coupled with the singsong voices of the area's two visitors did nothing but shout 'creepy'. The small child in a shirt and trousers and the house elf in an army uniform holding a box were like characters out of a horror film as they casually discussed murder and torture with happy grins on their faces.

Rose had morphed into a small boy (facially at least) with brown eyes and auburn hair for the occasion, who bore a startling resemblance to a Weasley in case she was caught, not that she expected to be. The face she had stolen actually belonged to a Weasley cousin that she'd met before at Bill and Fleur's wedding – Mike? Mark? Whatever – so she at least looked the part at The Burrow if things went south. Dobby was just dressed up because, why the hell not?

It was barely dawn and she and Dobby had decided to go ahead and catch Pettigrew now before the little shit escaped and ruined everything. Sooner rather than later, and all that. She didn't want to draw attention to his absence though, so they'd found another rat in the wild that she'd glamoured to look like Pettigrew's Animagus form, which she'd then leave in his place while Pettigrew was located to his new temporary abode. She could use compulsion spells on animals somewhat, so as long as the thing stayed in the house for a good few days before running away she didn't really care if Ron got upset about losing his pet. Considering that he had always despised having a rat, if he did end up complaining it would just be because he could rather than any actual regret at being down a rat.

As they walked towards the lopsided house, she tried to feel for any wards but was more than a little bewildered at the complete absence of protection surrounding The Burrow. Bill was a Curse-Breaker for crying out loud, and Arthur and Molly weren't exactly magically weak. It wouldn't have taken much to put up an alarm or something, but even that was apparently too much.

It's a good thing I'm not actually here to steal anything valuable.

She silenced her clothes and feet and made her way inside the house while Dobby stood guard at the door invisible, and she crept up the stairs to Ron's room and opened the door. She only just managed to stop herself from puking. It was filthy. And messy. And so orange. Jesus Christ, you have to be colour blind to not recognise this travesty. She glanced around with barely concealed disgust. Rose dreaded to think what it would have been like if she'd been born a boy and been forced to share this bombsite.

Rose looked over the bed, and indeed, next to a snoring Ron – how utterly delightful – there was her parents' betrayer. She could honestly empathise with Sirius' murderous tendencies right now. Very easily in fact. But Sirius needed to be free. And for him to be free the rat had to live. So not fair.

She cast a quick but powerful sleeping charm on both boy and rat, then levitated the rat in front of her into the box, before pulling out the second actual rat and putting it on the bed before spelling it to
stay for a few days. A quick few wards on the box to prevent the bastard from transforming and escaping, or sensing anything outside the box, and Peter Pettigrew was caught. *Huh. That was kind of anticlimactic.*

Mentally shrugging her shoulders, she turned to leave before slowly turning back to the sleeping boy with a smirk. He may only be eleven but he was stil a prat as he demonstrated the day before. Children weren't inherently innocent people who could be constantly excused, and Ron really needed to learn some appropriate behaviour. She mentally ran through her knowledge of hexes before remembering a curse from the Black library which conjured a specific illusion to last for a week before disappearing. *(She was cruel but she wasn't evil.) Besides, a week of seeing spiders everywhere could prove to be useful again in the future. She quickly weaved the curse over the boy before finally leaving the house with Dobby and the rat.

After getting back to the manor Dobby hid the rat with some food in the basement before making breakfast for them both. Now that they had the traitor they didn't want him to accidentally starve to death before Sirius got a trial; even with his corpse the Ministry would probably say there wasn't enough evidence to free Sirius. Rose mentally shook of those thoughts before quickly morphing back to her new favourite blonde and blue-eyed face, and started eating accompanied by her new potions regime. Which tasted *awful.* After eating Rose decided to start on some training as her core was already as developed as some adults.

She left Dobby with some instructions to find a couple more elves to help with the house and farming, and took a book to the gardens to further develop her wandless magic abilities. After reminding herself of some of the easiest spells she knew, she began on control. The Occlumency that she had developed as an adult came back in time with her as a fully mental discipline, so she focused on clearing her mind and focusing her magic for specific spells. Once done she began wandlessly casting a few simple spells, such as *Lumos, Wingardium Leviosa* and *Incendio.*

It was very relieving to be living in a manor that had extensive wards surrounding the property; it was impossible for the Ministry to detect magic being used at The Pottery because the entire place was unplottable. She could practice all manner of spells to her heart's content without any underage magic notices. Granted, she now had an untraceable wand and was emancipated so she could use magic anywhere she liked, but she would like to keep those two facts a secret for as long as she possibly could.

All of her spells took a minute or two to work, but she could feel her magic responding quicker each time she cast a spell. It was getting easier the more she tried and soon she would be pretty adept at it. It should be a lot easier without the blocks and the stress of the war messing with her control.

She spent the morning reading her first-year Defence book – Quirellmort wasn't going be much help – before going in for lunch. Dobby was going crazy preparing food and she thanked Merlin her cupboards had stasis charms on them or she'd have to give the food to an orphanage or something.

She made her way back up to her room and saw the communication box glowing. Opening it she found a letter from Sharpfang.

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*Dear Lady Rose Potter-Peverell,*

*It seems you have quite a knack for finding information that could ruin your enemies. As it stands I can only apologise for how your life has been handled, and offer my help for your future plans.*

*Firstly, Gringotts can indeed update the wards on your properties, for a price. A contract will be*
Secondly, I will take the liberty of using this will as evidence to gain reparations from Albus Dumbledore for ignoring the wills of your parents.

Lastly, do you wish for a public reading of the will, or will you be attending to your affairs in private? Let me know and I shall assist you.

May your gold grow and your enemies suffer a terrible fate,

Manager Sharpfang

Gringotts Bank

She penned a response after looking over the contract, which was cheaper than expected, stating that she did want the wards done and she wanted to settle things privately. For now.

Rose realised that while her manor may be secure her other properties certainly weren't. She thanked Merlin for House rings having a portkey function as she would have to spend the next few hours travelling around Britain and France blocking unsavoury people from her properties.

She sent Dobby to check on her clothes at Madam Malkins before portkeying to the chateau in Cannes. It was small, sunny and beautiful, overlooking the ocean, but she was more concerned with stopping people from robbing her blind. Quickly finding the ward ledger in the study, she found that Dumbledore did indeed have access. Who the hell let him come here? She furiously crossed out all names except hers before heading on to the Peverell properties (Godric's Hollow had been – illegally – claimed by the Ministry, which would soon be rectified).

Peverell House in Yorkshire was right in the middle of the moors, and was a small manor that looked like a castle with dark stone bricks and turrets. She would explore again later, but for now she would comfort herself with blocking all travel other here. The ward ledger hadn't been used in decades (if not centuries), and a certain old man was absent from the list but just to be sure she crossed all the names off before adding her own.

The same process was repeated in The Hills cottage in Cardiff, another place in the middle of nowhere which was on a random hill surrounded by sheep. The cottage was old, made of stone and very quaint. Rose was pretty sure it had been over a century since anyone had even been there, and she might use it as a holiday home sometime.

Lastly the holiday cottage in St Andrews for the Black Heir(ess). It was expensive, with a wraparound porch and was hidden by a copse of trees in the country. She found the ledger and rejoiced inwardly at the paranoia and anti-light stance of the Black family, as the old goat's name wasn't there. After crossing off a few names that she was certain were Death Eaters, she decided to go shopping for some muggle clothes before going home. With the exchange rate you could get so much more in the muggle world for barely anything.

She quickly transfigured her clothes into a pair of jeans, a t-shirt and trainers and morphed her hair and eyes into a nondescript brown before calling the Knight Bus. A quick trip to London later and Rose was on her way to spending even more money. She wanted to get some nice clothes that were tasteful, but not too expensive seeing as she probably wouldn't be wearing them that much at Hogwarts.

The girl found a shopping centre and immediately set off for a clothes shop. She spent an hour and a
half walking around before leaving with five large bags stuffed with an entire wardrobe. She now had everything that she could possibly need. And it was heavy. She couldn't shrink anything because of the increased use of CCTV, so instead she walked into a public restroom and portkeyed home.

When she got home and morphed back she found Dobby had brought back her wizarding wardrobe, and then together they put away her clothes. She felt better now that she was basically done with shopping. Earlier she had located her father's telescope and scales and she was finally ready for school.

"Miss Rosey, Dobby has found help!" He looked so earnest it was kind of cute.

After seeing her nod Dobby introduced his new fellow elves who appeared with a crack. "This be Toppy, Miss Rosey. Toppy be good at farm work with animals and growing food. And this be Miffy. Miffy be good at cooking food, Miss Rosey, so Dobby can work on cleaning and helping Miss Rosey!" Dobby gestured at the two nervous elves, one male and female respectively, who stood looking between Rose and Dobby warily. And he's bouncing again, she thought with a grin.

She smiled gently at the two elves. "Well then, as I'm sure Dobby has told you my name is Rose Potter and I would very much like it you would work for me. There aren't many rules for working for my family, but they are as follows: firstly, you do not punish yourselves. If you think you have done something wrong come to me and we will discuss it. Secondly, you will not work to exhaustion. If you need to take a break, eat or sleep, you will do so. I want my elves to be as healthy as possible. If you need extra help tell me and I'll sort out the problem. Lastly, I want you to wear a uniform. It is not clothes, but a way to show that you work for the Potter family. I will not give you them, you make them yourselves. Is that okay?" Rose finished her little speech and looked at the two elves who looked utterly bewildered yet happy. Dobby just looked smug.

"Yes, Miss Rosey!"

"Do you need any help to get started?"

"No, Miss Rosey!" With a shake of their heads, the three hyperactive elves disappeared with a crack.

Rose just stood still for a moment, utterly bemused. "Elves are so weird."
Rose shook her head and chuckled at the thought of her mad elves as she ambled up to her room, where she changed into a short-sleeved, light blue summer dress that came to her knees, which she paired with a pair of sandals. She almost skipped to the study where she immediately sobered. Sat on the desk were her parents shrunken portraits. She really couldn't avoid this conversation any longer. Madam Bones was coming over the next day and she desperately needed her parents' help, even if it wasn't really them.

She picked the portraits up carefully and took them over to where two sofas sat facing each other over a low coffee table. She gently placed both of them down on one of the sofas and resized them before propping them up, and made her way over to the other sofa. Sitting down she simply gazed at the frozen faces of her parents for a moment before taking a deep breath and unfreezing them.

The paintings slowly came alive with small movements and sounds, looking around the familiar room before slowly focusing on the young girl sitting in front of them.

James Potter looked at the girl carefully. She had a similar face to him just like his mother, and she had his mother's hair, too. It was a light blonde colour and fell in soft curls to the girl's hips. Her skin was pale and she was rather skinny. To be honest she looked kind of under-fed. Really under-fed.

He narrowed his eyes in suspicion before making eye contact with her. Hey eyes were a vibrant blue set in a familiar almond shape, and they looked like they were going to cry as they looked back at him. He was so confused right now.

Lily wasn't doing much better than her husband. Who on earth was this small child who looked like the spitting image of her mother-in-law? She was so tiny and cute, and she looked incredibly nervous at the current situation. Lily looked around the room once more, noticing they were in the Potter study which she knew that only a Potter could get in. Just as she opened her mouth to reassure the small girl her husband, of course, opened his big mouth without thinking.

"Who the bloody hell are you?" As soon as the words passed his mouth James felt a sense of deep foreboding fall over him. He may have been dead but he knew the fury of his wife intimately, and he didn't even have time to prepare before the painting of his beautiful wife began attacking him.

"James Charlus Potter!" Oh shit, full name. "Are you seriously going to be that rude to this child?!! How dare you! We're in the study you imbecile! You know you have to be a Potter to get in here!"

Each shout was accompanied with a hard hit to the head. He was about to retaliate when he heard a vaguely familiar sound.

Giggling. It sounded so familiar. The girl was giggling at his pain. Now laughing as she clutched her stomach with tears in her eyes. "T-that was hilarious! You looked terrified!" The girl laughed even harder.

"It's not funny!" His pain was not funny, damn it!
She stopped laughing and looked at him with a gentle smile on her face. "It kind of is, Dad."

That one word froze him and Lily immediately.

"D-Dad?" James was terrified. There was only one person in the world who could call him that, but this girl looked nothing like his precious Bambi. She was too old. How long had they been frozen? And where did her looks come from?

Lily was having a similar meltdown. Why was her baby so grown up? They were only supposed to be frozen for a little while, what happened?

"Hi Mum, hi Dad. It's me, Rose. I guess I should explain a bit." The frozen faces weren't very reassuring but she carried on anyway.

She closed her eyes and focused on her magic, morphing her hair and eyes back to the familiar black and green. Judging from the gasps they understood her abilities straight away.

"But – how?" James was floored. He wasn't sure what he was asking either. How come she can morph? How come he's only just met her? How is she so tiny and under-fed?

Lily just started crying. "Oh, baby! What happened?!" What the bloody hell happened to her daughter?!

Rose took a deep breath. "Okay. I'll explain everything. I just need you to keep quiet until the end, okay?" Getting twin nods she began. "Okay. Firstly, the only reason I'm a Metamorphmagus is because Sirius blood-adopted me, but with the small block you put on me you wouldn't have noticed until it was removed or it dissolved by itself.

"So when you hid from Voldemort because of the prophecy along with the Longbottoms, you might not have known this but the only reason he knew about the prophecy was because Snape told him the first two lines after he overheard it from Dumbledore interviewing someone in the Hog's Head, which I still can't understand seeing as the school was only a few minutes away.

"When you were betrayed by the rat and died, Dumbledore immediately sent Hagrid to collect me. I'm still not sure exactly how he knew that I was still alive and you weren't, but whatever. Hagrid wouldn't give me to Siri who insisted, and instead Siri was sent to chase after the rat while Dumbledore, Hagrid and McGonagall left me on Petunia's doorstep under some, quite frankly, useless blood wards. A few days later and Siri was in Azkaban without a trial after the rat framed him, Remy had been sent off after being told he couldn't see me, and the Longbottoms were in St Mungo's after being tortured into insanity.

"I grew up in a cupboard under the stairs, with frequent beatings and being starved daily. When I eventually got my Hogwarts letter – which was being kept from me – I was introduced to the magical world, but no one told me I was from an old family or anything. My school years were frankly awful, and I nearly died every single year there.

"My first year the DADA teacher was possessed by the spirit of Voldemort and kept trying to kill me. Second, the Chamber of Secrets was opened and a basilisk was set upon the muggle-borns, which I eventually killed. Third, Siri escaped Azkaban and the school was surrounded by Dementors which kept trying to kill me. Fourth, I was entered into the Tri-Wizard Tournament against my will, which ended with me being kidnapped and used in a necromancy ritual to resurrect Voldemort after seeing my friend killed right in front of me.

"Fifth, I was considered a lying psycho by the public and was tortured by a teacher using a blood
quill, before getting Siri killed because Dumbledore kept too many secrets. Sixth year ended with Dumbledore dying after telling me about Voldemort's past. I spent seventh year on the run hunting down Voldemort's Horcruxes – objects with pieces of his soul in – before eventually killing the bastard at school where hundreds of people died including Remy.

"After the war I found out that I had other blocks on me that hid and essentially destroyed my Metamorphmagus abilities, as well as causing some permanent damage to my core. I went to work with the Unspeakables after my friendships fell apart where I had an accident with the Veil, after which I ended up back in this body. So far I've claimed my Head of House rings, blocked all my vaults and properties from anyone, and captured Pettigrew to bargain for a trial for Siri. Any questions?"

She wouldn't admit it, but she was scared to death that they wouldn't believe her. Honestly, even she would have trouble believing it.

After a minute of silence her parents proved once and for all why they made such a great couple, after all not many people could hope to match their colourful language and painful threats. Rose was glad that she had no guests at the moment because she might have been arrested just being in proximity to the things they were saying.

"So … you believe me?"

That shut them up. And confused them. "Bambi, you're our daughter. Why wouldn't we believe you?" Lily's tearful and emphatic nods joined in with her husband's words.

"Baby, of course we do! We're your parents, it's what we do."

For Rose that was the final straw. She may have been an adult mentally, but she was in a child's body that reacted to emotions differently. She couldn't help it. She burst into tears. "I'm sorry. I'm sorry …" The girl kept repeating the words over and over again while her parents looked on in helpless agony and anger. They just looked at each other and knew when Sirius and Remus came to see them that revenge would be had. Anyone who hurt their daughter was dead.

After she stopped crying she explained more about what was happening with the goblins, Dumbledore and Sirius. She told them about being a Parselmouth and how Lily really ought to have taken an inheritance test. She told them about Amelia coming the next day and asked them what she should do.

"Tell her the truth." Lily was firm on this and James agreed with her. "She's an honourable woman who won't betray our family. She'll listen to you if you show her the truth."

"I got the Pensieve from the family vault."

James was smiling like a loon. "That's my Bambi! Got your dad's brains, didn't you? Ow!" Suddenly he was bent double rubbing his head.

His wife just looked at him and sighed. "Men. So tell us all about school. The good parts."

The family spent the next few hours trading stories about school and didn't even notice when it started to get dark.

"I think Bambi needs her sleep." James was smiling at his daughter like she had won a medal or something when she simply yawned. Idiot.

"You're probably right. But, um, before I go, I want to ask you guys something." She was fidgeting
now, not even looking at them as she stuttered over her words.

"Does this have anything to do with the blonde hair and blue eyes?" Mother and daughter turned as one to James looking surprised.

"How did you know that?" Rose was, quite rightly, amazed. She'd always seen her father as kind of dense. *Oops, sorry Dad.*

He looked indignant. "I do have a brain."

Before Lily could start another argument Rose explained. "I love the two of you dearly, I do, but all my life whenever someone looked at me they'd say, 'You look just like your father but with your mother's eyes.' It kind of gets exhausting. I just want to be known for me. Like, when everyone found out I was good on a broomstick they kept saying things like 'Of course you can fly well, you're James Potter's daughter. Why wouldn't you be able to fly?' I want my achievements to be because of me, not because I'm your daughter. Is that so bad?"

"No, it's not. I used to go through the same thing because I look just like my dad, too. It pissed me off. Everything I did was because I was Charlus Potter's son, not because I was James Potter." He looked resolutely at his daughter. This was the man who had stood and faced Voldemort to his death. The man who'd sacrificed his life for his wife and daughter. "I want you to be proud to be a Potter but I don't want you living in someone else's shadow. You're your own person and everyone should respect that."

"Your father's right. You're our daughter, true, but you're Rose. Not James. Not Lily. Rose. And people need to understand that. Personally I don't think I can ever tell you how proud I am of you for trying to live as yourself."

Looking at her parents' faces, seeing them look at her with pride, Rose had never felt so accepted. She might have had a crazy life but her family loved her.

After she bade her parents goodnight she thought about family and what it meant to be one. One thing was sure though. Hers was crazy.
After breakfast the next day Rose was horrifically nervous. And fidgeting. And trying not to vomit all over the expensive carpet. She had enough of a reason to though. This meeting could decide the fate of Sirius' freedom. She wanted, no *needed* his freedom desperately. He was one of the only living adults that she had left in her life. She couldn't lose him. Even if right now he only knew her as his baby goddaughter who couldn't even walk or talk, she knew that Sirius was the sort of man who would do anything for her. She would do the same for him, and she knew that even if this meeting didn't turn out how she wanted she'd get him out of Azkaban anyway, legal permission or not.

She spent the short hours after breakfast choosing an appropriate outfit to meet her guest. Amelia Bones was a woman to be respected; she was Regent for the House of Bones and the Head of the DMLE – she was a powerful woman and Rose acknowledged that. She eventually settled on deep blue robes worn open over a long black skirt and cream blouse, coupled with calf-high boots. It was a little more traditional than she preferred, but it was better to have a 'proper' first impression than be seen as an ignorant child who was spouting crap.

At ten to the hour she slowly made her way to the foyer fireplace. She eventually planned to show Amelia her parents' portraits once she – hopefully – got her to believe her about the time travel madness. Even she could admit that it was a fairly bizarre story, though. Rose wasn't sure how much exposure Amelia had had to the Unspeakables during her time at the Ministry. It was possible that she had at least heard of this happening before, but she wouldn't hold her breath.

Just then the flames of the fireplace roared to life and Rose's inner self decided to have a meltdown just as Madam Bones walked calmly out the flames. "Good morning, Miss Potter. It's a pleasure to meet you again." Madam Bones offered a smile to the girl who had a worryingly blank look on her face.

"The pleasure is all mine, Madam Bones." Oh good, at least her body could operate on autopilot. She pasted a small smile on her face as she greeted her guest. "I simply wish the circumstances of this visit were a little more welcoming."

The woman was honestly quite intrigued at the words as she was led into a small parlour decorated in shades of purple and silver. She sat at the table laden with sandwiches, snacks, fruit, tea, juice and coffee, across from her small host.

"Help yourself to whatever you please Madam Bones. I believe that our talk would progress better after some food."

The two made small talk as they slowly filled themselves up, before Amelia's curiosity got the better of her. "Not that I don't appreciate the food Miss Potter, but I am wondering why I am here. You mentioned business with the DMLE and the alliance between our Houses."

"Yes Madam Bones. Unfortunately I cannot fully explain one thing without mentioning the other. I have evidence that a certain prisoner is Azkaban is irrefutably innocent, however I cannot explain
how I discovered such a fact without speaking to you as an ally."

Her minding was racing. *An innocent prisoner? Who? How?* "Perhaps you could first explain about this prisoner and the evidence you have."

Rose took a deep breath and let it out. "Lord Sirius Orion Black was not my parents' Secret Keeper and was not responsible for their deaths, or those of the muggles or Peter Pettigrew. He never even received a trial after being arrested. As for evidence, I have my parents will which states that Sirius was not their Secret Keeper and that Pettigrew actually was. I also have Pettigrew himself locked up in my basement right this moment." She deliberately met the woman's eyes as she spoke. She wasn't worried about a Legilimency attack anymore; between her Occlumency and her House rings' protection her mind was a fortress. She wanted Amelia to see that she was telling the truth from her body language.

A sharp inhale was the only external response from the woman. Internally she was screaming. Sirius Black was innocent. *Her* Sirius was innocent. Her fiancé was innocent. And she left him there. Oh God, I left him in that hellhole. I deserve to be there.

"Show me." Amelia was certain that the girl was telling her the truth. She could sense the longing and desperation in her eyes. She didn't understand why this girl, who shouldn't even be able to remember anything about Sirius, would be so desperate to free him but at this point she really didn't care.

"Dobby, can you get the envelope from my desk please?" A second later a house-elf in a uniform popped in with an envelope which Rose took and handed to the older woman. She barely registered the loud crack of the elf leaving as she slowly opened the envelope and read through James and Lily's will. Where they professed Sirius's innocence. *And it was witnessed by Dumbledore.*

She looked up into the worried eyes of the girl in front of her. Quite frankly she didn't give a shit how she'd ended up with this or with Pettigrew being held hostage in her basement. "Miss Potter, I will get him free. What about Pettigrew?"

She watched the girl's shoulders relax slightly. "He's an illegal Animagus, a rat. He's stuck in a box at the moment and can't sense anything outside of the box. He has food so he won't die, but he's not going anywhere any time soon."

*Impressive.* "How did you stop him from leaving?"

Rose tensed before slumping a little. "I warded the box." She knew she'd have to explain now.

"Dobby can you bring me the Pensieve from the study please?"

After the Pensieve was on the table, Amelia watched as the girl carefully removed more than a dozen memories and placed them in the bowl before turning to her.

"I understand if you don't believe me immediately, honestly I'd be more surprised if you did. What you need to need to know is that I'm actually thirty-years-old mentally. I was an Unspeakable that had an accident with the Veil and some Time-Turner dust. I woke up in my ten-year-old body so I decided to change things. As an Unspeakable I've studied things such as this, so I'm aware of potential problems with time travel, however those particular problems don't exist in this particular situation. I have memories of my life at Hogwarts past the age I physically am now, so I'm relying on your expertise to prove the truth. You're trained to sense the validity of memories so will know if they've been tampered with."

Honestly that was such a ridiculous story that Amelia immediately believed her. If someone was
going to lie they would create a more believable story. Not to mention that she had heard of time travellers in the Department of Mysteries before. Crazy bastards, the lot of them.

Amelia had worked at the Ministry for over ten years at this point, so she was quite familiar with the various departments and the quirks their staff possessed. Being the Head of her own department, even at the young age of her early thirties, Amelia was forced to interact with different department Heads and collaborate on a range of projects. The Department of Mysteries was a group of people that she despised working with because of their complete and utter disregard for safety if something caught their eye. (She remembered one person who let someone get hexed once because they'd wanted to investigate what the hex did to human flesh.) She had honestly never doubted that the Unspeakables had somehow managed to cause accidental time travel, and that was before she even had confirmation.

Even so she wasn't one to blindly believe anything without proof, so she took a breath and plunged into Rose's memories.

As Amelia was experiencing the fun and excitement of Rose's previous life, the girl in question was watching her closely. She was at least thankful that the woman was determined to free Sirius even if she didn't believe Rose about the time travel accident. She had included a memory of an adult Susan to try and sway her though. Hopefully if she believed her she could help track down Remy. She had no idea where he was at the moment but she needed him too. He was family no matter what he thought. She would beat the self-pity out of him if she had to.

So engrossed in her visions of kicking a certain werewolf in the balls as she was, Rose completely missed Amelia's return to the real world. Jesus Christ, we fucked up big time. We forced everything on a child. We just sat back and cried about everything while that poor girl got stuck with the responsibility of killing a Dark Lord as a bloody teenager. She's definitely James and Lily's, she thought looking over at the dazed girl.

"Miss Potter." Bright blue swivelled back to her. "Unnecessary as they were, thank you for further proof. I already believed your story but the memories certainly helped. By the end of the day I can have Sirius in a secure location away from Azkaban, and an emergency session of the Wizengamot set up by the end of the week. However, I would recommend that you do not attend as your presence could cause too much excitement. I won't use the will unless I'm backed into a corner. Is that acceptable?"

The girls answering smile was a heart-breaking mix of gratitude and relief. "Thank you Madam Bones. If it's not too much trouble could you send Sirius here after the trial with a portkey? I'm hoping to get him to live here at least part-time."

"That's a good idea, but who has access to the manor?" She was curious about how paranoid the girl was. Unspeakables generally end up warding their homes even more than Gringotts, let alone allowing strangers to visit.

"Other than us? There's Remus Lupin, Augusta Longbottom, the Tonks family and Peter Pettigrew until he leaves. I didn't want my wards accidentally killing him before he was tried, they've just been updated by Gringotts."

"Good. Now, is there anything else I should know about?"

Rose spent the next hour explaining about the Horcruxes and the plan to destroy them and Voldemort. In between eating the extra food Dobby brought out, Amelia added her own ideas, especially concerning the Philosopher's Stone if it ended up in the school again. They would use the box to send it to Gringotts so that Dumbledore couldn't destroy it and Flamel could get it back. It was
kind of suspicious how things had played out with the stone last time around..

"There is one thing you should know, Ma'am. I'm sorry I forgot. It's about Barty Crouch." She had a feeling she looked as sheepish as she felt.

"Barty? What about him?"

"I meant Barty Crouch Jr. He's still alive and currently being held under the Imperious Curse in Crouch Manor." She explained the switch with his mother and that he was the one in her fourth-year memory.

"Bloody hell. Just because they're family doesn't mean you can just let someone out of Azkaban."
Pinching the bridge of her nose, Amelia resisted the urge to find Barty Sr. and curse him into oblivion. Or strangle him with her bare hands. "Okay. I'll set up something about a week after the trial. An anonymous tip or something."

The woman looked beyond stressed. Rose wondered how to calm the woman down. Huh. That might work. "Ma'am, are you busy for the next few hours?"

Said woman blinked at the suddenly impish-looking girl and shook her head.

"Do you mind following me?" The blonde child got up and led the woman upstairs to the study and led her to the sofa where she sat the previous night.

"What –" She caught sight of the two paintings grinning at her.

"Amelia!" Twin shouts caused the woman to grin in response.

"I spent hours with them last night and I thought you might want to spend a bit of time with them, too." Rose smirked at the stunned look on the stern woman's face. "I'll be in the library if you need me. Have fun!" She skipped out to the sound of her father's laughter.

Amelia looked at the girl with a bemused smile before turning to the portraits. "Perhaps I should tell you what you've been missing …"
A sirius trial

Chapter Notes

I don't own 'Harry Potter'.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

*Bang* *Bang* "Order! We are here today at the behest of Madam Bones of the Department of Magical Law Enforcement. Madam Bones if you may state your order of business for the Wizengamot today," Chief Warlock Albus Too-Many-Names Dumbledore was definitely not having a good day. He had absolutely no idea what this emergency session was for and he honestly didn't care. He had too many other things to prepare for as it was, namely Rose Potter's imminent arrival at Hogwarts. She had to be prepared for Tom's eventual return; she was the prophecy child, after all.

"Thank you, Chief Warlock. It has recently come to my attention that a grave miscarriage of justice was carried out by this august body in the past. I recently discovered that a prisoner of Azkaban prison was incarcerated without a trial at the behest of the previous regime."

She allowed the horrified whispers of the crowd to carry for a moment and eyed Dumbledore's suddenly pale face. Not very good at hiding his emotions, is he? Fudge's smug face made her even less impressed, even though this was her plan with Rose. A few well-placed words about how he would receive praise for being the Minister that stands for justice made him fold life a deck of cards. Of course, it helped that some of those words were praise from The-Girl-Who-Lived herself; Rose's offer of support made the idiot cave to their demands without even considering what they were asking. It was rather sad when the leader of the government was so easily manipulated, but for now she would count her blessings.

"The prisoner's name is Sirius Black."

A beat of silence. Then total chaos. Shouting and screaming echoed around the room from a bunch of supposed adults.

"Quiet! New evidence has come to light suggesting that Mr Black is entirely innocent of the crimes he was blamed for, and we would be remiss in our duties if we failed to examine it properly. We have already failed to correctly convict him of the crimes he was incarcerated for, are you suggesting that we once more break our own laws?" Her cold voice carried through the chamber causing a wave of uneasy muttering. If they continued with the trial they essentially admitted that they had done wrong in the past, yet if they ignored the problem now they would be suggesting treason. There was no winning situation for them.

"I agree with Madam Bones. This body has already allowed a grave error of justice to occur in the past. It is our duty as members of the Ministry right now to stand up for what is right and push for the truth!" Fudge looked so proud of himself that it was taking all of her energy not to break down laughing. Or hex him.

Dumbledore saw no way out and grimaced. "Bring in the suspect!"

An Auror walked in with Sirius Black in chains with an anti-Animagus cuff on his wrist. Contrary to what everyone had expected, the man was well-groomed if rather thin, dressed in fine deep red silk
robes and didn't look completely mad. He was led to the chair on the floor and chained to it.

Amelia caught a flinch out the corner of her eye from the audience. Remus Lupin. An utter pain in the arse to track down and an even bigger pain to convince of Sirius's innocence. Which then led to his overabundance of self-pity when he realised that his best friend had been falsely imprisoned for the past ten years. If Rose hadn't warned her beforehand of his personality she might have throttled him.

"Mr Black. Do you consent to veritaserum questioning?"

"I do."

Murmurs in the courtroom made Amelia inwardly smirk. Everyone knew that if a prisoner allowed that, then there was a very good chance of them being innocent. The rest of the people who asked for the potion thought that they could fight it.*

One of the Aurors walked over and administered the potion. Sirius' eyes glazed over as it spread through his system.

"State your full name."

"Sirius Orion Black."

"What is your date of birth?"

"November 3rd 1959."

Amelia mentally relaxed. "The potion is functioning correctly. Mr Black, were you the Secret Keeper for the Potters when they went into hiding during the year of nineteen eighty?"

"No."

Some whispering broke out in the crowd.

"Are you a Death Eater, and have you ever been a Death Eater?"

"No, and no."

The room was getting louder. "Quiet!" Dumbledore swung the gavel looking more than a little stressed at the turn of events.

"Have you ever been a sympathiser to the person known as Lord Voldemort?"

"No."

"Who was the Secret Keeper for the Potters?"

"Peter Pettigrew."

"Did you kill Peter Pettigrew and the muggles?"

"No."

"Explain what happened with them."

"I went after Peter after James and Lily died. When I caught up to Peter he shouted that it was my
fault that James and Lily were dead, and blew up a gas line killing the muggles. He transformed into his Animagus form, a rat, and escaped. I was found by Aurors, blacked out, and woke up in Azkaban."

"Are you too an Animagus, and if so what if your form?"

"Yes. I turn into a black dog like a grim."

"Thank you. Administer the antidote."

The courtroom was stunned into silence and Amelia had to resist cheering. "No further questions, Chief Warlock." The woman sat down serenely and cast her eyes over the various voters. The light voters looked absolutely appalled at an innocent man having been thrown in jail. Augusta in particular looked like she wanted to hex Dumbledore where he sat.

(She had been informed of Rose's treatment at the hands of her muggle relatives because of Dumbledore and now stood as Rose's magical and legal proxy. Dumbledore himself wasn't even aware of the change, never having received official permission to act as such. He'd only managed to get away with it being Chief Warlock.)

Those of a neutral persuasion were likely to vote to free Sirius so that they could ally themselves with the House of Black. The dark voters were probably going to vote against, seeing Sirius as a disgrace to his House. Malfoy would probably want him in prison so that his son would inherit the Black fortune. *I wonder what he'll say when he finds out that Rose is first in line.*

Dumbledore cleared his throat. "All those in favour of dropping all charges against Sirius Black."

Nearly three-quarters of the wands lit up in favour.

"All those against?" The rest lit up including Malfoy's – *bloody peacock* – even though it was useless.

*Bang* "Well then. Congratulations Mr Black. All charges have been dropped. The usual charge of being an illegal Animagus is three years in Azkaban. This charge will be deducted from your ten-year incarceration, and for the remaining seven years you will be reimbursed 10,000G for each year. On behalf of this governing body I can only apologise my boy, and wish you all the best from now on."

Sirius just looked blankly at the old man. Amelia had already told him that Dumbledore had known he was innocent and left him in prison anyway.

The chains fell away and he looked around the room. He was free. Amelia was gesturing for him to join the audience where he spotted a welcome face. Moony. He all but ran to his friend and hugged him to death.

Dumbledore coughed. "If that is all – "

"I'm afraid not Chief Warlock. As I stated evidence was collected that proved Mr Black's innocence. The most important piece of evidence was actually Mr Pettigrew himself."

Remus and Sirius spun around so fast it would have been amusing if it weren't for the fact that they were facing the man who had betrayed their friends to their death.

The snivelling pathetic man was all but dragged to the chair before being chained up.

The two remaining Marauders couldn't even pay attention to what was happening, their blood was
pumping so loudly in their ears, obscuring anything from registering. They were only vaguely aware of the trial going on around them and didn't snap out of it until the rat was sentenced to Azkaban and someone suggested the Kiss.

Dumbledore tried to argue that it was inhumane but he was quickly overruled, and the courtroom watched on as a pathetic traitor was destroyed on the floor.

With the day's Wizengamot session finished the vultures quickly began swarming around Sirius and Remus. Amelia grabbed them both and quickly dragged them to an empty backroom before handing them an empty notebook.

"It's a portkey. Take it quick. The password is 'home'. It's safe, trust me."

They didn't even try to argue and grabbed the book. "Home."

As they swirled away they wondered why the password was home before they smacked down into a spacious sitting room that felt very familiar to them. As they picked themselves up they looked around and froze at the familiar sofas and chairs, the same bookshelf in the corner, and the old red rug in the corner covering up what they knew to be a burn mark on the floor.

"Why … why are we here?" Sirius couldn't force his voice to work properly. He sounded like a toad. The Pottery. Oh God, James …

Remus wasn't doing much better, memories filling him of his teenage years here, of Dorea hitting him over the head with a book when she found out about his condition and telling him to get over himself and stop moping, that there was nothing wrong with him.

"You're here because this is your home, idiots."

The men spun and got ready to deal with the threat when they saw … a very tiny girl. She was small and thin with curly blonde hair to her hips and vibrant blue eyes. Her pale skin was offset by the deep purple jumper she wore with black jeans and socks.

"Who are you?" he almost snarled. He was being assaulted by scents left and right and Moony was close to the surface. This girl put him on edge whoever she was.

"Really?" Rose was exasperated. She just wanted to hug them damn it, and they were acting like she was some sort of enemy. She understood, but really?! She really wanted to stomp her foot like the child she appeared to be.

She rubbed her hand over her face and sighed. "Just … follow me, please. You'll understand in a minute." She turned and walked out the family room into the study without waiting for them to follow. She knew they would anyway.

"Hey! Where do you think you're going? That room's for – " Sirius' rant cut off when he heard the voices.

"Bambi! What are you doing here? I thought you were going to meet Padfoot and Moony?"

"Is everything okay, baby?"

"You mean other than them nearly attacking me?"

"What?! How dare they attack my child! I'll – "
"James? Lily?" Two disbelieving voices filled the study as they entered the room. There on the wall were two large portraits of the very couple whose murder they just had to relive. And on the floor in front of them was the girl.

"Wait. Bambi?" But that would mean … "Rose?" Sirius looked at the girl confused. She was beautiful he'd admit, but she didn't look a thing like she had before.

"That's your fault Black." Lily was smirking at him. "When you blood-adopted her you turned her into a Metamorphmagus, but the block we put on her stopped her from showing it. This is her new look. Isn't she cute!" Her squealing was making the girl – Rose – blush like mad.

"Rose?" Remus could smell it now. This was the little girl that he had sworn to protect, the one he had been terrified of holding when she was a baby. He didn't care what she looked like, she could turn into a boy for all he cared.

"Well, do I get a hug now? Or are you two going to bite my head off again?" No sooner were the words out her mouth than she was crushed in a bear hug between the two men.

"Aww, James look, aren't they cute!"

"Of course they are Lily-Flower, they're a family!" He looked at the two men carefully. "She's yours too, you know. No take-backs, you're stuck with her." Exuberant he may have been, but the others could see how serious he was.

The two men looked at each other before nodding. "Well Bambi, what do you want to do now?" The former inmate contented himself with running his fingers through the girl's silky curls. Though the calm atmosphere was soon interrupted by a stomach growling loudly in between him and Remus.

A moment of silence, then laughter from the adults.

"Shut up."

Chapter End Notes

Veritaserum is 100% effective in this story.
By mid-July the new family was completely caught up with each other and happily living each day doing something new. The time-travelling girl had retold the story of her past life and time-travelling accident, and while initially somewhat sceptical – time travel wasn't exactly common, even with magic involved – the two men believed her easily with all the evidence she had. Remus and Sirius had been utterly distraught when they discovered what Rose had gone through before, and resolved to be the adults this time around and take care of her like they should have done before.

The two men were still incredibly guilty that they hadn't been around to take care of her as a child but they were still grateful for the chance to be a family from now on. Sirius had immediately and, surprisingly without protest, submitted himself to daily visits at St Mungo's for healing; it didn't hurt that his favourite cousin Andromeda was part of the team healing him. He wanted to be there for everyone in his life and he wouldn't be able to do that without extensive physical and psychological healing. He wasn't in a good place right now; going straight to Azkaban after seeing two of your friends dead and learning that another friend was a traitor didn't provide much of an opportunity to mentally process anything, and he needed help to properly deal with everything from ten years ago.

Sirius was a man who enjoyed putting on airs and acting snobbish for fun but he wasn't ignorant in the slightest. He was always aware of the family madness lurking in the back of his mind, waiting for an opportunity to rear its ugly head. Sirius was intimately aware of the madness of his own mind and even more so after Azkaban. He couldn't help but wonder if he had been worse in Rose's old life because people had still considered him to be guilty, other than his family anyway.

The Black cousins' reunion was rather tearful and happy – something the Black family would have cursed them for no doubt – but they couldn't care less. They were the ones who'd had to deal with being part of a family that willingly signed up to kill and torture people and were cast out for disagreeing with the crazy bastards. Andromeda had never believed that Sirius was guilty but no one would listen to a disinherited woman that married a muggle-born. She was so happy that Sirius was free and getting the help that he needed and deserved, and she couldn't wait to properly catch up with him.

In the mean-time Sirius had designated Amelia as his proxy on the Wizengamot; he knew that if he tried to vote for anything right now no one would trust his judgement what with having spent ten years in Azkaban. In the meantime he followed Rose's advice and secured all of his properties against anyone unwanted. None of them had allowed Dumbledore access– the Blacks would never allow him to visit their properties – but now they were all secure against undesirable visitors. Also known as Death Eaters and Voldemort sympathisers.

The knowledge that the Black family was still standing because of him was rather ironic: the runaway Heir who had been nothing but a monumental disappointment was now entirely responsible for maintaining the existence of The Noble and Most Ancient House of Black. He really couldn't ignore the humour of the situation.

His relationship with Amelia was not nearly as secure as his assets however, but after she confessed
that there had been no one else in the past decade they'd decided to take it steady. She still had the engagement ring from before and they still considered themselves to be engaged, but they wanted to develop their relationship again slowly. She now spent a few days here and there at The Pottery talking with Sirius and Remus, filling in the portraits on her plans for Rose's safety, and spending time with Rose. Sirius was thrilled with how well Amelia and Rose got on. They had developed something of a friendship as Amelia treated the girl as the woman she was mentally and the two of them bonded over Rose's future work with the Ministry.

He had been worried about what would have happened if they didn't get along. He wanted to have them both in his life, but while he loved Amelia dearly and had chosen her Rose was his responsibility. The idea of giving up the woman he loved for the sake of the little girl he had sworn to care for was painful, but if need be he would do it. When he'd reluctantly said as much to Amelia he'd been shocked when she said that she would have been angry if he said otherwise. Apparently being a man willing to do anything for the child he cared for was an attractive quality to her.

Amelia informed everyone of a quick and private trial for Crouch Sr. and Jr. soon after Sirius'. Fudge had been terrified of the backlash of the case and decided to conduct everything without public knowledge, citing no need to panic people with the information that a Death Eater had escaped prison years ago and had been living among them. Everyone would have been somewhat impressed if it weren't for the fact that Fudge had only said that to cover his own neck. Crouch Jr. was given the Kiss and his father had been sent to Azkaban for ten years.

Remus was a kind man of strong morals, but even he couldn't muster up anything other than vicious satisfaction at this information. Between Sirius being in Azkaban and Rose's past-future memories Moony had been all but howling to rip the vile man apart. Now that justice had been served he was content.

He had never felt so happy as he had in the past few weeks. He had his best friend back, Rose was with them and they were all living together as a family. He didn't have to worry about trying to find work to eat or find somewhere decent to live, and when he tried to explain about leaving for the full moon Rose just levelled a flat look at him and told him in no uncertain terms that the basement was secure and told him to shut up. Sirius rolling around the floor laughing at his stunned face didn't really help.

He'd tried to protest about finding work so she shoved her investment portfolio at him and told him to help that way. With the Potter estate and investments having been stagnant for ten years Remus inadvertently found himself as an accountant/investment advisor for the Potter family. Sirius quickly jumped on Rose's idea and gave Remus his ledgers too. With actual work to be done, and for his family too, Remus was quite the happy man. They even paid him so he knew it wasn't charity, and with the money he could easily afford the Wolfsbane potion every month.

Remus had initially decided to start looking for a new place to live before Rose directed him to the bedroom she'd had set up for him. He was going to protest before he noticed the small dream-catcher attached to one of the bed-posts and the small pile of his favourite chocolate from Honeydukes on the bedside table. When he asked she just blushed and shrugged before looking away. If it weren't for his enhanced hearing he wouldn't have heard her muttering about him being her family. It took all his composure not to cry at that, and when he thanked her with a smile the happy blush he got in return was utterly adorable.

Rose had also handed him a recipe for a potion that would help treat the scars made by werewolves. She hadn't seen a cure for Lycanthropy be developed in her lifetime, but the potion was a way for those infected by the disease to heal some of their wounds. Rose stated it wasn't just for the physical healing, but because without the physical evidence of them losing control they could heal mentally
too, if only a little.

Remus had hugged her for all his worth when that happened; he'd barely been holding back his tears when she reached up and hugged him back, with a grip so tight it was obvious that she had no intention of letting him go. The two had stood and hugged in silence, and if the girl felt her shoulder get wet she said nothing as she tightened her grip and held on silently.

All in all The Pottery was now full of happy people, the manor less an empty house and more of a home. Dobby, Toppy and Miffy were ecstatic to have a such a nice family to serve and went all out to help their masters. The grounds were now home to cows, goats, sheep and pigs for farming, and a small plot of land for vegetables was Toppy's pride and joy. He had never been part of a family that appreciated him so much for just doing his work before.

For Miffy The Pottery was heaven. A family that enjoyed her cooking and gave her free rein to cook whatever she wanted within reason. Her mistress was a young girl who needed help to grow so needed lots of healthy food, and her dog-master was recovering from prison. Wolf-master needed more food as well because he was too skinny, so she got to cook lots of food every day.

In between his cleaning Dobby was having fun helping Miss Rosey. She'd said he could prank anyone who had been horrible to them within reason, for a couple reasons: one, she didn't want to be responsible for anything too bad, and two, if she didn't know about it she couldn't be blamed for it.

When Dobby had sneaked into Hogwarts to get back Miss Rosey's mail and send it to the goblins, he'd decided to enact some revenge on Dumbledore. The old man had seemed nice and friendly at first, but he'd hurt Miss Rosey and her family so Dobby figured he was free game. (He had also heard dog-master and wolf-master making plans for the old man, so couldn't bring himself to feel guilty at all.)

He hadn't done anything too bad, but house-elf magic was a lot stronger than most people thought. He could isolate specific magical signatures and set up spells that only activated when those specific signatures were registered. Dumbledore soon found himself tripping over random steps, hearing strange noises, being shouted at by random paintings and suits of armour, and other small disturbances. Dobby also may or may not have been responsible for the old man's head and face going totally bald one day, but he did take a picture to show his masters; their roaring laughter made the house-elf inordinately happy.

Rose had found Dobby's prank hilarious and she suspected that he had done more but didn't ask him – he kept walking around the manor with a manic grin on his face that didn't bode well for the subject of his ire. The other elves had been worried at first that their friend was going to get punished for his behaviour. After it became apparent that Rose found it funny they lightened up, and may or may not have offered Dobby some suggestions of their own.

After spending a few weeks with her new family Rose had realised that there was a certain someone missing that she still missed greatly. She'd decided to go back to Diagon Alley and spent her time dawdling before finally going to Eeylops Owl Emporium and leaving five minutes later with a certain snowy owl and everything to care for her. Hedwig was the same as ever, proud, haughty, and absolutely breath-taking. She had seen Rose and immediately flown down from her perch to her shoulder where she glared at everyone else, as if daring them to move her.

With her oldest friend back Rose felt a certain relief. It wasn't logical; this wasn't the same Hedwig as before, the one that had stuck with her for years before dying for her owner. Hedwig looked at her with the same intelligence as before though, and Rose knew this was still Hedwig.

She looked around the alley at the street traffic preparing for the new school year. It was certainly
going to be an interesting year, for sure.
Looking at the gleaming red of the Hogwarts Express, Rose Potter felt an unsettling mixture of anticipation and unease curl in the pit of her stomach. She had always seen the auspicious castle as a place of fantastical magic and wonder but it was no longer her home. Her home was The Pottery, and spending days chatting to the paintings of her parents and family, or visiting the muggle world with Sirius and Remus. They were her family and for once she felt content. She really didn't want to leave them.

Her summer had been great too, as she had been introduced to Neville and Susan and the three had become fast friends even with Rose being mentally older than them. Susan was calm and cheerful, with a witty sense of humour that was balanced by her fervent beliefs in the justice system and her strong desire to follow in her aunt's footsteps and become an Auror. She believed adamantly in working hard for the things that you wanted and it was clear why she had ended up in Hufflepuff in the future/past. (Thinking about things in relation to time travel wasn't getting easier at all.)

Neville was as shy as ever, but with the gentle coaxing of the two girls he had opened up immensely, especially as they weren't put off by his obsession with Herbology. Instead they were impressed by it and encouraged it, and with the new wand his gran had bought him (on the 'advice' of Amelia) his confidence was better than ever. He was still shy and reserved (he wasn't going to do a one-eighty so quickly), but he stuttered much less and spoke more openly with his friends.

Rose personally felt that he would do much better in Hufflepuff as they could help build his confidence in a gentler manner than Gryffindor. That wasn't to say that he wasn't brave, but Neville's bravery only seemed to appear in dire moments and the rowdiness of the lion's den didn't exactly help introverted people.

She and Neville had had a joint birthday party in the summer where both their families, the Bones' and the Tonks' attended. Sirius and Andromeda were closer than ever and Rose had been thrilled to see Tonks again. As per usual the girl was clumsy and loud, and enjoyed entertaining the younger children by creating animal faces with her morphing abilities (which Rose made a note of so that she could try a few in the future). She wasn't sure if she and Remus would get together this time around, and while she would be devastated over losing Teddy she could understand that reality didn't work that way. At the moment Tonks was only eighteen while Remus was thirty-one. He wasn't old in the slightest but he would easily have a problem being with a teenager. They had only gotten together before because there had been a war going on around them and they hadn't exactly thought things through.

She sighed as she turned from the train back to the two men with her. Both had dark brown hair and eyes and looked utterly unremarkable. Sirius had insisted they come in disguise as it would be like a joint prank, seeing as Rose still looked different to what others expected as well. (He was healing rapidly but he was still a childish prankster. Besides, Rose thought it was hilarious.)

Looking at the two men she considered the closest thing to living parents she had, she tried not to break down and cry. She would miss them a lot but she wanted them to be happy by themselves.
They had decided to start a company creating joke and prank items, as well as creating other things to make life easier and modifying muggle items for magical use. She couldn't wait until she introduced them to the twins.

She stared at them before hugging them both tightly, relishing in the feeling of them hugging her back. *People that love me.* The train whistled in warning as there was only five minutes left before departure, so she summoned up what was left of her vaunted Gryffindor courage.

"You know … my birth parents might be James and Lily Potter, but I consider you two to be my dads too. Mum and Dad's portraits didn't care, and I was wondering if you'd mind if I called you guys 'Dad'?" On the outside she was calm but internally she was screaming with anxiety over their response. Hence why she'd waited until now to ask; if things went pear-shaped she could escape onto the train and hide.

The two men were frozen in awe for a moment before squeezing her even tighter, repeating 'yes' over and over again like a mantra. The family of three felt as though they were on cloud nine they were so happy. Sirius and Remus released the girl – their daughter – before looking at her with pride in their teary eyes.

"Now listen up Bambi. I know you'll probably have to deal with a lot of crap but just try to be happy. Enjoy school this time and have fun. If you have any problems write us, or if it's an emergency use the mirrors. I want you to know that we're proud of you no matter what happens. Even if you end up in Slytherin, we'll be happy for you, got it?"

"We're happy if you're happy Rose. Even if you decided to give up and come home, we'll support you as long as that's what you really want."

Blinking away tears she ran to the men again and crushed them in a hug. "Thanks Dads."

Rose released them and jumped on the train which had started to leave before turning around to wave at their goofy grins. She carried on waving until she couldn't see them anymore before wandering down the train looking for Neville and Susan. The girl eventually found them in a compartment with Hannah Abbott who she remembered was Susan's best friend.

"Rose! I was wondering where you were. Rose this is Hannah Abbott, Hannah this is Rose Potter."

The girl with blonde pigtails looked at her in shock making Rose inwardly sigh in resignation. *Let the awkward introductions begin.*

"Hello, my name is Rose Potter, it's nice to meet you," she finished with a smile.

Hannah shook herself realising she was being rude, "Hannah Abbot, nice to meet you too." She smiled at the girl while inwardly she was trying to solve the mystery. She had been told that The-Girl-Who-Lived had black hair and green eyes, and her forehead was completely bare of where everyone knew a scar should be.

"Miss Abbot, if you have any questions about me I won't be offended. I just hope that you won't gossip about me." Rose knew that while she was an adult her friends were children and couldn't be blamed for their curiosity.

Hannah flushed while Neville and Susan looked at her sympathetically, already having been through this. "Um … well, I was wondering why you don't look like the pictures I've seen of you, and your glasses and scar are missing too …" The poor girl trailed off nervously looking like she was expecting Rose to blow up at her. Rose took pity on the poor girl and relayed her 'story'. (Nobody
"Well quite frankly Miss Abbott, all of those pictures were fake, and as for those articles and books about me my lawyer will soon be taking action against the authors for making money off me and my past, considering they are only doing so because my parents were murdered. None of the authors had my permission, and about the glasses and the scar I grew up in the muggle world ignorant of magic, so how does anyone know what I look like.

"Also, this whole Girl-Who-Lived stuff is ridiculous. How does anyone even know that I survived the killing curse? The only people who were there were You-Know-Who, my parents, and me. I was a baby so I don't remember anything, and everyone else is dead. So how does anyone even know what happened? And as for me defeating You-Know-Who, it's kind of stupid. I was a baby, if he was defeated by anyone it was my parents, I mean, I'm pretty sure accidental magic can't defeat a Dark Lord."

She finished her small rant with a confused shrug towards Hannah who looked increasingly calculating for a soon-to-be Hufflepuff and inwardly smirked as the eavesdropping gossipers from outside the door scattered. Soon everyone would be thinking about her words and Dumbledore would most likely be pissed that she didn't consider herself to be The-Girl-Who-Lived.

The conversation quickly moved onto the Sorting and where everyone wanted to go and Rose subtly directed Neville towards Hufflepuff where the girls wanted to go.

"Honestly, I'm not too bothered where I go. Every House has their good and bad points. Besides, blaming one entire House because of the actions of one person doesn't make any sense." Rose desperately wanted to combat some of the inter-House rivalry, and hoped that by explaining that all of the Houses had their own problems would help.

"Do you mean Slytherin with You-Know-Who?" Susan was genuinely curious and Rose could tell she would actually listen without bias.

"Of course. I can name a few Slytherins with good reputations or who defied their pure-blood supremacist families. For example, Horace Slughorn is a renowned Potions Master who used to be a professor at Hogwarts who never favoured one House over another. Then there's my grandmother Dorea Potter nee Black who married my grandfather over the wishes of the family, and only managed not to get disinherited because the Potters were rich. Also, Andromeda Tonks nee Black was disinherited because she eloped with a muggle-born. Not to mention the man who betrayed my parents, Pettigrew, was a Gryffindor, so clearly not all members of the House are brave and chivalrous."

"What did you say about Gryffindor?!"

Rose turned with dread to see Ronald Weasley glaring at her and resisted the urge to bang her head against the wall. Instead …

She pointed at his hair and said blankly, "Is that a spider?"

The resulting shrieking and flailing made her inwardly cackle and resolve to send the memory home. Her parents would enjoy her mischief at least.

He finally stopped, opened his mouth, before squinting at her before his eyes lit up in recognition and started yelling at her.

"You're that stupid rich girl from the bookshop. If it weren't for you Bill wouldn't have had a go at
me, it's your fault!"

The others in the compartment looked bewildered at his words and pissed off that he was shouting at their friend.

"For your information you started whining about me buying my own things with my own money, and had a go about my non-existent parents letting me spend my money. So 'Bill', who I'll assume is your brother, probably scolded you for verbally attacking a random stranger about their personal circumstances in public. You were rude, end of discussion."

"You had a go at someone about their personal business in public and it's her fault?" Neville was looking increasingly annoyed at Ron. He'd met him briefly before but hadn't realised that he was that bad.

"I think it's best if you leave now, you're bothering everyone." Susan's face showed a definite resemblance to Auror Amelia.

"I heard The-Girl-Who-Lived was on the train, I'm looking for her," he huffed petulantly.

Hannah couldn't believe the boy's audacity. Even if she didn't like Rose, which she did, she still wouldn't have let this pest near her. "She's not here. Leave."

Rose was impressed. For three eleven-year-olds their glares were fiercely cold. Ron took one look around and ran off.

Everyone shook their heads before going back to their discussion. They spent the rest of the journey talking about the different Houses and the subjects at Hogwarts before the announcement came that everyone had to change. Rose had arrived at the station in her robes already, and had her trunk in her pocket shrunk so nobody could snoop through it. Instead she had a second trunk on the train filled with random things.

Once everyone was off the train, Rose looked around at the nervous first years and couldn't help the anticipation curling in her stomach. *Hogwarts, take two.*
"Firs'-years! Firs'-years over here!"

Rose eyed the half-giant with a twinge of regret. It was obvious as he was scanning the terrified first years that he was looking for a specific child and Rose would bet her trust vault that it was her. She knew that it wasn't his fault but Dumbledore manipulated him so much and he didn't even realise it. She knew they probably wouldn't have the same relationship as before but she hoped that it wouldn't be completely lost.

As she followed the group she sent smiles towards her friends to try and calm them. Neville looked the most nervous but calmed when Hannah grabbed his arm and whispered something to him. Rose grinned inwardly at his pink cheeks as she climbed into a boat with them.

She glanced around and wanted to roll her eyes at history repeating itself. Hermione Granger, absolute believer in authority, was lecturing Daphne Greengrass and Tracy Davis on the greatness of Gryffindor and the magic she already knew for the Sorting. Rose wanted to bang her head against a wall. How on Earth do you manage to alienate people before you even step foot in the building?

Then again … She glanced sideways to see Draco Malfoy in a boat with Crabbe and Goyle and a young Zacharias Smith. That entire boat was just asking to be hexed. Her dear cousin Draco – kill me now – was boasting about his family wealth and lineage and Smith was responding in kind. She was seriously considering pushing them all in the lake.

After getting out the boats and being led into the castle they were met by a stern-looking Professor McGonagall who began her usual spiel about the Houses being your family. Rose tuned it out before she snorted at the hypocrisy. The amount of times her House had turned against her and shunned in her past life proved beyond a doubt that they were no family.

She tuned back in as the professor walked off and Hermione and Draco were arguing about the Houses.

"–Gryffindor House has an amazing reputation! That's where Headmaster Dumbledore went!"

"You stupid little mu–"

"Excuse me."

Rose may have been in the body of a child but she had long since perfected the method of drawing attention to herself verbally. Her voiced carried across the antechamber and caused everyone to look over at her, including the arguing pair.

"Each of the four Houses has its good points and its bad points, so saying that one House is better than the others is ridiculous and on par with the stupidity of saying one blood status is better than another. Yes, Albus Dumbledore may have been Sorted into Gryffindor, but that was because he was suited for that House. As far as I'm aware you are not him, so perhaps you should
consider which House would be better for you, not the Headmaster. And another point, just because generations of a certain family have been Sorted into one House doesn't mean there won't ever be a change in the pattern."

By now McGonagall had returned and was looking at Rose with an appreciative look while everyone else had contemplative expressions on their faces, but before anyone could comment on her words the Professor had begun leading the children into the Great Hall.

As she calmly walked down the middle of the hall she felt a little sad that she couldn't experience the same innocent wonder as the others, but honestly she was much too cynical for any childish behaviour anymore. She looked at the wide-eyed faces of her peers as they were entranced by the singing hat and hoped that some of them had listened to her words before.

Rose looked up as Hannah's name was called and watched her walk up to the hat with a pink face. It was placed on her head, then–

"HUFFLEPUFF!"

The badgers cheered as she walked over to their table, as she waved to Neville, Rose and Susan.

"Bones, Susan!"

The hat was settled on her auburn hair, when–

"HUFFLEPUFF!"

She all but ran over to Hannah grinning as the Sorting continued.

Things continued in the same vein as before, with people being Sorted more or less in the exact same House until–

"Granger, Hermione!"

Hermione walked over much more sedately than she did in the previous timeline, and the conflicted look on her face was a rare sight for such a determined person.

The hat was on her head for a good minute, until–

"RAVENCLAW!"

The bushy-haired girl blinked, startled at the decision but she still couldn't seem to make up her mind about her Sorting. She casually walked over to the Ravenclaw table without a smile on her face and sat staring blankly at her plate. Rose sincerely hoped the girl would take a good long look at herself; she was clearly Ravenclaw material and not being in Gryffindor wasn't a bad thing.

Neville was smiling broadly when he was Sorted into Hufflepuff with Susan and Hannah, and Malfoy once more went to Slytherin, though this time it took longer and he no longer looked so arrogant.

It seemed that most people had stuck to their original Sorting, and everything was calm in the Great Hall until–

"Potter, Rose!"

Thank fuck my Head of House titles aren't released to the public. If she had called 'Potter-Peverell' Dumbledore probably would have had a stroke. Then again, that's one way to get rid of him.
She paused for a second, watching the old bastard look amongst the children trying to look for her, or at least what he thought she looked like. She smirked briefly before settling her face into a calm but not arrogant expression and slowly walked up the stool.

She ignored the widening eyes of the teachers and the confused questions and whispering permeating the hall, and calmly sat down and looked out at the students until her blue eyes were covered with a ratty hat.

"Well, well, Miss Potter, it's certainly been a while hasn't it? Time travel dear? It seems you always have crazy things happening around you, don't you?"

"Hello again. In my defence this time the incident was completely accidental. I am curious though, you obviously know where I want to go this time but where do you think I should go?"

"Well Miss Potter, Gryffindor is completely out. You may be brave but it is tempered by a more rational mind. You no longer rush into situations head first, you calculate the risks of certain actions and act based on what you consider to be the most beneficial for the outcome you want. That cunning is certainly Slytherin of you my dear, and your ambition drives you very much, but the reasons behind your ambitious nature rule out Slytherin entirely. You act completely for the good of your friends and family and your loyalty would have made Helga weep with joy.

"However, it seems your work with the Unspeakables has uncovered a part of you that is now a driving force. Discovering knowledge for knowledge's sake. You thrive on research and uncovering the truth. You are also correct that it will further your goals for the school. It seems we are in agreement, Miss Potter. You should be in–"

"RAVENCLAW!"

There was a beat of silence before the students in blue and bronze let out deafening cheers and started clapping loudly and wildly, more in line with how the Gryffindors usually acted. The other tables clapped politely too, and she definitely saw some considering looks from the snakes as she walked over to her new House.

"Hello there, and welcome to Ravenclaw. My name's Penelope Clearwater, I'm a fifth-year prefect. If you need any help don't hesitate to let me know."

Rose spoke briefly to the blonde-haired blue-eyed prefect and wondered if she was already Percy's girlfriend. She had a serious demeanour but it was clear that she cared about the other students and was serious about offering help. She introduced Rose to the other first years at the table before they turned back to watch the Sorting.

The Sorting finished with the remaining students mostly going to their original Houses but Rose found it hilarious that Ron was glaring daggers at her. He was ‘supposed’ to be friends with her but there was no way in hell that he was going to be sorted into Ravenclaw. There was also the fact that he hadn’t realised that she was Rose Potter and he practically already hated her. He looked like he was planning to hex her or something, but she basically had three Marauders as dads and Lily Evans Potter as her mother. No way in hell would she be taken off guard by an immature eleven-year-old.

As the feast began she made sure to fill up on healthy food. She had finished her potions regime but still wanted to make sure she didn't end up a skinny midget this time around. As she was eating she got dragged into a discussion on whether Charms or Transfiguration was more useful with Terry Boot and Anthony Goldstein, and didn’t even realise as the feast flew by.

She ignored Dumbledore's not so subtle ploy to entice her to the stone and surreptitiously checked
she still had her wands and shrunken trunk. Her paranoia was on par with Moody. *He would be so proud of me.*

After being dismissed by the Headmaster and led to Ravenclaw Tower by the prefects, the first years were introduced to the riddle method of entering the common room before being ushered inside.

The circular room was beautiful, with a domed ceiling displaying the stars which were reflected in the carpet, to the arched windows and the blue and bronze silks adorning the walls. The room was covered with tables, chair and bookcases, reflecting the nature of the House, and near the doors to the dormitories was a regal statue of Rowena Ravenclaw herself.

Everyone turned around when they heard a throat being cleared, before a diminutive figure walked to the front of the crowd and began talking to them in a squeaky voice.

"Hello everyone and welcome to Ravenclaw House! I am Professor Flitwick and I am your Head of House as well as your Charms professor! I would like to extend a warm welcome to all you first years, and I hope that you enjoy your time here.

"There is much I can say but I will keep it brief. Here in Ravenclaw we pride ourselves on our intellect, creativity and originality. If someone is slightly different to the perceived 'norm', we accept them regardless. We also prefer that you keep your grades up to at least an EE in everything, with a preference for Os if possible. If anyone is having trouble, on the notice board you will find sign-up sheets for tutors and study groups which I urge you to join.

"Your rooms are two to a room, or three if there is an odd number. You are expected to keep your room tidy and leave your roommate's belongings alone. Your room is a private space which will be respected. You are all welcome to the books here in the common room but they must stay in the tower.

"I think that is all I will say today, if you have any more questions you can ask a prefect or come see me in my office. Now off to bed with you!"

The girls followed Penelope as she directed them to the girls' side. Apparently there was no escaping Hermione Granger in any life as the two were now sharing a room, and the girl still looked utterly confused she now found herself in. The room was large and spacious, with a four-poster bed, a desk, and two bookcases for each occupant.

Rose looked at her roommate wistfully. The Hermione that she had known before she was with Ron was an amazingly intelligent woman who was driven, loyal and brave. Then she had put a fragile relationship ahead of her friendships. Rose had often heard about their arguments and wondered how they even managed to stay together. Rose hoped that with time she could get a semblance of her Hermione back, once she grew up a bit and stopped blindly worshipping authority figures.

"Well then, I guess this is us. It's nice to meet you properly, my name is Rose Potter. I hope we can get along." She smiled and held out her hand which was taken after a moment.

"Hermione Granger. It's nice to meet you. Did you know you're mentioned in at least ten different books on modern history?"

Rose interrupted her quickly before she could begin ranting.

"I know. Though you should know that most of those books are lies and were written about me and my family without my permission, and they've basically made money off my parents' murder. If you want to know something ask me instead."
The other girl looked outraged, but it was clear she was torn between anger that Rose had insulted the books and that people were making money off a tragic murder.

The conversation was cut short as Hermione yawned and started to get ready for bed. Rose was the same, but when Hermione fell asleep she grabbed some stationery and went down to the common room. She made sure there was nobody around before she called Dobby.

With a crack the over-enthusiastic elf appeared.

"What can Dobby be doing for Miss Rosey?"

"Hey Dobby. I was wondering if you had access to Dumbledore's office. We know he's got heirlooms from the Potter and Peverell families but he might have others. Can you get in and out without being seen? Don't take anything yet, just test it. Also, can you freeze the portraits?"

"I will check Miss Rosey!" And with that Dobby left.

In the meantime Rose began a letter to her family informing them of the day's events including her Sorting. She was happy with what had happened so far and she was pretty sure they would be too. As she finished signing it Dobby reappeared.

"It is easy for Dobby to get in Dumbly's office Miss Rosey, and Dobby can freeze the pictures so Miss Rosey should be able to get what she wants."

"That's great Dobby! Do you think you could take this letter to Hedwig and have her take it home. You know she doesn't like others taking my letters."

"I will do that Miss Rosey!" With a wide grin Dobby left Rose in the common room alone before she decided to go to bed. Tomorrow was her second go at school and she intended to actually study this time.
Do you have to like your friends?

Chapter Notes

I don't own 'Harry Potter'.

Rose had honestly forgotten what a nightmare eleven-year-old Hermione was. A combination of a complete devotion to authority and a lack of self-esteem made her lecture other people in an attempt to seem useful and draw people to her. She had confided in Rose once that she had been unsure how things worked in the wizarding world worked so decided to learn all she could so others would come to her for help. Of course she didn't consider that the magical and non-magical worlds in Britain were as different as two separate countries, so she came off as rather ignorant to the magically-raised children while being condescending and pushy to the others.

It had only been a few days but she was already lecturing everyone without taking into account their own opinions. Even in Ravenclaw, the House known for being academically-driven, she was quickly becoming an outcast as she pushed her ideas onto people without asking. The Slytherins saw her as woefully naïve and taunted her on principle, while the Hufflepuffs were unimpressed by her superior tone to everyone. The Gryffindors were obviously against too much studying in general, so the bushy-haired girl was becoming isolated very quickly.

Her overbearing nature was simply too much for a bunch of eleven-year-olds who were still enamoured with the fantastical nature of the castle and magic in general. With everyone focusing on learning the basics of their unfamiliar environment, having someone trying to force knowledge onto you (especially when they were obviously not all-knowing) was dampening the excitement of their classmates.

It was Thursday evening of the first week before Rose gave up and pulled out an introductory book on the magical world and its culture from her personal trunk. It was a comprehensive yet simplified guide to how their society functioned and how this knowledge could help newcomers adapt and live in the magical world. She silently thanked her family for creating an expanded section for books in her trunk, which was now carrying the equivalent of a small library inside.

Said trunk was now warded to high hell with Parselmagic and barely legal blood wards to prevent anyone from entering. The library section was filled with an array of illegal and barely-legal books, as well as the most valuable ones she owned. The common and easily replaceable ones were on display in her room where she was now.

"Hermione, can I ask you a question?"

Said girl paused and turned from her – far too long – essay and nodded cautiously. It seemed she was at least peripherally aware of how she was perceived by others.

"Have you ever been to a foreign country?"

"Yes. My family goes abroad every year." Hermione looked somewhat bewildered at this point.

"So you know that other countries have their own cultural rules and customs that should be respected when you go there."
"Of course I do! You know, when I went to –"

Rose held up her hand and interrupted the beginning of what Rose suspected would be a rather impassioned speech.

"Hermione. I'm not sure if you've realised this yet, but the wizarding world is essentially its own country. It has been separate from the muggle world since the late seventeenth century when the Statute of Secrecy was proposed. This society has since developed on its own without influence from non-magical laws and regulations and now has its own culture and customs.

"It's rather unfair, but there is no class on such customs and for some reason there is no such book explaining things on the reading list. But my point is that you are behaving in a manner that is suitable for the non-magical world as opposed to the magical one. I have a book here on the topic if you'd like? It'll help you understand why some of the things here happen the way they do."

The brown-haired girl was blinking back tears at this point. Oh shit. Oh fuck. I hate crying people, what am I supposed to do?! Rose's inner meltdown was interrupted by her roommate's shaking voice.

"Why? Why are you helping me? You clearly know about this and could have let me mess this up, so why bother with me?"

"Because I'd like to be your friend Hermione. I do think you can be a bit pushy, but you're crazy smart and you seem like a cool person to be around. Also, I'd like to make friends who aren't concerned with my name and trying to figure out why I'm not who people thought."

Rose finished her quick speech with a calm smile that belied her inner mayhem. She dearly hoped the other girl wouldn't start crying, she had no idea how to deal with that. In the future she had been friends with women like Susan and Daphne who cursed people and smashed things when they were upset, not cried. Hermione may have only been eleven, but when she had originally been eleven the other Gryffindor girls had just gotten angry and shrieked about whatever pissed them off, so she had never had to deal with crying. (Whenever she had seen tears from Hermione Rose had tended to escape. Quickly.)

She herself tended to get drunk, go to random clubs, or have sex with The-Blond-Arsehole-Who-Shall-Not-Be-Named *cough*Zacharias Smith*cough*. She inwardly shuddered at the memory of her bad choices and vowed if she got into a relationship this time around it would be with someone who she could actually talk to without fighting the urge to hex.

Hermione looked astounded before beaming at her and running and hugging Rose. Said blonde girl was awkwardly patting her new friend on the back before she handed over the book that started the conversation. The other girl looked excited with an unholy gleam in her eyes – Oh dear Merlin, what have I done? – before rushing over to her desk and beginning to devour the text.

She herself decided to prepare for Potions the next day with Snape. She couldn't wait. At all. Note the heavy amounts of sarcasm. She read through her notes on first-year Potions that she'd already finished before warning her roommate of said teacher's disposition, with a warning not to be pushy with him.

The other girl nodded before the two girls went back to their respective work. Rose wondered if there was a world somewhere where a Severus Snape existed that was kind and nice towards Rose. She imagined him smiling gently at her. Rose shivered at the image. Dear Lord, that's creepy. And fucked up. Snape, smiling? Please, Dumbledore will dress normally before Snape is nice beyond his obsession with my mother.
She just prayed that he wouldn't be too awful, but considering their lesson followed the Gryffindor/Slytherin lesson she wouldn't hold out much hope.

Sitting there in Double Potions with the Hufflepuffs Rose pondered what she had done wrong in her life to deserve this. As expected Snape was in a foul mood from the Gryffindor/Slytherin class, so as the mature adult he was – insert eye roll here – he decided to take out his frustration on Rose and asked her the same questions as in her previous life and was enraged when she answered them all correctly. He then proceeded to ask more and more difficult questions up until fourth-year material before he gave up and took points from her for being a 'know-it-all'.

She nearly laughed, and would have if it wouldn't have earned her a detention. However her inner joy at pissing the dungeon bat off vanished when she felt a Legilimency probe in her mind. Granted her mind was a fortress but it was the principle of the matter. He seemed even more annoyed when he couldn't enter her mind and started sniping at everyone, especially Neville, and her friend would have messed up the potion if Rose hadn't seen fit to partner him and calm him down.

For some reason Snape seemed to hate her even more than in her past life, and the only reason she could think of was her appearance. The girl had the disturbing feeling that her lack of green eyes – Lily's eyes – was what was pissing him off. She really didn't want to analyse that thought though. Rose simply resolved to answer his questions correctly and calmly, and vent her frustration by writing to her family and planning on getting him fired.

Snape may be a genius when it came to Potions, but he was nasty and vindictive and totally unsuited to being a teacher. His teaching was the reason for such a high dropout rate for the subject, and the less said on his Death Eaters activities the better. Just because he'd supposedly repented didn't mean that he didn't have to be punished for what he'd done as a Death Eater. She decided that one way or another he had to go.

It wasn't as if Snape was the only one annoyed with her appearance though, as it seemed the entire wizarding population had some bizarre preconceived ideas about how she should look because of those stupid books. (Granted that had been her original appearance but that wasn't the point.) Her lawyer had been having a field day collaborating with Sharpfang and Sirius and Remus. The latter two may be kind to their family, but they were Marauders with an axe to grind and were taking great joy in destroying the idiots who'd thought that profiting from their friends' deaths had been a good idea.

Dumbledore too had been irritated but had hidden it under a grandfatherly mask and asked about her appearance, and Rose responded in kind by playing the part of an enthusiastic and intelligent child, but a child nonetheless, who was confused, because, "honestly Headmaster, this is just what I look like. Did you know with genetics there's a range of possibilities in what a child can look like, and I think when you add magic to the mix it can change even more, fascinating, isn't it …"

It was a little disturbing how easy it was to confuse the old man. He couldn't even go and check with the Dursleys and her old neighbours, because Sirius thought her appearance was one of the best pranks ever and had used an old curse from the Black library with Remus to permanently modify everyone's memories about her. As far as Surrey was concerned, Rose Potter was a polite blonde-haired, blue-eyed girl who had the misfortune of living with her relatives who resembled a horse and two whales. (Sirius may be maturing but he was still a prankster at heart.)

By the time the weekend had arrived Rose was mentally exhausted. She had managed to meet up with Hagrid for tea twice, once with Neville, Susan and Hannah, and once with Hermione, and he still couldn't get over his habit of letting things slip and had spoken about the attempted theft at
Gringotts both times. She resolved to let her friends study the mystery and instead she began thoroughly studying ahead and making proper notes this time that she could use in the years ahead.

The girl decided to preempt the stone adventure sooner rather than later; her core was getting stronger by the day as she used more complicated wandless spells, meaning she was better prepared if something went wrong. For now she’d leave the stone where it was and get it later. She wasn’t sure how often it was checked and didn’t want anyone to alert Quirrellmort if the stone suddenly vanished. Checking it would be a good idea, at least.

She sneaked up to the third floor and checked to see if there were any wards keeping out the students over the door. She knew that last time there had been nothing protecting the students but she wondered if any of the changes she’d made had actually made the Headmaster worried about student safety. *Are you fucking kidding me?! There’s nothing here! Anyone could just waltz in here and get eaten!* When she was originally eleven she’d just assumed that you couldn’t really stop someone from going anywhere they wanted, but as a grown woman working in the Department of Mysteries she bristled at the disregard of safety protocols (ignoring some of her colleagues' rather skewed perspectives on what constituted 'safety').

Inwardly fuming at the incompetence of the Hogwarts staff she wove a few Parselmagic wards that were based on the Notice-Me-Not charm around the door. Whenever someone got too close they would remember something they needed to do and be compelled to do so. It wasn’t all that strong though, so the staff should have the ability to overcome the compulsion if need be.

She then left for the Room of Requirement where she found the Room of Hidden Things. She walked a familiar path among the aisles of forgotten junk before coming across Rowena Ravenclaw’s diadem. She could feel the malevolent aura pouring off it, and she thought that she could hear whispers from it, urging her to wear it.

Rose stepped back and took out her extended bag before removing the Gringotts communication box. She quickly penned a letter to Sharpfang and sent it along before waiting for a reply. There was no way she was going to send something so evil without a warning first.

Not five minutes later she had a letter asking for the Horcrux with a promise to send it back after the ritual. She used a nearby scarf to pick up the diadem and placed it in the box before sending it to London.

Shaking off the evil aura Rose decided if the room was considered lost then everything inside was fair game. She spent the next twenty minutes pilfering the room, picking up thirty-three new books, an old trunk, a crystal ball, a few bottles of firewhiskey, an owl stand, some jewellery and an antique hand mirror. With her knowledge of how to detect curses she moved through the room fairly quickly picking up things to look at later.

When she saw the box glowing she opened it up to see a gleaming diadem that gave off a feeling of warmth. Skimming her fingers over the surface Rose got the urge to start reading and researching, as if she needed to look for uncovered knowledge right this second. It seemed as if the de-cursed diadem inspired a desire for knowledge rather than cursing the wearer.

Sat beside it in the box was a shiny gold cup with a badger engraved on the side. Sharpfang must *really* like her if he was willing to part with such an artefact. It was technically hers for 'finding’ the Horcrux in Bellatrix’s vault but the cup was still a priceless artefact. If she could reunite these two items with the locket and sword, the school would once more be home to an heirloom from each of the four Founders.

Shaking her head she put the diadem and cup back in her bottomless bag and went back to the
dormitory to write home. She wasn't sure what she would do with them yet; she wanted to give them back to the school but with Dumbledore as Headmaster she wasn't sure what would happen with them. The same with the locket when it was cleansed; she didn't want such history to be forgotten or used to further someone else's reputation.

When she got back to the dorm it was dinner and she opened her trunk to the sectioned compartment before placing the two former Horcruxes inside and warding them. Afterwards she opened the section with an apartment before walking inside and asking Dobby for some food. It hadn't even been a week yet but she was exhausted. She had gotten Hermione on the track to maturity, pissed off Snape and Dumbledore, and gotten another Horcrux cleansed.

With dinner finished she decided to sleep in the trunk after asking Dobby to make it look like she was sleeping in the dorm. As she drifted off she wondered if she'd ever have a normal time at Hogwarts.
Children will be (annoying) children

I don't own 'Harry Potter'.

Watching Hermione as she muttered various facts and figures from *Quidditch Through The Ages* vigorously while Neville hung on to her every word, Rose was hit with a hilarious sense of déjà vu. The two were still abjectly terrified at the mere prospect of flying, but the differences made the time traveller inexplicably proud of her friends.

Hermione was still a bookworm and she still respected authority figures just a tad too much, but now she was employing her scarily accurate intelligence with logic and common sense. She was starting to question things, how things happened, why certain customs existed ... Her ability to consume and retain information was rather frightening and Rose considered the possibility of an eidetic memory or if her memory was somehow being enhanced by her magic.

Either way Hermione Granger was slowly becoming more like the woman Rose once knew and loved and Rose didn't really have to do anything. She knew that this timeline would be different from before and she didn't want to selfishly manoeuvre her old friends into what they once were; she wanted them to develop as they should have done without a war hanging over their heads.

A simple reading of a book was enough to push Hermione towards a similar path to before, and if that was how she was going to mature then Rose was happy for her. Hermione's ability to take her newfound knowledge and visualise it being used practically was astounding, and she was using this method now in all her classes.

Even with the prospect of flying Rose could see her trying to determine how the brooms would be used practically, and she was even making a solid effort to comfort Neville. She may have been a bit forward, but with the help of Hannah – who had seemingly taken Hermione under her wing – she was succeeding little by little into bringing some colour back to the blonde boy's face.

Said boy was not stood with his back straight and proud, nor was he looking calm, but he wasn't hunched in on himself and he wasn't shaking from his fear either. It seemed being in a House of calm and caring people who wouldn't start teasing at the drop of a hat was doing wonders for him. Not to mention having a wand that was actually attuned to him personally. Alongside his genius Herbology skills, his Charms work was apparently some of the best for the first-year badgers and he had even been asked for help by his classmates.

The changes to Neville Longbottom gave hope to Rose that things could legitimately be different this time, without hundreds of people dying for the cause of an insane madman.

Then again, Rose thought, some things never changed. Exasperated didn't begin to describe her feelings as Neville's broom once more rose up on its own and began to fly away.

*Not this time*, she thought. She reached out with her magic, thanking Merlin that she was proficient in wandless magic, and used a silent *Wingardium Leviosa* to float him back down. While the broom's magic may have been unstable Rose's was powerful, with the full family magic of the Potter and Peverell families behind it, and she overpowered the broom quickly before her friend could get hurt.
Beyond the physical pain if he fell, she could see this damaging his newfound confidence and didn't want his progress to stall.

Once the panic had settled, everything carried on calmly with the Hufflepuff/Ravenclaw class getting along amicably as per usual. Rose made sure not to do anything too flashy as she didn't want to be drafted towards the House team and get shit for getting preferential treatment. Honestly, last time McGonagall should have just punished her. She shouldn't have been rewarded for being an idiot and she was mature enough to admit it. At the very least she should have had detention and the opportunity to try out, not just drafted onto the team at the first possible chance.

Leaving the field with Hermione and Lisa Turpin, who had bonded with Hermione over their mutual dislike of flying, Rose came across Ron and Malfoy agreeing to a Wizard's Duel before Malfoy flounced off with his overgrown bookends.

Rose looked at the ginger boy with a pang of regret. She knew that she was being unfair to him as he was only an eleven-year-old; he was immature, yes, but he was a child and as a child he was bound to be somewhat immature. He was the sixth son and had never really experienced dire hardships. The Weasley family might not be that well-off, but they were far from destitute and the lack of finances was more than made up by the abundance of love in the family.

Rose decided then and there that she would at least be civil with him, if only distantly. She didn't think their relationship would ever be what it was in her future-past (Is that the right term?) but she wouldn't turn away his friendship if he offered it. At the very least she would offer a proverbial olive branch to the boy.

"Mister Weasley?"

He spun around and scowled at the blonde girl. "What do you want?" His scathing tone was impressive, and she wondered for a moment how much of the family genetics his Black grandmother had passed on.

"I just thought that I should warn you about Mister Malfoy. He is in Slytherin, and as a Slytherin he's more likely to try and get you in trouble rather than actually take part in the duel. He'll probably just tell Filch or someone that you're going to be there, and not bother to go and leave you to get caught. There's no point humouring him when he's only looking to start a fight with a Gryffindor. Maybe you should just not go."

Rose finished speaking and looked at him with a slightly concerned face. She honestly didn't want him to get in trouble just because Malfoy was a git as a child, and she desperately wanted Ron to start thinking before he acted. He was a genius strategist, but for some reason he didn't employ his brain in real life. Some of the plans his older-self had created were genius, yet for some reason he never thought like that in his day-to-day life. Hopefully he would at least consider her words.

"I'm not a coward! Of course I'm going, I'm gonna beat the prat!"

Or not. She watched in half amusement, half irritation as he stomped off making plans to beat Malfoy in a duel that Malfoy himself had no intention of participating in. The girl mused that she could go and stop him, but then again she wasn't his mother and she had no intention of letting him fall into the mindset that there would always be someone to bail him out. If he wanted to do stupid shit then he could deal with the consequences himself.

There was honestly only so much that Rose could do for this world. It was rather ironic that she was in a better situation to affect larger changes than the smaller ones. She could search for and destroy Horcruxes, she could arrange a full trial in front of the Wizengamot, and she could even somewhat
push the Minister of Magic into thinking for himself, but could she get an immature child to use their brain? *Fuck no.* The people themselves were beyond her reach and she was truly glad for it. She didn't want to become the sort of person that manipulated people to suit her needs. The phrase 'for the greater good' made her skin crawl, and she *never* wanted to become like that.

She shook her head and walked back to her other classmates resolving to stay out of things unless there was dire danger. Childish antics based on jealousy didn't rate nearly high enough for her to care about right now, especially when she was hungry. Food trumps idiocy, enough said.

The next day the school was abuzz as six first years, three each from Gryffindor and Slytherin, had managed to lose a total of a hundred and twenty points, twenty a piece. Apparently Ron did *not* take her advice, and instead dragged Dean and Seamus along with him on his ill-advised midnight adventure.

Surprisingly Malfoy did go along, but he hid with Crabbe and Goyle to watch the Gryffindors get detention for his own amusement. Amusement which soon turned to horror when they were caught by McGonagall who was doing her rounds and in a foul mood because of the lack of a good seeker for the House team.

As the snakes were caught by the professor, the lions were found by the caretaker, and the two groups met up just to be assigned a month's detention and the points deducted. The subsequent shunning proved Rose's earlier thoughts – Hogwarts Houses were *not* family. The two Houses in question were fuming that a few firsties had already lost so many points and sent them to minus.

The blonde girl decided to ignore the situation. She would be civil and polite if need be – no point in alienating someone who may be a potential ally in the future – but she refused to get involved. If anyone wanted to learn from this they would need to figure out the problem to begin with.

Ronald Weasley and Draco Malfoy were so similar it was laughable that she didn't realise it before, and they would both need to take a good long look at themselves before they managed to grow up.

Besides she had more important things to think about, she thought as she glanced from her calendar to her bushy-haired roommate.

Trying to get Hermione Granger to go somewhere without an actual reason why was an exercise for Rose's patience.

"Honestly Rose, I really don't have the time, we have that Potions homework to do, and I just *know* I read something about the uses of porcupine quills *somewhere*, but I –"

"Come on Herminie, you and I both know that you've practically finished the work, and if you're that concerned about ingredients I'll show you this book I have later."

"But –"

"SURPRISE!"

"… what?" She turned to her friend.

"Happy Birthday Hermione."

Hermione looked around the room, taking in the streamers and decorations that cycled through various bright colours at random, to the huge banner strung from the ceiling proclaiming 'Happy
Birthday Hermione! There were two tables pushed against the walls, one piled high with all manner of food centred around a two-tiered cake decorated with moving quills. The second was home to a few boxes that were obviously presents.

But the thing that made Hermione's eyes fill with tears was the crowd of students smiling at her. Smiling at her. They weren't sneering, or laughing, or just ignoring her, but looking at her like they were happy to be there even if they didn't know her personally. Aside from every single Ravenclaw first year, there was Neville, Susan and Hannah as expected, and with them another 'puff named Wayne Hopkins. Representing Gryffindor was Parvati who'd probably come because of her sister, and Lavender.

As the birthday girl tearfully greeted everyone Rose looked around and couldn't help but think how these people could help her with her plans for Hogwarts. The reason she'd wanted to be in Ravenclaw wasn't just her fanaticism towards barely legal research – granted the Ravenclaw students were more open minded towards said research because, why not? – but because it was best situated to make connections in the other houses. Slytherins respected Ravenclaws for their serious nature and their disregard for labels such as 'light' or 'dark' when studying, Hufflepuff and Ravenclaw shared a camaraderie for not being part of the Gryffindor/Slytherin rivalry, and Gryffindors generally liked them because they weren't Slytherins.

"Present time!"

The cheers interrupted her musing and she decide to ignore her plans in favour of her friend's birthday.

Rose and the other guests had all bought something for Hermione, whether individually or as a group, so they crowded round as she opened her presents one by one.

From the Ravenclaw boys she got a rather nice quill that was paired with the good set of inks from Lisa, Morag and Mandy. Hannah and Susan got her a leather satchel charmed extendable and feather-light, while Neville got her a small plant like a cactus that emitted a scent that worked like a mild Calming Draught (great for Hermione's studying-induced stress).

Wayne gave her a wizard's chess set as something every witch or wizard should experience (having just discovered the game himself), and Parvati and Lavender gave her a book on hair charms and a special shampoo that would tame her hair. Her sister Padma and Su gave her a book on wizarding cultures around the world that had Hermione looking possessed with glee.

Finally it came to Rose's present which was rather heavy. She unwrapped it and came to a small wooden chest decorated in intricate lines. She opened it up carefully to see a book that looked very old but preserved nicely. She picked it up and looked at the cover.

"It's the first folio."

She almost dropped the book in shock but held on out of fear of damaging the piece of history in her hands.

"You gave me a first folio of William Shakespeare?!!"

Hermione's shrieks weren't helping her building panic attack. She had a first folio, from the 1600s. This book was easily a few thousand pounds if not more, and her friend just nonchalantly gave it to her for her twelfth birthday.

"Hermione! Relax! If you must know it wasn't something I paid for, my family's had it for years and
I decided to give it to you because I knew how much you'd like it.” She was quietly explaining to Hermione while the muggle-raised children were explaining to the others about the book. Rose didn't feel the need to mention the book came from a disowned member of the Black family or that she had another one laying around somewhere; she had a feeling her friend might actually hyperventilate at how some old families threw money around like it was confetti.

When everyone finally calmed down they spent the rest of the evening having fun and gorging on food and cake like eleven-year-olds should before going back to the dorms. Hermione was practically jumping around with excitement as she put her things away, chatting to herself about her new friends while Rose just shook her head and turned back to the letter she was writing.

*Dear Dads …*
Sirius Black was, quite frankly, a simple man. Growing up as the Heir to a large and wealthy pure-blood family, having anything material that he wanted, living in lavish mansions and houses, these things were considered completely normal for him.

He'd hated every single minute of it.

When he had been a young child he'd just known that his family was wrong. Whenever they went to functions and saw others, he had seen genuine affection between members of other families, real emotion when they looked at each other, and he hadn't been able to help but wonder what was wrong with the House of Black.

They were cold, distant, and looked at each speculatively, calculating how useful the others were and how to use them. Pollux had seen his daughter Walburga as a way of wresting control from his cousin's line, Cygnus had seen his three daughters as mere pawns for political alliances, silently ashamed that he had only sired daughters, and Walburga herself had seen her sons – the Heirs – as proof that she was in control of the House of Black. Sirius had always known that his family was mad; after all, what sort of people married their own cousins? He himself had come close to being married off to Narcissa before he ran away like Andromeda. He had nothing against Narcissa personally, he had just been disgusted that his mother wanted him to marry a girl whose name was just a few branches over on the family tapestry.

He had always wanted a simple life; close friends, a loving family, a job that made him happy, a job that he chose for himself. He'd thought he had found it after graduating. James, Remus and Peter had been his family, his brothers, and Lily had fast become a sister that he loved to bicker with. He had signed up as an Auror, a career his parents would have deemed beneath them, and he'd been as happy as he thought he would ever be. His life had finally been a life of his choosing and there had been no way it could get better.

Then he had been partnered in training with Amelia Bones.

He'd been more or less blown away by her. She'd been a strong woman just like the Black women, but with a warmth his female relatives lacked. She'd had a sharp tongue, a dry sense of humour, and the warmest smile he had ever seen. He'd argued with her constantly but there had always been an undercurrent of humour. Their interactions had been characterised by reciprocated insults, playful in their nature, with a mutual understanding that they were only joking. A tension had existed between them for months before it snapped in the aftermath of an attack on Diagon Alley where they'd finally admitted what everyone else had already figured out, and immediately began dating.

The two had been consummately professional at work but in private they'd fit together so well it was bizarre. Banter and insults and playful teasing, the relationship went both ways and neither of them had ever felt bored. She'd gotten on well exceedingly well with the other Marauders and Lily, so well in fact that to Sirius her presence had never felt even the slightest bit forced.
Her relationship with Lily had been especially strong as the two women bonded over dating such idiots – as they’d reminded James and Sirius constantly. Lily had even said that if her and Alice hadn't been best friends for years Amelia would have definitely been Rose's godmother.

There had never been a moment that Sirius felt awkward about Amelia's transition into a focal point of his life; their relationship had felt so right that every moment together Sirius felt ecstatic over his happiness.

His worrying on the other hand had been a different case entirely.

Sirius was a man who was a prankster at heart, a man who flirted shamelessly with any woman he could find, and a man who seemed so at peace with himself that it had taken Amelia a while to realise that he had been afraid she would leave him at some point.

Amelia had long since come to the conclusion that, name aside, Sirius wasn't really a Black, but she hadn't quite realised the impact of growing up in such a politically-driven household. He had charmed her immediately and she'd put him to the test making sure that he had been genuine in his feelings for her. When they’d finally gotten together she'd been ecstatic that she had a partner that was so firm in his convictions that he would publicly oppose the House of Black.

When she had realised his confidence issues she immediately began her mission to prove him wrong. For Sirius, she’d felt that her actions would go further than her words in reassuring him. She’d introduced him to her parents and her siblings, telling them of her plans for the future and including Sirius in all of them in a manner that made it very clear that he was considered an integral part of said future. It would have taken a blind man not to realise how obviously she cared for him, and Sirius had honestly nearly cried when he'd figured out what she meant by her actions.

He wasn't used to such affection and devotion especially from someone he'd known for less than a year. Even with the Marauders it had taken a long time for him to fully trust that they wouldn't drop him once they got bored. Growing up as a Black he had been conditioned to think of familial relationships as cold and manipulative, and yet he had been with a woman determined to prove him wrong about everything.

Not a few years after school and he had been a qualified Auror with one of his best friends, had his own place to live, and was engaged to his girlfriend. What could possibly go wrong?

As it turned out, a lot. From Lily ending up pregnant, to the Potters going into hiding, to the rampant suspicion amongst their friends, Sirius had been breaking. Every day there had been more news about attacks and murders, and every time he'd been assigned a case he'd dreaded being the one that found someone he knew, dead before his very eyes. He might have projected an air of Gryffindor optimism, but he had honestly been waiting for the other shoe to drop.

And drop it did. Halloween of nineteen eighty-one, his entire life had come crashing down around him. His friends dead, Rose taken, and Peter, his friend – no, not friend, cowardly bastard, betrayed James and Lily, lied to us, enemy – had led his friends to their death.

Blacking out and waking up in prison had just been the icing on the cake of the shit-fest his life had become. He was in prison, his friends were dead, his baby goddaughter was fuck knows where, and Amy, his Amy, thought he was a traitor and murderer. You are a Black, you know. She won't be surprised, I bet she's suspected you were like this all along. You don't honestly think she loved you, do you? What can you offer her? A husband with enough issues to fill a Mind-Healer's pockets for life? A family of crazies who wouldn't hesitate to kill her? It can't be the money, it's not like you have too much of that either.
Over and over and over again. Thought swirling in his head. Whispers floating round and round. Every single depressing thought, looping in his mind, reminding him of all the reasons that Sirius Black was worthless. He might not have directly responsible for James and Lily's murders, but he didn't help them as he should have. And Rose, why didn't he just take Rose?

Azkaban was more than a prison in the physical sense, it was a mental prison. It searched inside a person looking for what would make them crumble, before trapping those very thoughts in an endless loop. It was a prison designed to make the inmates relive every single thing they had ever regretted inside their minds without escape.

Ten years of depression, and bone-deep cold, before his personal warmth had stalked into his hell with a controlled fury, then whisked him away to the Ministry and explained he was getting a trial, that Dumbledore had known he was innocent, that she knew he was innocent.

She knew. When they were alone her mask had broken and so had she. She'd looked as guilty as he felt about James and Lily, and she'd apologised over and over again. The woman had promised his freedom and said he would understand how soon enough, that she couldn't tell him lest it be overheard.

The days up to and during the trial were a blur, vague images of his freedom and Moony until being told that small – tiny, too small, why? – girl was Rose, Bambi, his goddaughter, and suddenly he was free, living with a house of talkative paintings, house-elves, Moony, and Rose.

Sirius honestly couldn't believe the last few months; he was free, he had a home, and he had a fiancée once more. And he had a daughter. He had a daughter. He'd cried at home after that hug with Rose as had Remus. They knew that they had failed her in many ways no matter what she said, and they felt truly blessed that such an amazing girl loved them enough to want to be their daughter. James and Lily's portraits were likewise enthusiastic that there were people around to care for and raise their daughter, even if she was mentally an adult. (They were also very determined to use Sirius and Remus to enact revenge on their daughter's behalf.)

His life was now back to what he wanted it to be: simple. It was simple in how he had the things he wanted and he was wanted in turn. He had friends and family, a job he enjoyed with his friend, and a child to raise. Even if time travel shenanigans were involved he was happy. His life was perhaps a little insane now even if it was simultaneously uncomplicated. He wouldn't take it for granted though; the people he had now more than made up for any absurdity.

He looked over at his fiancée who was shaking with laughter at whatever Augusta had said. The others weren't much better and he thought he saw Moony nearly fall off his seat. The empty bottles of wine on the table were a fairly big clue that the guests at Longbottom Hall weren't as sober as they thought they were.

Augusta had invited him, Remus, Amelia and the Tonks' for dinner and to vaguely discuss the goings on at Hogwarts and in general. The Tonks' and Augusta weren't privy to Rose's accidental trip through time, but they were aware of her childhood and Dumbledore's manipulation of the Potter will. The look on Andromeda's face had been enough proof that, while she might have been disinherited no-one ever really stops being a Black. Suffice it to say everyone was fairly pissed off at the Headmaster, but they put that aside while they enjoyed discussing the children at Hogwarts.

The Longbottom Regent was heartened to find that her grandson was coming out of his shell and maintaining a high average in his work, but was most excited about him making true friends. She knew that she had been too harsh on him – Amelia wasn’t known for holding back with words – but she hoped that their relationship could improve as he gained in confidence. His excellent grades in Herbology and above-average scores in Charms made her truly regret how she'd raised him, but she
was so proud that she shed a tear or two in the privacy of her study.

Likewise, Sirius and Remus were exchanging letters with Rose every few days and were elated and relieved that she was doing okay. They didn't care about her Sorting but they were worried that she would have trouble with her classmates due to her adult mentality. Sirius wanted his daughter to have fun but wouldn't give a fuck if she left because of boredom. He did think it was funny that she was being praised as a prodigy when he knew she'd barely done any work the first time around.

He was especially happy that Rose and Amelia had a good relationship. He couldn't imagine what he would have done if they hadn't, but the truth was they wrote to each other weekly and Amelia said that she couldn't wait to see Rose again which made him practically giddy.

He seemingly had a perfect life again but he wouldn't be complacent this time. He hated his family with a passion but he couldn't deny their efficiency at protecting what was theirs. He had already definitively made sure that Rose was his Heiress and that after her, her future children would inherit the Black family so no Malfoys would be gaining control of his assets. The properties had been rewarded and most vaults absorbed into one that only a few people had access to.

He wanted the Black family to stay in control of someone he trusted if he had no other children and Rose was literally the only option. Narcissa honestly wasn't that bad, but her stupid peacock of a husband was, and from what he knew of their son he was so spoiled that Sirius thought he'd squander the Black fortune in less than a year if he had control. Nymphadora might have been able to take over but she had already turned down the offer – vehemently and loudly.

He and Remus were slowly going through the properties and putting away the darker things that could be kept and only throwing things away if necessary. Rose was still vaguely furious that Molly Weasley had had the audacity to throw away the Black family heirlooms as if they were hers, and had asked her new dads if they would make sure the family legacy was kept if possible. Sirius agreed somewhat, and made sure that his things would stay in place with some well-placed wards.

Kreacher was always going to be an issue until Rose had sat down and explained the truth behind Regulus' disappearance to Sirius. His brother, his stupid baby brother, had decided to be a Gryffindor at the worst possible moment and sacrificed himself in a monumentally brave move against Voldemort. After he calmed down from crying he and Kreacher had come to an accord which became true devotion when Sirius had returned from a trip to Gringotts with a cleansed locket.

After bursting into tears and being given Regulus' prefect badge, Kreacher had done a one-eighty and started wearing a uniform with the Black crest on it with the badge pinned proudly to his chest. He'd even helped Sirius move Walburga's portrait to a room with the other portraits before beginning a crusade to clean every inch of Grimmauld Place before moving onto the next Black property with some other Black elves, including Winky. Sirius had taken her on after the Crouch trials as Barty Crouch Sr.'s mother had been Charis Black Crouch. As her masters were cousins to the Black family, Winky saw no problem working with the family and unknowingly just barely avoided a life of alcoholism.

Sirius Black's crusade against the bad history of the Black family was helped immensely by his position as Head of House, and aside from fixing the properties the first major decision he made as Lord Black not a few days before Halloween cemented his views irrevocably. He dissolved the marriage between one Rodolphus Lestrange and Bellatrix Black and cast Bellatrix out of the family for good.

Nobody knew it just yet, but Sirius had started his cousin and her family's quick journey to death, though it wouldn't be discovered for a week that Frank and Alice Longbottom's attackers had finally gotten what they deserved.
I wish it were that easy before

Chapter Notes

I don't own 'Harry Potter'.

§§ - Parseltongue

It had been a couple of weeks since Hermione's birthday party and October was getting noticeably chillier as time went on. Things at Hogwarts had finally settled down into a routine that Rose could work her plans around, and she was genuinely enjoying school for once, easy as it was. Rose and Hermione had quickly been established as the top two students in the year even though Rose was dumbing down her work immeasurably.

She may be in a child's body but her analytical mind was one of the best Unspeakables in the Department of Mysteries, and it had been alluded to that she could have taken over in the next decade if nothing went wrong. (And when the Unspeakables said 'went wrong' they meant something like the situation she was in now; it was honestly a strange year if nobody disappeared or died in their department, and they always had to have numerous back-up plans for this very reason.) Her adult mind was now being forced to revise knowledge that was as simple as breathing so she literally couldn't act the same as before.

It only took a few metaphorical glances at her life for Rose to realise that she was changing things around her very quickly. She had already had the Horcrux in her head destroyed as well as the ones in the cup and the diadem; she had gotten a note from Sirius saying he would take the locket to be cleansed soon, and Sharpfang was readying a team to cleanse the ring as she spoke.

Sirius was free, Remus was living with them, and she was a 'genius' Ravenclaw. Snape hated her more than she thought possible, and Dumbledore had an automatic frown whenever she was around. If she wasn't careful something big would happen that would cause things to go horrifically wrong. She needed to stop Voldy's other possible future plans before they could take effect and cause her own plans to fold like a deck of cards.

Hence why the girl decided to remove one of the biggest threats in the castle. It was evening when she began to enact her plan, and Rose decided to wander around the castle for half an hour in seemingly random directions before seamlessly wandering into the corridor where a certain haunted bathroom was.

A quick check turned up no sign of Myrtle so Rose quickly set up some wards around the room keeping people out and some extra ones around the sink in case anyone ever figured out where the entrance to the Chamber of Secrets was.

She made her way to the sink and spoke to it softly.

§Open§

The sound of shifting stone permeated the bathroom as the sink morphed into a tunnel that was reminiscent of a cliché mystery story.

§Stairs§
Rose peered into the dark tunnel as the slick walls rearranged themselves into a set of stairs covered in centuries worth of grime which she removed with a quick Scourgify.

As she casually wandered down into one of Hogwarts' biggest mysteries she pondered Dumbledore and his knowledge of her Parselmouth abilities. He had been so sure that the skill was because of the Horcrux in her head, but she knew that if the soul fragment had been strong enough to make her a Parselmouth it would have been strong enough to fully possess her. She had an uneasy feeling that the esteemed Headmaster actually knew that it wasn't because of the Horcrux at all, and that he knew the truth about Lily Evans.

After graduating school and being able to walk into Gringotts without being threatened to death, Rose had decided to take an inheritance test that revealed her ability to speak Parseltongue hadn't been as random as people had thought, and that Lily Evans hadn't been quite as muggle-born as people had thought either. It seemed that a few generations ago Lily’s great-grandmother had been born a squib and cast out of her family.

The Gaunt family.

Elpis Gaunt. Her name meant 'hope', but she had been tossed aside with no hope at all as soon as it had been discovered that she couldn't use magic. After all, what did the great descendants of Salazar Slytherin need with a useless child who couldn't use what made their ancestor who he was?

Elpis had been distraught but managed to find work as a simple maid at the estate of a young man who had been orphaned a few years before. His name was Matthew Harris and she'd thought that he was the most handsome man she had ever seen. She'd only been eleven to his seventeen, and even though she'd known nothing would come of her feelings she'd enjoyed watching him as the two of them grew.

She hadn't been quite right though, as when she was sixteen the young man had confessed his feelings for the young girl who had always been able to put a smile on his face even when his parents’ estate made him depressed. She'd tried to protest, saying that someone of her lowly status had no right to someone like him, but he hadn't given up his pursuit of the girl. Not six months later the two were wed to the surprise and general disapproval of others, but the couple in question barely noticed in their wedded bliss.

In the years to come the happy couple birthed three children, and their daughter Margaret eventually married a man named Michael Evans, and the two went on to have a son named Harry. Years later Harry Evans married a young Jasmine King, and the Evans family soon grew by two with the arrival of Petunia and Lily Evans, and magic was once more restored to that particular family line of the House of Gaunt.

When Lily's latent Gaunt magic had been introduced to the strong Potter magic, Rose had been gifted with the full strength from both families, and with an extra blood adoption from one Sirius Orion Black, Rose Lily Potter inadvertently became one of the magically strongest children in generations, with Potter, Black and Gaunt magic flowing freely through her body.

With the existence of one Tom Marvolo Riddle the succession for the House of Gaunt was muddied, and she had a sinking feeling that she would inherit another ring or two after the idiot was killed. While he had accepted his title before, his Horcruxes had the House in a sort of stasis where the title both existed and didn't exist, and he seemed to have no named Heir. While Rose's great-great-grandmother hadn't been first in line, she could be in a position to inherit if there were no other Heirs eligible. She would check with Sharpfang about that.

She came across the door to the main chamber and was soon inside the wet cavernous space watched
over by the ugly statue at the end of the chamber. She was no longer utterly terrified of the numerous
snake heads that seemed to be moving, and instead was bemused that a chamber for a snake was wet
and humid when most snakes preferred dry habitats.

Shaking off the familiar feeling of wonder at the lack of common sense with magic, she took out her
broomstick – a new shiny Nimbus 2000 that Sirius hadn't been able to resist buying – and called out
into the wide chamber.

"Dobby!"

Her echoing voice was accompanied by a loud crack that bounced around the chamber, perpetuating
the unsettling atmosphere. She wasn't scared like before, but this was still a room where a young girl
had nearly been killed in front of her, and yet another place where Rose had nearly died herself.

"Miss Rosey! Dobby is being ready to help!"

"You remember what to do?"

Dobby nodded vigorously, and with a snap of his fingers the cavern was filled with about fifty silent
roosters which the girl quickly floated around the chamber and settled them at regular intervals
around the room.

"When Miss Rosey says 'now', Dobby is letting the roosters make noise again to kill the big snake,
while Dobby pops away. Dobby is not to be coming back before Miss Rosey calls."

"Excellent Dobby. Get ready then."

Rose's plan was fairly simple: make the roosters kill the basilisk for her. She would hide in the air
disillusioned with a charm to hide her scent, and if the bloody thing didn't die from the crowing she
would let loose with Fiendfyre. She didn't want to burn the roosters to death but she wanted the
basilisk dead more.

She did feel it was a rather stupid weakness for such a dangerous creature to have, but she would
count her blessings where she could. Others may have found her initial encounter with the basilisk to
be awe-inspiring and cool, but she didn't think it was so cool that she almost died at the age of twelve
fixing yet another problem that the adults should have. Rose could either fight a giant snake with a
sword up close and personal, or let some roosters' cries kill it. It wasn't a hard decision to make.

Voldy had warped the snake too much with his magic and bound it to him and his craziness so it had
to die. Honestly, it was kinder to put the thing out of its misery.

The girl mounted her broom and flew up above the entrance to the basilisk's nest, making herself
scentless and invisible as she did. She closed her eyes and cleared her throat.

§Speak to me, Slytherin, greatest of the Hogwarts four§

Though out of sight, the sound of the stone door to the beast's lair opening was deafening, causing
her heart rate to pick up a little. Soon the stone sound was accompanied by a dry slithering sound,
endlessly going on as the snake emerged from the tunnel.

Rose peeked a little – she was stupidly curious – and blanched, having forgot how long the bloody
thing was, and she watched as a good forty feet of snake appeared before she shouted.

"NOW!"
A snap, then the chamber was filled with the sound of crowing. If this wasn't so serious she'd probably be trying to hex the bloody things, they were that annoying. As it was the crowing caused a chain reaction that was rather disturbing to watch.

After the crowing a high-pitched wail appeared from the thrashing basilisk. Its full sixty feet were in the main chamber now, and it was desperately trying to escape the fatal sound. It convulsed and flailed where it lay, as if trying to banish the sound of the roosters with its own cries. A minute later the wailing stopped and a bang echoed through the chamber as the basilisk hit the floor dead, and the crowing was the only sound remaining.

"Dobby! Can you get rid of the roosters please?"

A second later the chamber was peacefully quiet and Rose looked at the scene and thought she was right about it being rather disturbing … disturbing how easy it was. There was no running for her life, no adrenaline pumping through her veins, no silly girl to rescue, no … nothing. It was kind of anticlimactic when she thought about it.

Rose flew down and revealed herself before taking Dobby to explore through the back of the chamber, though this time she knew what was there. Through the slimy tunnels the duo eventually came to a room that the last Potter knew to be the study of Salazar Slytherin.

While stealing from the Founder may be a little crass to some, she knew that she at least had a purely academic interest in his belongings unlike others. She could put up wards all she liked, but she wouldn't just assume they could never be broken. It was best to take these things in case Voldemort got them, or someone like Dumbledore who would remove them for being 'dark', never to be seen again.

Once in the room the two got to work without speaking. They had already done this once before and silently decided to repeat their future-past actions. Rose quickly took all the books she could find while her loyal elf grabbed the various trinkets and heirlooms, before he popped everything into her apartment in her trunk to be sorted through later. Eventually she would move everything into a vault at Gringotts for safekeeping; nobody would think to look for the belongings of Salazar Slytherin in a vault belonging to Rose Potter.

The trunk was their space for organising things as the two were currently using it to sort through her backdated mail that Dobby had liberated from the castle and had been cleared by Gringotts. She had inherited quite a lot from strangers, and was busy replying to the letters and contacting Sharpfang and her lawyer about the random inheritances scattered amongst the letters.

She felt awful each time she came across a letter that had eagerly wanted a reply, and had to tell them her mail hadn't gone to her so she was only just receiving them now. The girl felt a little embarrassed when she found letters written by people her age, but she didn't neglect them and still replied. Every single one was greatly appreciated and she wouldn't ignore that just because of some awkwardness.

Rose was a little pissed how many marriage contracts there were in the pile, but was also relieved that Dumbledore obviously hadn't seen them. Merlin only knows who he could have betrothed her to without her knowledge. She patiently answered each one stating her current interest in schooling over future relationships before declining them all.

A lot of people had sent her children's toys when she was younger, so she decided to forward those to the children's ward at St Mungo's where they would be appreciated more. Although she did keep a couple that were cute. She grinned to herself when she saw a badger plushie sent by an eight-year-old Cedric Diggory and a dragon plushie from the two oldest Weasley brothers when Bill was fourteen.
When her and Dobby finished stealing Salazar Slytherin's personal belongings – *finders, keepers* – she sent her elf back to The Pottery while she penned a quick letter to Sharpfang, informing him of the overgrown snake's demise

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**Dear Manager Sharpfang,**

*I thought that I should inform you that Salazar Slytherin's basilisk in the Chamber of Secrets has just reached the end of its life.*

*I would like to enquire as to whether Gringotts would like to execute the rendering of the creature or not, and if you would like to negotiate a price for the bank's service if so.*

*I have an idea of how some of the proceeds will be used, however I can guarantee that the meat of the basilisk will go entirely to Gringotts as I have no desire nor need for it.*

*If it pleases Gringotts I can provide a portkey to the Chamber of Secrets as the location is beyond the wards of the school itself. I think we are both aware that certain individuals would attempt to interfere in this process if they caught wind of it.*

*I hope to hear from you at your convenience.*

*May your vaults overflow with gold and your enemies die at your hands,*

**Lady Rose Potter-Peverell**

With the letter sent to her manager the small girl looked around satisfied. Even if Quirrellmort got the idea to use the basilisk he physically couldn't. In a few months Voldemort would be dead and her life could go back to a sense of normality … somewhat. She wasn't naïve enough to think she would ever have a quiet life.

The blonde girl stretched her arms above her head before starting back up to the school for lunch. Killing a thousand-year-old overgrown snake really whet one's appetite. She wondered what the elves were serving for lunch …
(Others') plans are made to be broken

Chapter Notes

I don't own 'Harry Potter'.

That weekend saw the famed Chamber of Secrets playing host to the one and only Rose Potter, the house-elf Dobby, and a small army of goblins who were gleefully hacking away at Salazar Slytherin's dead companion with disturbing fervour. All in all, a group of – very mismatched – individuals who were taking great joy in their rather morbid work.

Rose had created a – very illegal – portkey to the location (not that the goblins gave two fucks about Ministry legality when there was money to be made at their expense), where the Gringotts employees immediately began marvelling over the sheer size of the specimen. She was sure they were salivating over the meat that was considered a delicacy for their race, and with the size of the basilisk there would be a lot to go around.

"Lady Potter-Peverell, you do realise that a creature such as this, especially in such a condition, will go for around 300,000G, do you not?" Manager Sharpfang grinned at his favourite customer as she mentally calculated the conversion to muggle money. His grin widened at the same time as her eyes, as she realised she was now a multimillionaire just from this venture alone.

_Sweet Jesus, Holy fuck, how much?! A galleon is about thirty quid, so 300,000G is roughly £9,000,000! Okay Rose, don't hyperventilate, it's fine, it's not as if you've just realised how much money you wasted in your past life … Dear Merlin, this is a lot. Snape would kill me if he knew I had this on hand. I suppose it helps though, especially with the my plans …"

"Do you wish to re-negotiate the terms of our agreement, my Lady?"

She blinked slowly before belatedly shaking her head.

"Well then let us summarise, shall we? You have agreed that Gringotts will retain 40% of the total proceeds once the parts of the creature have been sold. You have agreed that 100% of the meat is to be handed to Gringotts, as are the fangs and the other parts, including the majority of the creature's venom.

"Your 60% share will be divided as such: 10%, or 30,000G, to the family of Myrtle Warren to divided among them as they see fit; 2% to be spent on a set of broomsticks to be donated to the school as replacements; 10% to be donated to the DMLE to help maximise Auror recruitment and develop their training programme; 10% to be donated to St Mungo's to be spent at their discretion; and the remaining 28% to be paid into the Potter family vault.

"You have also requested a personal set of items to be made from the hide, as well as any additional armour vests from whatever hide remaining to be donated to the DMLE. A small jar of venom is to be given to you as well for your current situation. Is that correct my Lady?"

Outwardly she was perfectly composed and poised, even if inwardly she was ranting and raving enough to fill a swear jar in a few minutes.
"That is correct Manager Sharpfang. Please proceed as you wish. Any items I have requested are not needed immediately, however I would prefer if they were to be finished by Yule, though that is not a demand just a preference.

"Do you wish for me to stay here as you work, or would you be amenable to me leaving? I only mention it as there is other business I could attend to in the castle, specifically concerning a certain stone."

The goblin manager eyed her sharply at her nonchalant tone and nodded carefully.

"That will be fine my Lady. We are happy to continue here as it is inaccessible by others, and you are welcome to carry out other business while we work. We will be in contact with you if anything irregular happens. Also, if you need any help with your business you know how to contact me." He finished by giving the girl a pointed look.

_Translation: "find the stone and send it to me as soon as possible."_

She smiled at her manager before saying goodbye to the other goblins and leaving up the stairs to Myrtle's bathroom. The ghost was much more amicable now as Rose had sat down with her and told her the creature responsible for her tragic death was dead itself, and that the person who controlled the creature was on his way to being killed too.

Myrtle may have been highly irritating to anyone she spoke to, but the poor girl just wanted someone to care about her. She'd been there for fifty years already and nobody had even cared to ask about how she'd died; 'Moaning Myrtle' was simply a ghost who the current students were taught to avoid, not the memory of a girl whose life was cut too short. Yes she was annoying, but she'd died when she was a hormonal teenage which wasn't her fault. The magical world was much too wrapped up in itself to care about the situations of others sometimes and Rose hoped that would change eventually.

The girl made her way to the forbidden third floor corridor before removing her personal wards and entering Fluffy's domain. (No matter who long she lived or how much she liked the man, she would never understand Hagrid's unique fascination with mismatched animal names – case in point, 'Fang' and 'Fluffy'.)

A quick hummed tune later – courtesy of looking after Teddy as a baby so often – and she was through the trap-door using the Devil's Snare as a cushion. The plant room and the key room were even easier than before; a light spell and using a broomstick were as simple as breathing to her.

She was no genius strategist, but she easily played across McGonagall's chess board before entering the troll room. (After growing up playing chess against Ron, she had a more in-depth understanding of the game than many others.)

An overpowered sleeping charm later and she came face to face with the evidence that Snape did in fact possess enough intelligence to give him at least one redeeming quality, even if it wasn't enough to make her like him in any sense of the word (especially as his actions in class were getting worse and he was getting closer to being sacked by the day – or hexed).

Instead of drinking something made by Snape – _how about fuck no_ – she froze the flames before stepping through the doorway and coming face to face with the Mirror of Erised.

Logically she knew that she should look for the stone immediately but she wondered what her biggest desire was right now. Last time Rose had been surrounded by her parents and generations of Potters, but would it be the same now? Her parents were dead but she had enough of them in their portraits, and her new dads were just as much her family as her birth parents. Rose didn't spend every
night wistfully dreaming for someone to save her anymore, instead she went to sleep remembering the summer that they'd all spent together.

She mused about how the mirror worked while she checked around for any wards or monitoring – *nada*.

Throwing caution to the wind she stepped in front of the magical artefact and saw the same image as before … with a few additions. She was with her family, but this time she was an adult, and there was a crowd of her new family there too. Sirius, Remus, Amelia, the Tonks family, the Longbottoms, her school friends … and at the front were a few children.

There were two boys and a girl and they all looked like her. They were between her and a shadowy figure she assumed was supposed to be her partner. Her adult self was smiling at them, looking happier than she'd even been. She looked taller, more well-proportioned, happier … She was living unburdened, and turned to smile at a grinning Teddy poking his head out from behind a laughing Remus.

She could feel her emotions start to go haywire and slammed up her Occlumency shields for a few minutes while she calmed down. *Stop. Now. Forget what you saw and think about the Philosopher's Stone. You need to get it before someone else does or it gets destroyed. Do you really want that on your conscience because you couldn't get a fucking grip over something you couldn't change?!*

She knew full well that inwardly berating yourself with an entirely separate voice wasn't the best sign of mental stability – *well no fucking shit, what was your first clue?* – but she found it actually helped to get her back on track sometimes.

Taking a deep breath, she thought about getting the stone to save it before opening her eyes to look in the mirror.

Her reflection was eleven-years-old again, and the blonde girl in the mirror grinned before pulling the stone out her pocket before putting it back in, winking her bright blue eyes. As she did Rose felt the weight against her leg, and pulled out the stone as she walked away from the mirror.

She turned it over in the hands, examining the shape and size and committing it to memory, before pulling out a rock from her pocket and transfiguring it into a replica which emitted a faint magical aura. It was a tricky bit of spell-work which worked by absorbing the ambient magic in the air and releasing it in a steady stream to mimic an aura.

The girl spelled the replica into the mirror before calling out for Dobby who popped her back into the apartment in her trunk. She wrote a brief letter to Sharpfang before sending it and the stone to his communication box, asking him to contact the Flamels and explain the situation to them. *She* certainly didn't want to explain to them how one of their prized possessions was being used by a manipulative bastard as bait for the not-so-dead Voldemort possessing one of the teachers.

Rose decided to forego worrying about things she couldn't control and penned a letter home.

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**Dear Dads (dead or alive) and Mum,**

*So, I may or may not have done something stupid – in your eyes – and I won’t tell you what it is until Amelia gets her surprise at work. Don’t worry, she'll know when she gets it.*

*(To Amelia: Don’t worry Amelia, it's perfectly legal! – I know that doesn’t sound all that reassuring, but I promise you it's nothing to worry about. In fact, I think you'll like it from what*
I've heard you say before.)

Anyway, I remember telling you about a pretty red gem before, and I found one that looks just like it! But it turns out it belonged to somebody else so I sent it back to them. I wonder if there's any way of making something just like it? I've heard it's difficult, but you've got to admit the idea sounds cool.

So how's it going with Marauder Inc.? Very imaginative name by the way. Just joking, it's great. Do you think you could get a TV working around magic? I'd sell my kidney for one of those. Don't worry I'm only joking, there'll be no organ selling.

I came across a couple of pranksters the other day and I think you guys would love them; they made a couple of the Slytherins – the ones who enjoy hexing first years – grow elephant trunks so long and heavy they fell over and couldn't move. I nearly spat my food everywhere.

I was thinking I might try and introduce them to you by name at least, that way you'd probably get a couple of ready-made apprentices in a few years. They have the map by the way; can you send me some notes on how you made it the first time? I want to try and give it a go, I'd rather not take the original one back from them.

On a not-so-great note, the greasy dungeon bat has become even worse if that's possible. He took points away from me the other day for being too distracting after he looked me in the eye. I really want to be wrong about the eyes thing. Only being nicer to me because I have the same eyes as the woman he had an obsession with gives me the creeps.

I actually found some articles about the decline of Potions Masters, Aurors and Healers in the past few years, and I realised there's a good chance that the reason is because Snape is forcing people to drop the subject. Severus-fucking-Snape is destroying our economy because he's a wanker. That's kind of sad when you think about it.

Especially when you combine it with the History scores. Barely two people a year get a NEWT in it – if they're lucky – and the subject is bringing down the total average test scores. Best school of magic my arse. Out of the main eleven schools were near the bottom. No joke, I'm sending some statistics home. Don't give me that face Dads (Prongs/Padfoot), just think, I could use this to get the overgrown bat fired if I collect enough evidence. And get Binns sacked. Can you actually fire a ghost? Or would he be exercised, do you think?

Anyway, I've been doing crazy shit again, but I'm all good. By the way, do any of you know anything about taking OWLs early? Not that I'm going to right now, but I was thinking for the theory-based subjects in a few years. I was thinking I might do them all.

Talk to you guys later, love you loads.

Rose

After checking that nobody was outside her trunk she got out and took a casual stroll to the owlery. Hedwig was preening as usual, looking around at the other owls in a superior manner as Rose stoked her feathers gently. Her owl really was a queen; Sirius has jokingly called her 'Your Highness' once and now she wouldn't respond to him unless he called her by that name again.
"Hey girl. Can you take this back home for me? Make sure you rest and hunt afterwards, okay?"

Hedwig nipped her fingers affectionately before spreading her wings and taking flight out the tower. Rose stood and watched as her owl flew gracefully into the distance, becoming smaller and smaller until the small pinprick in the sky vanished.

Her stomach rumbling made her realise that she'd missed lunch. She headed to the kitchens and decided she might as well go and make friends with the other elves if she was going to ask for food from them.
Remus shivered as a burst of chilly air flew in through the window, and he got up to close the window before going back to the desk in the library he was working at. By now it had been claimed as his in all but name, covered in trinkets from school, his notes on work, and a few pictures, including one taken in the summer of him and Rose. In the picture Rose was sat sideways on his lap, switching between grinning in an unrepentant manner at the camera, throwing her arms around his neck to hug him to death, or sneaking a quick peck to his cheek. Picture Remus was mock glaring at Rose or smiling and waving at the camera.

Earlier this year if you had told Remus Lupin that Sirius Black was innocent, that Peter Pettigrew was in fact guilty, and that he would become a father to Rose Potter, he would have politely asked if you needed directions back to one of the long-term wards at St Mungo's and even offered help to get there.

He was a man of logic and none of the things in his life this year were logical whatsoever. A tiny enigmatic girl had inherited her future memories and proceeded to swiftly turn his life upside down without hesitation or shame. His life had always followed the sad reality that came with being a werewolf, and he knew that things would always be the same no matter how much he hoped otherwise.

Only now he was a father. Whenever he thought of that cheerful face grinning at him – even with the hints of crazy he could see in her eyes – he felt warmth unfurling in his chest and filling him completely. She was amazing. She didn't care that he was a werewolf, or that he was poor, or even that he hadn't been to see her before. She loved him. She loved him. She loved him.

The utter disbelief he felt was at odds with the overwhelming feelings of love for this beautiful girl. His girl. She wasn't naïve in the slightest, and she helped him find work and inspired him and Sirius to create their own business just by being herself. They were already looking for properties on Diagon Alley and would probably be up and running before the end of next year at this rate.

Remus was never one for too much optimism; after his sad life there was no point. Being turned into a werewolf as a child. Facing prejudice repeatedly. Losing all his friends in one fell swoop in one night. That didn't exactly inspire much hope for a long-lasting and happy life. Ever since that awful Halloween he'd been living in a haze of depression and self-pity, nearly contemplating suicide after being told that the wards around Rose's house kept out ‘dark’ creatures, including werewolves. The idea that he was too dangerous to be around the girl had torn him up inside.

He remembered when he'd revealed that knowledge to Sirius and Rose back when they were getting to know each other. The gleam in Sirius' eyes had suggested he wasn't as removed from the fabled Black madness as he'd like to claim. And Rose? She'd lost it.

The unholy shriek that came from her mouth had been earth-shattering, and she'd spewed so much
vitriol that the two men had gawked at the sheer creativity in her language and threats. Her painful suggestions hadn't been quiet in the slightest and her voice had echoed around the entire property. They hadn't even been able to make themselves scold her, especially as her magic had swirled around her like a raging fire. She'd eventually stopped when she accidentally set the curtains alight, and instead spent the day cursing Dumbledore under her breath, cheeks red with anger and embarrassment.

He supposed he should have been disturbed at her instant rage, but instead he'd been trying to stop his eyes from tearing up. It'd been years since someone had cared about him so much and was willing to show it so clearly. She was enraged on his behalf and he felt giddy at the thought. The small girl had kept insisting that he was family until he gave up and agreed to stay with her and Sirius, and he had a feeling at the time that she cared so much that she would've tied him to a chair to stop him from leaving.

He was right of course. It turned out that she cared so much that she began to call him 'Dad', and he didn't care what anyone said he'd gladly admit that he cried when she first called him that. The days out together with the three of them were the brightest parts of the year, and his life, so far.

The shy smiles on her face whenever he took Rose's hand or ran his fingers through her hair were a source of delight and contentment for the scarred man. They spent countless hours just basking in each other's presence and enjoying mundane things. She'd gotten him in the kitchen with her too, and the duo had spent many a day in the summer baking a mountain of sweets that they gorged themselves on with Sirius.

The three of them all had scars from their childhoods, so that summer had been spent doing the most generic things they could think of, things that others took for granted. They'd eventually ended up with a mountain of photographs and souvenirs from their random trips, and though they were cheap the new family treasured them.

He looked over at the pile of letters from his daughter and smiled, if with an exasperated air. He didn't know how she managed to get in these situations, even when she was deliberately being careful. The business over the past week had been hectic, what with Sirius' birthday, the reveal of the Lestrange deaths, and then getting a letter from Rose detailing her newest Halloween adventure which she'd neglected to tell them of immediately. Remus was pretty sure she knew that they would react badly so postponed the letter as long as she could.

At least she's okay, I don't think I could hold Moony back if Bambi was hurt. Hell, I'd probably encourage him. He ran his hand over his face and thought about what she was doing with Rita Skeeter and hoped it panned out. He couldn't bear it if something went wrong as she'd probably blame herself.

He moved his papers around on the desk looking for the notes he had on a magically-enhanced TV – he wasn't entirely sure Rose was joking about selling her kidney – before he came across an unopened letter addressed to him in loopy handwriting in dark purple ink. He smiled gently before he shook his head.

His correspondence with one Professor Charity Burbage had been quite unexpected but not at all unwanted. The bubbly young woman was extraordinarily passionate about her work and had campaigned for two years in a row to update her curriculum at the school. Her subject – Muggle Studies – was horribly out of date, and as a half-blood who had been raised in the muggle world herself she cringed every time she looked at the textbook. She always provided extra materials for the students but as the class was only an elective she could only help so much. There were still too many students who were unaware of the non-magical world.
She had only taken over the post the year before, but she'd always been passionate about the subject and had tried corresponding with Professor Quirrell before she started teaching in order to get his advice, but it hadn't panned out. (Considering the idiot had deliberately gone to Albania in search of Voldemort, Remus wasn't too surprised by that.)

Remus was impressed with her dedication and eagerly looked forward to her weekly letters. They had begun writing each other after Remus and Sirius decided to ask others for advice about their shop. If they could figure out what sort of products from the muggle world would be more popular it would help their business. Remus called it market research. Sirius called it using your bloody brain.

He'd written the professor asking if she could spare some time to answer a few questions, which had evolved into weekly letters and meetings at least once every two weeks for coffee. Sirius got an unrepentant grin on his face whenever Remus went to meet the woman which was usually followed by dodging something thrown at him for his behaviour by whoever was in the room with him at the time. Usually Remus. Or Amelia. Once even Dobby took it upon himself to enforce manners in his 'dog-master' by throwing an apple at his head. Needless to say Remus had been in hysterics as Sirius looked like he'd been hit by a Confundus Charm.

Charity Burbage was a woman of about 5'5", with shoulder-length chocolate brown hair that fell in loose curls, a round face, and wide indigo eyes. She was averagely proportioned and dressed rather casually. Remus would admit – at least to himself – that he was attracted to her, but he didn't know if it would go any further, especially with him being a werewolf.

For the moment he wouldn't worry as it was just casually platonic; there was no sense worrying about something that he couldn't predict. His newfound confidence originally surprised him a little, but he realised that even if something went wrong with the woman he still had a family there for him. His new family was everything that he'd ever wanted and they would always come first to him.

He did ask Sirius his genuine opinion on her, and his long-time friend told him to go for it as she was a nice woman who could understand his bizarre obsession with books. (Sirius wasn't the best with words but Remus appreciated the sentiment.) Amelia told him she was a kind woman who seemed to actually care about the students on a personal level instead of just peripherally, and her yearly campaigns were known at the Ministry so Amelia thought her a very decent woman.

Rose's advice was the worst – or best – depending on how you took it:

"Professor Burbage? She's cool, and really kind to everyone. She even attempts to talk to Snape nicely, the woman must be saint. Besides she's really hot. I would if I were you."

Remus wondered what this said about his daughter's sexuality. He couldn't care less if she was into women, he was more concerned that she'd start to be attracted to people the same age as she was mentally. He was fairly sure that would not end well. Amelia found Rose's advice hilarious and for some reason seemed to respect her even more, while Sirius was conflicted. On the one hand it was funny to see how her words affected Remus, but on the other hand, if she started to date other girls he couldn't just threaten to kill them if they hurt her.

James' portrait just found it fantastic that his daughter was carrying on the Marauder tradition of causing mayhem while Lily couldn't stop laughing at what Rose had said.

The other portraits were also kept up-to-date with Rose's activities, especially Charlus and Dorea who had taken a shine to the sarcastic girl. Dorea was smug that her granddaughter had chosen to look like her, while her husband was proud that Rose was making sure to take care of the family.

All the portraits seemed at the very least happy with the small girl who had taken time every week of
the summer to go around and talk to them all, asking questions about their lives, explaining current events and asking their advice. She was willing to listen, but she was no pushover and was very firm in her convictions. All in all, they agreed she was a good person to lead their family.

The new father was quite surprised at how Rose managed to effortlessly command respect from her House, but seeing her speak to them all, dead portraits or live inhabitants, he could understand the inherent need to listen to the girl.

It was a difficult situation. While he was immensely proud of how she drew people in and made them listen he was distraught at why she was like that in the first place. She was a leader, but an unwilling one who had been forced into the role because the adults in her life had sat on their arses and foisted off the hard jobs onto a teenage girl with no formal training. He was disgusted with them all, including himself and Sirius, for leaving the girl with no choice but to step up because they’d been too self-serving. It was their fault she was the way she was.

Rose said that she was jaded, and while he agreed somewhat he didn't think that she was so far gone that she didn't care. She tried to come across as cynical and uncaring, but when he considered everything she'd done for the people she loved he was sure she only just avoided being a loyal Hufflepuff by the skin of her teeth.

She wasn't selfless with everyone, and she was particularly cunning – everyone had agreed she could have done well in Slytherin, even Sirius – but when someone earned her love, she loved unconditionally. Remus loved her unconditionally and would easily throw away his morals to protect the girl who'd practically saved his life. She was his daughter, blood or not, and he could honestly say he'd gladly commit murder to keep her safe.

Between her and Sirius, and the others he was now close to, he could admit things were a lot more hectic now. He mused a little more over his migraine-inducing family who were probably going to give him a heart attack one day before he shook off the thoughts.

He mentally shifted focus and turned back to his newest project as the best person in the house at potions. After endless hours of practice he could now brew his own Wolfsbane every month, so Rose asked for his help on a potion from the future that could reverse the effects of Cruciatius Curse torture in patients such as Frank and Alice Longbottom. Before she'd time travelled she'd watched as the potion was created and hailed as prodigious, even though there was a bittersweet feeling at its time of creation.

The Longbottoms were not the only victims of such torture, however the couple had been originally killed during a raid on the hospital just before the Battle of Hogwarts. The potion hadn't been released until eight years after the fact. Neville Longbottom himself had praised the potion publicly despite his dislike of the media, and Remus felt nothing but respect for the man he saw in that memory.

While he felt a twinge of guilt for stealing someone else's creation without giving credit, it was overshadowed by his desire to heal his friends and help his daughter. Rose's extensive Occlumency meant that she had easily remembered the recipe after studying it, though it was going to be a bitch to brew.

It was full of obscure and expensive ingredients, and took a whole month to brew and a week to settle afterwards. But if he started it now they could be healed by Christmas. He could give Augusta and Neville back the missing parts of their family for Christmas.

He stretched out his back and listened to the satisfying cracks and then did the same with his neck and fingers before picking up his quill, ready to work again.
Occlumency was a skill that Rose Potter employed daily for the sake of her continued mental stability. Time travelling and landing in a body two whole decades younger than her mental age was jarring to say the least, without the added pressure of adjusting to the time period itself. The Rose Potter of the future was a thirty-year-old woman who spent far too many hours researching topics that others wouldn't even consider for polite conversation let alone actual work, and there was no way that she could talk about her work which relied on research that hadn't even taken place yet.

Before she went hurtling through time she had been settled in her fully-grown body and had enjoyed the stability that came with being an adult, before that adult consciousness had been suddenly thrust into an abused ten-year-old body. A body that was subject to conditioned responses based on fear, and blocked magic, and the beginnings of hormones that just made everything worse. Mentally, Rose was an adult that could control her responses and mask her emotions without using Occlumency as a crutch. Physically, her body responded to outside stimuli as a child would. Heightened emotions were definitely a damper on her daily life.

But walking around Hogwarts castle day in, day out, Rose was profusely thanking every deity that she knew of that she retained her ability to lock her emotions down with Occlumency. Coming face-to-face with innocent people that were unaware of the war was trying on her emotions. But worse than that was seeing people that she'd spent years mourning at their graves. Every. Single. Day. She saw these people every day. She could remember her weekly trips to graves, laying flowers, getting drunk to cope with the sheer guilt that she was left with. Rose had never handled these things well, and her memories were jumping at her every time she saw a face that she equated to a headstone. She had been close to losing it before she came across the two people who simultaneously made it worse and made it better.

Fred and George Weasley. Gred and Forge. Two parts of the same whole. Smiling. It was better because they looked so happy and she could finally see something physically good from her time travel. But it was awful, because this was definitive proof that George had never really smiled after his other half died. Her memories of his adult visage couldn't compare to the simple joy on his face now, even after his kids had been born.

Her Occlumency was never not employed when she came across the twin devils with red hair. She loved them so much; they'd been some of the only people who had always treated her normally, just a random young girl instead of The-Girl-Who-Lived. Her memories were filled with times when they'd gone out of their way to cheer her up, or teach her how to play pranks, or answer her endless questions about magic.

She'd been distantly watching them since the beginning of term, laughing at their pranks and dodging the various areas they usually trapped – she had no desire to be the subject of their 'curiosity' – and she had to admit that their antics were helping her mental stress a little. She could sit back like a normal student and just laugh at their mayhem instead of wracking her brains trying to figure out possible contingency plans that Voldemort could employ.
(Rose had surreptitiously been keeping an eye on Quirrellmort but the useless teacher was acting the same stuttering mess as usual, though as October went on it seemed as if he was a little more pathetic in class. Rose took this to mean his useless troll plan was on its way to completion.)

She was sat in an abandoned classroom that she'd commandeered since term started, trying to decipher pages of chicken scratch that James Potter had thought passed as handwriting (and resolutely ignoring that little voice in the back of her head reminding her of her own terrible childhood handwriting). She had the notes on the Marauder's Map in front of her and her inner geek was drooling at the sheer brilliance of the teenagers who'd been messing around when they'd made it.

The pages denoted a complex set of spells seamlessly interwoven that belied the creators were nothing more than overly-curious teenagers. The magical power needed behind its completion was a little off-putting though, as she thought she may need to wait a year or two before she could complete the spells by herself. (Her core may have been developed as much as a weak adult's, but she needed more power in order to create a new map flawlessly.) Rose wanted her own map without having to take the original one from the twins.

She was shouting at the notes when it happened.

"Bloody hell Padfoot this doesn't make sense, these two charms cancel each other out! … Oh, Moony fixed it after. So after attaching –"

"Did you say –"

"– Padfoot, little ickle firstie, –"

"– I think she did Gred, and I think –"

"– she said Moony too, Forge, now –"

"– how do you know those names?"

How the fuck did they know I'm here?! Wait ... The map. I'm sat here trying to figure out how to make the bloody thing, and they're using it sneak up on unsuspecting students. She wanted to bang her head against the table and cry hysterically the ironic injustice of the situation, but she settled instead for a bemused smile. No need to alert everyone in the school that The-Girl-Who-Lived-To-Collect-Hyphenated-Titles was missing a few vital screws.

She subtly raised her mental shields before lifting her head and looking at two sets of brown eyes looking at her very curiously. Oh shit. Having that look directed at you by the Weasley twins never boded well, and Rose despaired at what she assumed to be the end to her relative peace at school. She thought about playing dumb with them but she had too much respect for them to do that. Not to mention that they were too smart, even at thirteen, to be fooled quite so easily.

There was nothing for it – she would tell them the truth as much as possible without revealing everything. There was no way that she could reveal time travel to people that she wasn't close to personally, and she couldn't let on that a first year Ravenclaw somehow knew that a couple of third year Gryffindors were in possession of the very map that she was researching.

"Padfoot and Moony are nicknames for some of my family. They sent me notes on a map they used to have and I've been trying to decipher them for about a week."

"You know Padfoot and Moony?!!" The stunned looks on their faces and the fact they weren't doing the twin-speak thing made Rose smirk inwardly. It was always immensely satisfying getting one up on them, difficult as it was. Point one to Rose.
"What about Prongs? And Wormentail? Who are they?"

Rose sighed inwardly even as she wanted the coo a little at them and their rapid-fire questions. Rose was really thirty and these two were actually very cute at this age, probably because they reminded her a little of Teddy.

"Long story short. Prongs is James Potter, Padfoot is Sirius Black, Moony is Remus Lupin, and Wormtail is Peter Pettigrew. Although Pettigrew no longer deserves to be called a Marauder because he was a traitorous bastard who betrayed my parents to their death and got Sirius locked in Azkaban for the crimes that he committed."

Why she thought that that would answer their questions she had no idea. The next hour was spent explaining that "yes, I really am the daughter of Prongs", and "of course these notes are real, I got them from Padfoot and Moony", not to mention that "sure you can write to them, I've actually told them a little about you two and your pranks before".

That last one made them look like they'd died and gone to heaven. Their pride was obvious as was their awe at having their work reported to their pranking heroes. Rose was having a blast making them happy even as she struggled not to giggle at their dazed expressions. The sheer happiness emanating from the twins was probably enough fuel for a full-bodied Patronus.

The two looked at each other and nodded in unison before one of them pulled out a piece of battered parchment from their robes and handed it to the shocked girl.

"I think you'll find this is the map you were looking for."

"As the daughter of Prongs it's really yours, we know most of it already."

Rose looked at them blankly. This wasn't what she'd wanted, she wanted to make her own one while they carried on pranking people and they needed the map to do it properly and not get caught. They hadn't memorised the map yet and she didn't want to deprive them of their fun. They weren't cruel with their pranks and they were always careful not to do anything too dangerous, hence why she wasn't too bothered with asking them to stop. She was already familiar with the castle as an adult so she didn't need the map to explore, she just wanted one to warn her of people if she went out. I wonder …

"So you guys have the map! I suppose that makes sense, what with some of the stuff you've pulled. But you know, you guys found it so you should keep it … If you want, you two can help me look through the notes and figure out how they made it and if we can, re-create their work. Then we could make a few more so we could all have one each. What do you say?"

Rose hoped desperately that they would say yes, and none of her hope was about the map or making more. Speaking to them, she had forgotten how much she missed them as a twosome. She missed planning with them, and talking, and just hanging out. They were witty, smart and incredibly charismatic, it was no wonder that so many people looked up to them. Their relationship wouldn't be the same as it was in her past life; this time she wasn't their little brother's best friend, or in their House, or even on the same Quidditch team, but they could at least be friends. She hoped.

The prospect of at least three separate maps and looking at the original work of the creators was clearly too tempting to pass up, and she was graced with two identical grins promising untold mischief which she promptly mirrored back at them. And thus, the unholy trinity was born.

Elsewhere in the castle one Minerva McGonagall shivered violently as if some untold horror had graced the castle. (She was right of course.) As she flicked through some of her old photos she came
across one of the Marauders graduating, and she just knew that her foreboding was somehow their fault.

The day before Halloween saw Rose Potter basking at the results of her plans. Inwardly, at least. She didn't want to come across as arrogant or haughty, and she especially didn't want anyone to realise she wasn't quite the innocent bright-eyed eleven-year-old she portrayed herself as.

Her musings at Hermione's birthday party had finally come to fruition, if only to the bare minimum. Plans for inter-House cooperation were finally realised with a small study group filled with members from each House that met once a week in an abandoned classroom near the library.

From Ravenclaw, Hermione, Terry and Su had signed up, while Neville, Hannah, Susan and Wayne had come from Hufflepuff. Representing Gryffindor, Parvati and Lavender had descended on the group with giggles, and surprisingly three Slytherins had come along – Blaise Zabini, Daphne Greengrass and Tracey Davis.

The snakes were initially rather wary but after a couple of weeks they'd opened up a fair bit. Tracey was rather upbeat and surprisingly got along with the two Gryffindors, while Daphne was calculating but enjoyed some lighthearted banter with Susan and Hannah. Personally, Rose thought that Blaise was the best and utterly hilarious. He had a dry, rather mature sense of humour for an eleven-year-old which Rose responded to in kind. They usually paired up to cause mayhem to the general consternation of everyone as they egged each other on with increasingly mature humour.

In her opinion the study group was a huge success, not only in getting the Houses to actually communicate with each other but also as a legitimate study group. They'd split up so help make notes on specific subjects and cycled through two different subject lectures a week.

Rose had teamed up with Tracey (who knew a good few jinxes and hexes) to help the others with DADA which was appreciated greatly with how shit Quirrell was. Someone once commented that it was as if he didn't even want to teach DADA. Imagining a young Tom vehemently applying for the position, Rose nearly broke down in hysterics at the irony.

Hermione and Su lectured everyone on Transfiguration, while Susan and Hannah effectively explained the different uses of Charms. Blaise and Daphne, though only eleven, were clearly better than Snape and their group's Potions mistakes had already been reduced. Terry and Wayne provided some actual lectures on History, and Parvati and Lavender were effective at helping distinguish the various constellations in Astronomy. Neville was by himself, but he was a genius at Herbology and he had no problems helping the others.

All in all, the group was steadily combating centuries of student segregation even if it was just amongst themselves. Other students in the school were taking note of their increasing friendships in class though, and while some were re-evaluating their approach to other Houses, some were not – three guesses who.

Rose knew that there was nothing overt she could do to combat childish learned prejudice based on ignorance besides continuing as she was. She wouldn't let a couple of boys who knew no better ruin her pride at her work.

She knew that she was going to be in a shit mood the next day anyway, and refused to let her mood get a head-start. Her last thought before she drifted to sleep was a prayer for a normal Halloween.
This is why we can't have nice things

Chapter Notes

I don't own 'Harry Potter'.

Rose thought it was interesting how things that had happened so long ago still had the ability to affect things in the present so much. She had gotten over her parents' deaths a long time ago, especially with the portraits that gave her a semblance of them back. James and Lily Potter were dead, but she was also the daughter of Sirius Black and Remus Lupin. She was happy.

Except she wasn't. Halloween. The ten-year anniversary for the Potters' murder. No matter how many years she told herself she would be happy she never was. Every year like clockwork she couldn't forget the question, 'What if?'

Imagining growing up with James as an overprotective father scaring boys away from her, going to Lily for advice about life, Sirius and Remus married with children that were practically her siblings, having actual siblings … What if they hadn't died? It was one of the worst questions she could have asked herself yet she did the same thing every year. She consoled herself that this was the only day she wallowed in her pity like this.

Her mood was noticed by others rather quickly, and she was thankful that her Housemates were smart and pieced together the problem rather quickly. Granted some of them had no idea how to treat her, but Rose was thankful they were trying to spare her feelings anyway, and everyone avoided the topic of her parents.

Out of all her friends Neville seemed to be the best equipped to deal with Rose Potter that day (experienced as he was with an awkward parental situation), and everyone watched in amazement as he sat and spoke to her like it was a normal day, and everyone soon got the hint to just act normal.

She went through the day on autopilot without engaging anyone until it got to Charms class. The class was comprised of all four Houses together and she wondered if things would be different this time.

To her surprise Ron was somehow paired with Millicent Bulstrode, and she had a sinking feeling that it was going to go horribly wrong. She and Neville were too far away to interfere, but even he had a grimace on his face when he saw the pair.

Just like last time Hermione levitated the feather first, but this time Rose was tied with her. Their study group got it next as did Millicent not long afterwards. The scowl on Ron's face did nothing for her worries, and she saw him snap at the girl before everyone was dismissed.

"Honestly, she's like a troll. I mean, look at her. She just a Slytherin, and an ugly one at that."

And with that, Halloween of nineteen ninety-one repeated itself, but with Millicent Bulstrode in the place of Hermione Granger heading towards the toilets crying.

"Hey! What the hell's your problem?" Blaise was furious. His opinion of of his Housemate was rather ambivalent, but Slytherins were taught to stand up for each other in public. Not to mention
that no one deserved what this little shit had just said.

Before Ron could reply he heard a furious voice that hissed and caused his hair to stand on end.

"Shut up Weasley."

Everyone turned to see a visibly livid Rose Potter with glowing ice-blue eyes. She may have been small in stature but she certainly wasn't in presence. Not one person wanted to be stupid enough to get in the way of that, and the one she was talking to? He was terrified.

Ron had never seen something like this. She'd barely spoken so far and he was already scared stiff. Even his mother didn't inspire this much fear, or his father when his brothers had nearly tricked him into that Unbreakable Vow.

Rose was pissed off. Halloween was a horrid day for her and her emotions were going haywire. All she wanted was a normal day to mourn her parents, but apparently that was too much to ask. Then this little git decided to show everyone what a nasty person he really was, and she just lost it. If there was one thing she abhorred it was bullying, and something she couldn't deny was Ron being a bully.

"You have no right, no right, to speak to anyone like that. That girl was simply trying to help you with your work that you're too lazy to do yourself. I've noticed your jealousy and envy over these past few weeks, and let me tell you something: it's pathetic. You stand there and have the audacity to complain about not having things, yet you seem to have no motivation to actually work for anything, you just expect everything to fall into your lap. When someone actually offers you help you throw it back in their face like a whiny little child having a temper tantrum.

"You claim to be proud of your House, yet I see nothing brave or chivalrous about verbally attacking someone behind their back and laughing like an immature child. And you have the gall to accuse Slytherins of being evil?

"Congratulations Weasley, you're finally going to be known as someone who stands out from everyone else. You'll be known as the little boy who can't think for himself and hurts others to cover up his own sad insecurities. I'm sure you're so proud of yourself. I bet your parents will be when they hear what you said."

And with that the girl stalked off in anger. She left behind a ginger boy whose face seemed to be simultaneously trying to pale and redden, whimpering in fear with a feeling of lead in his stomach.

Dean and Seamus weren't feeling much better. They hadn't said anything but they'd laughed all the same. With Rose's speech they felt ashamed and silently agreed with her that they weren't exactly acting as noble Gryffindors.

The remaining crowd had mixed feelings, fear and vindication among others, but the one thing every single person agreed on was that Rose Potter was not someone to be crossed.

The Slytherins were reluctantly impressed, and her placement in Ravenclaw made it easier to respect her for defending one of their own. Blaise was especially impressed. He knew she had a sharp tongue but what she'd just said was downright vicious. He had a feeling she would have carried on if her magic hadn't been going out of control. It wasn't obvious, but Blaise was more sensitive to magic than others and he could feel her control slipping.

He was worried about her though. He might be reserved in public but Rose was his friend. She had a wicked sense of humour and the two of them got along like a house on fire to the general alarm of everyone else. Today wasn't the best day for her to lose control though. He knew what it was like to
lose a parent as he remembered his father's murder vividly, and he had an uneasy feeling that that was something the two of them had in common.

Rose couldn't decide if she was more pissed off or amused that everyone was walking around her on eggshells, expecting her to blow up at any moment. Yes, she might have let her emotions get the best of her with Ron, but today was the anniversary of when her life turned to shit, couldn't they cut her a little slack? This was why the thirty-first of October was usually celebrated in solitude so she could celebrate Samhain properly and honour the dead without losing control.

The rest of her classes passed quietly with concerned looks from Blaise which she answered with a sad smile before everyone headed to the feast. She had originally been planning on missing it until Millicent ran off. She knew the other girl wouldn't appreciate Rose going after her directly, especially with Slytherin pride on the line. Rose knew from experience you had to let the snakes do things on their own terms, so following her and asking if she was okay would not only be patronising, it would drive her into a corner. Driving a snake into a corner was never a good idea.

Instead she obligingly attended the feast, if a bit solemnly. The other Ravenclaws were a blessing, and sat on all sides seemingly protecting her while talking to each other, allowing her to eat in silence. Considering how socially awkward some of them were, Rose was honestly touched at their actions.

All too soon Quirrellmort came running in screaming about the troll, before collapsing in a faint so fake she had to hold in her laugh. She'd seen better acting from children. With everyone screaming and being sent back to their dormitories – oh yes, I'm sure sending half the student population into the very area of the school the dangerous creature is reported to be, is the height of intelligence – she looked around for Snape. Arsehole he might be, he cared about his House, but he ran out before she could get to him.

She had to hurry here. She wasn't a headstrong Gryffindor this time, and she knew it was better to tell a teacher in case the troll and Millicent didn't meet or if it was in a different area to what was reported. One thing she'd learned as an Unspeakable was to assume that she never had the full picture. Assumptions lead to mistakes. Never act rashly. That was how she had lived her life, and tried to do the same now – the hormones really aren't helping though.

"Professor Flitwick!"

"Miss Potter? You're supposed to be following the prefects!" The diminuitive professor turned at the voice of his favourite first-year student – not that he'd ever admit it – and frowned at the panic on her face. He'd heard her earlier when she viciously tore down Mister Weasley, and while she was harsh he was proud that she actually explained the boy's problems instead of just screaming and shouting at him. He was even more proud when the girl noticed her magic going out of control and left before she caused an accident. He may or may not have awarded points afterwards.

"It's Millicent Professor, she's not here. She never came to the feast and she doesn't know about the troll. I heard she was crying in a bathroom in the dungeons."

He felt his stomach drop as he turned to see the other students nearly gone. He gestured for Rose to follow him as he found Professor McGonagall and Professor Sinistra and explained the situation. The three professors and the girl made their way out the Great Hall and through the dungeons. Apparently leading a first year into danger is okay if you're a teacher.

Just as they came across a foul smell they heard a scream and she blanked, memories of Hermione cowering from the troll overlapping with the countless fights from the war. Hearing such a shriek in
Hogwarts after the infamous battle made her react unconsciously.

Ignoring the shouts from her professors she bolted through the bathroom door, coming face to face with a frozen Millicent and a troll in the process of swinging its bat towards the other girl. Rose didn't even consider her wand and she ran and tackled the other girl, rolling the two of them towards a wall to the side of the disgusting creature.

The troll's club smashed one of the sinks and a shower of tiles and pipes flew through the girls' bathroom. The adults were lucky and used magic to shield themselves from the debris, but Rose once more moved automatically and grabbed Millicent in her arms, forcing the girl between her and the wall.

The resulting pipe to the head made Rose hiss in pain, even as she heard a loud thud echo around the room before silence reigned. *Fuck, that stings! Bloody shitty troll, I didn't even get hurt before, and then I actually was eleven! Owww ...*

Wincing Rose let go of the pale girl in her arms and turned to her teachers. Professor Sinistra had sat down on the stump of the toilet like Quirrell had previously, but unlike him her panic looked genuine and she seemed to be gratefully taking in deep breaths. Flitwick had already made his way over to the girls and was checking them over with spells, frowning at Rose's head injury. McGonagall didn't seem to know what to feel, alternating between glares of fury, panic, and the odd look of pride.

"Miss Potter ... while I appreciate that you helped in this occasion, do not do something so careless again, you could have been killed! In all my life ..."

The stern Scotswoman trailed off, glaring ominously at the downed troll that made Rose kind of wish she could tell the woman who let it in. Her fury would be glorious.

"Sorry Professor, I just reacted ... I didn't want to see anyone hurt." It wasn't the best excuse, but she couldn't exactly say, "Sorry Professor, but my instincts from being on the run and fighting in a war as a teenager are just too ingrained to ignore."

The woman's eyes softened and she let out a long breath before nodding. Rose turned to her fellow student.

"Millicent. Are you okay?" She was curious if that was how scared she'd looked before.

The other girl blinked rather shakily at her. "Potter? What are you doing here?"

"Miss Potter informed Professor Flitwick here of your absence at the feast and how you were unaware of the troll." Professor McGonagall's exasperatedly proud look made Rose blush.

"But why?"

"Just because we're not friends doesn't mean I was going let you walk around the castle with a troll loose. Besides, you shouldn't have been here anyway."

"What do you –" The Gryffindor House Head was cut off by Flitwick shaking his head.

"... Thanks. I mean, you didn't have to ..." Millicent looked embarrassed and uncomfortable and the blonde girl couldn't help but feel for her.

"You know, you could come along to our study group if you want? It's during the afternoon every Friday, so there's a meeting tomorrow. If you want to know more just ask Blaise, Daphne or Tracy."
The poor girl looked so wary but hopeful. "You don't mind?"

"Of course not! It's not a closed group or anything, it's just other people don't really want to come."

She smiled gently at the other girl. She'd never been close friends with Millicent, but the two got along well enough whenever they’d met in the future. Right now she was in an awkward part of puberty and her features hadn't really settled. She was by no means ugly but she would never be a traditional beauty. Rose knew eventually she would grow to be around 5'10" with strong muscled limbs and broad, smooth facial features.

"… Maybe."

*Typical Slytherin. Never commit to anything without analysing the pros and cons.* "That's fine, just think about it."

The sound of a throat clearing jolted the girls from their conversation.

"If that is all, I believe it is time to go back to the dormitories, this has been enough excitement for one day. Miss Bulstrode, Professor Sinistra here will escort you to the Slytherin common room. Likewise Miss Potter, Professor Flitwick will take you back to Ravenclaw Tower, after you visit the Hospital Wing. I myself will report back to Headmaster Dumbledore."

The Deputy Head looked ready for bed and Rose could empathise.

"Before we go, however. Miss Potter, ten points to Ravenclaw for looking out for your fellow student to such a degree; and Miss Bulstrode, ten points to Slytherin for staying calm in the face of danger and allowing us professors to do our job. Well done girls. Now off to bed!"

The group of five split up with Rose waving at Millicent and getting a jerky nod in return which she counted as a success. Flitwick was apparently very proud of her and his praise made her walk with a permanent blush on her face.

Madam Pomfrey was unimpressed with her to say the least, but she was more annoyed that her actions had even been necessary to begin with. She fixed her head in under a minute and gave her a pain-relieving potion before sending her on her way.

When Rose got back to her room she had to explain everything to Hermione who was apparently pissed off to the extreme that Ron's careless words had led to the Slytherin girl nearly getting killed by a troll. The brown-haired girl didn't know Millicent at all, and though she’d had some bad experiences with some of the more horrible snakes she hated the idea that one of them would die because of a bully.

Hermione did tell her that the boy in question was now utterly terrified of her which made her laugh. Rose honestly didn't mean for her words to come out like that but she didn't regret them. Some people say that actions speak louder than words, but words can still have terrible consequences. Rose only hoped that Ron realised this before he said something he couldn't take back.

After getting ready for bed she dropped onto the mattress face down and fell asleep almost immediately, dreaming of bright green eyes and messy hair.
What do you mean I'm not funny?

Chapter Notes

I don't own 'Harry Potter'.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Being from the future admittedly gave Rose an unfair advantage over her classmates in terms of work, but it also gave her the opportunity to spend more time on other pursuits that gave her mental state a bit of a wind-down, so to speak. Aside from her weekly study group sessions, she'd now agreed to meet every Wednesday evening with Fred and George to study the map and try and recreate the Marauders' masterpiece.

She also spent at least a couple of hours every day in her trunk apartment practising wandless magic and learning to control her morphing abilities (with a plan to test them on Snape at least once). Once you got the hang of it, it wasn't that difficult. It was easier sticking to human anatomy and she decided to put her skills to the test the day before Sirius' birthday.

She stood in front of a conjured mirror in a random classroom slowly changing her appearance. The hardest part was increasing her height as it was painful to force such obvious growth in the skeleton. Growing from 4'6" to 5'2" hurt, but she needed to look like a woman instead of a young girl for her plan to work. After that she slowly increased the curves in her hips and breasts until she was average sized at least. Her hair soon darkened to a chestnut brown and her eyes lightened to a pale blue. After straightening her hair and giving her face a rounder shape she was done. She changed into some of her mother's clothes from home and set out.

The dark grey roll-neck jumper clung to her body like a second skin as did her dark jeans, which distracted people from her face - she had no qualms about using her body like this, though her fathers might say otherwise - and she confidently strolled through the castle halls out the front door and got in a carriage to Hogsmeade. It turned out that permission slips weren't usually checked, and as she was so obviously not a child no one spared more than a glance at her. (Her borrowed face also mixed features from three different seventh years, so if anyone saw her they would probably think she was someone else.)

Once in the village she made a quick stop at Honeydukes to stock up on various sweets, before wandering down an alley and calling Dobby, who appeared and took her hand before he popped her away. She didn't think that she could Apparate just yet, and didn't want to expose herself if she tried and splinched herself. After all, what sort of eleven-year-old could even get that far with Apparition?

She reappeared behind an abandoned warehouse in front of one Remus John Lupin.

"Dad!" She practically jumped on the poor man as she hugged him to death, breathing in his scent. "I missed you."

His eyes softened as he looked at his daughter, chest warming at her words as he hugged her back. "I missed you too, Bambi." He gave her a quick kiss on the forehead before stepping back to examine her latest look.

He thought she looked beautiful as always, but perhaps that was a bias that came with being a
parent? He was a little concerned about trying to keep men away from her though, and hoped he
could convince her to buy something like a thick coat that would cover her up. He wasn't
overprotective or anything, he just wanted to be careful. Perfectly normal behaviour. *Perfectly
normal.*

(Unbeknown to him Rose was more than aware of his concern of her attire and thought it was
hilarious, but she would humour him anyway.)

It was mid-morning and they had all day before she had to go back, so he grabbed her hand and led
her away towards the nearest underground station. She blushed and smiled at him when he took her
hand which he squeezed before they carried on.

He and Sirius knew her childhood had been bad and lacking in any form of affection, so she was
extremely touch-starved. She might have been a woman mentally, but even as an adult her
relationships had been a bit skewed. They'd decided with James and Lily to give Rose a proper
childhood in that regard at least.

Their daughter was naïve and innocent when it came to physical affection, so the two men took it
upon themselves to show affection whenever possible. Some would probably say they were
unnaturally close to the girl, but quite frankly Remus thought they could go fuck themselves. If it
took holding hands, hugging her, or running his fingers through her hair to make her smile, he'd
happily do it all day.

Rose was once more simultaneously loving the closeness and cursing her body; even as an adult
she'd craved physical comfort, but she'd pushed the feeling aside and focused on her work instead.
Her body now still had the feelings of the eleven-year-old Rose who'd wanted that closeness more
than anything, so whenever it happened her body reacted by itself, blushing or smiling sweetly like a
child. She would admit that even her adult self would have revelled in the attention, but her reaction
as a woman wouldn't have been so 'cute'.

The father and daughter duo got on the tube where they spent the journey chatting about anything
and everything, and eating some of the sweets Rose had bought at Honeydukes. They got more than
a few considering looks, well Rose did, and Remus was convinced his plan for a coat was needed
more than ever as he glared a man into submission after he caught him staring at his daughter's
behind.

After they got off in a shopping area they wandered around aimlessly for a bit before Remus finally
succeeded in his plan, and the girl/woman was happily wearing a dark blue padded jacket that fell to
just above her knees none-the-wiser - as far as *he* was concerned, anyway. The two then spent the
next hour searching for party decorations and the like for Sirius's surprise party the next day.

After they wandered around for a bit they decided to go to a nice restaurant for lunch and walked in
arm-in-arm. Everything was going fine until the waitress made a mistake that Rose couldn't help but
make worse for the poor girl.

"A table for two for you and your girlfriend?"

Before Remus could politely correct her, Rose jumped in.

"I know you're pretty hot Dad, but I'm pretty sure there's a line in our relationship we're not supposed
to cross."

Remus closed his eyes in apparent pain as the waitress looked mortified and stuttered out apologies.
Rose just grinned.

When they sat down Remus gave her a *look*, to which she just laughed. After a while he snorted and thought about including the memory with Sirius' birthday present.

After they finished eating they went back to shopping where they decided to get an early start on Christmas gifts as they couldn't get Sirius' present until four. She realised for the first time ever she had a lot of school friends to buy presents for. *Merlin, my life is sad.*

Just a few hours in London were enough to de-stress both of them, especially when they found a book store tucked away down a side street. The two of them were slightly obsessed with books, and a mere hour in the shop had them buy at least fifteen books each which they shrunk in an alleyway.

By four they'd Apparated away and came face-to-face with the warehouse where Sirius' present waited for pick up. As they wandered in she thought about buying one for herself, at least for later.

"Well here she is."

They turned as the owner wheeled in the present. The vintage motorbike. A 1973 Kawasaki Z1 900 to be precise.* It was pretty awesome in Rose's opinion, and she thought the bikes were looking more and more interesting.

Remus grabbed a basic helmet to go with the bike even though he was sure Sirius would never use it. He'd have to ride the thing out of here for a little bit anyway before he could shrink it without anyone seeing.

"Excuse me, how much is this one?"

He turned away from the owner to see the girl eyeing up one of more basic bikes and knew they wouldn't be leaving without a second one.

"£6000." The owner was looking at the girl warily. He didn't think she was being serious and didn't want to waste time with a girl who was looking around rather cluelessly.

"Do you take card?"

"… What?"

"Do you take card?"

He nodded in bewilderment at the girl as she grabbed a helmet and came over to buy the bike she'd picked on a whim.

"I have no idea when it comes to make, but I've passed my test and I really want one. I prefer the increased manoeuvrability compared to cars."

The man with her nodded thoughtfully and carried on a conversation about cars versus motorbikes as the owner checked their paperwork before letting them pay. Watching them race off on a bike each, he thought they were genuinely two of the strangest people he had ever met.

Remus and Rose were thankful for the existence of charms as they had no energy to move at this ungodly hour. It was barely six in the morning – contrary to what most would think, Sirius was an early riser – and they were setting up all the decorations with spells while they sat on the sofa. They were in one of the bigger parlours decorated with red and cream, which was very tastefully arranged
for formal meetings.

Or at least it had been before they'd shoved the furniture around, hung garish paper chains, banners and balloons, and attached enlarged pictures on the wall in such a haphazard manner that most pure-bloods would faint at the how the House of Potter had been besmirched. It was that reason that Rose thought it was a brilliant idea.

The Potter elves had collaborated with Winky and Kreacher to provide an obscene amount of food that was piled on a table to the side, surrounding a three-tiered cake decorated in red and gold with small roaring lions.

A pile of presents was on a smaller table even though most of Sirius' friends wouldn't be there. Remus knew that he would want Rose there, even if he was sulking because Remus told him she couldn't come because of school. He'd lied.

He'd told Augusta and the Tonks' that they weren't doing anything on the day because he had a surprise for Sirius that would distract him all day. They'd thought he meant the bike but he meant Rose. As they were unaware of the time travel, they wouldn't understand why she was there if they came so he had to make sure they stayed away. They'd sent their presents ahead at least.

After they finished Rose went up to the family kitchen where she began making breakfast for everyone. She mostly made plenty of pancakes because she knew how much Sirius liked them, even if they were really unhealthy.

Soon enough the table was covered in dishes under heating charms, which was just in time as she heard her other dad moving around in the hall before he opened the door and looked around. He glanced at the mountains of food before locking eyes with his daughter.

"Happy Birthday Dad."

Rose beamed as he stood there in shock before all but running at her and picking her up and swinging her around. Her musical giggles filled the kitchen and him with warmth.

"Bambi! What are you doing here?" He put her back on the floor before burying his face in her hair. She always smelt very sweet, like treacle tart and chocolate, and it made him think of family.

"What do you mean, 'why'? It's your birthday."

She said it like it was the most obvious thing in the world and it made him want to cry. He bent down and kissed her cheek which flushed a deep red even as she smiled sweetly up at him. He marvelled at his luck of having such a wonderful child in his life, and a quick glance at Moony told him the other man thought the same thing.

After the three of them ate breakfast they got dressed and went out to see a film Sirius had been wanting to see, before returning home where Sirius saw what had become of the parlour. He looked wide-eyed around the room before Rose told him she thought he'd like the idea of so many decorations that pure-bloods would hate, to which he just laughed.

Amelia appeared after that and the four sat down to eat too much food and spent hours playing a bunch of muggle board games. Monopoly was the best, where Remus showed everyone exactly why he was handling their investments by utterly destroying everyone with his hidden Slytherin tendencies. Sirius just failed miserably and proved why so many people had arguments over the game.

Sirius finally decided to open his presents by starting with those from people not present. Augusta
had given him an Acromantula-silk cloak in burgundy with a silver clasp engraved with the Black crest, which everyone could see was expensive as hell.

Ted Tonks was obviously trying to entice Sirius towards muggle entertainment with a hardback collection of *The Hobbit* and *Lord of the Rings*. Rose and Remus reassured him they were great, and Amelia looked interested herself.

Andromeda gave him a simple leather necklace, from which hung a faintly glowing pale green gem which apparently promoted mental stability and health. Sirius was happy for it, as Azkaban wasn’t going to be forgotten any time soon.

Nymphadora – and how he enjoyed pissing her off with her name – gave him a dragon-hide wand holster covered all over with numerous protective spells, like anti-summoning charms.

The presents from Amelia were simply beautiful. One was a gold watch with the Black crest on the face which had a variety of different functions, including a calendar. The other was a large picture frame made up of smaller ones which were all filled with pictures of Sirius and the people he cared about.

His old friend told him his main present was outside before handing him a small vial with Rose's Pensieve and told him the woman was Rose. Sirius was curious as was his fiancée, and they poured in the memory and entered ignoring Rose's pout and Remus' grin. The two emerged laughing and Amelia had tears in her eyes while Sirius reminded himself to tell the portraits.

The girl handed over a small package while telling the birthday boy her main present was outside too. He unwrapped it to pull out a plain white t-shirt with the phrase, 'I really did eat the homework' on the front. The adults apparently all thought it was amazing and they were crying with laughter.

A few minutes later they were stood outside while Remus pulled out a small package which he put on the floor before re-sizing it. There, in all its glory, was the vintage motorbike.

The last Black blinked, then blinked again, before screaming like a little girl, running over to it, jumping on, then driving away across the field.

Rose was just glad that her animals were contained and that she lived in the middle of nowhere.

She looked around at the adults and smiled before grinning. *I wonder how much alcohol they can handle?*

Chapter End Notes

I have no idea about motorcycles, so the make could be completely wrong, sorry!
Sirius' birthday was one of the best that he'd ever had, and even days later he was still as excited as a toddler on a sugar high. Seeing Rose was especially great, as was having a birthday that was memorable in its simplicity. He missed having her around but he didn't want to put his needs ahead of hers.

After realising just how much they'd fucked up with Rose in her future he'd made sure to always put her first. If she wanted to stay at Hogwarts he would support her, and if she decided to drop out and move halfway across the world he'd go and buy her a house to live in. He was determined to care for her as much as he possibly could, and even more so after she went to so much trouble for his birthday.

A few days after his birthday he opened the newspaper to see what he thought of as a belated birthday gift, morbid as it was.

LESTRANGE TRIO FOUND DEAD IN AZKABAN

JUSTICE FOR THEIR CRIMES?

As of yesterday evening it has been confirmed that the Lestranges, imprisoned during the war, have been found dead in their cells at Azkaban prison.

Rodolphus Lestrange, his brother Rabastan Lestrange, and his wife Bellatrix Black Lestrange were known Death Eaters who were arrested and convicted after the war for their torture of Lord Frank Longbottom and his wife Lady Alice Longbottom with the Cruciatatus Curse.

Prolonged use of the Unforgivable resulted in their incapacitation, and the two now reside in the long-term Janus Thickey Ward at St Mungo's Hospital for Magical Maladies and Injuries.

The three prisoners were checked by guards when it became apparent that their usual behaviour had changed.

"She stopped screaming for some reason," said one of the guards, "wondered what the hell she was playing at."

As it turns out, none of them were playing at anything.

After examining the bodies of the deceased prisoners, Ministry officials have proclaimed the cause of death to be inconclusive, though some have speculated that their magical cores suffered a sudden block.

"It's as if they were suddenly cut off from a source of magic or something. Prisoners can't use
magic externally, but their core helps keep them alive. They seemed to have been suddenly unable to access their internal magic, which combined with the atmosphere here caused them to die suddenly."

One can only wonder, as this reporter does, exactly how these people died. Was it an inexplicable yet natural occurrence that killed them? Or did someone figure out how to rid our community of criminals such as these and decide to enact justice? Did they do this for their victims?

Nobody can say for certain, but I think we can all agree that the mystery will remain for quite some time.

Sirius Black sat and stared blankly at the picture of his cousin in the centre of the article, screaming in madness at the camera. While he couldn't say he was sorry in any way, shape or form that the crazy bitch was dead, he was confused as to how they died all of a sudden after ten years in that hellhole. He remembered Bella from Azkaban, always screaming how her 'Lord' was going to save her, and how they'd rid the world of filth together. He'd thought it was hilarious when Rose told him that the 'Lord' the pure-bloods followed so reverently was actually a half-blood with a muggle father.

He picked up his coffee mug and went to take a sip before he froze in realisation. Oh. It was me. I killed them. He put down his cup as he thought carefully over his recent actions. He'd dissolved the marriage between Bellatrix and Rodolphus and cast her out the family just over a week ago.

That was it. Bellatrix, no longer a Black, had died when she lost her connection to the immense strength of the Black Family magic, which was why she'd lasted as long as she had. Her husband and his brother had likewise been relying on the Black magic. The marriage between the House of Black and the House of Lestrange had given them a weaker, but no less useful link to the Black Family magic. The Black family was a lot older and stronger than the Lestrange family, so even a weak link had helped to keep them alive until that link had been broken through the dissolved marriage.

Rubbing a hand over his face he thought about how their supposedly 'superior' family had fallen apart over time. Bella had been mad from the start, Andi'd eloped, and Cissa got stuck in a marriage with an idiot (because he knew damn well that Cissa hadn't gone into that marriage willingly, and she probably only agreed because things could've gone so much worse). Regulus made some bad decisions before practically killing himself, and he'd run away.

The generation before hadn't been much better with his mother and father being cousins, and his favourite uncle Alphard, the playboy that he'd been, finally being disinherited after helping him run away. His other half-decent relatives had had the good idea to marry into other families quickly and get away, like Dorea and his aunt Lucretia.

He knew that he should probably feel guilty that he'd all but murdered his cousin but all he felt was a profound sense of relief. Bellatrix was insane, but the worse part about it was that she was a Black. Women in the Black family were smart and so was she. Smart and insane do not go hand in hand, and she was dangerous to anyone that she thought was in her way. Now she'd never be a danger to anyone ever again.

He hoped at the very least that the Longbottoms would find some semblance of vindication in all of this.

The youngest Longbottom didn't know how to feel as he read the article at the Hufflepuff table. On
the one hand, the monsters that had hurt his family couldn't hurt anyone else any more, but on the other, his parents were still stuck in the hospital, unable to recognise him at all. His hands were shaking and he could almost feel the pitying gazes from all around the hall. Even the other 'puffs looked awkward, as if they didn't know how to treat him or act around him. He realised this must have been how Rose had felt on Halloween.

"Hey, Nev. Have you finished the Transfiguration essay? Kind of long, wasn't it?"

He turned to his left to see Rose sat at the table next to him, casually stealing a muffin and nibbling on it as she looked at him. *She's doing what I did for her.* On the anniversary of her parents' murder he'd treated her like he did normally, and now she was doing the same for him in return.

Smiling at her weakly he answered. "Yeah, it was long. I finished it, but I might have messed up the part about the practical uses."

Watching the two first-year students discussing their work wasn't all that interesting and the others eventually stopped looking at him and went back to their own conversations.

Rose was glad that he was cheering up, though the boy still looked very conflicted. "It's okay to have feelings that contradict each other, you know. When I found out that Pettigrew was Kissed I was happy because he'd been punished, but I was angry because my parents were still dead. I think it's normal that you wouldn't know what to feel right now, and I know I'm not an expert or anything, but I think as long as you feel something at all then it's okay." She spoke lowly so no one would overhear.

The boy blinked back tears before gracing Rose with a heart-breaking smile. "Thanks Rose, that helped. Really."

Neville Longbottom wasn't seen for the rest of the day, but the next day he was at breakfast all the same with a smile on his face as he laughed with his friends.

Rita Skeeter was a bitch, plain and simple. She lived to cause trouble and Rose would love nothing more than to get her arrested and out of her life for good. Unfortunately the woman was more useful writing for the paper; she was a genius at digging up things and ruining someone in just a few words. Rose would usually be warier of her own reputation being dragged through the mud, but as someone who now owned 16% of the Daily Prophet, with Sirius owning a whole 27%, the two of them were safe.

Together they were the majority shareholders – the paper had been subtly informed that both shares counted as one – and the staff were now acutely aware of the ramifications of slandering them in their articles. They'd gotten a notice that all of their stories must contain the truth with verified sources that they could produce if asked instead of wild speculation. Miss Skeeter had been rather annoyed until an anonymous note pointed her towards the graves at Godric's Hollow and the home of Bathilda Bagshot.

Rose wasn't forcing her to uncover Dumbledore's many secrets, but if she did, *oh well.* It would also hopefully be a long-term project to keep her busy until Rose could use her for her own benefit. In the meantime Rose had decided to entice Skeeter into making the first step towards Dumbledore's downfall for her. She didn't care how many people thought that the sun shined out of his every orifice, the old bastard needed to go and fast. Despite what she usually said about him and how she was aggravated by his actions, she had never thought that he was evil, just extremely misguided. Holding three full-time positions by himself at his age was ridiculous, and she'd be more surprised if things *didn't* fall through the cracks. He simply didn't have enough time to devote to his work and
ended up making mistakes.

This was the crux of the issue that she had with him. He made mistakes just like any other person, but his mistakes tended to be big and have very dire consequences for those involved. One need only look at how he’d handled Tom Riddle when he was younger for proof. It didn’t take a genius to realise that all Tom had wanted as a child was affection and trust, yet instead of helping him Dumbledore had treated the child as a potential enemy.

He was old, and yes he’d accomplished a lot, she wouldn't deny that, but he tended to present things in a skewed manner to make himself look better; case in point, his relationship with Grindelwald. All for 'the greater good'. That phrase made her want to puke. He never listened to anyone else, thinking he knew best just because he was older.

His actions at the school were awful too. From an adult’s perspective, the fact that he apparently hadn't realised a teacher was possessed and allowed a troll to get in to the school was horrifying. He was supposed to be in control of an extensive set of wards to protect each and every individual in the castle, but when Rose considered how many times she'd nearly died here over the years, she could only conclude that the man was negligent at best.

She watched as a flurry of owls descended on the Great Hall with the morning mail, waiting for her daily mail. She always got the newspaper at least and letters from home every few days. Her beautiful owl swooped down to her gracefully before offering a letter from Amelia and the paper. An outbreak of whispering caught her attention as did a clang from the head table where someone dropped something. She had an idea what was happening and set aside a plate with lots of bacon for Hedwig before opening the paper.

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**HOGWARTS: DOES IT CARE ABOUT ITS STUDENTS?**

**DOES SCHOOL MEAN EDUCATION?**

*I do not believe I am alone in saying that Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry is a magical place for us all, and I'm not talking about the spells!*

*As children we're taught that this fantastical castle will be our home, that our House will be our family, and that they will help us and nurture us so we can go out into the world ourselves.*

*But is this really true? Does Hogwarts care about its students?*

*This reporter is devastated to admit that this may no longer be the case. I was shocked to find that our beloved school, supposedly one of the world's leading magical academies, is actually one of the worst.*

*Our students' scores are some of the lowest average grades, with some other schools even offering more classes and more opportunities for its students!*

*I am saddened by this fact, and I think I can speak for many when I say I am furious that our hard-working and diligent students are being lied to. These children are our future, and being denied the right to be the best they can be is a travesty!*

*This reporter was shocked to find that the lower teaching standards of Hogwarts may also be responsible for slowly destroying the workforce in Britain. In the past decade the number of*
adequate Healers, Aurors and Potioneers, amongst others, has been in steady decline.

When asked about their opinion, a former student had this to say: "Potions is really hard at school, especially as the teacher is too strict. He even takes points for breathing! Not to mention if you want a NEWT in Potions you need an O in the OWLs, no exceptions."

This begs the question as to why Potions is carrying on in the same manner despite such results. If such an environment is being perpetuated in our classrooms, then it is no wonder there aren't enough people for these jobs!

It is heart-breaking that such a high standard is slowly destroying the dreams of our youth, and I cannot help but wonder what we can do to change this.

However, it seems even worse is the History of Magic course, where barely two students a year – two! – pass with a NEWT grade in this intriguing subject. I'm sure many readers are familiar with the ghostly visage of Professor Cuthbert Binns and remember his classes intimately, but as adults we must ask ourselves – is this acceptable?

Is it right for our children, the younger generation of our society, to be subject to a sub-standard education because we do not act? No, it is not!

I implore my faithful readers to think about what our future means to you, and what we can do to help our children become what they deserve.

Rita Skeeter

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Rose looked at the paper in front of her with wide eyes, taking in the controversial but completely honest words of her least favourite journalist. The hall was alive with a cacophony of loud and questioning voices, but the only thing running through the last Potter's mind was the ramifications of Skeeter's poisonous words.

"Holy shit."
The next day was no better, with a second article detailing how Hogwarts had played host to a troll on Halloween which had nearly resulted in a first-year student getting bludgeoned to death by the creature. As much as it pained her to admit it, Skeeter's flair for the dramatic was definitely working and the Headmaster was coming under fire from all angles.

Dumbledore had long since locked himself in his office, probably because the numerous howlers being directed to him from angry parents and government officials alike were the height of embarrassment. He probably thought that if people didn't see them, they'd forget all about the articles. This may have actually worked if Skeeter hadn't then gone on to publish her actual sources detailing the falling education standards of Hogwarts and the employment rates of certain careers.

She was enjoying a rise in readership unlike anything she'd ever seen before and she'd started to understand the benefits of writing the honest truth, especially if it was scandalous truth. There was nothing anyone could do, as Dumbledore had already tried to get the paper to stop slandering him until it was blatantly pointed out that there was no reference to him personally, but rather Hogwarts as an institution.

The owner of the paper had stood in Diagon Alley and asked Dumbledore very loudly if he was trying to cover up the truth. Needless to say the man backed off quickly and had sequestered himself in his office to try and hold on to his positions by calling in every favour he had. Things were not going well for the old man; his competence was being called into question by the ICW, and Minister Fudge had suddenly grown a backbone and was siding against him – thank you, Amelia Bones.

That was not the worst of it however, as not a few days after the first article a team of Aurors stormed the castle and arrested Snape for his inappropriate behaviour against the students. Worst was the reported Legilimency probes, and accusations of allowing students to sabotage others with dangerous and potentially fatal results.

Rose had been getting evidence from some of the students for over a month now, and some of the of-age pupils had even provided memories for evidence which had been sent to Amelia. They both knew that it wasn't fair, but some of those students were from wealthy pure-blood families who could demand a trial for his actions against their Heirs. She herself gave evidence, but Amelia assured her that all of the students' names would be kept anonymous.

This was an opportunity that Amelia wasn't going to miss. She'd wanted to question him for years but with Dumbledore's word on his side she hadn't been able to do anything. Now she had the Potions Master in a holding cell while his body was flushed of potions and spells, and when it came to the trial Dumbledore couldn't be involved as the Chief Warlock because of a conflict of interest due to recent events.

Apparently when she'd questioned Snape, he'd just sneered at her and spat nasty vitriol about the students being too stupid to understand his subject and how it was their fault if they failed.
Considering she had one memory where he actually gave extra ingredients to one of the Slytherins to throw in another cauldron she highly doubted that.

Amelia just left the pathetic man to his own company and went to arrange a trial; he would finally have to face the consequences of his actions. The quicker she could convict him, the better.

A couple of weeks of Snape-free school was rather invigorating, Rose thought. Slytherin House, at least the nastier ones, were pissed off that they could no longer get away with some of the crap they pulled, as Professor Sinistra as their temporary Head was as strict with them as she was with the other Houses.

Potions was taught by whatever teacher was available for now, but the students were assured that another well-renowned Potioneer was going to be teaching soon and not to worry. She wondered if that meant Slughorn, and if so, how the hell did anyone manage to bring him back?

She walked up Ravenclaw Tower slowly, thinking about how if everything went to plan Voldemort would be dead in about a month. It was late November now, and the only two Horcruxes remaining were the ring and the diary. She knew that Sharpfang would be taking care of the ring soon and the diary would also be destroyed shortly.

Rose got to her room and put away her notes from the study group before spelling her bed curtains shut and going into the trunk apartment. She saw some new letters to respond to in a pile on the table, including one from Sharpfang. She broke the seal and opened it up.

---

**Dear Lady Rose Potter-Peverell,**

*I am writing to inform you that the item known as the Philosopher's Stone has been returned to Nicolas Flamel and his wife, both of whom have offered their greatest thanks to you despite their anger at the situation in general. I would expect some correspondence from them in the future.*

*I also wish to inform you that myself and a team of Curse-Breakers are departing to cleanse the ring Horcrux tomorrow, after which the ring will be returned to you as per our agreement.*

*As you have mentioned before, the diary will also be dealt with shortly, which leaves us with the wraith in your possessed professor. The day before you depart on the Hogwarts Express for Christmas, I will be sending you a portkey which you can attach to your professor and he will be deposited in a ritual chamber for immediate exorcism.*

*May your gold grow and your enemies weep with fear.*

*Manager Sharpfang*

---

With her plans in the works and those of the goblins, two more Horcruxes would be destroyed by the start of December and things could get back to normal. Or at least what constituted 'normal' in the life of Rose Potter. Merlin only knew why the standards of sanity in her life were so lax.

She sighed and put away the letter before turning to the pile of other letters in front of her with a wince.
"Why the bloody hell am I still getting fan mail from my classmates?"

By the last week of November Rose was rather irritable. It was wet and cold, the teachers were handing out ridiculous amounts of homework, and she was getting more and more stressed about Voldemort as the days went by. She made sure not to let anyone know she was twitchy, though. Merlin only knew what sort of half-baked plan Voldy would come up with if he thought his plans to get the stone were going wrong. She was almost morbidly curious about what he'd say if he knew that the stone was already gone.

She walked out of her Potions class with Professor Sinistra trying to think of a plan for sending Quirrellmort to Gringotts. Getting him there sounded complicated and dangerous, but she had a feeling that a simple plan would be the best solution. There was no point in trying to come up with something convoluted and flashy when an easier plan would be more reliable.

Reaching up briefly she felt for the ring on a chain around her neck. The newly-cleansed Gaunt ring was a soothing presence that she constantly felt the need to touch. Having the Resurrection Stone embedded in it probably didn't help.

Perhaps it was her status as Lady Peverell now, but the Hallow felt nothing like it had before. It wasn't eerie, it didn't call to her, and it didn't strike fear in her when she thought about its capabilities. To her it felt warm, its magic exuding a soft aura that called to her Family magic offering comfort. She often felt it resonating with her Peverell House ring, almost as if it was reassuring her that it was hers and hers alone.

Despite knowing what it could do she felt no need to call upon the dead, even with the opportunity to see her parents once more. She knew deep down that the dead were meant to stay dead. Death is not something that can be controlled on a whim, it is something that merely exists. Even working with the Veil she'd always been careful to be respectful, especially as she had a theory that the archway and the stone were connected somehow.

Walking along the hallways she passed a group of older Slytherins who were whispering furiously to each other. She had a feeling that it was because of the morning paper proclaiming Severus Snape guilty of child endangerment and illegal use of spells against underage children, amongst other convictions. Amelia told her that he'd actually given up a whole lot of information which the Aurors were slowly using to build up a case against the Death Eaters who'd escaped prosecution after the war. (Said Aurors were thoroughly enjoying their anonymous donation, even if Amelia had face-palmed in private.)

Amelia was a woman who'd seen a lot in her career chasing evil wizards, but even she was thoroughly disgusted at what she'd learnt from Snape's questioning. Rose thought that with his status as one of the inner circle he probably knew a lot about Death Eater 'activities' which was probably why Amelia was so disturbed.

With irrefutable evidence that Snape was being sentenced to Azkaban the snakes were obviously worried about being protected. The nicer ones like her friends were worried about the unfair prejudice against their House, but the nastier ones had realised their bullying wouldn't be condoned anymore.

All the fervour was certainly beneficial for Rose, though. The next day was an emergency meeting of the Board of Governors so Lucius Malfoy would be out of the manor, and Sirius had offered to help her plans by having a Black family meetup with Andromeda and Narcissa, in private at least. (Rose had a feeling that her dad and Andi got on better with Narcissa than they'd admit, especially as they seemed very keen to reconnect with their cousin-slash-sister.)
The following day saw Rose in the Chamber of Secrets awaiting her faithful house-elf. Having a house-elf from the future was inordinately useful, not just for their bond but also for Dobby’s knowledge of current events. He knew things that happened with the pure-bloods around this time, he knew people to avoid, but best of all he knew the layout of certain buildings.

One of these buildings was Malfoy Manor.

She may have been there before, but being kidnapped and tortured didn't exactly give her the opportunity to explore the building. She hated the place and didn't understand how Draco could stand to live there in the future, even with all of the renovations that he'd done.

Grimmauld Place may have reminded her of Sirius and made her cry a bit, but she hadn't seen anyone locked there and tortured. It wasn't the happiest place, but she could remember sitting with Sirius as he told stories about his childhood, laughing about annoying his mother and lamenting over his brother.

She smiled as she thought about how she didn't have to rely on memories of Sirius anymore, or Remus. Her once father figures were now her actual fathers, legal adoption or not, and she had a family that actually loved her. The biggest wish she'd had as an abused orphan at the Dursleys had finally come true.

Rose was startled out her thoughts by Dobby popping in with a small brown box.

"Any problems Dobby? Did anyone see you?"

The elf shook his emphatically, ears flapping about. "No problems, Miss Rosey. Nobody saw Dobby working."

"Great job Dobby! You can go back to work now."

Dobby beamed at her a little maniacally before popping away.

She opened the box and peered inside, gaze falling on the teenage diary of one Tom Marvolo Riddle. She thought that Lucius Malfoy really needed to reconsider the actual strength of house-elves and how easy it was to steal from him.

Before Rose had originally met Dobby at the age of twelve, he'd been working for the Malfoy family for just over twenty years. He knew the ins and outs of the manor and the secrets they wouldn't want anyone to know of. He also knew all about the wards covering the property which did nothing to stop him getting in. The hidden room under the drawing room floor however was closed even to elves unless they'd been shown how to get in. In his past life, Dobby had been.

Rose could have gotten the diary before now, but she'd wanted to wait until she knew a specific time that Malfoy was out in case Dobby got in trouble. There was no way that she'd put him in that sort of danger, especially with how vividly she remembered the time he'd nearly died from Bellatrix's knife. He'd been stabbed and it'd been touch and go for a while, but he'd just barely pulled through. Even though he'd reassured her plenty of times she still felt guilty about that day, and she'd made sure he was always safe from then on.

So Dobby had once more come to her rescue and popped over to Malfoy Manor, stole the diary and replaced it with a fake. Looking down at the diary she couldn't help but feel pity for the younger Tom, as this diary was the physical manifestation of the very moment he fucked up everything for good.
Before this he could have turned his life around, but this … thing, was a one-way ticket to insanity and a ruined chance for a good life that he could never take back. She wondered if he’d known what was happening when he did it, or if his mind had fractured instantaneously without notice.

She banished the thought, realising that there was no point in feeling sorry when she couldn't save him. Though it could be construed that killing him was putting him out of his misery, she supposed.

Rose picked up a small box and opened it carefully to see the case of vials inside that she'd received from Gringotts, pulling out one of the vials and looking at the clear liquid inside. Basilisk venom.

She didn't even pick the diary up before she tipped the vial into the box, watching as the venom sizzled and burned through the leather and pages. The diary spurted and bled ink, and it emitted a high-pitched scream which seemed distant but echoed around the chamber at the same time. A black haze rose out of the diary before screaming even louder, then dissipating into nothing.

As of right now all the Horcruxes were gone.

As of now, Voldemort could die.

Chapter End Notes

Hi guys :)

Before anyone accuses me of bashing Snape let me just say this: as much as I enjoy the fanon version of him being a snarky and sarcastic good guy, in canon he is literally an arsehole. There is actually a moment where he grabs Harry and violently shoves him to the floor (I believe it's after the pensieve moment, but I could be wrong). He is verbally and emotionally abusive towards a young orphan, and doesn't even respect him enough to judge him on his own actions, let alone the blatant discrimination towards the different Houses.

Sorry about the mini rant, but you have to admit the 'Harry Potter' series certainly makes you see certain things in a darker perspective as an adult.

Until next time :D
Is the end of life really death?

Chapter Notes

I don't own 'Harry Potter'.

Just a heads up - I'm utterly crap at writing action, and I'm probably going to piss off a few people with how I handled things. Sorry guys, I just wanted to do things in a a different way, please don't flame me too bad!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

It was quite nice not having the adults at school suspicious of Rose, and none of the professors seemed all that concerned that Rose had elected to go home for Christmas as they were more focused on taking names down for those who would be staying. They seemed much more rushed than usual, and with how much Dumbledore had been hiding in his office recently Rose wondered how much extra work they'd been given.

Rose was honestly too excited to care. Not one time at Hogwarts had she had the chance to take the Hogwarts Express home for Christmas and spend it with family. Her family. It was a new experience and she was going to enjoy it to the best of her ability, even if she was more childish than usual.

Though she had a feeling she wasn't the most childish if the letters from home were any indication. According to Amelia she was having a difficult time reigning in her fiancé, as he seemed to be on a mission to cover every inch of Rose's house in tasteless decorations even if it was still two weeks until Christmas. She dearly hoped her family home wouldn't be destroyed by his enthusiasm.

Rose had always thought herself to be a mature adult but being in the past was actually rather trying for her. She knew she was good at burying parts of herself that made her vulnerable, but her family was slowly bringing them out and soothing her long-buried pain. They'd realised quite quickly that she didn't know how to respond to affection, and they were rather good at distracting her with hugs and kisses. Putting her first was a new experience too, as adults had usually treated her as an afterthought. Or simply used her as a chess piece. Not that she was bitter or anything. Not at all.

She was coming face to face with childhood issues that had never been dealt with properly and her dads seemed determined to show her what a family really was. The two of them were focusing on her but Rose knew they were benefiting too. Sirius was obvious with his childhood tainted by insanity and cruelty, but Remus' early life hadn't been all sunshine and rainbows either.

His parents had said they'd accepted his Lycanthropy and cared for him, but when the full moon came he'd been locked away with his parents looking at him with sadness, fear and pity. They could have mentioned straight-up the brutal reality of his situation and he would have loved them just the same, but their method of pretending everything was normal was disheartening to say the least.

Now though the two men were very involved in the spirit of the season. She grinned at the thought of Christmas even though present shopping was getting a little daunting. Thank God for owl-order service.

Aside from her close friends, the rest of the Ravenclaws including Penelope were getting an assortment of magical and muggle sweets, and some key chains shaped like books.
Hermione was getting some wizarding children’s books, like *The Tales of Beedle the Bard*. Daphne, Tracy, Susan and Hannah were getting some jewellery, and she'd bought some Potions tools for Terry. For Su and Millicent she’d gotten two high-quality jumpers.

The last two girls, Lavender and Parvati, were getting a set of colour-changing hair accessories. Wayne was getting a collection of Stephen King novels which inspired Blaise's *Sherlock Holmes* set. As for Neville, he was getting a new pair of Herbology gloves made from dragon-hide.

The terrible twosome Fred and George were each getting a book of notes handwritten by the Marauders. (She knew McGonagall would hate her forever if she found out.)

The basilisk hide had certainly come in handy for Christmas; Sirius was getting a jacket like the one he had from his teenage rebellion, and Remus was getting a nice pair of boots that would last him for years to come.

For the Aurors, Amelia had a coat on the way while Tonks had a stylish vest. As a lawyer, Ted was getting a journal for work while she'd had a nice bag made for Andi. Augusta had a coin purse, and both it and the bag had Undetectable Extension and Anti-Summoning Charms on them.

She got a few assorted scarves to send to her teachers, as well as some bolts of fabric for her elves to make their own outfits. Hagrid was getting a book on dangerous creatures and how to care for them. (She didn't want to tempt fate, but at least this way he'd have some reputable instructions in case he found himself in another dodgy animal situation. Which he most likely would.)

For the first time as a Hogwarts student, Rose Potter was excited for Christmas, and nobody, not even Voldemort, was going to ruin it.

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Getting rid of Voldemort was supposed to be an extraordinarily difficult task. The mad man had begun his reign of terror decades ago and he was still feared so much that the mere mention of his name elicited physical recoils. He was a psychopathic terrorist who delighted in murder and torture, and his killings showcased just how insane he was.

To stand against Lord Voldemort was practically suicide as many had found out in the past, and the monster wearing a human's face was a walking nightmare for nearly the entire magical population. The nightmare was more memorable than even his victims, as the memories of the poor souls who'd lost their lives to him had been drowned out by the terrifying infamy that was Lord Voldemort.

Even though it made her furious she could somewhat understand why people celebrated his supposed demise instead of mourning her parents. For such a monster to be killed was a relief, a respite from the fear that your family was next, or someone that you knew would soon become a target.

People had hunted him, tried to kill him and bring him down, to rid the world of his evil. He himself had been determined to never be normal. Tom Riddle's desire to stand above all others, to rise against his supposed 'filthy' origins, had sparked some of the evillest magic in existence and twisted his very being into something all sane magicals recoiled at. To defile oneself so deeply and irreversibly was a source of disgust for others, and Tom Riddle's descent into the persona of Lord Voldemort had marked a sickening new experience for the magical community.

For a man who'd split his own soul, who'd desperately tied himself to the mortal plane in such a way, to be taken out in this manner was utterly ludicrous. Rose couldn't tell if it was sad or fitting.

Rose had racked her brain for hours upon hours trying to think of a plan to lure Voldemort outside
the boundaries of the school's wards. Compelling him to walk off, inviting him to Hogsmeade, even using someone as bait, she'd had plans upon plans swirling around in her brain before realising that she was truly becoming a Ravenclaw and over-thinking things.

Voldemort was a terrifying and powerful entity but as of right now he was a powerless wraith trapped in the body of a mediocre wizard. Rose's meditation and exercises with wandless magic had increased her ability to sense the magical strength of others, and Quirrell was merely average at best. This was probably why he'd had to feed on unicorns, because his body was too weak to sustain the magic of Voldemort's spirit. As much as she despised the monster she was smart enough to acknowledge his magical prowess.

Said prowess was unfortunately – for him – out of reach at the moment, as the dominating soul in the body belonged to Quirrell. Voldemort could anchor himself to his host body and control his magic, but the DADA teacher's reserves were pitiful compared to Voldemort.

Rose had nearly bashed her head against the wall when she realised that she'd been planning while subconsciously thinking of him as stronger than he currently was. She'd told herself before that simple was best and she lived by using the tools at her disposal. The fact was that the portkey she would receive would only work when outside the boundaries of Hogwarts' wards. It would also take effect as soon as it touched human skin so she would have to levitate it onto the professor. She had to get both elements in a location where the process would work without anyone the wiser.

Rose was a determined individual, not to mention smart and cunning, so much so that she couldn’t begrudge the comparisons between her and the younger Tom. But the contrast between them that made all the difference was her ability to empathise with and respect others. Especially other species.

When Voldemort had used Kreacher to hide the locket he'd been so arrogant to automatically assume the inferiority of the elf that he didn't realise he had just given away the secret to his 'immortality'.

But Rose wasn't so naive. Other creatures had their own inherent magic and had their own abilities which made them both unique and strong. House-elves were no exception, and she didn't doubt the strength of their abilities which was why Dobby was such a constant in her life. His own time travel aside, he was intelligent and crafty, using his magic to take revenge on those that had wronged him and his family.

When Dobby had originally spoken about freedom he'd meant the freedom to choose a family that would treat him right. It was this reason that his bond with Rose was so strong. She respected his choice to work instead of forcing what she thought house-elves should be onto him, and even went so far as to restrict his jobs if she thought he was in danger.

It was this reason that Dobby was the key to killing Voldemort.

Dobby had already established his ability to compel non-magical people when he'd successfully spelled her aunt ans uncle, and though magic made the process more difficult, a quick slip of a Confundus Charm-like potion in his morning coffee made Quirrell much more open to suggestions. Which in turn made it easier for Dobby to compel the idiot to walk to the infamous haunted bathroom.

It was rather pathetic that a Stunner and Body-Bind were more than enough to take down a Voldemort-possessed wannabe-terrorist, but considering the general arrogance that witches and wizards possessed it was no wonder than hiding around a corner and spelling someone in the back actually worked. Levitating the body down to the Chamber of Secrets was also ridiculously simple, and she felt an anxious flutter in her stomach as she felt herself cross the border of the school's wards.
When she got to the main chamber she took a minute to morph her appearance to that of generic brown hair and eyes and removed all traces of her House from her uniform. Just because she had somewhat reckless ideas didn't mean that provoking the insane psycho was a good idea.

With a flick of her wand the man was cognisant and moving.

After a groan and some muttered threats, Quirrellmort rolled over before locking eyes with her unimpressed brown orbs and bolting to his feet, wand pointed at a spot between her eyes. It was a shame that she had set up some small yet powerful Parselmagic wards that allowed her to send spells through but deflected ones aimed at her. Idiot.

"You know, I never quite understood the reasoning behind serving Voldemort, let alone allowing him to possess your very body. Maybe it's me, but I'd prefer working with someone, rather than serving them like a pathetic dog starved for attention."

Quirrell had always struck her as a cowardly worm but the flash of fury on his face would have made a saner person whimper. Sanity wasn't something that Rose Potter subscribed to, however.

"How dare you! You insolent child, I have no idea how you know the truth, but listen to me! Lord Voldemort is power, and power is the only thing that's important. You –"

"Quirrell."

The soft tone, hissing even in muffled whispers was followed by a brief discussion which ended in Rose once more coming face-to-face with the back of Quirrell's head. As an eleven-year-old, the sight of the possession had been terrifying to Rose, but as an adult who'd specialised in obscure branches of magic the red-eyed visage was simply nauseating.

Voldemort had no idea what he was doing to himself, to both of them, and this snake-like face was like a flashing sign, warning everyone of the dangers of possession. He might think that he knew what he was doing, but he wouldn't look so inhumane if he'd succeeded. Of course, his arrogance wouldn't allow for him to concede his mistakes.

§Hello Tom, nice to see you again.§

His snarl was almost impressive, though it lost some of the effect for the simple fact that he was stuck on the back of someone's head.

§Who are you?! You dare to speak the noble language of the great Salazar Slytherin with your filthy mouth?! You pathetic child.§

She arched an eyebrow in an unimpressed manner even as she subtly shifted the grip on her wand.

§You can rant and rave as much as you want, Tom Marvolo Riddle, but I am more than worthy of speaking a language that I inherited from my ancestors. As for the 'pathetic child' comment, I'm not the one whose daddy issues made them change names and start killing people in a childish temper tantrum.§

Rose was more than aware of her tendency to get snarky when agitated, but the moment the words fell from her mouth she wanted to face-palm. Granted he was the reason her parents were dead, but she shouldn't have snapped like that without thinking; it was clear that being face-to-face with him would always bring out her most idiotic Gryffindor attributes. Insulting the crazy bastard was the furthest thing from smart, and the growing fury on the twisted face was more than enough of a warning sign.
She knew that she had wards up that would protect her, but instincts were instincts, and she acted without thinking and dived out the way of the spell he sent at her. Judging from the sickly orange colour it was a dark Cutting Curse and would have left her dead immediately if she'd been hit. As it was she vaguely noticed the orange dissipate as it hit her wards.

Rose was thankful for her daily wandless magic training as she conjured thick ropes as she dodged, hearing the satisfying thud where the possessed man tripped and hit the stone floor hard, hurling insults as he went. Voldemort couldn't use wandless magic as the possessing spirit, and with his arms trapped at his sides he was unable to aim.

She wasn't stupid though and knew he could probably escape with enough time, so she quickly pulled out the portkey bag and levitated the chain out and launched it at his neck, watching as it wrapped around him from the force of the movement.

His eyes widened briefly before he vanished before her eyes. She could feel her blood pounding in her ears and her stomach was clenched with anxiety. Rose quickly made her way back out the chamber and through the castle, not pausing until she was safely ensconced in her trunk.

The girl had no composure as she ran to the glowing box on the desk and wrested open the lid so hard she nearly tore it off the hinges. She was high-strung with shaking hands, and her breathing was shallow as she desperately searched for what she was looking for, what she needed.

With shaking hands she opened the quick note from Sharpfang which told her that Voldemort was currently in their custody, and that he would write again when the ritual was over. The goblins were attempting to separate the parasitic Voldemort from the spirit of Quirrell, but they were doubtful of their chances.

When a host is unwillingly taken over by a spirit there will always exist the smallest part of the subconscious mind that rejects the foreign presence completely. It is difficult and it doesn't always work, but it is possible to isolate that part of the mind and expand it, slowly allowing the host to essentially take over their own mind, similar to the initial possession. Then they are able to guide the mind so it finds the spirit that possessed them and drive them out. It cannot be guaranteed to work but there is a chance.

If the host is willingly possessed there is no chance at all.

She could not remember if Quirrell ever said he was willing or not. His actions before led Rose to think that he was coerced, which seemed to be a grey area in the middle. She didn't know if he would survive.

Pacing around her trunk was doing nothing to settle her nerves about Voldemort and even Dobby was visibly concerned. The hot chocolate he gave her warmed her immediately before a strange and artificial calm washed over her. She raised a brow at his unrepentant look before he very matter-of-factly said she needed to be calm before she hurt herself.

Rose snorted into her cup as she drank, before sitting down and trying to distract herself with a book. She'd just read the same line for the fourteenth time before her box began glowing. She mentally thanked Dobby for the Calming Draught before opening the box to find a letter that looked deceptively innocent. She took a breath and opened it.

As of 22nd December 1991, Quirinus Orcus Quirrell was dead as the ritual to save him failed.

As of 22nd December 1991, Lord Voldemort, also known as Tom Marvolo Riddle, was dead as the ritual to kill him succeeded.
The evil that had ruined her life and killed her birth parents was gone. It was surreal.

Voldemort was dead.

She sat down and looked at the parchment blankly. Rose Potter stayed that way for hours until she succumbed to sleep, dreaming of an unknown future.

Chapter End Notes

First of all, again I'm sorry if any of you were disappointed in my handling of his death, but I am terrible at writing action and I wanted to do something a little different. Rose is not Harry, and she's lived a life of experimenting and logic - there was a reason I had her in Ravenclaw. That being said, her parents' killer is something of a trigger for her old Gryffindor personality. Something like a knee-jerk reaction.

Secondly, this story is supposed to be primarily about Rose fixing things so that people can live, not just about getting rid of Voldemort. He was never supposed to be the final villain or anything, as the story is about the characters and how things would happen if there wasn't a Dark Lord looming over everyone.

Lastly, thank you so much for all the reviews, they've been such an inspiration for this story.

I hope everyone keeps reading, and if anyone has any constructive criticism I'm all ears, just please don't flame me for the sake of it.

Happy reading :D
The inhabitants of the train compartment were looking rather concerned for the small blonde girl sat in the corner. She was looking blankly out the window and didn't seem to be focusing on anything at all, instead ignoring the passing countryside as she retreated into herself. The other students were all worried about her; all morning she'd been like this even though not a week before she'd been bouncing around excitedly about going home.

Blaise, Hermione and Rose's Hufflepuff friends were troubled about their friend and their quiet discussions amongst themselves couldn't come up with any reasons for her mood. The friends knew that she had a new family that she loved dearly, as she usually got an incredibly sweet smile on her face when she spoke about her 'dads' and some of the things they had done together. They'd thought that she'd been excited to spend Christmas with them and couldn't figure out why she suddenly wasn't. (Then again, suspecting that she'd just had Voldemort killed wasn't even in the vicinity of their suspicions.)

Hermione and Blaise at least had some ideas as to why their friend was in a strange mood – even if they were completely wrong – and the two of them were even more observant than Rose had given them credit for. Blaise was fast becoming one of Rose's best friends and Hermione was her roommate, and without any other girls around in their dormitory she had noticed more things about Rose than she had in her previous life. (Not that Rose had realised this with her single-minded focus on sorting out all the crap from her past life.)

The two of them had questioned Rose subtly in the past few months as they noticed that she was actually quite reserved for all that she laughed and joked, and she never offered any substantial personal information about herself. It was public knowledge about her birth parents, and they knew about her godfather being released from his unlawful incarceration before the school year started, so they figured that maybe he was one of her dads, but that was about it.

Rose Potter was more Slytherin than most of the students in the House itself in how she presented herself. She gave no information that could be used against her, she was a genius in their school work, and had excellent control over her magic.

They also knew that she hated her muggle relatives.

Whenever the conversation got onto the topic, it was quickly diverted and everyone else distracted with something else. The look in her eyes displayed deeply-buried pain and anger, as well as a touch of sadness.

What cinched it for the two observant children was how she once subconsciously rubbed her arm when she spoke about her uncle. Blaise was a from a connected pure-blood family who had seen a few abusive adults with children before (as unfortunately some families had some rather disturbing views on what constituted 'discipline'), and Hermione had once encountered an abused boy at her primary school.
They figured that her muggle relatives had been abusive towards her and she now had no idea how to react to a family event that was going to be completely normal. They had no idea how far the abuse had gone, but their thoughts were eerily similar in their plans to destroy Rose Potter's muggle relatives.

Nobody hurt their friend and got away with it.

The only other children to have any idea of the girl’s thoughts were Susan and Neville who actually knew who her adopted parents were. They weren’t stupid though, and Amelia and Augusta had briefed the two on how that knowledge could be dangerous for Rose at school so they were to keep quiet. It didn’t feel like a burden at all though, primarily because the girl in question was their friend. They were also very much aware of the dangers of family members being targeted, as they themselves personally felt the absence of their parents on a daily basis. Neville’s parents may be technically alive, but he felt like an orphan sometimes just like Susan.

There was no way they would even dream of betraying the girl who had offered her hand of friendship to the two without a second thought, even more so with how she’d stringently maintained their friendships despite being in a different House to them. She could have dropped them immediately, but she’d held on like they were something precious. Of course, knowing how nervous she was about their friendships helped even more.

Their guardians had warned them beforehand that Rose had actually been raised in a less-than-loving household and that the girl was exceedingly shy but hid it well. They’d told the two children that Rose didn’t know how to react to positive interactions and that they’d have to be careful with her, but not to bring it up and embarrass her.

They’d noticed it immediately in her interactions with Sirius and Remus. Simple actions like hugging her and stroking her hair made her beaming face seem heart-breaking when Susan and Neville realised she only reacted like that because she’d never had anyone to do that to her. It was baffling that such simple things they’d taken for granted were so alien to the girl.

The two had been determined from that moment on to become the best friends ever for Rose in the hopes that she would have some normal relationships with children her own age. When she’d carried on hanging out with them the two had been delighted.

Susan’s only other female friend at the time had been Hannah and she’d always wanted another friend. Not to say that Hannah was a bad friend, but she knew that sometimes having the same two people together for too long could get argumentative. Rose was a lot more mature than other girls their age and she never caused any friction between them, giving Susan a small break from other children.

Neville on the other hand was ecstatic that his first friend wasn't ashamed of him and spoke to him in public. He’d been terrified when they’d originally met, thinking that Rose Potter was someone who would be disgusted with how weak he was. Instead he’d met a happy, confident girl who genuinely enjoyed talking to him and helped him to improve himself, simply because she considered them to be friends already.

Neither Hufflepuff would allow their friend to remain upset for long. Hufflepuff was generally seen as the weak House to others, but when you hurt someone under their protection they showed exactly why the majority of the Department of Magical Law Enforcement were former badgers.

Rose Potter was rather oblivious to her friends’ vaguely murderous thoughts as she gazed out the
window, watching the scenery pass by in a distracted manner that was strangely reminiscent of one Luna Lovegood.

Nearly an entire day had gone by and she still couldn't believe what had happened. Using a house-elf and a goblin-made portkey, she had transported the Voldemort-possessed professor to the goblin Curse-Breakers for an exorcism/cleansing ritual which had resulted in both host spirit and possessing spirit dying.

One day ago Voldemort had died.

Not been defeated. Not temporarily destroyed. But died. He had finally met his final and permanent death, and to Rose it was utterly surreal.

She hadn't actually registered it yet. She couldn't, not with all the knowledge of the other plans enacted in her future school years roaming around inside her mind. The basilisk petrifying students, the Tri-Wizard Tournament, the graveyard, Death Eaters in the Ministry, in the school, her school as a battlefield …

Voldemort had been responsible for all these tragedies, and she couldn't quite correlate the seemingly simple removal of Voldemort from this world to his larger-than-life plans every year. It was as if she was waiting for him to reappear out of nowhere, proclaiming that she was going to die or him forcing her to duel him to the death.

She kept looking around and waiting for a snake-faced visage to materialise out of nowhere. She was back to where she had been just after the war, but if anything this was worse because she didn't know. PTSD was bad enough with physical proof of things ending. When everything happened out of sight it was awful.

When she'd killed him originally he had been laying on the ground at her feet, dying as she watched the light fade out of his eyes with a sense of satisfaction. Rose had watched the face of Voldemort die in front of her and had been able to see the end of the war take place at her very feet.

This time however she hadn't seen Voldemort, she'd seen an enraged Quirrellmort get whisked away by a portkey and later received a note from Sharpfang telling her that Voldemort was dead. She didn't get to see the murderer die in front of her, and instead had to contend herself with a simple letter from her manager.

She had nothing but respect for Sharpfang and her trust in him and his judgement was near unbreakable, but she needed to see evidence of his demise. She didn't think she could cope at this point if she didn't.

Others might be a little worried if they started getting desperate to see evidence of death but she knew that closure was needed in this situation, even if would be morbid to say the least. She didn't care though, the man had ruined so much of her life that to see him definitively dead would be a balm on her soul.

Rose knew that there was a good chance that there was nothing left of the body that had portkeyed away which was why she hadn't been offered the chance to see. The goblins had an unusually high opinion of her from her dealings with bank from the past six months – she'd known offering so much of the basilisk profits would be useful to her – and would have offered the chance without a moment's thought if there had actually been something left to see.

The thought depressed her and she heaved a sigh, finally noticing out the corner of her eye multiple concerned looks directed at her from her friends. She was rather bemused at how she'd made friends
rather easily this time, perhaps because she didn't bow down to other people's expectations and instead was unashamedly herself.

No longer did she dumb down her work to make Ron like her more or to make sure Hermione didn't get jealous of her grades, instead she welcomed attention that would be attributed to her as Rose Potter, not The-Girl-Who-Lived. She was considered a genius but she wasn't so advanced that it was suspicious. It was rather ironic that her intellect made her friendship with Hermione even stronger this time.

Instead of Hermione being jealous she was inspired and saw Rose as something of a friendly rival. With stable friendships Hermione wasn't so insecure and didn't need her book-smarts to make herself seem useful. She still lectured people, but it was for their study group where everyone did the same thing. It seemed normality was a heartening experience for the girl and Rose could only empathise.

She hated being known for something that was not her work. The only reason she was alive was because Lily Potter had been a hell of a lot more cunning that anyone had given her credit for. The old, obscure, and very much illegal blood runes that covered every inch of Rose's nursery in Godric's Hollow proved beyond a shadow of a doubt that Lily hadn't given a flying fuck about legality where her daughter's life had been concerned. The ancient magics that had been invoked in that room were more than enough for several one-way tickets to Azkaban, but the threat of prison hadn't even been a factor in her decision to keep her daughter alive.

This time around Rose had decided to honour her parents' sacrifice fully, and actually live rather than just survive doing what others wanted. She'd made friends, found a family, and was making a name for herself at school which had nothing to do with Halloween of nineteen eighty-one.

She turned back to the other occupants of the compartment with a grin on her face.

"So what's everyone doing over Christmas, anyway?"

Sirius gleefully looked around at the mass of parents and family members waiting for the Hogwarts Express, inwardly praising the genius of glamour charms. He knew that eventually people would find out that he and Remus were the parents of Rose but they wanted to give her a semblance of peace for a while longer. That and they wanted to keep her to themselves.

He was stood with Remus, Augusta and Amelia waiting for their children to appear so they could whisk them away for the break. He and Remus had planned to take Rose out for the day today, before returning to The Pottery to spend Christmas Eve lazing around and finishing their – somewhat garish – decorations and putting up the tree together as a family.

As a child he'd hated this time of year. Everything had been so artificial and rehearsed it had been pathetic. He remembered once in muggle London where he had seen a family together shopping for presents, and the father had told his children about how Christmas was a time for family and a time to appreciate the good things in life.

He had been struck by the simple joy they exuded and ended up even more disgusted when his mother told him that he had to attend a ball and look a certain way to attract certain people, as the possibility of alliances had to be considered. There had been no such thing as 'family time' in the Black family.

It wouldn't be the same for Rose. As a child her Christmases had been non-existent and as an adult she hadn't celebrated all that much for herself. This time she was going to be spoiled rotten and Christmas was going to be about her. He couldn't wait until she opened some of the presents he'd
bought.

Remus looked over at his friend who was sporting a childish grin and snorted before turning around and waiting for the train. Sirius might have been acting like an idiot but they were in agreement about this Christmas being about Rose. Just the image of her spending Christmas locked in a cupboard had Moony roaring to escape and kill the bastards who'd dared treat his daughter that way. Never again would she feel like something strange to be locked away, and this Christmas would be about giving her a childhood Christmas beyond imagination.

He switched back to reality as the train pulled in and hundreds of students disembarked. He glanced around the masses of bodies looking for a head of curly blonde hair. Unfortunately she was still rather small so spotting her was proving to be difficult.

Remus and Sirius stood together next to Amelia and Augusta so their children would be able to spot them easier. A few minutes later they heard a shouted, "Dads!" before a small weight collided with their legs and two small arms held onto their waists.

They reached down and lifted Rose up into a group hug and held her tightly. She might have snuck home for Sirius' birthday but that had been a month ago and they missed her.

They let her down and grinned at their daughter before gently ruffling her hair.

"Let's go home, Bambi."
One Christmas miracle coming up

Chapter Notes

I don't own 'Harry Potter'.

Neville Longbottom was crying. Scratch that, he was sobbing. His hands were covering his eyes and he was crouched on the floor where his legs had given up on him. In the back of his mind he could hear the familiar voice of his grandmother scolding him on his behaviour, telling him to straighten up and how he was ruining the image of the House of Longbottom.

He really couldn't care less.

His entire world had just been turned around and he didn't know what to feel. Happy, sad, confused … His mind was a complete and utter mess. Everything had just changed within the space of less than an hour and his emotions were all over the place. His grandmother Augusta had always reminded him to present himself in a poised and collected fashion, but his thoughts were entirely too erratic to properly consider the situation and act accordingly.

Besides, considering the usually severe woman was in a similar state to him right now, he thought putting forward a regal view of the House of Longbottom wasn't all that important at the present time. Tears were falling down her face as she sat in a chair crying silently at the two confused faces in front of them, who were worriedly trying to understand what was wrong with their family.

The two Longbottoms had been rather subdued as they left for their yearly Christmas visit to St Mungo's, not knowing exactly how they should feel this time. It was the first year that they would visit knowing that the monsters responsible for Frank and Alice's condition were dead and gone, unable to hurt anyone else ever again. The problem was that their victims were still in the hospital; Frank and Alice were still sat in their ward, completely unaware of the fact that their attackers had finally been dealt with and that they'd been avenged.

Augusta and Neville could sit in front of them and explain everything that had happened to the Lestranges until they were blue in the face, but their family still wouldn't register anything. They were irrevocably trapped; trapped in the hospital, trapped in their own minds, and any justice from the Lestrange deaths wasn't going to change this fact.

No matter how satisfying it was to know that the vermin responsible for tearing their family apart were dead and gone, it didn't erase what they'd done in the slightest. Their vindication was tainted with bitter sadness, knowing that their justice didn't magically fix anything. Frank and Alice were still in the hospital, and the two other Longbottoms had to contend themselves with a relationship created through loss and tragedy.

Augusta and Neville's relationship had always been categorised by Augusta's over-protectiveness. Having her son and his wife attacked in such a manner had caused her to be overbearing to the extreme with Neville, which had methodically destroyed any self-esteem the child had. After Amelia had lit into her over the summer she had taken a step back and realised what she'd been doing to her grandson.
She'd never been more ashamed of herself.

Neville had been thankful when she apologised though, and the two began mending their relationship over the summer, enough so that by the time he went to Hogwarts she had been extremely proud of his Herbology knowledge and made sure to tell him. The knowledge that she was praising him for something that he was uniquely good at had made him ecstatic, especially when she'd told him that his parents hadn't been all that good at the subject.

Their relationship improved exponentially when Augusta discovered what Algie and their older relatives had been doing to him trying to determine if he was a wizard. She had never known how the older Longbottom kin had treated her grandson and had exploded with anger at his treatment. Neville was morbidly curious as to whether some of the things she threatened them with were possible, such as the entering of certain objects into certain orifices. The fact that she had not known about their behaviour towards him went a long way towards re-building bridges between them.

Unfortunately, an improved relationship hadn't been enough to ignore the fact that Augusta was only raising her grandson because her son and daughter-in-law were unable to. That fact had been swirling around in their minds as they began their journey to the hospital, unaware of the life-changing drama that would soon occur.

The duo mechanically made their way to the familiar hospital and began the familiar process of signing in at reception, before their usual routine was suddenly changed without warning. The receptionist jolted as soon as she heard their names and looked up at them with shock and another emotion that they couldn't identify, before a Healer came out of nowhere and whisked them away to a private room.

The Healer began a rushed and frantic explanation about Frank and Alice, but nothing registered in the minds of the boy and his grandmother at all until they heard that a miraculous healing had occurred, and that their family members were awake and aware.

Frank and Alice Longbottom had been healed.

None of the Healer's words registered after those words permeated the room and settled in their very souls. They could hear their blood pumping in their ears and hear their hearts racing, they felt as if their breath had vanished in an instant, and though they may have both felt differently the one thing they had in common was disbelief.

Augusta didn't believe them at all. For ten years her family had been fractured beyond all repair and now this Healer had come waltzing in proclaiming that everything was fine. How dare he! This man had the audacity, the gall, to proclaim that a hopeless case like her son and daughter-in-law had suddenly been solved through a mysterious miracle? She was going to kill him.

The sheer pain at the thought of a miracle cure for them made her seize up, but her pain was not the issue here. It was Neville's. This man's utter insensitivity was going to destroy her grandson and she would not stand for that.

Neville himself started, and for a single, heart-wrenching moment, felt such piercing hope it was painful. He could feel his heart clenching at the image of his parents turning to him and smiling, calling him by name and asking him about school. The hope of having parents to talk to, to ask for help, parents to introduce to his friends.

Then reality set in.
His parents weren't dead but they weren't going to come back either. They were stuck in a prison of their own minds, locked away without a key, and there was no hope of escape. It was pointless to pray otherwise.

The crushing feeling of despair flooded him. He refused to imagine something that wouldn't happen, but that brief flare of hope had only served to make him feel even worse as it was extinguished and now he just felt hollow.

He felt tears in his eyes and wondered exactly what this man had to gain by telling them something so impossible. His parents were never going to get better and he was always going to be coming here on every Christmas Day for years to come, talking to his parents with no answers and getting endless sweet wrappers every single time.

He hated having parents who were gone but not. He would never say anything but sometimes when he felt at his very worst, he was jealous of Rose and Susan. Their parents were dead and there was nothing but a definitive situation. They would never get false hope nor would they ever wonder about the possibility of seeing their parents. But it was worse for them too, and he would never insult them by saying something so selfish, as he knew they probably wished for at least a tiny part of their parents back. They were all suffering.

Neville saw his grandmother narrow her eyes and look at the Healer with a glare that promised death and started to open her mouth. Before she could talk the excited – and now nervous – Healer ushered them quickly to a private room on the Janus Thickey ward.

The Longbottoms walked in, the elder preparing to get the Healer fired very shortly, before they came face to face with a team of specialist Healers and Frank and Alice Longbottom. Who were looking at them in shock.

The two of them were rather emaciated with sunken faces and pale skin from lack of sunlight. They were lying in bed as per usual, dressed in awful hospital gowns and surrounded by Healers poking and prodding at them from every angle.

They now also had a light of intelligence in their eyes, and when they saw Augusta and Neville walk into the room their faces morphed from mild discomfort to pure shock.

"Neville?"

Twin voices hoarse from disuse permeated the room as the team of Healers quietly left, unnoticed by the reunited family.

Which led to the current crying situation. Neville had lost it completely while Augusta had seemingly forgotten any etiquette she possessed whatsoever. The newly-healed couple were bewildered but worried, as they hadn't been fully informed of the situation before their two visitors arrived.

The couple knew that they'd been hospitalised for a while but hadn't been told exactly how long. They didn't even know how they'd ended up there either. It seemed that the extreme damage done to them had resulted in them locking away the memories of the attack and the surrounding days as a self-defence mechanism, so they were unaware of the involvement of the Lestrange family in their attack.

Seeing a boy who could only be their son walk in, looking far older than they would have thought, was worrying to say the least. Seeing their son collapse on the floor and start sobbing his eyes out was even worse. When even Augusta lost control the couple was near hysterical with panic.
The Healer who'd brought them in soon came back and gave Neville a Calming Draught which calmed him so much that he fell asleep, and the Healer quickly transfigured a chair to a sofa and laid him down gently in full view of his parents.

Augusta took a potion too, but she was more used to them than her grandson and instead took a few breaths before walking over and grabbing both patients in a firm hug before sitting back and explaining the situation.

Frank Longbottom proved very quickly that he was Augusta's son and let loose with a variety of disturbing and creative threats against those who'd harmed his family. When he found out that some of his family had hurt his son, the look on his face reminded Augusta just how her son had managed to remain friends with the Marauders and not end up a victim.

It was Alice who was more dangerous though. Her husband may have ranted and raved, but she calculated and plotted. She may have been weak at the moment but she knew that soon enough anyone who'd hurt her son would be regretting it.

They were both rather pissed off that the Lestranges had died before they could get their own revenge, but happy that the people responsible for their attack were dead and gone. They contented themselves a while with imagining all the ways that they could have died and all the ways that they would have killed them if they had still been alive. Just because Frank and Alice had been Aurors didn't mean that they had no desire for revenge.

Augusta went on to fill in the blanks surrounding the days of their attack. Their memories were a little fuzzy of those days; the years before were fine but the general time of the attack was vague and hazy.

Knowing that their friends had been well and truly screwed over by Peter Pettigrew made them both angry and distraught. One man's actions had resulted in a girl being orphaned, a man falsely being sent to prison, an engagement breaking up, and another man being told he was too dangerous and being sent away.

As with the Lestrange family they were viciously glad that Pettigrew was dead but they knew it was different than their situation. There would be no miraculous recovery of the Potters. Rose Potter would never see her parents again. Remus and Sirius would never get to see their friends again.

Their family would never be whole again.

Alice especially felt awful that she'd failed in her duty as Rose's godmother. The others tried to tell her that it wasn't her fault in the slightest, but all Alice could think about was the tiny girl with messy midnight hair and bright green eyes (as they used to be, she'd learnt) who used to grin at her with a gummy smile.

They weren't the only ones whose lives were ruined though, and the couple were rather distraught when Augusta finished describing the deaths at the end of the war. To suddenly wake up and realise that a fair few of your friends had been murdered years ago was a horrifying experience, but it was evened out by the possibility of learning about their son.

The newly-coherent couple turned the conversation to their son and discovered his unique genius when it came to plants and how he was opening up slowly to those around him. Augusta proudly described his many friends and how well he was doing before the boy in question woke up.

He blinked slowly before sitting up and looking around. He froze as he locked eyes with the tearful ones of his mother, actually looking at him. She gazed at him with obvious love before gesturing him
over. The boy needed no further prompting before he all but ran into his mother's arms and held on for dear life, where he spent the rest of the day as the family of four reconnected once more.

They never found out who had made the miracle potion that healed their family, and St Mungo's never knew who had managed to slip in and out and give their patients a potion without anyone realising, before leaving the recipe behind for their future use.

(Remus had always been a lot sneakier than people thought, and he spared a happy thought for his old friends and their family as he watched Sirius chase a shrieking Rose around the Christmas tree as a dog.)
Christmas Day. Also known as the 25th of December. Also known as the day that Rose Potter and Remus Lupin were forever grateful that nobody other than them and their family bore witness to the insanity that was one Sirius Orion Black. The very idea that one of his Mind-Healers or someone from the Ministry could have seen his behaviour made the two forever thankful for the wards on The Pottery.

Sirius was running around the family room like he was both high and doped up on caffeine, randomly switching from human to dog and back again, laughing rather maniacally over the decorations and presents. Apparently the idea of a family Christmas with no outsiders, and no rules enforced by 'family' or 'well-meaning' nosy bastards had completely erased Sirius' behavioural limits – what existed of them anyway.

The remaining occupants of the house, including the portraits of James and Lily who'd been moved for the day, were looking at him with no small amount of concern, and Rose was genuinely worried that there was something wrong with him. Lily seemed to share her views and the two females wore identical expressions as they watched the mad man. (The fact that Rose had red hair for the day just reinforced the similarities between mother and daughter.) Remus was also worried, but he had a resigned air about him that suggested this behaviour had been expected. James was just rolling around his portrait roaring in laughter at both his friend, and the expression on his wife and daughter's faces.

Sirius was having the time of his life. It was Christmas! It was the first time ever he could properly celebrate with his family with no major problems whispering in his ears. Even after he graduated from school they had still been in the midst of a war, and with the constant news about people dying and families being tortured, a celebration had always been tinged with a fearful desperation that their family would be safe.

But this time was different. He was a free man, he had a lovely fiancée, Moony was carefree for once, and his Rose, his precious Bambi, was now his daughter and their family was together. He knew his behaviour was worrying to the others, but he wanted everyone to have a Christmas that was entirely about family that they could all remember. His and Moony's memories were tainted by fear of the war, and Rose's only good Christmas was when she'd been one, and she couldn't even remember it. If he had to act like an idiot to make everyone happy, then so be it.

He caught Moony's eye and gave him a quick wink and a grin before the other man's eyes widened before he looked over at their daughter and walked up behind her slowly. She just noticed he was missing before she was swept up in the werewolf's arms with a small squeak and given a tight hug, before the man threw her on the sofa by the tree and her presents where she landed with a small scream.

The two men laughed at the red-headed girl as she lifted her flushed face and glared at them. It was barely seven in the morning and they looked way too happy for this early. Rose grinned at them a bit before aiming her wand at them and hitting them with a very cold jet of water that had them...
spluttering and shivering.

The Pottery was the scene of complete maturity after that as the family spent the next hour using the cushions and their wands in a violent magic-enhanced pillow fight to the raucous cheers of Lily and James Potter. The house-elves even surreptitiously joined in too, switching out from cooking their lunch every now and then to fling cushions in random directions and cover everyone in feathers.

After finally calming down presents were opened and all three of them ended up complaining about being spoiled.

Sirius was ecstatic over his basilisk hide jacket, even if he nearly had a heart attack when he realised where the material had come from. He also got a set of expensive runic tools from Amelia for his business venture with Remus, as well as a case of foreign firewhiskey from Remus.

Remus was likewise horrified at the origins of his basilisk hide boots, but he loved them all the same. They weren't over-the-top in design, and the dark colour would go well with whatever he wore. His clothes were also no longer an issue as Sirius had apparently gone on a shopping spree in a muggle shop and bought him a new wardrobe which he refused to return. He even got a present from Charity, who'd sent him a beautiful quill and ink set for his investment work. (Thanks to Remus' genius mind, both Sirius and Rose were making enough money just from their investments that they'd never have to work a day in their lives if they didn't want to.)

The small girl – who was finally growing, thank you very much – was bewildered at the mountain of presents she'd got, and truly couldn't understand why her new parents had spent so much on her. Her main present was a TV and VHS player with a dozen films that she'd mentioned in passing over the months. (Apparently joking that you would sell your own kidney to pay for one was actually rather disconcerting, and the two men had hastened to make one.) She also got around thirty new books – her obsession was eagerly embraced – another broomstick, a broomstick cleaning kit, nearly an entire wardrobe of clothes, and many more.

She couldn't believe her parents had done this much for her, and if she had to stop opening presents to surreptitiously wipe her tears, nobody said anything. After she collected herself she looked through the gifts from her friends and realised they seemed to have similar ideas to her dads.

All the girls except the Ravenclaws had got her clothes and accessories, while the Ravenclaw girls had each gotten her a book, or a series of books like Hermione. *The Ripliad, huh? Hermione has good taste. The new one's only just come out, as well.* The Ravenclaw boys and Wayne had banded together to buy her an obscene amount of sweets from Honeydukes which would probably last her a year, while Neville sent her a magic rose flower that glowed in the dark – the reference to her name was so sweet, and it was no wonder Neville had become one of the most sought-after men after the war.

Rose did think it was rather hilarious that her dads – all three of them – became rather twitchy when they saw her gifts from him, the twins and Blaise. It seemed the twins had enjoyed spending time with the daughter of an actual Marauder very much, as they had sent actual presents to her; each of them sent a personalised hand-crafted bracelet they’d made imbued with protective runes, one in blue and one in green. They also sent the obligatory box of prank items, too – they were still Gred and Forge after all.

Blaise's present was the worst for her dads though, as the white gold necklace decorated with real diamonds was seemingly too similar to a courting gift for them, and the boxes of Italian hand-made chocolates put Blaise Zabini squarely in the line of fire for her over-protective fathers.
It was honestly taking all she had not to laugh as she knew that Blaise had done this on purpose. A month ago she'd made the mistake of telling him that her parents were determined to keep her away from romance, and Blaise responded by telling her that he was going to send her something romantic just so she could enjoy seeing them freak out. She didn't realise that he would send such an expensive piece of jewellery, but he was well aware of her sweet tooth, ergo the chocolates.

She caught Lily's eye and grinned and got a knowing smirk in return. Her mother was known as a genius for a reason, and she'd obviously picked up that Rose knew more than she was letting on. Lily was proud of Rose for getting one over on the idiots, and she couldn't deny the hilarity of listening to three grown men rant about the non-existent love life of an eleven-year-old.

Rose's trip through time had given her the opportunity to save people and she had done so, and she'd vowed that she wasn't going to be selfish with the second chance to help people. But now that Voldemort was dead she considered that maybe she could eventually have a decent relationship as an adult. She didn't really care about gender, it was actually trusting another person so intimately that was the issue. It didn't matter right now anyway; an eleven-year-old body didn't exactly provide the best opportunities for romantic endeavours.

After she unwrapped all her presents Dobby popped in with a small box which had a card, and a lumpy misshapen package which had been sent ahead by Gringotts despite no signature - the other impersonal presents would be sorted through in the next few days - with a note stating the object's strong magic.

She opened the box first to find an incredibly old book with a worn but cared-for cover which was faded so badly she couldn't make out the title. She gently opened the front cover to the title page, and saw that the book was called *The Secrets of the Alchemist*. Rose was a little confused until she looked at the card.

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**Miss Potter,**

*My wife and I would like to extend our deepest thanks for your help in re-obtaining our Philosopher's Stone. Despite our feelings towards the situation itself, we will be forever grateful that somebody as selfless as you found the stone and saw fit to return it instead of keeping it, as many others would have done in the same situation.*

*As a token of our appreciation, we have gifted you with a book that I (Nicolas) wrote many centuries ago. It is not the only copy, but it is exceedingly rare. I hope that you enjoy it at your leisure. Thank you once more, and Merry Christmas.*

**Nicolas Flamel**

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Seeing Rose start to hyperventilate the men jumped up and read the note over her shoulder. After, they weren't much better. To have such an old book, written by *the* Nicolas Flamel, was insane. Both Remus and Rose were looking at the book with identical looks of glee and awe, and Sirius had to stifle his laughs as the two held on to the book so reverently as they found a place to store it. She then turned back to the lumpy package.

As soon as Rose laid eyes on it she knew what it was. Her dad's cloak. *Her* cloak. It seemed that Dumbledore had kept to his original plan, and she was now in possession of two of the three Deathly Hallows. Like with the stone, the inherent magic of the cloak resonated deeper with her, probably because she was Lady Peverell. Instinctively she knew that it would be stronger than it had been
before. It had always puzzled her that a cloak from Death could be seen through by other wizards if they were powerful enough, and now she felt that this issue would be solved.

She placed the package down oblivious to the curious looks of her parents and read the note.

Your father unfortunately left this in my possession before he died, instead of keeping it himself. It is high time that it is returned to its rightful owner. I would ask you to use it well, but I believe you will do so without my request anyway. Merry Christmas, Miss Potter. Your parents would be proud of you.

Rose was baffled, and more than a little worried. Had her actions affected so much that Dumbledore had truly changed? He sounded very remorseful and she couldn't understand how he'd changed so much. Or why. What had happened? She couldn't get over the nagging feeling that something was up, but she was quickly distracted by the cheering from James' portrait as Sirius fell over and hit his head on a table, cursing loudly.

Christmas lunch at The Pottery was loud and riotous. After moving the presents to their rooms, they’d ended up playing games all morning and everyone was a little hyper. It was great in Rose's opinion; the kitchen was decorated with colour-changing streamers and bells that sung Christmas songs at random, as well as small paper fairies charmed to fly around the room.

Their table was completely covered in dishes of food, so much so that they wondered if the table had had to be strengthened to withstand the weight. Nearly every inch was covered in food, and those that weren't were filled with the prizes from the wizarding crackers they'd bought.

Christmas was loud, garish, and so far from 'proper' that the family of three couldn't help but appreciate how different it was from what they knew. Remus' Christmas memories were happy overall, but there was a sense of fantasy with them, as if his parents had thought that if they could act normal enough it would become a reality. Sirius knew that the Blacks' idea of this time of year was too twisted to be happy, and Rose's memories of the Dursleys' 'normal' family celebration proved beyond a doubt that this Christmas was the best.

Sirius and Remus were slowly getting drunk and started telling more and more adult jokes with bawdy humour, and seemed to forget that their daughter was only eleven. That may have been because she managed to keep up with them in that respect, being a twisted adult woman mentally. They seemed to appreciate her wit though, as did the portraits of her parents if the tears in their eyes were anything.

They didn't get too wasted though, as they decided to make use of Rose's new TV and VHS player to watch a few family films together, including some Disney films. Everyone was completely hooked and the three of them were curled up together on the sofa with the girl sandwiched between the men. Both had their arms were around her with their fingers playing with her curls absentmindedly.

She spared a quick thought for Neville and hoped that he didn't completely break down with the news about his parents. He may have wished to have his parents back with him, but hoping for something and seeing it become reality are two different things, and the upcoming changes in the Longbottom family would be rather trying on the boy. Rose desperately wanted him to be able to experience something like her current situation with his parents.

The family film marathon was interrupted by a trip to the kitchen for some of the lunch leftovers – thank Merlin for stasis spells – and they decided to gorge themselves on food before starting on a
triple chocolate cake the elves had made earlier.

Not long after the three of them were full and very sleepy, and they fell asleep tangled together on their enlarged sofa, thinking about how thankful they were for their family.
Albus Dumbledore was old, and he held no delusions about his age. He could feel his age in his bones, deep in his soul, and he could see it in the mirror every time he cared enough to look. He hated looking in the mirror. The mirror knew everything, and yet it said nothing.

But it said everything.

The mirror was his enemy. He could see his broken, crooked nose where Aberforth had punched him and blamed him for Ariana's death. He could see the small freckle under his left eye that Gellert used to lovingly stroke when they had just been two foolish young boys in love. He could see the vibrant blue of his eyes, the exact same shade as Ariana's when she would smile adoringly up at him and call him 'Al'. He could see everything in the mirror.

He hated the mirror.

When he was a young and naïve boy, he thought that he could change the world with just a few nice words, he could help the people that needed it the most, and he could have the power to change the world for the better. The world was a horrid place as it was, but Albus was an intelligent person, a genius even, and he could help them change. He could have the man he loved stay with him forever and ever. Love was everything in his life, and he would always have it with him.

He was nothing but a fool.

Watching the light fade from his beloved sister's eyes – and why, why, did he ever think she was a burden? – and watching the man he loved run away like a coward, and watching his brother break down and cry over their sister's coffin, he stood there and knew without a shadow of a doubt that he was going to hell.

Burning in eternity would be his next 'adventure'.

He knew that he was going to hell when he heard rumours of his beloved killing people and simply turned a blind eye like the coward he was. He knew that he was going to hell when he ignored the articles about Gellert Grindelwald killing muggles while his brother spat abuse and sneered at him. He knew that he was going to hell when he resolved to kill Gellert, promised it to eager listeners, and then couldn't bring himself to kill him and instead locked him in his very own prison.

Liar, liar, liar.

He couldn't do it. He looked into the eyes of the man that he loved, that he hated, that he despaired over, and couldn't muster up the resolve to rid the world of a mass murderer. He was a coward, and he lied to everyone.

What sort of cowardly liar didn't go to hell?
He knew that power was his enemy, and yet there he was with the most powerful wand in existence sat in the palm of his hand. The irony made him laugh and cry with madness. Years and years searching for something to share with Gellert, and now there was no Gellert to share it with. He briefly contemplated killing himself, but he was a coward. If he ran away from life he was a coward, and if he died then he would find out the truth about the very girl whose death destroyed him, and he couldn't deal with that.

He was a pitiful coward.

Power was his enemy, and when he'd been offered the chance to be the Minister of Magic he'd trembled with fear. Fear that he would ruin everything he touched. Fear that people would know the truth about him. Fear that he would fall prey to the allure of power once more. Fear and lies and cowardice. His life was a cacophony of deceit, and yet he was being offered the chance to be in control of them all? He'd wondered what was wrong with the people of Britain, and if he could help them change.

He rejected the offer immediately. Temptation would only lead to ruin.

Being a teacher was a good thing for him, he could be a source of guidance for the young people of their world. Being a headmaster was a great thing, he was the school's ultimate source of guidance. He had power, but it was a position that he could be pushed out of if he became too much. It was perfect.

His memories were not perfect. They say the devil is in the details, and he was aware the details existed to mock him eternally.

He'd already messed up with Tom. He was a boy who had wanted to be recognised, and all he'd seen in the haughty face was himself before Ariana died. He'd recoiled from the boy, pushed him away. He'd told himself that the boy was powerful, that he would make mistakes, that he would ruin everything. But Albus Dumbledore forgot one thing.

The boy was not Albus Dumbledore.

The boy had wanted to be loved, not revered. He had wanted to learn, he didn't want power. He had wanted a life, he didn't want to rule over people. He had wanted desperately to be known as a person, as an individual, not to be known for accomplishing something that would elevate him above all others.

He was not Albus Dumbledore, never was and never would be.

As the boy grew he became everything Albus had feared, yet still he did nothing. He had seen the powerful boy as his enemy, watched him as those charismatic eyes turned upon him with accusation and mistrust. Albus had known that the boy would become his enemy.

In the years to come he would be proven right.

The Headmaster guides and cares for his students. The Headmaster ensures the safety of his students. The Headmaster makes sure that the students get along with each other. Surely, he would do the same?

His life was built on lies. A deck of cards waiting to fold.

He watched as the students in green were hated by all others, but he said nothing. He saw when curses flew through the air, hitting young children in the back, but he didn't stop them. He heard about a student being goaded into coming face to face with a werewolf and nearly dying, but he did
nothing.

He did nothing. Nothing, then nothing, then nothing.

That seemed to be the catchphrase for his long and badly-navigated life. He could see it clearly, carved into a smooth gravestone, ‘Here lies Albus Percival Wulfic Brian Dumbledore: He did nothing’.

He told himself that his power would go to his head, that he would ruin things, that he would destroy everything. Lying to others, lying to himself, lying to Hogwarts, lies, lies, lies. The life of Albus Dumbledore was built on lies. Lies and mistakes.

Lies and mistakes that ruined lives.

He'd lived in a state of suspended animation, waiting for his mistakes to come back to bite him. His mistakes would eventually come back and ruin everything. His mistakes had always had a habit of being the worst they could possibly be.

He'd been right.

Tom. Tom had been so smart, so brilliant, so charming. Why? Why did this happen? What went wrong? *You didn't help him. You made another mistake. You didn't see what was in front of you.*

*You were ignorant, and you did nothing.*

He always did have the habit of seeing what he wanted, not what was there. He had seen Ariana as a burden, not his sister. He had seen Aberforth as immature, not the only person with his eyes wide open. He had seen Gellert as a good man, not the killer he was. He'd acted as if could pretend that everything was okay, that everything would become okay if he just kept on pretending.

He'd seen Tom as Albus Dumbledore, not as Tom Riddle.

Tom was Gellert, but he was *not* Gellert. He didn't want to kill Tom, but he wouldn't run away this time. He would put a stop to everything, he would work hard, and he would end it. He would put to rest at least one of his mistakes.

He always knew that his best intentions tended to destroy lives.

The Order of the Phoenix. Fighters. People who wanted freedom. He'd rounded them up and sent them against Tom's army. Many of them died. He sent inexperienced people against fighters. He sent them against murderers, when they didn't have a will to kill themselves.

Tom didn't kill them, *he* did.

The prophecy was the best and worst thing that he'd ever done. He'd wanted it to end. He didn't care how. Tom needed to die, and that was infinitely more important than anything. He had always been more in tune with Gellert's brain than he'd care to admit.

*For the greater good.*

The Potters and Longbottoms would be fine, he'd made sure of it. They said that they had switched secret keepers after the will. They would be safe, he'd made sure of it. The Order could be trusted.

He should have trusted his memory.

His memory knew that people betrayed each other, and it knew that people lied. His memory was a
vicious place filled with deceit and despair. His memory was reality, not like the fantasies that spewed from his mouth in platitudes.

Why didn't he trust his memory?

The girl was a Horcrux and she would have to die. Tom had to die, and so did the girl. She had a piece of him that had to die. There was no other way around it. It was kinder to hide her, to let her grow up unaware of what she would never have.

*For the greater good.*

Those words were a condemnation, a free pass, a blind eye towards evil. Those words were clawing at him, dragging him back towards his own personal hell – reality.

He knew of no way to help her, and it was cruel to let her grow up with magic just to have it all ripped away when she finally had to die. It was better to let her experience it just a little before dying, it would be kinder that way. There was no point allowing the poor child to grow accustomed to something she could never have.

He had always been good at lying to himself.

The twinge in his chest was nerves at Tom's plans, what Tom had done, how Tom had done everything in the war. It wasn't guilt at all.

*It was not guilt.*

Death Eaters roaming free, pleading innocent, and begging for forgiveness. It made him think of Gellert. Albus would have forgiven him in a heartbeat. Gellert was the link to the past Albus, the Albus of hopes and dreams, and Albus couldn't bring himself to destroy that part of himself.

Albus was weak.

Second chances were given, he helped them, he was helping them, wasn't he? This was his second chance to help people – *second chance, third chance, fourth chance, how many do you need?* – and he knew that he could help them. Not everyone had to suffer their mistakes.

He was suffering enough mistakes for everyone.

The girl was not what he expected in the slightest. She was like Tom, but she wasn't. She was smart, but she wasn't cruel. People listened to her, but she had friends. She had enemies, but she defended her own. But Tom needed to die, and so did she.

Except she didn't. *She didn't.*

Her Horcrux was gone and so was Tom.

She didn't need to die.

The letter from Gringotts was sat in the middle of his desk, looking deceptively innocent, as if it hadn't just turned his life around, made him question everything he'd ever known, made his heart pound with despair.

Tom Marvolo Riddle, also known as Lord Voldemort, was dead, and Rose Potter's Horcrux was gone.

She didn't need to die.
He looked at the cupboard with the various family heirlooms that he'd procured over the years, and he cried.

He cried for Tom. He cried for Rose. And he cried for himself.

He hated himself, but he cried.

Hours later Rose Potter and a few other family Heads received some long-lost family heirlooms from an anonymous source, before enjoying the belated Christmas presents excitedly if a little confused. None would understand the implications of receiving lost treasures at such a crucial time, none that is, except Rose Potter.

The girl would understand, but by then would be too late to change things.

"It's time, Gellert."

Gellert Grindelwald turned his ageing body to face the man that he'd failed so badly. The man that he loved, and cherished, and betrayed too much.

He had never wanted to hurt Albus in such a way, but it's certainly easier to look back and see the folly of youth for what it was. Hindsight has, as they say, perfect vision. Vision was what he had had in spades, but his control and temperance were sorely lacking, and he had hurt the one person who had truly understood him.

In recent years, he had managed to keep up with some of the news in the world, and it was clear that Albus was faltering. The two of them were too old for this world; they had ruined enough, and those younger and less stringent deserved a chance to live. Living for themselves, instead of living to serve. If there was one thing that held true throughout time, it was that youth didn't always equal stupidity, and children were more intelligent than adults often gave them credit for. It was something the two geniuses had hated, and yet they too fell in the same trap of equating age with wisdom.

Foolish mistakes weren't just for children.

He knew about the girl, knew that she was brilliant, and he knew that Albus had lost control of everything. Sometimes, control needed to be relinquished, and sometimes the old had to choose peace for the sake of others. They weren't the only ones who could figure things out, and it was an insult to others to patronise them.

He was tired, and old, and he had deliberately held out for Albus. He knew it was stupid, but they had once promised to be together in everything, including death. Death was a constant, and while it was an unknown, it was certainly preferable to the poisonous monotony that was life. Death was an equaliser, an end, and a beginning.

Death wasn't so frightening anymore.

He smiled. "Goodbye Albus. I'll see you soon."

A flash of green light, and Gellert Grindelwald died with a smile on his face.

Albus sat down on the bed next to his companion and smiled down at him. "See you soon."

He lifted his wand and pointed it at his own chest, and a moment later, Albus Percival Wulfric Brian Dumbledore had proceeded on to the next great adventure.
When the bodies were discovered, there was no wand made of Elder to be found.

Chapter End Notes

I have a feeling some didn't like the plot of this chapter, but I wanted to do something different to other fics. I don't want to rehash other plots, canon or fanon, so even if you don't like it, perhaps you could at least respect me not copying others? Maybe? :)}
The end of what we knew

New Year's Eve was generally considered to be a muggle celebration, though many of the wizarding population thought the day to be uplifting at the very least, looking forward to the upcoming year and hoping for good blessings for their family. A time when hoping and wishing for the new year to be even better was commonplace, and people celebrated the new beginning.

New Year's Eve of nineteen ninety-one was not celebratory in the slightest.

Nobody had any idea how to react to the recent news plaguing the pages of every newspaper in the country. In the past week many prominent members of society, most notably pure-blood supremacists, had fallen ill with a mysterious disease that drained their magical core and left the people in a coma, which didn't even guarantee survival.

At least four victims of this illness had already died suddenly from it, and the best Healers at St Mungo's could only suggest that those with weaker cores had died first. The suggestion that the magically weaker were dying first was considered an insult to many families, but when shown proof that patients such as Lucius Malfoy and Walden Macnair – both known to be magically powerful – were not deteriorating as quickly, those complaining could do nothing but stop and pray for their own family.

From the evidence gathered by personal Healers of the victims and their family members, around the Yule period (just before the school break began) those infected began to feel lethargic and dizzy, slowly losing energy and sleeping more often to compensate. For the first few days it was nothing major, but eventually as the week progressed the illness seemed to have spread and worsened until those infected were bedridden and sleeping constantly.

Some had died quite quickly while some managed to fight it for longer, but it was agreed that the cause behind the illness was a mystery, as was the method to treat it. Magic infusions, potions and spells had all been investigated as possible treatments but nobody responded to anything. At this rate it seemed as if the individuals would all die or lose their magic completely; perhaps if the magic drain could be stopped then the patients could survive with just a portion of their core permanently depleted, but at this point the options were simply become a squib or die.

The Healers were horrified at the sudden illness and their inability to cure it, and Amelia was alarmed when she was initially called in, until she realised just who had been infected. All the Death Eaters that she'd been compiling cases against in the past few weeks had all been conveniently rounded up in one place and were suffering from an unknown affliction.

Snape's testimony had been enlightening to say the least, and she knew beyond a doubt that this was a result of Voldemort dying. Snape had been suspicious that a link existed between them, and between his ideas and Rose's panicked confession that she was responsible for the 'illness', Amelia knew that they were dying because Voldemort had linked his core to theirs with the Dark Mark.

Even if they didn't die, she might be able to convict them if she found enough evidence against them.
The fact that so many Ministry officials were seemingly dying was enough to make Fudge cower in fear, and she might as well use the opportunity to get clearance on searching their homes for 'possible causes of the illness'.

People were becoming so morbidly complacent with the news that people were turning up ill, with some dying every so often, that you would think that one more person dying on New Year's Eve wouldn't cause that much of a stir, and usually that assumption would be correct.

Unless the deceased person was called Albus Dumbledore.

**ALBUS DUMBLEDORE NO MORE!**

**LEADER OF THE LIGHT DEAD: NOT SO LIGHT AFTER ALL?**

I am sure that my loyal readers will remember the recent articles detailing the falling education standards at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, and while we stood united, I think I can speak for us all when I say that this change was not the one we were looking for.

Only confirmed today, officials have proclaimed that sometime during the past week, Albus Dumbledore died and left our society for good.

I believe a moment of silence is needed to mourn this great and accomplished man.

…

I was shocked to discover this sombre news, especially when it was discovered that the Leader of the Light himself seemingly took his own life out of a sense of guilt.

Yes, you heard that right. Albus Dumbledore ended his own life out of a perceived guilt that he felt for many of his actions during his long and accomplished life.

A note was left in his office at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, but Ministry officials have confiscated it to preserve some of the great man's dignity during this time of sorrow.

What was even more shocking, though, was the location where the Headmaster was found, as his body was found next to the body of the famed Gellert Grindelwald in Nurmengard Prison.

If appearances are to be believed, the Headmaster took the life of the infamous Dark Lord in his very own prison cell, before sitting next to him and joining him in death.

Older readers and those versed in history may remember a promise that the esteemed Albus Dumbledore made during the war with Grindelwald. He originally promised that he would kill Gellert Grindelwald and rid the world of his evil presence, but after defeating him had the Dark Lord imprisoned in Nurmengard instead, citing repentance being a worse punishment for the murderous man.

With the circumstances of his death, one can only question why Albus Dumbledore decided to fulfil his promise now, and why in such a fashion?

This reporter would like to offer my heartfelt sorrow for such a loss in our community. There may have been issues that some of our community had with the man, but it cannot be denied that
Albus Dumbledore accomplished a great many things in his career for the benefit of our future.

Albus Dumbledore will be truly mourned.

The news that Albus Percival Wulfric Brian Dumbledore had died, and supposedly committed suicide after finally ending Gellert Grindelwald, essentially broke the magical community. Many were distraught, some were angry, a few were happy, but the one thing that everybody could agree on was the sheer disbelief at the manner of his death.

Killing a prisoner then killing himself just seemed way too far out of left field to have been the actions of Albus Dumbledore, so much so that some people began proclaiming that the man must have been cursed. The idea that his actions were forced upon him by another was an easier pill for them to swallow than the concept of his actions belying his previous beliefs.

His body was immediately searched and examined for signs of spells that would tamper with his behaviour, but the only possible explanation in the end was that his actions had been a result of his own choices. Acting so differently to what he had proclaimed to be the path of light had so many of the light-aligned families in despair at his actions, while the others were shocked that his final actions had been to take out a Dark Lord, imprisoned or not, and were worried that they constituted a bigger statement.

People were running around like chickens with their heads' cut off, trying to figure out what had happened to their venerated leader, while the people who were aware of the truth were swearing to never speak of it again.

The team of Aurors who had found what essentially consisted of a suicide note vowed to each other never to speak of the words written in Dumbledore's last confessional. The people, including Amelia, felt the note would be too damaging to the mentality of the population, and the public's view of Dumbledore would shift so entirely that people would probably riot in response to its contents.

They may have worked in law enforcement, but they were all familiar with the importance of politics in their society. As much as they may have wished that the people were informed of the old man's machinations over the years, in this case they were content to let sleeping dogs lie. To let the people know just how far this man had fallen would destroy the hope of too many for them to be comfortable with.

For Amelia it was mostly because of Rose. This week had already been stressful for the girl, with the knowledge that her second killing of Voldemort had resulted in the Death Eaters being sent to hospital or dying. (Amelia theorised that as he had been connected to a real human body this time, not an artificial one, he had been able to maintain the link between his core and those of his followers, thereby draining them when he was exorcised.) The young girl had looked awful when she saw her last, and Amelia knew that she felt horrifically guilty for not having predicted this outcome.

It wasn't necessarily guilt because of who they were, it was how they were being punished. Rose abhorred torture or causing unnecessary pain, and in her eyes the illness they were suffering from was nothing but torture. Dragging out the pain with no definite end in sight was disgusting to her, and she thought if they were going to die, just have them Kissed and be done with it.

This was why Amelia didn't want Rose to know everything about Dumbledore. Some of his notes included his plans from her, and even as the Head of the DMLE Amelia had wanted to be sick. To even consider using a child in that manner was deplorable, and if the man weren't dead she'd consider doing the deed herself.
Rose had enough guilt on her plate without telling her that the only reason he'd decided to off himself was because his plans for her were now useless. Sure, he felt extraordinarily guilty for what he'd done to her, but guilt didn't change the fact that he sacrificed a child's life for the sake of killing a man who he himself could have stopped years ago, if only he'd had the balls to do so.

Amelia Bones sighed wearily as she looked over her paperwork-covered desk. Things had gone bad so quickly that she couldn't believe it was just a few days ago that it was Christmas. She vowed that she would do everything to stop Rose from shouldering the blame, but she had a feeling that her efforts wouldn't work the way she wanted.

A scream tore from her lips as she flung a dark cutting curse at the training dummy, watching it with a vengeful satisfaction curling in her stomach as the fake human was sliced open. The top half dropped limply to the floor, the thud echoing in the room as it hit, barely audible above her blood pumping and heavy breathing.

The need to hit something, to hurt something, was bubbling just under the surface of her thoughts, the snarling and vicious part of herself that she kept caged at all times, prowling through her brain and looking for an escape.

She dropped to the floor and lay on her back looking up at the cream-coloured ceiling. The colour was plain and boring, and was probably supposed to be soothing, but it was doing anything but as she gazed upwards, sneering at it before blasting it and crumbling some of the plaster.

Her wand arm fell to the floor haphazardly as tears came unbidden to her eyes. She had no idea how this had happened, and even more was that she had no idea how to react. She'd always maintained that humans were confusing creatures with complex emotions that contradicted each other, and her theory had never seemed as strong as it was now.

Rose rolled over onto her side, curling up in the foetal position with her curls falling across her face and the floor in all directions, flickering between blonde, brown and black in her distress. She gripped her wand tight, the weapon providing a feeling of protection that did nothing to soothe the hollow feeling inside her stomach. The protection was empty, an empty threat, for what can a weapon do when the enemy is your own mind?

Even her Occlumency was useless at the moment. She may have sometimes used it as a crutch at school, but she knew her limits, and she knew that if she repressed her feelings much more she'd suffer a mental breakdown. She had no desire to make her parents even more worried about her than they already were.

I killed them all. Voldemort, the Death Eaters, Dumbledore, Grindelwald … I killed them. She knew logically that she wasn't responsible, but emotions were not logical, and right now her emotions were all over the place.

She had no issue with killing Voldemort, he had needed to die for the safety of their entire world, and it was almost a kindness to him, too. The Death Eaters didn't deserve their current method of punishment, but they deserved what they got for their crimes. Even Grindewald was someone she didn't care about.

Dumbledore was the problem.

The man she'd despised. The man she'd respected (deep, deep down). The man who had disappointed her too many times to count. She had never really hated Albus Dumbledore, but she'd hated the things that he had done. He'd set himself up as the hero and acted as if the ends justified the
means without any consideration of who got hurt in the process. He'd been a man who had been unwittingly patronising, but she knew that he had truly believed in his actions as a path of good.

It was infuriating and it had made her so disappointed in him, because for all that he had been a genius, he'd also been woefully ignorant and naive, and his actions had baffled her in the face of their innate stupidity. He'd had a brain, a very well-respected brain, yet he'd consistently forgotten to use it. Or had simply used it without applying a limiter of common sense.

It had made him a very difficult man to understand, and it was even more difficult to hate him. She hadn't been able to stand him, but hating him hadn't been possible either when he'd tried so hard to be good, despite the results of his actions.

The bank had informed her that they'd told Dumbledore of the truth about Voldemort and the Horcruxes, and she just knew that was why he'd ended his life, and the life of the man he had probably still loved. Atonement for his broken promises by following through on one of his oldest that he had ignored.

When she received some Potter and Peverell heirlooms a few days after Christmas she had been amazed, but worried when the accompanying note had been a simple, "I'm sorry, for you and Tom."

She'd felt angry, but the nagging feeling that something had been wrong had lingered under her skin, but again she'd ignored it, and now she had his death on her hands.

Her tears dripped on the ground as she wept for his death. The death of a man who'd ruined her life, but believed that he had been doing right. A man who had tried so much but had fallen so hard. She cried for the image of the man who Dumbledore could have been if he'd taken a different turn in life.

She got up and left the duelling room before slowly making her way to her bedroom. She walked inside and spent a good twenty minutes in a daze getting ready for bed before walking over to her giant four-poster and climbing in. She turned over, and there on the opposite pillow was the Elder Wand.

She reached over and picked it up, feeling the lingering traces of Albus Dumbledore's magic on the wood. The strong, pulsating magic flowed through her, resonating with the ring on her finger and around her neck. The wood was warm but not hot, and the memory of the magic whispering in her ear and enticing her was gone, replaced with a hum of acceptance and triumph.

Rose was once more had all three Hallows, and this time she knew that they were hers. They would never leave her, and they would stay with her always. She would hide them soon enough, especially the wand; she was a researcher by nature, and temptation was a slippery slope.

She buried her head in her pillow, trying to forget the nonsense of her life. She cried for the man who could have been, and she cried for the man who had been. Crying never solved anything, but for once she would relent.

She cried for the life that she'd never had.
A couple of days after the shocking news of Dumbledore's strange death had broken, Sirius and Remus had arranged a day out for the family with a couple of Rose's closest friends. The girl had been beside herself the past few days, and the two men were very worried about her mental state. Her emotions had been wildly erratic as she couldn't make her mind up on how to feel about recent events. Causing Death Eaters to lose their magic or die was one thing, but when she felt responsible for causing the suicide of Albus Dumbledore, never mind that the man had clearly felt responsible for his own actions, they knew that it was time to take her mind off it.

Their daughter, their amazing little girl, had managed to free Sirius from prison, give them both a family, and kill Voldemort all in the space of a few months. Just because she'd already had knowledge of the future didn't mean that what she'd done was any less incredible. Causing Death Eaters to face punishment for their past crimes was not a bad consequence of her actions in the slightest. Neither was making an old man sit down and realise just how far he'd fallen; it was something that should have happened decades ago, and it was not Rose's fault that Dumbledore had thought suicide was his best option for redemption.

Remus and Sirius had previously had plans but had cancelled to help their daughter try and recover some of her equilibrium; they had no desire to send her to a Mind-Healer when she was a time traveller. Amelia was all for it, and Sirius was still somewhat baffled at how putting his daughter first made him more attractive to his fiancée. (For all that Sirius was an intelligent man, he could be clueless sometimes, and didn't consider that a parental man showed promise for the future of their engagement.)

Meeting Charity was originally Remus' plan, but they'd met briefly so that Remus could cancel for the sake of his daughter. Charity wasn't a nosy woman, but having heard about the man's mysterious daughter for months had caught her curiosity, and she was often perplexed when he said he couldn't tell her more for the sake of his daughter's safety. She couldn't imagine why his daughter would be in danger, but made sure not to be put off.

Finally finding out that Remus Lupin's daughter was the one and only Rose Potter, the enigmatic young girl making waves in the castle, she finally understood his reasoning, even if she was unsure of how the man she was interested in had become the father of the genius girl. From what she'd seen of Miss Potter at school, the girl was startlingly bright, somehow had a whole slew of friends from all of the Houses, and never spoke about her family in public. Then again, when her family consisted of Sirius Black and Remus Lupin, Charity could see why it was best to keep quiet.

While she didn't quite understand why the girl was feeling awful, she knew that she'd never keep her family from her. The poor girl had suffered enough heartbreak as it was in her life, and if spending the day with her adopted family was going to help her, then Charity was all for it.
Knowing what she did about the behaviour of certain people, Rose was not often shocked about the actions of people in this timeline; getting to know someone previously gave her a – somewhat unfair – advantage when it came to predicting their behaviour. She knew which of her classmates were the best in certain subjects, she knew which shopkeepers in Diagon Alley would offer discounts to well-behaved children, and she knew how certain people would react to one of her fathers being Sirius Black.

Or at least she thought she did.

Molly Weasley had never been shy about her disapproval of Sirius Black, or Grimmauld Place, or how he had been with Rose, and when she remembered some of the things Molly had said to Sirius before, it made her want to curse something. Preferably a human-sized doll with Molly Weasley's face on it.

So when the Black-Lupin-Potter trio made their way to the Burrow to pick up the twins for a pre-arranged day out (negotiating with Arthur was so much easier), Rose was tense and preparing to lash back at the woman if she so much as insinuated that her dad was unfit to look after her.

To Rose's everlasting surprise though, the plump woman of the house didn't say a word beyond asking when the twins would be back. She didn't fuss, or try and drag in The-Girl-Who-Lived, and she didn't even question the family of three about where they were going. Molly may have had an issue with Fred and George's antics, but she still mothered them, and she was always worried about where any of her children were.

From the muttering under her breath as she pottered around the front room tidying and straightening up random things, Molly was distraught over the death of Albus Dumbledore and considered his actions to be those of a traitor. The Leader of the Light would never be so callous as to kill someone and then commit suicide, and as far as the woman was concerned he was no longer light at all.

She was annoyed that all of Dumbledore's plans had fallen through, especially the one to have Rose Potter close to the Weasley family. Albus had asked her to make sure that Ron kept an eye on her as she wasn't used to the magical world, and Molly had mentioned the possibility of them getting married in the future. Albus had laughed and mentioned that they were only children, but that he didn't know what would happen in the future.

Molly had taken that as an assent to her plans, and plotted for Rose Potter – a girl of considerable status and wealth – to marry into her family. That wasn't the only reason, of course. The poor girl was an orphan and needed a good and proper family to show her how things were done, and to look after the dear. She and Ronnie would have the most adorable children! The money would just be a bonus - a very attractive bonus, mind you.

(The truth was that Dumbledore had genuinely only asked for Ron to keep an eye on her, and he was at the very least innocent of trying to control her through marriage.)

Molly had asked Ron to befriend her, but apparently her youngest son had offended the girl and her plans were falling apart. The girl was close to her twins, but she was more than aware that the two boys were not easily manipulated, taking after her twin brothers so much, so if she wanted the wealthy girl as part of her family, it would have to be Ron that she got closer to. At least, that had been her plan until the man who was helping her (in her mind, anyway) went and killed himself and ruined any chance of forcing the girl to do anything.

Molly knew that the girl was supposed to be very intelligent, and without Dumbledore around to help her, and with Sirius Black and Remus Lupin looking exceedingly protective of the blonde girl between them, Molly Weasley knew her plans would never work, and it was now useless to even
Fred and George were practically vibrating with excitement at the fact that two of the Marauders were stood in front of them, in the flesh. They were actually in their house, right there. Padfoot and Moony. Their heroes. They kind of wanted to get down on their knees and worship at their feet, but they didn’t think that their mother would appreciate them giving a bad impression of themselves. If the small smirk on Rose's face was anything to go by, she would enjoy it at least. Rose was wicked like that.

From Rose's descriptions the shorter man was Sirius Black, and with his wavy dark hair falling to his shoulders and the sharp silver eyes and high cheekbones, it was obvious this man had been born into a high-class pure-blood family. Unlike most other pure-bloods though, his eyes were glinting with mischief and his lips were twisted in a smirk that promised unparalleled mischief. He was also dressed in what looked like a muggle leather jacket with a different material, a muggle band t-shirt in blue, and dark jeans with boots. Other pure-bloods would have had a fit at the mere idea of such 'common' clothes. The twins thought it was brilliant.

Remus Lupin on the other hand was a good few inches taller than Sirius and had sandy brown hair and light green eyes with flecks of amber. His features weren’t as sharp, and he had more of a rugged appearance that Sirius. He was dressed very sedately, with a pair of nice black trousers, a pale green shirt and a grey cardigan, with a pair of boot that looked to be the same material as the other man's jacket. Overall this man did not look like a prankster, but when he caught the twins' eyes and grinned a little they could see just how this man had managed to get away with so much crap.

The final guest at The Burrow had seemingly not grown at all – as they liked to remind her often – and she was stood between her two adoptive fathers, looking just as commonly muggle as them, with a smirk on her face directed at her friends. Rose was evidently enjoying their reactions to her family, and they couldn't even deny it. When they'd found that map and realised what it was they had been ecstatic. When they'd found a small girl in an abandoned classroom who was looking at the original notes on the map they'd been intrigued. When they'd realised that they could actually meet the two remaining Marauders it felt like they’d died and gone to heaven.

They looked over at their blonde friend while the adults made arrangements for the day and shared an evil grin with her. Today was going to be great.

Watching two men and three children constantly fall on their arses was probably either incredibly hilarious or incredibly worrying depending on your personality, but for the people in question they were having the time of their lives.

After they'd left The Burrow Fred and George had finally done their comedy routine and prayed at the feet of their heroes, calling them 'Masters'. Remus had been bewildered and looked more than a little worried at the mental state of his daughter's friends, while Sirius just roared with laughter at their antics.

They'd kept at it for a while, probably encouraged by the sight of Rose bent double and holding her waist, while she'd laughed so hard she'd cried. Fred and George knew their friend was more mature than she let on, and they'd made it their mission to get her to laugh and have fun whenever they could.

When everyone had calmed down, Sirius had told everyone they were going to have a muggle day out for the entire day, and that the twins would be going back by eight that night. Immediately after that the group portkeyed away to adventures untold.
Which eventually led to them falling over repeatedly. Because they were at an ice rink. It was decided that they’d do something which none of them had done before, so they all eagerly went and put on skates and proceeded to the rink. All five of them had been convinced that ice skating couldn't possibly be as hard as some of the people made it seem, and they all thought it wouldn't be that long until they could stand up.

They were all *so* wrong.

Within minutes it had become obvious that none of them possessed even an iota of skill when it came to ice-skating, but they'd been having too much fun laughing whenever one of them fell over to stop. Fred and George eventually made it a competition to see who could fall over in the funniest and most creative way, and the other occupants of the rink made sure to steer clear of the obviously insane group.

After an hour and a half though, they'd all managed to stay upright for a few minutes, and if they went slowly enough they could make a loop around the rink with incurring another bruise to add to the growing collection. They'd made sure to go with at least two people in case one person fell over or something; they'd learned their mistake after Sirius went crashing into the side and fell over – after they stopped laughing at the man.

After the cold of the rink they'd headed to a Chinese restaurant which had had an all-you-can-eat deal, and everyone gorged themselves till they couldn't move. The males of the group had been morbidly fascinated with exactly how much food Rose could fit in her body. She was still rather slim and she hadn't even hit five foot yet, so they were left puzzled at *where* exactly all the food went.

After they'd finished eating the twins were told they were going to the Potter ancestral home, The Pottery. While Rose was out of earshot the boys were told that only her friends from *before* Hogwarts had seen the house, and none of the ones she'd made since had been given the opportunity. The twins were quite awed and humbled by this chance, and resolved to make it up to her on her birthday.

Of course, their awe multiplied exponentially when they went to the family room and realised the portraits of Rose's birth parents were there. Which meant James Potter. Which meant Prongs. They now had Moony, Padfoot and Prongs in the same room. If Minerva McGonagall ever found out three of the Marauders and the Weasley twins were in the same room she'd probably quit her job and run away while she had the chance.

She left the boys and men to it and went and sat with her mother's portrait and sat talking to her for a few hours while the men were corrupting the twins even more – it was like the first generation of troublemakers meeting the second. From what Rose overheard Fred and George were now aware of the upcoming Marauders Inc, and the men were seemingly making future plans to take the boys on as apprentices after they graduated. If they could get decent grades on their OWLs and NEWTs, then they would get automatic positions with Remus and Sirius.

Rose knew that wouldn't be a problem at all. Despite what people thought of them, the twins were geniuses. Some of the products they made themselves were extremely difficult to do for the average person, and she couldn't understand how people didn't see how intelligent they were. The planning, creating and testing of their inventions was a lengthy and complicated process, which required a lot more talent than others gave them credit for.

To see them get the chance to make something of themselves was an opportunity she wouldn't pass up. She wasn't even using her future knowledge or asking her dads to do this for her, it was something that was happening by itself. She might have joked about it happening but she didn't ask for it. Fred and George were already genius pranksters, Remus and Sirius had decided to open a
business by themselves, and Rose had only told them about the pranks the twins did now. Anything that happened after that was up to them.

Watching Fred and George rapidly take down notes as the Marauders told anecdotes of their days at Hogwarts she felt a small stab of pity for the school's population, before it was replaced with anticipation at what they could do. Just a month before coming home the three of them had conspired to charm nearly a hundred different portraits to shout dirty jokes at anyone that walked past them. It took ages to get them all without being seen, but the result was great. Some of the teachers were torn between distress that the students were being harassed, and humour at what the portraits were saying. (Seeing Professor Flitwick snort and giggle at a particularly filthy joke made Rose's day.)

She couldn't wait to see the next generation of Marauders wreak havoc in the magical community and she wished everyone else all the luck in world. They'd need it if the grinning faces she saw were any indication.

Chapter End Notes

About Molly, she will NOT be some major villain who has a marriage contract for Rose, etc., but I personally do not buy her strolling around muggle London, breaking the Statute of Secrecy over something she already knows, and using the entrance used by muggles when there are probably areas for flooing and apparition. I mean, do you honestly see Lucius Malfoy casually sharing walking space with muggles? I think not.

Molly isn't necessarily evil or bad here, she just let her mind run away with itself, and probably fooled herself into thinking this was the best course of action.

In canon though, I do think she is incredibly overbearing and not at all fair to her children. They are all - the older ones, at least - following their dreams and happy, yet she constantly demeans them and acts as if they're still undisciplined children instead of fully-functioning adults. The way she assumes that she is like a mother to Harry, after spending just a few weeks with him is incredibly rude and forward, and she doesn't even ask him! She goes far past worried mother to bitchy and caustic where Fleur is concerned, and is beyond rude to Sirius by taking control of HIS home and patronising him in said home!

Sorry about the rant, but I was raised to respect other peoples' boundaries, and her disregard for others' opinions and choices really bugs me.
Being an accomplished and hardworking member of the Department of Mysteries sometimes made a
person lose sight of the little things in life. Being surrounded by complicated arithmancy formulas
that calculated the potential for the manipulation of space and time, researching ancient runic
alphabets as evidence of dead civilisations, and discovering whether certain potions and spells
worked in the predicted manner on the human body using convicted criminals as test subjects, were
just some of the projects that Rose Potter worked on as an Unspeakable and was forbidden to discuss
with anyone.

The Department of Mysteries was a place of the unknown, where proving a hypothesis definitively
was considered a miracle, and the complicated nature of the job all but assured that everyone who
worked there began thinking and over-thinking every little thing in their lives. Eventually common
sense took a back seat to the intellect their work required, and Unspeakables had a tendency to forget
the simplest things.

Such as the very existence of an entire room within the very department they worked at.

Even with the ill Death Eater situation – which had thankfully begun to taper off, with victims
suffering the loss of a portion of their magic if they weren't dead – and Dumbledore's bizarre killing
Grindelwald/killing himself fiasco, Rose was still concerned about the continued existence of one
Lord Voldemort. With how much the crazy bastard had ruined her life, she thought she could be
excused for still being twitchy and expecting the creep to jump out at any time and try to kill her.

Which was why when she remembered the Hall of Prophecies she face-palmed so hard she bruised
herself.

The Hall of Prophecies. Also known as the room which could offer her physical proof that
Voldemort was dead and gone for good. The prophecy – also known as the shitty useless words
from a drunk fraud that destroyed hundreds of lives, thank you very much Sybil Trelawney – was a
magical sphere that was connected to the life forces of the very individuals it spoke of. If one or more
of the prophecy's subjects were fully dead and erased from this plane of existence, then the swirling
smoke in the sphere would change from the light grey/white colour of a prophecy in play to the black
smoke of a prophecy completed or voided.

All she needed was that annoying little sphere in the Hall of Prophecies and her mind could be at rest
about Voldemort. As in, all she had to do was go to the very place that she went when she was
fifteen and got her beloved godfather – now father – killed by his insane cousin. She honestly wasn't
sure she was strong enough to do so.

Even as an adult, every single one of her co-workers had had at least a vague idea of her distaste for
the hall and never made her step a single foot in there. Someone else had always been assigned duty
in that room, and she'd always been pointed towards a project that required the utmost concentration,
so she hadn't even had the time to contemplate what it would be like in the room that represented so
much of her guilt.
No matter how many people had told her that it wasn't her fault that Sirius died that night, she would still never forgive herself for being a reckless idiot. That was probably when she first despised being a Gryffindor. She knew it was her fault, if only she'd been smarter then Sirius wouldn't have had to come and save her from her own stupidity. Even living with Sirius now didn't erase the fact that she still dreamt of his surprised face as he fell through the Veil, never to be seen again.

Sirius was one of the most important people in her life last time around, and she'd squandered their relationship by rushing in to an unknown situation like an idiot. She'd run to the Hall of Prophecies because she'd underestimated Voldemort's knowledge of their link, and because she'd thought that she was the only one who could save him. The knowledge of her arrogance and lack of intelligence still made her cringe to this day, thinking how if she'd only thought things through logically Sirius would have survived.

The Hall of Prophecies was the physical manifestation of one of her worst decisions, and just the image of the room was enough to give her cold shivers. Even knowing it was fake, she could still remember the vision of Sirius being tortured on the floor in the room, his screams echoing of the walls as he defied his attacker. The Veil room may have been where he'd died, by the Hall of Prophecies was the reason why he was there in the first place.

It was surprising, however, that she'd never had an aversion to the Veil after his death. This was the very artefact that had taken him away from her, and yet she'd never had the urge to run in terror from the room in which it was housed. She had a feeling collecting the Hallows had given her a strange connection to death, and the ragged stone archway with its fluttering veil had never made her rage and cower in fear as the prophecy room did. It was an emotional response, not a logical one.

The realisation that if she wanted the absolute proof of Voldemort's final demise she would have to enter the very scene of her guilt did nothing to assuage her fears, but Rose knew it needed to be done if she were to stop obsessing over him.

And so it would be.

Rose abhorred the idea of lying to her dads; she didn't have them all living in one house together after time travelling just to lie to their faces. She had no desire to become like Albus Dumbledore, withholding information for 'the greater good' and manipulating lives into what she thought they should be rather than what they wanted.

She had told them straight up there was some information that wouldn't be nice to know in the slightest, such as who'd died in the war and the manner in which they'd died. Remus was aware that he'd died in the war and hated that he'd left Rose alone, but he agreed that knowing about events which probably wouldn't come to pass was pointless, and the family of three agreed together to keep Rose's knowledge private unless a situation was dire.

The girl had offered Remus some basic knowledge of his life after he'd asked, such as his wife and son, but didn't elaborate on his mystery wife's identity on Remus' request. He knew that they had gotten together in the middle of a war, and with how different things were now he knew it was highly unlikely they would ever have the same relationship as in Rose's memories. He had a feeling it hadn't been Charity from Rose's reaction, but she didn't seem too bothered so he was happy.

Rose knew that she needed to go to the Ministry by herself to get the prophecy. It wasn't that she was the only one who could, but rather she wanted to go alone. She had to deal with her anxiety regarding the Hall of Prophecies, and she knew if someone went with her she'd use them as an emotional crutch and she couldn't do that.
This was an issue that she'd had and ignored for a decade and a half and she needed to deal with it. She knew how to get into the Ministry easily, and with the laxer security at this point in time it would be a joke getting in and out. The problem was whether or not her dads would let her.

They knew she was mentally an adult, but they tended to treat her as a child so she could actually experience having people care for her as she should have before. Usually she appreciated it, but now she was worried they wouldn't let her go by herself. She loved them dearly, but this was a task best done solo, not because she was being arrogant, but because they genuinely couldn't understand her bizarre emotions towards the place.

She made her way from her room to the kitchen where Sirius and Remus had their work notes spread over the table as they worked, picking at the plates of snacks Miffy had made for them earlier. It was nine o'clock at night, but night time was the best time to break in to the Ministry. At this point in time the security for the Ministry of Magic was shit, to put it frankly, and as an Unspeakable she knew of an obscure back entrance specifically used by their department so they didn't have to deal with others – Unspeakables tended to be a little anti-social.

"Dads?"

Two heads snapped up and she was fixed with identical frowns. It warmed her heart that the two men knew her well enough to tell if something was wrong just by the tone of her voice.

Remus asked, "What's wrong Rose?" He knew she was worried about something, but she was also looking quite determined.

She cleared her throat. "I have something I need to do. Like, right now. You two won't really understand why I feel like this, but I need to get something from the Ministry, and I need to do it alone. Will you let me?"

"Why do you need to do it alone?" Sirius was worried, but he wouldn't ignore his daughter's feelings. She was smart, and if she felt she had to do something then he'd let her.

"Honestly? I know it's stupid, but I need the prophecy to prove to myself that Voldemort's dead. But I also need to go there to deal with some issues that I've been ignoring for the past fifteen years."

Sirius had a sinking feeling he knew what 'issues' she was talking about. He didn't know a whole lot about his future, but he knew he'd died in the Ministry of Magic and that his daughter felt responsible for his death. She was too stubborn though, and no matter how many times he told her it'd been his murderer's fault, she still felt guilty. He hated knowing that his (most likely) reckless actions had gotten himself killed and made her feel guilty for his death.

The other man had similar thoughts to Sirius, and Remus was struck once more with how they'd left the war in the hands of a barely-trained teenage girl. They should have been protecting her, not pushing her to the front lines. He felt for her, and he could see how important this was to her.

"It's not stupid wanting proof that the man who ruined your life is dead. He was a monster who killed your parents and stopped Sirius and I from caring for you before, not to mention the countless other lives he destroyed. If having proof of his death in your hands will settle your mind, then go for it. Just be careful, I couldn't bear it if anything happened to you." Remus finished with a warm smile.

Sirius grinned. "Moony's right Bambi. If you need to go, then go, but make sure to be safe. If something goes wrong I'll feel it anyway, what with the Black rings being connected. If you need us to go with you we will, but if you need to do this by yourself, just make sure you stay safe."
Rose teared up a little, and rushed forward to be enveloped in a hug, held by two pairs of strong arms. She could smell chocolate, smoke and firewhiskey, and she'd never felt safer.

She stepped back and said goodbye, before turning around and going back to her room to get ready. She had a prophecy to get.

In every direction there were rows and rows of glass orbs, prophecies made throughout time, spanning centuries and distance. All she could think about was how these innocent-looking spheres had the ability to completely wreck the lives of so many.

The prophecy about her and Voldemort for instance. If nobody had heard it, then Dumbledore wouldn't have sent the Potters and Longbottoms into hiding, Voldemort wouldn't have targeted her parents for that reason, she might have grown up with a family, and Dumbledore wouldn't have seen fit to sacrifice a child's life for the sake of destroying Voldemort. The two men had let their lives be dictated by a simple prediction that was completely subjective. Instead of analysing and interpreting the words, they turned the prophecy into a modern-day Oedipus situation.

She shook her head to dismiss the thought, and turned down a path that, despite not having walked for over fifteen years, was as familiar as anything. She took her time, walking at a sedate pace, paying more attention to the feeling of her beloved cloak, the silky material caressing her as she walked, flowing around her as it hid her from all view. It was certainly nicer to think about than what lay ahead.

Reaching aisle ninety-seven she froze. There was Sirius on the ground, her beloved godfather. No, Sirius was her dad, and he was at home, The Pottery. He was crying in pain from the torture; the cruciatus curse was destroying him. But Dad is eating too many snacks with her other dad, laughing. He was going to die on the ground at the feet of a monster. Sirius was healthy and happy now, he was only going to die of old age. A flash of green –

She sucked in a deep breath and slammed up her shields. She couldn't afford to break down here, if anyone found out she broke in there would be hell to pay to say the least. Sirius Black was her father, and he was perfectly happy at home with her other father. He wasn't being tortured, he was sat at home eating too much sugar as he worked on his projects. He wasn't an escaped convict, he was an engaged man who was planning for his future.

Sirius was okay.

Her heart rate gradually slowed as she controlled her breathing. She walked over to the very spot from that ill-fated vision and memorised every inch of the Sirius-free space, forcibly committing it to memory. She would make herself overwrite the past memory by force if she had to. Looking around, she slowly compared the scene from her vision to the present, using the empty hall to negate the ill-fated dream that destroyed her family. Nobody was being tortured, and nobody was popping up to kill her.

She wasn't going to get anyone killed.

She now had another memory of this place, a boring memory of a hall empty of people. No people, no noise, no Sirius. She choked a little with relief as the small knot in her chest relaxed at the realisation that everything was okay now.

Her mental shields were ridiculously strong, her parents were safe, and the two men who'd let themselves get caught up in power and control were no longer around to ruin things. She had the chance to live for herself and have fun for once, and she wasn't going to let her memories ruin
everything.

Wiping the tears from her eyes she sped to the shelf in question and looked up.

\[ S.P.T \text{ to } A.P.W.B.D \]

\[ \text{Dark Lord} \]

\[ \text{And (?) Rose Potter} \]

She picked up the sphere and held it in her hand, grinning at the smoke inside – the black smoke.

Her heart had never felt lighter, and she could almost feel the weight lift from her shoulders. The black smoke in the delicate orb was proof that Voldemort, Tom Marvolo Riddle, was dead and gone from this world. The prophecy was useless now, and she could get on with her life without worrying about him coming back.

She didn't need to see his dead body, she just needed to keep on looking at the sphere which all but shouted the fact of his death.

With a happy grin on her face she glanced at the scene of Sirius' fake torture and nodded, before heading back through the Time Room to head back home.

If she surreptitiously grabbed a polished gold Time-Turner on the way out, nobody was around to see.
Baby spiders are just as dangerous

Chapter Notes

I don't own 'Harry Potter'.

Blaise Zabini was a boy who, at the mere age of eleven, had a very healthy respect for members of the female gender and found it utterly incomprehensible that anyone would even think of them as inferior to men. Women were devious and sly, amusingly determined, and so charming that he honestly hated having to spend time solely in the company of other males.

Others may have found the boy's perspective to be rather warped for a child of his age, and perhaps it was a little different for him to prefer the company of the fairer sex so much that he instinctively reacted negatively to spending time with other boys, but he really didn't care what anyone else thought of him.

Being the son of the infamous Black Widow probably didn't help the situation.

Alessia Zabini nee Morandi was a beautiful witch of poise, grace and charisma, and by the age of sixteen the girl had had men all but spilling blood for the opportunity to court and marry her. Her smooth caramel skin and long chocolate curls falling past her shoulders were completed by deep hazel eyes and dark red lips which would twist in a wide grin that men, and not a few women, found completely enthralling. Alessia danced a thin line between innocent and seductive, and the people she'd encountered at a young age had been mesmerised by her charms.

When she'd met the young Enrico Zabini she herself had only been eighteen, fresh from school and travelling at her leisure to wherever had caught her fancy. The broad-shouldered man with dark mocha skin who towered over had been just as flighty as her, and the two immediately began a whirlwind romance filled with fun and desire. They were both from families who cared more about the happiness of their members rather than throwing contracts at them, and the two were wed after only a year together.

Their relationship had never been overly serious; there were no deep discussions about where they would live as a couple, or what they would do with their lives, so they'd simply agreed to take one day at a time. That wasn't to say the couple hadn't been serious about each other though, as their marriage had been one of true love rather than fleeting lust, despite what others might have thought.

They'd loved each other so much that they both mutually agreed to trust in the others judgement; there had been no need to confirm their future verbally or in writing when they had just known that their marriage was going to last. They'd relied on their instincts much more than others when it came to romance, so much so that their coupling was baffling to whoever had had the fortune to meet the two.

Seeing how possessive they were with one another, and how casual their interactions were when they were seen together had made other people think that they wouldn't last even a few months, but they proved everyone wrong as they remained together as they travelled the world on their whims, blissfully unconcerned with their public image.

After three years of marriage Alessia had finally fallen pregnant, and the two had been ecstatic that
their happy family was going to increase by one. They calmed down a little with the announcement of an upcoming baby, but they'd still been the Zabinis and they wouldn't have been themselves without many spur-of-the-moment shopping trips for baby things and such.

Blaise Zabini had grown up in a loving and carefree household just outside Florence in Italy, though the boy had regularly travelled across Europe with his parents. At least once a month the family of three would set off to wherever had caught their fancy and explore to their hearts' content. To Blaise, their life of spur-of-the-moment travelling and blithe lifestyle had just been another part of being a Zabini, and he'd had no plans to change his family's habits.

That was until his father had been murdered by a wizard with a grudge.

Enrico Zabini had been a happy-go-lucky man that doted on his family at every chance he got, and to them he'd been kind and gentle to the extreme. To his business competitors that was not so however, and the man had cultivated a ruthless persona that allowed him to nearly double the Zabini family's net worth in the space of a short few years. He'd allowed cold, hard logic to dictate his business strategies, and his skills had allowed his family to earn enough money through investments alone that he hadn't had to sacrifice any time with them.

One of his past partners hadn't taken well to Enrico pulling his investments however, and decided to get revenge on the family by taking Blaise hostage to force his father's cooperation. Enrico had descended on the man stupid enough to harm his family for something like money in a rage, and in the resulting fight Enrico Zabini had been downed with a cowardly Killing Curse to the back.

The seven-year-old Blaise Zabini had born witness to his father's murder after the heroic man had saved him from being kidnapped and used as leverage. He'd seen the other man pale as the realisation of his actions sunk in to the recesses of his despicable mind. He'd watched as the callous Aurors reassured him that justice had been served as his father's killer was put behind bars, despite Enrico Zabini never being able to return.

He'd watched his mother – his beautiful, lively mother – break down in tears over the loss of the man she loved with all her heart.

Blaise had eventually found out that man who'd killed his father had actually been more upset that he'd been forced away from Alessia; without the business partnership with Enrico, he'd been unable to come into close contact with Alessia in a seemingly innocent manner. It turned out that the man had been obsessed with her and had been using his business dealings as a way of getting closer to the woman to steal her from her husband, whether she agreed or not.

To Blaise, this had translated to a man killing his father because he'd been too pathetic to realise that he'd been completely inferior. He'd seen countless men attempt to seduce his mother when they went out, and it was revolting how they all but fell over themselves to impress a married woman. His mother had handled every attempt with grace, and subtly redirected her admirers with enough diplomacy that Blaise had been astounded.

Going from a child that had grown up seeing the actions of men in regards to his mother, to seeing his father murdered over petty jealousy, it had struck him deeply that there was a massive imbalance in the two genders: women were graceful and intelligent, and men were disgusting and apparently possessed no intelligence in the slightest – except for his father, of course.

Enrico had always allowed Alessia to win their playful arguments hands down, and if there was ever something she had desired, no matter the cost or frivolous nature, said desire would soon – and inexplicably – find its way into her possession. She wasn't spoiled through, as she had often become exasperated by her husband's habit, only to soften at the loving grin on the man's face. Their
marriage was, in a young Blaise's mind, the very evidence that his mother – and therefore women – deserved to be cherished because of their inherent superiority.

A belief that had only been furthered by her subsequent three marriages before Blaise started Hogwarts. At the ages of nine, ten and eleven, Blaise had had to contend himself with having disgusting, but short-lived, stepfathers who'd been torn by anger at his central position in his mother's life and scheming how they could use Blaise to impress his mother.

It was a shame she'd only married them to kill them.

Alessia Zabini may have forged a persona of a whimsical and ditzy woman who cared for fun and her child – in that order – but if she'd gone to Hogwarts she would have been sent to Slytherin without a shred of doubt from the hat. She was observant and had the uncanny ability to calculate exactly which moves would hurt her enemies the most. The majority of people were under the impression that a hired manager handled the Zabini estate, but Alessia was the woman that had married Enrico after all, and she was more than capable of handling things until her son came of age.

She'd discovered that her husband's killer had more than a few associates that had been planning with him to overthrow her husband and use the Zabini family money for themselves. This had made the woman angry, but what solidified her decision to murder the scumbags was how they'd planned to use her beloved son, making him sire multiple children and hand over the family magics to them. They would also use Alessia as insurance to 'persuade' Blaise into complying.

Not over her dead body.

She had always been uniquely gifted in Potions at school, instinctively knowing how to administer concoctions in a manner which made the potion work quicker and yet was untraceable to the consumer. Nobody knew this though, as she'd kept her grades average to not arouse suspicion if she ever needed her skills in the future – Alessia was flighty, not naïve. She knew how to modify potions too, altering tastes and smells to retain their ultimate purpose, but allowing them to be administered without knowing.

Her next three husbands discovered this fact when they each dropped dead within four months of marriage. She'd used different potions each time, one causing a heart attack, one making the victim so disoriented that he'd fallen and had an 'accident', and one that emitted a scent that interfered with the potion the man had been making, resulting in an explosion that claimed his life.

Her potions were untraceable however, so the multitude of law enforcement officers could find no evidence to convict her. Yes they'd all signed over their assets to her, but they were husband and wife, how was that strange? She had an alibi for all three events, and it wasn't strange to visit her first husband's family at all, what with Blaise being their Heir. She certainly wasn't academically gifted enough to murder the men in secret. Her convincing tears had also tugged at the heartstrings of the officers and her friends who'd felt sorry that such a lovely woman had such awful luck in husbands.

Others were not quite as kind or unintelligent though, and she'd soon found herself getting considering looks from some as they speculated on whether she had anything to do with her husbands' mysterious deaths or not. She was also gifted with a name as she began to build a reputation amongst high society magicals for her practice of marrying wealthy men only to inherit their assets when they inevitably died.

'The Black Widow'.

She'd been named after a spider known to lure in males and devour them after they'd lost their use. The woman was very upfront with her son about her actions; becoming a parent that patronised their
own child as if they couldn't understand anything was not something she was willing to do. She
would never lie about her actions to Blaise; they were both angry over Enrico's death and she would
never make him lose anything else if she could help it.

In effect this made Blaise Zabini respect women even more. His mother had suffered a horrific loss,
and had even gained the knowledge that their family was still a target for some of the idiots who
thought they could gain control of their family fortune. She could have had a complete mental
breakdown, but instead she took her time to grieve, then began systematically destroying those who'd
been even the slightest bit involved in his father's death, before moving on to those who had plans for
their family.

She was incredible, and by the time the start of Hogwarts had come around Blaise had been
simultaneously eagerly anticipating and downright dreading it. He knew that he probably held up
both his parents to impossible standards, but he knew full well that if anyone wanted to impress him
they'd have to have at least a little in common with his parents.

Slytherin had seemed a good place to search for others who shared characteristics with his parents,
but he'd been deeply disappointed with how much the snakes brashly attacked and bullied others.
The males reminded Blaise of the idiot who'd killed his father and the girls paled in comparison to
the calculating nature of Alessia Zabini.

He'd managed to become friends with Daphne and Tracey once he realised they were vastly superior
to the other girls in their House, but the boys were clearly a lost cause; arrogant Malfoy, shy Nott,
and flobberworm-like intelligence from Crabbe and Goyle. Blaise was confused as to how these
students were supposed to represent the House of cunning and resourcefulness.

The Hufflepuffs were clearly too closed-off to other Houses, though he had a feeling that
Longbottom would become a force to be reckoned with after spotting him level a glare at Malfoy that
was cold enough to freeze air. The lions hated his House on principle, which left the Ravenclaws.

His mother had instilled the practice of observing his surroundings into him from an early age, and
almost immediately he'd noticed the enigma that was Rose Potter.

Rose was a mystery, even more than her appearance suggested. Granted her persona of the innocent
genius who always had a nose stuck in her book had been rather convincing, and Blaise had a
feeling if he'd been raised by anyone else he may have been taken in like everyone else. But he
hadn't and he'd known that Rose Potter was no ordinary girl. She was more than intelligent, she was
mature and wise, and the way her eyes flickered whenever they fell on apparent strangers had been
enough to pique his interest.

She was extraordinary in classes, even in Potions where the professor had had a disgusting and
unprofessional attitude towards the small girl, and while she maintained her spot as the number one
student she never bragged or flaunted her intelligence. Her compassion was as clear as day, and her
friendships with the Hufflepuffs and Granger were obviously strong by the warm look in her eyes
whenever they spoke. Blaise honestly hadn't been able to wait to speak to the blonde enigma.

When they'd been introduced there had been absolutely no hostility towards his House, and her
suggestion of an inter-House study group would have made Blaise cringe at the naïve plan if not for
the calculating gleam in her eyes. Weeks later, seeing all four Houses interact without hexes flying
and speculative glances from the other students, had Blaise fascinated with how she'd avoided
Slytherin.

There was no way someone so cunning was not a Slytherin, and his mind had run circles trying to
understand how she could have gone to Ravenclaw. (Sadly Blaise was unfamiliar with Rose's future
Blaise hated getting close to people on principle; they were no match for his parents who were the epitome of humanity (in his opinion), but Rose Potter soon managed to become a friend that Blaise genuinely looked forward to spending time with. The idea of his mother and his friend meeting filled him with a perverse sort of pleasure, imagining all the havoc the two could wreak on others.

Rose was probably his best friend by now, and she had the courage to stand up for others – nobody could forget her tearing into Weasley on Halloween – and yet she was collected with a sharp tongue. Some of the things that came out of her mouth would have made him pass out from embarrassment if he hadn't been raised by The Black Widow.

Watching his new best friend bounce around the train platform with her adopted parents – who seemingly took his Christmas present joke too seriously from the glares he kept getting – Blaise knew that Rose Potter was going to grow into a woman that he respected just as much as his mother, and if anyone dared to hurt her, well, he was raised by a woman who made her living by killing people.
Realising that nearly every single thing you thought you knew about a person was more than likely a lie was a harrowing experience for anyone, but for the staff of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry it was even worse. They were teachers, and each and every one of them lived under the assumption that their job was to guide their students and help them so they could eventually make their own way in the world when it was time to do so.

That was until the school year of nineteen ninety-one, of course.

The staff at Hogwarts had noticed the Headmaster's distracted demeanour and Snape's even more biting attitude in the weeks running up to the school year, and nobody had been able to figure out what the issue had been until Professor Burbage had timidly suggested it was because Rose Potter was going to be attending this coming year.

The girl would be emotionally trying for a few of them, but they'd resolved to treat her as her own person. Minerva was still reeling over Sirius' innocence and felt awful that she'd ever suspected one of her favourite students of such a betrayal. She still felt guilty to this day about leaving Rose with her relatives, as did Hagrid, and the two were determined to be there for the girl if she needed them.

Filius had been equally excited and nervous to see the daughter of one of his best students, and he hoped that she'd be at least a little like Lily. She might have been a Potter, but he would like the girl to remember her mother had been Lily Evans first. He'd just wanted Snape and Dumbledore to treat her normally as did the others.

The girl was the daughter of Snape's childhood best friend, and she was also a celebrity who could be in danger when she came into the public eye. The professors were relieved that they'd solved the puzzle of their strange behaviour, until they'd realised their two mysterious colleagues had still been acting off weeks after the girl had arrived. The resident Potions Master had been spewing vitriol and taking points more often than ever, and the Headmaster had been constantly distracted or fervently making unknown plans.

They'd been shocked and hadn't been able to bring themselves to cite young Rose Potter as an excuse anymore. After a couple of weeks the excitement of having Rose Potter in the school had dimmed, thanks in large part to the girl's ability to seamlessly fade into the background. She was a genius but very modest, and preferred to stick her nose in a book rather than socialise with so many people. In other words, she was a typical Ravenclaw.

The other students couldn't find it in themselves to gawk anymore, and even with her unique looks – which weren't all that strange to those who'd known Dorea Potter nee Black – she hadn't incited that much interest.

Except for hate from Snape and calculating interest from Dumbledore. The other staff had been bristling at the looks the two directed towards Rose, but they'd known that Dumbledore was not an enemy they wanted. They may have respected the man but they were unwilling to allow a girl to be
used as a pawn in some convoluted plan.

Their respect had taken a major hit with the revelations surrounding Snape and his classroom horror stories. The feeling of guilt descended upon the staff room after Snape's shocking arrest. They'd all had plenty of students complaining to them about how Snape was unfair, and their concerns had been brushed off as misunderstandings from children who were too young to see things clearly.

Except there was proof now, physical proof that their colleague had verbally and mentally abused the children in his care, and the other teachers had basically allowed it to happen because they hadn't believed their students had been mature enough to know when they were being mistreated.

When Snape had been arrested and the full list of evidence was presented to the Board of Governors and subsequently the Hogwarts staff, not even the word of Dumbledore or Malfoy Sr. combined had been enough to grant the teacher help. He'd systematically abused children in his care and allowed potentially fatal accidents occur for a decade, simply because he felt superior to untrained underage witches and wizards.

The other teachers hadn't even been able to fathom behaving that way towards the students, even the ones who tried their patience every single lesson, and they'd been disgusted by Amelia's reports that the man was still convinced he was in the right for having students too stupid to understand the subject.

To say the staff had been disappointed would be an understatement, and they'd decided to get on with their classes with a determination that had confused the students. They of course had had no idea that their professors were resolutely keeping a closer eye on them to ensure their full health, and making sure there were no underlying issues that needed addressing.

So much had happened in the months since summer that the staff were convinced that they'd had their share of misery with their colleagues, and had made plans to spend the Christmas break blissfully ignorant of things such as abuse and teachers getting fired. Seeing Dumbledore look so distracted throughout the Christmas feast hadn't rung any alarm bells for the teachers, who'd doggedly engaged the quieter students in activities to give them a good Christmas experience.

They were all aware that the Headmaster was an eccentric man, to put it kindly, and he sometimes had the habit of wandering off whenever he felt like it, so everyone had returned to having fun and waited for Dumbledore to return from wherever he was.

He never did return though, and his name soon ended up plastered across the front of every magical newspaper in Britain with news of his body being found in the Dark Lord Gellert Grindelwald's prison cell, sat peacefully where he'd taken his own life after finally killing his nemesis.

Minerva was reeling at the news that the man she'd cared about for years, had respected so much that she became a teacher like him, and looked up to almost reverently, had decided to end his own life in such a manner. She'd known there'd been something about Gellert Grindelwald that had always caused pain to flash in Albus' eyes, but she'd had no idea at how deep their relationship went.

She'd been convinced there was something wrong about his death, that there was no way that he would have done something so bizarre in his final moments, and she'd resolutely refused to even consider the alternative without any proof. Seeing the Aurors led by Amelia Bones in the castle and respectfully asking to search the Headmaster's office for anything that could have affected him, Minerva acquiesced immediately and joined the team herself. She desperately wanted the truth herself.

The morning she'd opened the paper to see news of her old mentor's death splashed across the
headlines, Minerva had felt the ancient magic of the castle settle into her core. It had been an exhilarating yet horrifying feeling. The warmth of Hogwarts' magic settling deep within her, cocooning her in a blanket of warmth, had been like coming home after a cold day and soothing didn't even begin to describe the sensation. But it'd been awful when she knew that the only reason she'd been able to feel the magic of the castle was because she was the Deputy Head and the old Head had died.

It was an ancient system set in place by the Founders who made it so that, if after five days of the current Head's passing no new Head had been elected, the Deputy would be forcibly made Headmaster or Headmistress until such a time as a new one could be found if they didn't want the position.

For that reason Minerva had to accompany the Auror team as the castle's magic was still acclimatising itself to her, and the Head's office was locked to everyone but her. She unlocked the office and stepped into the room with the officers, each of them half expecting to see a figure in brightly-coloured robes and long silver hair, bright blue eyes twinkling behind a pair of half-moon spectacles.

They shook off their thoughts and got to searching his office, but ultimately found no evidence that Albus Dumbledore had been targeted and forced into his actions. The grim truth seemed to be that Dumbledore had been even more of a mystery than they'd thought, and there were parts of him that weren't as benevolent as he'd appeared to be.

When they started to leave a flash of fire appeared over the desk revealing Fawkes holding a letter. The phoenix glanced balefully at them before dropping the letter on the desk, nodded its head, and left the confused group for good.

The letter bore Dumbledore's customary loopy handwriting, and the group eagerly opened the seal on the envelope before reading the letter.

To say that the recipients of Albus Dumbledore's suicide note were appalled was an understatement.

Amelia was fuming at the audacity of the old man. That despicable, manipulative old bastard had known that Rose was a Horcrux, knew — according to him — that she would have to die, and did nothing but plan to manipulate her into a position where she would willingly sacrifice herself 'for the greater good'. She didn't care that Rose was no longer in that position, or that Dumbledore felt guilty for his actions, it didn't excuse the fact that he had ruined lives because he simply assumed that he was right.

One of Dumbledore's oldest friends, Alastor 'Mad-Eye' Moody was a part of the team sent to investigate, and the man was torn between hot anger that threatened to burn him from the inside out, and curling disappointment that settled like lead in his stomach, seeping through every inch of his body until all he could feel was nausea. He knew that when he got home his stash of firewhiskey was going to take a major hit and that his home would bare more than a few scorch marks.

The other two Aurors, Kingsley Shacklebolt and Trainee Nymphadora Tonks were disgusted. The two of them had looked up to the old man for years, and couldn't fathom the kind grandfatherly man sacrificing an innocent child's life for the sake of atoning for his own mistakes.

Kingsley's practical brain could see the tactical advantages of a plan, but he would never condone sacrificing someone unless it was war and they had offered it themselves. He had only met Rose once as a baby, but even then he had silently promised to keep James and Lily's daughter safe. He could only think that Albus had better be prepared in the afterlife for the Potters' wrath at what had
happened to their little girl.

Tonks was furiously blinking back tears and resisting the urge to blast something. She'd only known Rose for a few short months but she already considered the girl to be her little sister. Rose was wickedly smart, had a twisted sense of humour that appealed to Tonks, and the warmth of a child looking for a family.

When her mother had cried and revealed she was right all along about Sirius, and that their cousin had an adopted daughter, Tonks had been intrigued. Within a few minutes of meeting the girl any thought of her being The-Girl-Who-Lived had flown from her brain as the two hit it off and began planning to prank their parents.

The blonde girl was her distant cousin but she was her sister, and the conniving plans of an old man would have robbed her of that relationship without ever realising why. Albus Dumbledore may have been regretful for his actions but all Tonks could think of was everything her sister had lost: her parents, potential siblings, a happy childhood … everything had been ripped away because of two men that couldn't leave well enough alone.

The worst reaction was easily from Minerva. All she could see was Rose's smiling and proud face whenever she read what her old friend had orchestrated. He had known that James and Lily weren't totally safe, had known that Sirius didn't get a trial, had known that Remus wasn't dangerous but still sent him away.

He'd known all about Rose's treatments at the hands of her relatives.

That was the part that made her truly hate Albus Dumbledore. He had knowingly placed a defenceless child in an abusive environment in order to make her malleable, and he had willingly allowed the abuse to continue all for the sake of his plans. She'd asked so many times if Rose was safe and Albus had reassured her every time. He'd lied to her. She'd been abused. To Minerva, leaving a child in an abusive household was inexcusable for anything and there could never be any justification.

Realising that he'd known who Voldemort was and that the murderer had been possessing one of the professors at school was disgusting. When she realised that Albus had deliberately allowed the possessed man to remain at school, interacting with the students, she felt sick to her stomach. The knowledge that she had been speaking to Voldemort, that a Dark Lord had been teaching impressionable children was deplorable.

The woman, under the eye of worried Aurors, carefully announced any further action was under the jurisdiction of the DMLE and calmly walked out the office with a blank face. She traversed the halls, walking at a sedate pace before finally entering her quarters.

Minerva McGonagall swept her eyes over the pictures decorating her walls before coming to one of the Hogwarts staff just after she joined. The teachers were all grinning and waving at the camera, with Minerva and Albus stood next to each other laughing at something.

She sat down in her favourite armchair thinking about Albus Dumbledore, the man she both loved and hated, eventually falling asleep with a single tear falling down her cheek.

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Each and every person in the room looked as if they were going to be sick.

"Let me get this straight. You-Know-Who used to be a student here, Albus knew who he was and didn't say anything, and even though he knew he was alive, he still stayed quiet? Not to mention that
Quirinus was possessed by You-Know-Who, which Albus knew, and that the only reason he was alive was because he split his soul? A part of which was in Miss Potter, so she was sent to an abusive household to eventually become a martyr, all on Albus' orders?"

Pomona Sprout's voice rose in volume as she spoke, the incredulous tone rising with the visible disbelief on her face. She couldn't fathom something like this happening, but she knew that Minerva would never lie about something this grave. If her words were to be believed, then the smiling face of Miss Potter was most likely nothing more than a mask to cover up years of abuse.

As Head of Hufflepuff Pomona was used to dealing with abused children. They usually ended up in either her House or Slytherin. They either craved care and affection, or became determined to deny the existence of anything untoward, reviling at the blow to their pride. Rose Potter was an unusually driven girl who had most likely avoided the two Houses by sheer force of will.

She wasn't the only person berating herself for not seeing the truth though, as Poppy Pomfrey couldn't understand why she hadn't noticed anything seeing as she was trained to see things like this. The realisation that the girl had probably trained herself to go unnoticed tore at her heart as she wondered what she'd gone through to get to that point.

While the three women were simply miserable, Filius Flitwick was enraged. As someone with Goblin ancestry he knew full well what Minerva was talking about. Horcruxes. He wouldn't even speak the word aloud, it was such a blasphemy to Magic itself. Knowing that someone had gone so far as to create more than one of them was revolting, and he shuddered imagining the resulting insanity.

That paled in comparison to the fact that little Rose Potter had been a living Horcrux, and rather than researching different ways to destroy the parasitic soul fragment Albus had simply decided the girl needed to willingly die. He had automatically assumed that his knowledge was superior and decided she would become a weapon before she outlived her usefulness.

Filius could honestly say he despised Albus Dumbledore now.

The three members of staff had been the only ones that Minerva revealed everything to because of how close they were and how long they'd been there. The Aurors had decided not to rock the metaphorical ship of the magical society by revealing Dumbledore's nefarious plans, but Minerva wouldn't disrespect her friends by lying to them. That and she desperately needed someone to talk to about the whole mess.

The other three had agreed with the Aurors' decision and likewise chose not to divulge the note's contents to the rest of the staff. Some were like Hagrid who would become devastated by the betrayal, but the rest were too unknown and they needed to focus on the students right now.

As they left to get ready for the new term, it was with an uneasy feeling that Hogwarts would never quite be the same again.
Chapter Notes

I don't own 'Harry Potter'.

It was the day before the Hogwarts Express was due to take everyone back to the castle, and Rose was enjoying a leisurely stroll through one of the nicer areas of London. She'd managed to wrangle a promise that she would be fine from her parents, although they made sure the two Black rings were still linked before she left.

She supposed they still felt worried about her considering her violent mood swings the past few days. Rose felt awful that she'd worried them so much, but between Voldemort and Dumbledore she was completely out of sorts. Relying on mental shields would do nothing but cause her to have a breakdown, and with the things she knew the resulting fallout would probably get her locked up in an untraceable cell in the Department of Mysteries – she had no illusions when it came to her former-future workplace.

Blasting training dummies, shouting and screaming, and practising some of the more frowned-upon hexes for hours on end had finally drained her enough that she could begin rebuilding some of her equilibrium. Rose knew from experience that she had to let all her emotions out in the most explosive manner possible before she started to recover.

Finally getting out the house and walking around muggle London had given her some much needed peace and quiet. There was no talk about Dumbledore or Grindelwald, and there was simply nothing magical to see at all. She'd spent the day quite blissfully free of her troubles, shopping for some new clothes due to a long-awaited growth spurt – halle-fucking-lujah – and eating too much junk food for hours before deciding to wander where her feet took her.

Rose had spent nearly an hour resting in a park, just enjoying the peaceful atmosphere before exploring once more and coming across a bookstore, where she ended up spending more time and money than she'd expected. She even got a few trashy romance novels that she and her dads read in secret. (All three would never admit to reading them on their deathbeds, but the designated shelf for them in the family room was always missing a couple of volumes.)

Eventually Rose realised that she had no idea where she was, seeing herself surrounded by upscale business offices. She wandered down the street glancing at the buildings without really paying attention, before her eyes shot back to the gleaming gold plaque next to her.

Marius Black

Law Firm

She blinked for a moment, astounded at her weird luck. She hadn't even been paying attention and she had somehow stumbled across the law firm owned and operated by her great-uncle Marius. Either Magic was deliberately fucking with her or her life was just that strange; she wasn't sure which one she'd prefer.

Marius Black was the older brother of her grandmother Dorea, and he'd been disowned at the age of
eleven after failing to receive an invitation to study at a single magical institution. After conducting a few tests it'd been confirmed that he was a squib and he was promptly tossed out the family and told to go to an orphanage. Phineas Nigellus Black had been a wanker as far as Rose was concerned.

After becoming Lady Black, Rose had found out that Marius had gone to live with his uncle Phineas Black who'd also been disinherited, but for supporting muggle rights instead of not being able to use magic. Phineas had been lucky enough to be sent to a private muggle academy by his aunt Iola, another disinherited Black. Soon Phineas and Iola had banded together and got Marius a spot at the same private academy Phineas had attended, and because of his superb grades he'd attended on a scholarship.

School had allowed Marius to flourish in a way the House of Black never had, and after graduating he went to Cambridge to study law. Years later he'd worked his way up the law industry before opening his own firm, which Rose now stood outside.

She knew that he had a family but didn't know if any of them were magical. Marius Black's family had originally been killed during the Second War when the Death Eaters had begun indiscriminately killing muggles for sport. 'Black' was a fairly common name in the muggle world and the Death Eaters hadn't realised they'd killed scions of The Noble and Most Ancient House of Black, even if they were from a disinherited line.

When she'd found out that she'd had family but missed the opportunity to know them she had been miserable. She had known that she technically had distant cousins, such as the Weasleys and Neville, and that Malfoy was something like her second cousin, but there had been no close relatives left. Andromeda had probably been her closest family after she graduated, and Rose had eventually come to see the woman as something of a mother figure in a way that Molly Weasley never had been.

Rose was aware that Marius and Dorea had continued to meet after he was disinherited, even if they'd had to sneak around while she was still a Black. Dorea had hoped when she got married that her husband would be accepting of squibs and allow her to have a proper relationship with her brother. She was therefore delighted when Charlus Potter told her he didn't care, and eventually he himself became friends with Marius.

She wasn't sure how much Marius knew about her or about what had happened, but she'd always wanted to know more of her family.

"Well then," she said with a small smile as she looked at the front door of the office, "no time like the present."

And with that, Rose Potter marched up the steps to Marius Black's office and opened the door.

The dark chestnut wood furniture and cream walls decorated with expensive prints made Rose smirk a little. Apparently once a Black, always a Black. Marius may have been banished from his birth family, but the elegant and opulent decorations of his offices all but shouted 'pure-blood'. He'd grown up with this extravagance and it had seemingly never left him.

The reception area had black leather sofas surrounding small coffee tables, and against the wall were a couple of floor to ceiling bookcases cramped with perfectly arranged law tomes. A couple of plants gave the room a little life, and the immaculate hardwood floor covered every inch of the office leading up to the receptionist's desk.

Said desk was being covered by a pretty, but sneering woman who looked at Rose's outfit like it mortally offended her. Granted an old leather jacket from Sirius and jeans weren't all that smart, but
"May I help you?" The poison dripping from her words suggested she would like to do anything but.

"As a matter of fact, yes, you may. Marius Black is my great-uncle and I would like to get in contact with him. As this is a personal matter regarding family issues, I would rather not contact him with a number where his colleagues may overhear our correspondence.

"As I am sure that you will not be providing a personal contact number for Mr Black, I would like to know if it is possible for him to see me today at any time, or if I could book an appointment at his convenience."

She finished her speech, mentally thanking Andromeda for teaching her etiquette in her past like. Her voice was a bored, drawling tone that would put Lucius Malfoy to shame, yet her gentle smile – with just the slightest mocking edge – was disarming enough that she couldn't be accused of insolence. She'd never felt more like a Black, and she knew Sirius would either cry at her being corrupted or piss himself laughing at what she was doing.

The receptionist went red and started spluttering at being spoken to like that by a child, before her phone rang and she realised it was Marius himself.

"Good afternoon Mr Black, how can I help you right now? No, you have no appointments for the rest of the day. Well … I mean, this girl has come in saying that she's related to you, and apparently you're her uncle, but that's absurd! Don't worry Mr Black, I'll –"

She broke off and turned to Rose with suspicious eyes. "What did you say your name was?"

Rose smiled blandly. "You never even asked me, Ma'am. A little unprofessional, if you ask me. My name is Rose Potter."

The woman flushed and scowled at the mild beratement before relaying the information to Marius. Her eyes widened comically before she stammered a reply and hung up, continuing to gape at Rose with a bewildered look on her face.

Rose was about to comment before a door opened behind the desk and a man walked in. Marius was an imposing figure who stood at 6'4", with broad shoulders and a tapered waist that led to strongly muscled legs. His face was as sharp as any Black, with a chiselled jawline, high cheekbone and sharp grey eyes. Despite being in his seventies the man didn't look a day over fifty. There were barely any lines on his face, and he still had a full head of silky midnight locks that fell in waves like the other Blacks. There were only a few strands of silver at his temples, giving him a distinguished air that Rose noticed made him even more attractive – just because they were related didn't mean she couldn't objectively notice.

He looked at her with speculative eyes before beckoning her towards him.

"Come along my niece, it seems we have much to talk about."

He then turned and left the room expecting her to follow.

Rose gracefully followed him out, turning to the still gawking receptionist as she did. "You'll catch flies if you keep your mouth open like that, you know."

She turned around with a smirk and followed her uncle to his office.
Marius was a man who, despite his best efforts, would always be a Black. He had grown up with a sense of pride instilled in him and took great effort to maintain that pride. He wasn't as spoiled as some of his relatives, nor was he as cold, but he took pride in himself that probably bordered a little on arrogance.

Being an eleven-year-old child tossed out of his home with nothing but the clothes on his back had been upsetting, yes, but it had been more than that. Marius had been furious. Furious that he'd ended up in such a humiliating situation, that his pride had taken such a massive hit, and it was then and there on the streets of muggle London that he'd vowed he would prove the House of Black wrong, that he would become someone who would make them regret getting rid of him.

He wasn't the only one who'd felt that way, as he'd soon found himself living with Uncle Phineas and in contact with Aunt Iola, both of whom had been intimately familiar with his feelings. They too had still had their pride as Blacks and had wanted to prove their birth family wrong. Iola had become a magical lawyer and had taken on clients from the Blacks' enemies just to spite them, and Phineas had become an author who'd boldly used his name to write books about muggle and muggle-born rights – it may have been petty to some, but giving their relatives the proverbial middle finger had felt very satisfying to them.

They'd helped put Marius through private school and university, after which he began making investments as he worked his way up through law firms making a name for himself. When he opened his own law firm, he may have sent a letter to the Lord Black detailing how The Noble and Most Ancient House of Black was now helping muggles. He hadn't cared about what they would do, to be honest. Phineas had already erected wards around his home and his office, and both he and Iola had thought the letter was hilarious.

Years later as a married man with children, Marius had been happy that he at least still had Dorea and Charlus after Phineas and Iola had passed away, and when he became an uncle to James he'd been ecstatic that at least one of his relatives had a normal life.

He'd known that little Jamie had his issues and that Charlus and Dorea were too lenient with him, but he hadn't seen him enough (busy with his own children as he was) to do much of anything.

He'd been surprised that James married a muggle-born girl, but Lily had been very intelligent and more than a match for James' antics. She'd managed to ground him in a way that nobody else had, and the gleam in her eyes had spoken of just how far she would go to keep her husband in line.

When they'd had a daughter Marius had been invited to see his great-niece once before the family went into hiding. It'd been rather depressing for Marius who'd lost his sister and her husband both within the last year to sickness, but if it kept his nephew's family safe he would simply wait it out.

He only learnt about the Potter murders months after the fact just before Christmas as nobody had seen fit to inform him. Yes, he didn't have much contact with the magical world, but his great-nephew Sirius had known about their correspondence and met with him fairly regularly, and Marius hadn't been able to figure out why he hadn't said anything.

It turned out that prisoners weren't really allowed to write letters to anyone.

Marius knew without a doubt that Sirius was innocent. There was no way that he would ever betray James Potter, and his blood-adoption of Rose Potter and being her godfather wouldn't have allowed him to physically betray her in that manner. If he had he would have died, so Marius was simply left wondering.
He was a squib though, and no matter how much evidence he could collect there was no way anyone on the Wizengamot would believe him.

Sirius had been in prison and Rose hidden away. One of his contacts in the magical world had told him that Albus Dumbledore had sequestered the girl away somewhere hidden under wards, and if that were the case then Marius had no chance of finding the girl.

That had been a decade ago, and he knew that this year she was supposed to be at Hogwarts. He would have no way of getting to the school so he'd decided to contact someone who could inform him of his niece's whereabouts. At least he had been going to, until his firm got caught up in a massive case and he got distracted in his work.

It was early January and Marius was mentally exhausted over his work and he thanked the stars he had no more appointments, when his secretary suddenly told him about a girl in the building claiming to be his niece. He was bewildered until he was told her name was 'Rose Potter'.

Marius put the phone down and breathed deeply, before getting up and making his way through the halls towards reception. He paused at the door and prayed he wasn't getting his hopes up. The idea that this girl wasn't the same child he was thinking of would be devastating, and he would need to hire someone to find her.

As he opened the door he stopped and looked over the young girl. Her attire was completely muggle and very casual, which was probably why his receptionist was being so unfriendly to her. Her leather jacket, baggy graphic t-shirt, dark jeans and leather ankle boots did not belong on a member of a Noble and Most Ancient House, but he had a sneaking suspicion that she enjoyed the scandalous effect of her attire.

Her clothes weren't the issue though, it was her face. Dorea's face. For some reason, the black hair and green eyes combo had been replaced with curly blonde hair to her hips and vibrant blue eyes. She looked just like his sister did as a girl, and his heart clenched a little in pain even as it jumped with the realisation that the girl was the right child. He didn't know why she looked different but he knew that they were family.

He called out to her and beckoned her to follow him, almost snorting when he heard her dig at the receptionist. They made their way into his office before the two were seated on opposite sides of his desk and he surveyed her shrewdly.

"Well then, why don't you go ahead and tell me what it is you wanted."

Her answering smirk filled him with unease, and he belatedly remembered what a pain Dorea had been as a child.
Exactly how many relatives do I have?

Chapter Notes

I don't own 'Harry Potter'.

Rose knew that she was more than a little cruel enjoying her uncle's discomfort as she was, but she had long since come to terms with the insanity of her own mind. Besides, his face was just like Sirius' whenever he realised that his new daughter intimately knew the ins and outs of sex – it was hilarious.

"Honestly? I didn't actually come here to say anything. I was just wandering around and I ran across the firm by accident."

Marius' disbelieving stare and arched eyebrow made Rose smile wryly.

"It's true! I only just managed to get my dads to let me have a day by myself. What with everything that's happened recently, things have been a little hectic."

The man narrowed his eyes. "And what exactly has happened recently? I am not in contact with the magical world that often, and I haven't heard anything for nearly ten months."

Rose blinked wide eyes at Marius before starting. "Well, long story short, to start with Sirius – my dad – was finally found innocent –"

"Took them long enough."

"... I'm sorry?"

"Sirius blood-adopted you. He would have literally died if he'd betrayed you and your parents."

The girl just looked at him before grinning. She wouldn't say anything but she wished she could introduce this man to the Wizengamot. Marius Black possessed more common sense in his little toe than the entire Wizengamot had all together.

It was such a shame that the imbeciles in charge couldn't even fathom that a squib could actually help their government; if Marius were in charge for even a day the Ministry would probably actually get around to doing genuine work.

"Yes, well, I'm sure we both know about the incompetency of the Ministry," she ignored his snort of derision and carried on, "but he was finally exonerated and the real culprit – Peter Pettigrew – was tried and Kissed." The satisfied glint in his eye all but screamed 'Black madness'. Disowned he may be, he was still a Black.

"After that Sirius started living with Remus – my other dad – and I at my family manor, and he's been living there while I've been at Hogwarts. In the past month Voldemort finally died for good after I found a cursed artefact that belonged to him and made a deal with the goblins, and Albus Dumbledore finally killed Gellert Grindelwald in his cell then killed himself next to Grindelwald's body."
She knew she couldn't just come out and admit to time travel, so she slipped in the Voldemort explanation – which was technically not a lie, thank you very much – as she dropped the other bombshells on him all in one go in the hopes that he would accept it without question.

Seeing as his response was a simple widening of the eyes she assumed everything was accepted by her uncle. The man was like stone, and she considered the possibility of whether or not he had discovered some sort of muggle-equivalent to Occlumency. His ability to control his emotions was astounding, but in light of his five decades of experience in the law industry perhaps it wasn't so unusual.

While it was intriguing to talk with someone as vastly intelligent as Marius, she longed to move past the business discussion and talk about their relationship as relatives. They may have shared blood but she knew that his past experiences with the Blacks could colour their potential relationship. She had no desire to force the man into a relationship that would be haunted by memories of the hateful people who’d kicked him out at eleven.

She wanted to know the man who was her great-uncle but she had no way of knowing if it would happen or not. This man had known her grandparents and Sirius at a young age, and Rose would always yearn for a large family after so many years of solitude. Rose was accustomed to loneliness, but as much as she wanted to know her family she wanted them happy more.

"Mr Black," she took a deep breath before continuing, "I am well aware that you don't know me and that someone like me tends to cause problems for others, but you are my great-uncle and I would like to get to know you in that respect. If you want me to get up and leave now I will, but if not I would like to know more of my family."

Rose wanted a big family more than anything, but this was one case where she absolutely wouldn't coerce someone or try and influence them. Family was sacred, and manipulating family was blasphemy.

Marius looked at the small girl in front of him. Her heart-shaped face and round lips were very attractive, and the light blonde curls and blue eyes were striking in their beauty. Her face was set in a mask of poise and calm and he was curious if she was in Slytherin like Dorea had been. He hadn't seen a girl her age able to control their emotions that well outside the House of Black, and he knew full well that Dumbledore would never have consented to having one of his relatives raise the girl.

She had a warmth to her that the Blacks and other families like them lacked, which immediately ruled them out as Rose's possible caretakers, and he instead had to rely on her mannerisms and behaviour to determine her early life.

He was thankful for the similarities between Rose and Dorea though, since if he hadn't known his younger sister as well as he did he wouldn't have been able to notice Rose's unease. When Dorea was a child she'd had a ring on her index finger that was given to her by their father Cygnus. Whenever she'd felt anxious she would twist the ring unconsciously, even if her face showed no agitation. Rose too had a ring on the same finger and her hands were clasped in her lap, twisting the small band around her finger.

His heart ached as he looked at the girl who was his only remaining link to Dorea. She looked and acted like his sister, but she was clearly her own person. She was confident in a manner reminiscent of an adult who was comfortable in her own skin rather than a child trying to act more mature, and she clearly knew more than she was letting on. He respected that she was cunning enough not to just reveal everything up front though, and he could honestly say that he wanted to know his niece.

However he was more than a little concerned about her eyes which seemed to flicker between hope
and resignation; exactly what sort of childhood had the girl had to immediately expect a 'no' to such a request? She hadn't asked for money, connections, or even help, just a simple plea to know him as family, yet her expectations didn't even come close to cautious optimism.

Marius was determined to know the small girl and figure out exactly what had gone wrong in her life. He knew that Sirius would tell him, and it would be good to see his nephew once more as a free man. He had a feeling that Sirius and Rose had both had terrible childhoods; he knew full well that Walburga had been a bitch to Sirius and made his life hell, and he dearly hoped that Rose's life had been better than her new father's, though he had a sinking feeling the truth was otherwise.

The glint in the girl's eye when she took a jab at his receptionist and her carefree attitude were more indicative of defensive children who had problems at home, though it could just be that her personality was a little twisted. James had been cruel as a child and a teenage bully no matter how you looked at it, and it seemed as if Rose had inherited his sense of humour, though thankfully it was tempered by Lily's moral compass.

Marius laid his arms on his desk and leaned back in his chair, studying the enigma before him.

"Why are you blonde?"

She seemed a little surprised at the direction of his questions but answered anyway. "When Sirius blood-adopted me, the influx of Black blood activated the dormant ability and turned me into a Metamorphmagus."

He wanted to snort at the irony. Generations of Blacks had been trying to figure out how to bring the ability back to the family, yet Sirius and James managed it with a drunken accident. Typical.

"And you didn't keep the black hair and green eyes because …?"

"Because I want to be known as Rose Potter, not the daughter of James and Lily. I love them both, but I want my accomplishments to be credited to me, not to them."

Marius felt a curl of satisfaction in his stomach at that statement. He could relate wholeheartedly; he'd wanted to be connected to his family in one respect – granted for him, it was because he'd wanted to throw his success back in their face – but he'd also wanted every accomplishment to be because he was Marius, not a Black.

He relaxed his features slightly and smiled at the girl gently, causing a small blush that was rather adorable in his opinion.

"Rose, I may have my own children and grandchildren, but you are my niece and I would never turn you away. I was actually going to contact you myself soon, but seeing as you're here at the moment we might as well get to know each other now."

The blinding smile he got in return was heart-warming, and it reminded him of the smile Dorea gave him on her wedding day.

You'd be proud of her Ree, she's one of a kind.

When Rose had originally been on the run with Ron and Hermione, they'd all known that the world was turning to shit around them and that their job was vital in ending the terror of Voldemort. It'd been sickening to listen to the wireless every night, hearing the announcements of the people and families who were cut down for no reason at all, trying to comprehend just how they had ended up in a war-torn world at just seventeen.
Rose knew that hundreds of families had been murdered and she thought that she'd known what that meant. The monument at Hogwarts that listed every single casualty that they knew of from Voldemort's reign of terror was a startling sight to see, the endless names scrawled across the stone.

Seeing the names was nothing compared to seeing the people however.

Looking around the large dining table in a lavish London restaurant, Rose couldn't help herself; the room was bathed in warm light and a quiet cacophony of happy voices, but all she could feel was an uneasy chill crawl down her spine and make her hair stand on end. The table she was dining at was cheerful in its entirety, but all she could see was a group of people that had all died in her first lifetime.

Aside from Sirius and Remus, the table was filled with the family of Marius Black who had all been killed by the Death Eaters simply for existing. Knowing that a family had been killed was one thing, but seeing them all in person really drove home the reality of the war. Marius, his wife, his two children and their spouses, and his three grandchildren had all been casualties of Voldemort's madness, and it was nauseating to realise that even the children hadn't been spared because Voldemort had been left alive for so long.

She shook off her horror-filled thoughts and took a breath, smiling at Remus when she felt his hand squeeze her knee in reassurance. He smiled at her gently, and she knew that he had an idea of what was going through her head. She turned back to the table and took in the people that she had never known before, but were her family nonetheless.

Next to Marius was his wife Delia Black nee Selwyn, a squib who had also been disinherited from her family. She was seventeen years younger than her husband, but the woman clearly loved her husband and apparently had from the moment they met thanks to Dorea. She was a brunette with light blue eyes, and despite being in her fifties looked as if she were in her late thirties at the most.

They had two adult children, Phineas (named for Marius' uncle) and Helena who were also non-magical. Both had inherited Marius's hair and while Phineas had the grey eyes of the Blacks, Helena's were blue like Delia.

Helena had married a genial muggle man named John Michaelson, and the two had a daughter named Scarlett who had taken after her father with his chocolate-coloured hair and eyes.

Phineas had married an orphan named Rosalind Harris who had bright amber eyes and midnight hair, and the two had a set of four-year-old twins named Flora and Janus. The boy and girl had both kept the dark wavy hair and grey eyes of the House of Black, though apparently that was not all.

The twins were magical.

Marius had been very surprised when his two youngest grandchildren had been pouting about having biscuits, which resulted in the packet flying off the shelf and into their hands. He'd tested them a little more with different objects to make sure it was both of them, before he determined that he now had a witch and a wizard in the family.

He'd felt worried about them straight away, but that had more to do with what would happen to his grandchildren if it was discovered they were Blacks. The family had had no Head with Sirius in Azkaban, but other families like the Malfoys had ties to the House of Black that they could have used to remove the children if they so wished to.

Rose knew that Sirius' release and Rose's own existence soothed that fear immensely. Sirius had already decided to revoke Marius' disownment and legitimise any of his descendants so that any
magical children would have access to the Family magic once more. Flora and Janus could grow up with that magic aiding their development.

Rose herself had become a person of interest to her cousins, and she could tell that Marius was relieved with her reaction to them. Rose had always wanted children of her own, she'd just never had the opportunity to form a meaningful relationship with someone to do so. She adored children (probably because of Teddy) and she eagerly adopted the three children as young pseudo-siblings; she didn't care that Scarlett wasn't a witch, she was still family.

She'd always wanted siblings, and now she had the opportunity be a big sister to Marius' grandchildren before any other children came along – she was betting that her dads would eventually give her some siblings to play with.

Glancing around, she realised that the image before her was more than enough of a reason to appreciate her time travel accident. Before she never would have known Marius Black, or been able to get to know his family and be a part of it herself. She never would have known that Marius had a dirty sense of humour, or that Helena enjoyed painting in her spare time, or that her younger cousins both hated carrots with as much passion as toddlers could muster.

No matter how many changes she had caused or the level of unease that plagued her, the evidence of at least one good change lay before her and she couldn't bring herself to regret it in the slightest.

Rose smirked into her drink. She certainly didn't regret seeing Sirius' gobsmacked face after having food flung at him by a toddler.
The Malfoy family had always prided themselves on maintaining their appearance in every way possible; how they appeared physically when they went out in public, the social and political reputations of their family in the Wizengamot and with alliances, and even their betrothals and familial roles were all carefully tailored to give the best possible impression of the House of Malfoy in the public eye.

Every single member of each generation had been brought up to stringently abide by these rules and act accordingly. Malfoys were notorious for digging their heels in and using traditional means to achieve their plans, such as the traditional courtship rituals used when a member was looking for a spouse. They could never be accused of impropriety.

When Lucius Malfoy had noticed the beauty and intrigue of the younger Slytherin Narcissa Black, he had followed proper channels by notifying his father the Lord Malfoy, and then contacting the Lord Black with an initial request. The two had only begun courting after the two families had agreed upon a betrothal contract and worked out the specific details.

For Draco Malfoy, his parents were the epitome of class and wealth; other families looked up to his parents as examples, they went to them for all manner of advice, and his family was the perfect family unit of a pure-blood House.

He remembered once as a young child when the family of three had been walking through Diagon Alley and came across a harried woman with a young child screaming for sweets. The mother had simply shouted back and dragged the child away, and Draco had never been more appalled at such behaviour in his short life.

The moment struck him deeply when he witnessed the identical sneers of disapproval cross his parents' faces. He'd made a small vow to himself – as serious as any six-year-old could be – that he would never act in a way that would earn that look from his parents. The very idea of receiving such a look from the two people he respected more than anything made him feel sick.

From then on he'd emulated his father's stately behaviour and followed his mother's advice the best he could. He knew one day he would be the Head of the family as Lord Malfoy, and made sure to act similarly to the current Lord. After all, surely his father would be the best example to follow?

Draco had been convinced his family was utterly perfect in every way possible and felt no qualms in proclaiming such statements to the other children he interacted with. Vince and Greg weren't all that smart so they'd immediately agreed with his words, as had a young Pansy who'd seemed determined to become close to him and went along with whatever he dictated.

He'd never quite understood why the young Blaise just gave him a small smirk whenever he said as such to him. Draco never saw the Italian boy that much, but whenever he did he had the urge to become better than him; Blaise had always had a somewhat indulgent smile on his face when he
looked at Draco, as if he were simply humouring him. It had infuriated him.

It was because of a young Blaise Zabini that Draco made a second vow at nine to prove that he was better that everyone else in every way possible. After this the blonde boy became even louder and more pompous, and began putting on airs like his father every day.

Unfortunately for Draco, his parents’ indulgence had given him a very warped perspective on what it meant to act in such a way in public. He saw a few other children but he rarely left the manor at all; he’d had a sheltered childhood that did nothing to prepare him for the real world or how to interact with others. He had no way of knowing that such behaviour wouldn't do him any favours.

The meetings his father had with his associates in their home were just more proof for Draco that his family was highly respected, and he couldn't wait to show off his family status to anyone who would listen (not realising that his father's ‘associates' were not the best people to be in league with).

Narcissa and Lucius had hardly ever scolded or corrected him and he grew up assuming that his behaviour was totally normal. Going to Hogwarts, he’d been excited that he would be able to prove that his family was better than everyone else, and having everyone else respecting him immediately was going to prove all his ideas right.

After all, his father had assured him often of the inherent superiority of pure-blood families, and school would be the best opportunity to prove him right. Mudbloods were useless and unwanted, and they were destroying the magical world. The Dark Lord who his father had worked with was right; their world was no place for those from tainted families. He was better than others because he was a Malfoy and his father had been a very close associate of the Dark Lord.

Unfortunately, all of Draco's childish assumptions about his family started to crumble into nothingness the day he started Hogwarts.

Despite not knowing how his behaviour was usually considered, he was well aware of the things that he would usually say about his parents and his House – he'd just assumed that saying those things was acceptable.

His beliefs first took a hit when he encountered the other first-year students and they all got into the small boats together to ride across the lake. Greg and Vince were normal as usual but the other boy with them was incredibly annoying. His name was Zacharias Smith, and the arrogant ponce hadn't shut up about how his family was descended from Helga Hufflepuff.

The more the other boy spoke, the more doubt crept into the Malfoy’s mind. He usually spoke in this way too, but this boy was so aggravating to listen to. Did other people think he was this irritating? He wanted to believe it was only Smith who was so annoying, but the memory of a younger Blaise with a condescending smirk on his face flashed in his mind.

His behaviour was modelled on his family's, so was it his family that was the issue? He had seen a few glances from the other wizarding-raised students that he couldn't quite understand, but he had assumed they were just respectful of his family. His family were famous for their wealth and status, so Draco simply wrote off the looks as wary praise and carried on as normal. His father would have told him otherwise if his behaviour was a problem.

When that stupid little mudblood girl had started on about Gryffindor it was pathetic; she'd been so focused on praising the crazy old man in charge instead of thinking about herself. The girl hadn't shut up and kept trying to push her own ideas onto everyone else. She clearly had no concept of appropriate behaviour; this was why the mudbloods were ruining things like Father said.
Though what was more annoying for the young Malfoy was that he'd noticed a similarity between the two of them. He'd always been steadfast in stating his opinions and pushing them onto others without considering if they were wrong. The girl was pitiful in his opinion though; her ignorance of basic wizarding culture was too obvious and her superior tone wasn't going to help her fit in.

He'd already been wound up from dealing with Smith and then he'd been faced with more evidence that his behaviour wasn't so perfect after all. This girl was receiving some rather disgusted looks from the other first years for acting in a way that he had also done before.

Draco had always been told to maintain his composure in public by his mother, but he'd been so conflicted that he nearly said 'mudblood' in front of everyone. If it hadn't been for another girl interrupting them he would have made a complete mess of things.

The other girl bore a startling resemblance to his mother which made him immediately suspicious, though he begrudgingly admired her poise as she stopped their argument. He had wondered if she would be in Slytherin with her subtly coercive speech, and he'd decided to keep an eye on her.

Realising that the girl was actually Rose Potter, The-Girl-Who-Lived, and his cousin was a startling revelation. She was nothing like what he'd heard, and when she went into Ravenclaw it put a new spin on her statement about not everyone following in their family's footsteps.

Potter was a mystery; she acted like the perfect pure-blood princess, was vastly intelligent, and probably should have been in Slytherin. He wasn't stupid, and he knew full well that the little study group happening was her idea. She had managed to combat some of the inter-House rivalry under the guise of learning. She should have been a Slytherin.

He'd wanted to be a Slytherin because his family was in Slytherin, no matter if the stupid hat thought he should be in Ravenclaw. He'd grown up knowing that Malfoys were Slytherins and there had been no question as to where he'd be Sorted.

When he'd overheard some older Slytherins saying that he was the son of a Death Eater he nearly said something in retaliation about their families, but their comments about pure-bloods being killed by the Dark Lord made him wary. Surely that wasn't the case? His father had told him that their cause was to cleanse the magical world, but killing off pure-bloods was counter-productive. He all but ran to the library and began hours of research about the Death Eaters and You-Know-Who.

Knowledge about the Death Eaters was common in their world because of the war, as was the list of victims. Three entire families from the Sacred Twenty-Eight had been wiped out in the war – Fawley, Shafiq and Prewett – as well as others that were reduced to just a few members, like the Bones', Longbottoms, Crouch, Lestranges, and Slaghorns. Not to mention the Blacks, his mother's family. The Potter family wasn't on the list, but they were just as well respected and were now down to just his diminutive cousin.

His family was listed as suspects in these murders – and they were murders – and Draco had felt his stomach drop at the list of respected pure-bloods who'd been killed for no apparent reason. They hadn't all been blood traitors, and some had been neutral – so why were they dead?

Finding out that your family were probably murderers was a nauseating experience.

His father had always focused on the 'great' parts of the family history, but what about the rest? The library had certainly been informative in that respect.

His father had apparently narrowly escaped prison by claiming that he had been Imperioused into doing things for You-Know-Who, and suddenly the memory of his father bragging to his friends
about being able to completely resist the Imperious Curse took on a whole different meaning.

The House of Black was all but decimated by now, with any remaining members having married into other Houses, or in Azkaban and insane. Or had been in Azkaban. The recent release of Sirius Black, now Lord Black, had caused quite a scandal at the Ministry when it'd been discovered that he'd spent a decade incarcerated without a trial when he was in fact innocent.

Draco remembered during the summer that Lucius had been very irritated at home, and he wondered if perhaps his father had wanted Black to remain in prison. Draco could tell from the family tree that he would've been in a position to inherit the Black estate if Black had had no children, but what his father hadn't seem to take into account was Rose Potter.

Potter who was Black's goddaughter.

When Draco read that he knew full well that he would never inherit the title of Lord Black. If Sirius Black was so close to Potter, who also had Black blood, then Draco wouldn't even be considered for the line of succession unless everyone else died. He honestly hadn't cared, he'd been more concerned about why his parents had lied to him.

After his insane aunt Bellatrix Lestrange died and Professor Snape was arrested and convicted, the letters from home turned frantic and disturbed, and Draco had been struck with how his parents' grace seemed to have fled them.

Also by how unsurprised Potter seemed.

'How' was a question that he couldn't answer, but he knew his cousin had had something to do with everything that had happened recently. Not that he could ask her as the two hadn't even spoken in class. Draco could – in the back of his mind, at least – admit that he'd been avoiding the blonde girl; he had no idea how to speak to the girl after learning everything he had. "Hello, there. I just thought I'd introduce myself. My name's Draco Malfoy, I'm your second cousin once removed, and apparently my father used to work for the man who murdered your parents and made you an orphan. Do you want to be friends?" Yeah, that would go down perfectly. Not.

On the outside, Draco Malfoy had been the same confident person as always, but internally he'd been having a meltdown about how things had deteriorated so quickly. He'd still loved his parents deeply but Hogwarts had shown him how other people interacted with warmth and laughter; he'd seen pictures of parents hugging their children, and how his actions – his family's actions – were isolating him further and further.

He'd had Vince, Greg and Pansy, but there was no-one he could speak to about things on a more serious level. He wanted to have an actual friend that he could bounce ideas off and have fun with.

For once in his life he wanted to be like everyone else.

He'd thought the Yule break would be enough of a reprieve, but when he met his parents off the Hogwarts Express he'd noticed just how cold they looked. Like dolls. They'd been smiling but it looked fake and rehearsed, and the closest he got to affection was a hand on his shoulder.

Not far away he'd seen Potter disregard any etiquette whatsoever and fling herself at two men who grabbed her in a crushing hug between them. Draco had never been so jealous of anyone before, and he'd had to swallow the lump that rose in his throat at the sight.

Yule had been the same as usual, only Draco had been able to tell how formal and impersonal it was for the first time, and he'd had to utilise every bit of skill he had to maintain the smile on his face as
he went through the motions of the holiday. He'd sat still like a good Heir, thanked everyone politely, and acted as if he were overjoyed, all the while he was trying not to cry.

His life had gone from blind reverence towards his family to feeling disillusioned with everything, and he didn't know what to do.

Watching his father be sent to St Mungo's had been terrifying, not only because Lucius' illness was a complete mystery, but also because Draco couldn't tell if he was upset by this development at all. He'd lived his whole life desperately trying to get approval from Lucius Malfoy and he'd thought his father loved him, but thinking about the few small pats to his head and the patronising smiles, he knew that to Lucius Malfoy he'd always been an Heir, not a son.

Upon that realisation Draco no longer felt any need to gain his approval, and realised that he genuinely didn't love his father at all, or even like him – apathy was the only thing he could bring himself to feel when he thought of the man who'd sired him.

Over Yule he'd realised his mother seemed just as much a pawn to Lucius as Draco was, and his love towards her was reaffirmed. He knew that she'd only acted the way she had because Lucius made her, and when Draco looked closely he'd seen the buried hatred toward her husband that lurked in his mother's eyes.

Having your father and all his friends arrested and sentenced to Azkaban the day before school started again was a strangely liberating experience, even if it confirmed that the man who raised you willingly became a murderer.

He and his mother sat in the stands with blank faces as the Head of their family was sentenced to life in Azkaban with the other Death Eaters – who were all coincidentally sufferers of the recent mysterious illness – and was dragged out never to be seen again.

His mother had been cleared of all charges after it was discovered that her marriage contract gave Lucius complete control over his wife's actions, and Lucius had forced her into compliance by threatening her with never seeing Draco again.

Draco had never hated his father more when he heard that.

The two Malfoys made a hasty exit after the trial and returned to their home. Malfoy Manor was tall and imposing as ever, decorated with cold and dark colours, surrounded by extravagant peacocks, and lacking in any warmth whatsoever.

There was so much to do; Draco would have to take up the mantle of Lord Malfoy, the family's assets would have to be examined, and they would need to make sure that there weren't any obscure stipulations for the Head.

The mother and son ignored all their duties and sat down together. Soon enough Narcissa was holding her son tightly and stroking his hair, whispering soft words as the boy curled up in his mother's lap like he'd always wanted to.

The manor finally felt warm.
Hello people, hope you guys are liking the story so far :) 

So, this chapter. I think Draco Malfoy was a bully in canon, but I think it had something to do with being on the offensive because 1. the Slytherins were generally persecuted, and 2. he was raised to parrot his family's behaviour. I think if he had managed to learn the truth by himself, and have his father removed from the picture at the same time, he would have felt free to be himself.

Lucius Malfoy on the other hand, I actually really like, but that's after Deathly Hallows. At that point he realised just how bad he'd messed up and that his family was actually the most important thing he had. But that's only after the war with Voldemort, because before he wasn't too careful.

I think the diary in Chamber of Secrets is the best example of this. He deliberately gave Ginny a dangerous artefact to sabotage Arthur without considering what it was. All he knew was that it was supposed to kill muggle-borns, but without Voldemort around he didn't know what it really was or what it was capable of. He placed a dangerous item in a position where it could kill students without any definite knowledge that his son would be safe. That is not the behaviour of a concerned parent, that is self-serving man who cares more for himself.

We never see much of Narcissa, but she is awesome in Deathly Hallows, and the way she casually uses Snape for the Unbreakable Vow is savage lol. Like, "my son's life is infinitely more important than yours, and if someone's going to die it's not going to be him." She is an awesome mother, and nobody will convince me otherwise.

Also, the Unbreakable Vow shows that Draco is truly more important than anything. I don't think Lucius has started to regret his life choices at this point, so he's still working to please Voldemort. He would not want to risk Snape's life because that would anger their master. But Narcissa really doesn't care, even though Snape's position as spy is an advantage for them. Draco has always been her number one priority.

Sorry about the little rant, but I actually find the Malfoy family fascinating. They're not good people but their motives are interesting.

Until next time guys!
"Hell fucking no! No, no, no fucking way can this be happening, what a piece of shit, crap, bullshitting wanker …"

It was a blessing in disguise that the students of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry were unable to catch any of the venomous rantings of the furious girl, or a simple detention would have been the least of the girl's worries, what with the vitriol spewing from her mouth descending into threats of murder and vicious torture.

Rose was not happy, and by not happy she meant that she was mentally reviewing her memories of the lethal spells used by the Auror department during times of high risk. She may have been an Unspeakable for the vast majority of her working life, though that was only after a brief stint as an Auror after the war, after which she'd realised her career choice as a confused fifteen-year-old was completely unsuited to such a jaded young adult.

Talent in the job hadn't been the issue, it was that her cynical attitude and aptitude with the deadlier spells encouraged nothing but suspicion in her character, not to mention her instinctual distrust of following authority figures. One of the things she'd loved about being an Unspeakable was that the department Head acted more as a supervisor who checked in every now and then, but ultimately left everyone to their own projects.

After just coming out of a war with Death Eaters still on the loose the Aurors had been given free rein to use deadlier force, and Rose had excelled in taking down her targets with deadly ease. With her magic unblocked she'd come face to face with the realisation that her core was actually grey rather than light, and the deadlier spells that the Aurors were using at the time worked better with her magic.

The point was that Rose Potter was an ex-Auror and Unspeakable with the developed mind of an adult, and her mind was home to a plethora of spells which weren't even used in polite duels due to what the spells had been developed for.

Spells which she was desperate to use on one of her new professors.

Rose had never had the best experiences with professors – Quirrell had been possessed by Voldemort and tried to kill her, Lockhart the fraud who tried to wipe her memory, Remus (sorry, Dad) accidentally trying to kill her, Crouch actually tried to have her killed at the end of the year, being tortured by Umbridge the toad, not to mention Snape's 'teaching' methods … Hogwarts should be glad that she'd never snapped and killed one of them.

Her new Defence Against the Dark Arts professor was a complete tosser who Rose hated on immediate sight. The condescending look pasted on the twat's face, the clear lack of a properly functioning brain, and the way he was so far up his own arse made the girl's fingers continuously twitch towards her wand, mentally reciting a castration curse.
Gilderoy Lockhart had been bad enough once, let alone a second time.

She had no fucking clue how the wanker had managed to get hired as the DADA professor again – even if it was the first time for him – but she was tempted to just give up and go home.

Flophart was a grade-A useless twat who couldn't teach a flobberworm, let alone hundreds of impressionable students at once, many of whom were taking their OWLs and NEWTs. She dreaded to think of the test scores at the end of the year, what with the combined 'talents' of Quirellmort and the fraud. She shuddered just thinking about it.

Speaking of shuddering, she hadn't realised just how inappropriate the man had been before; it was one thing to think the bloke was just a bit weird at twelve, but to see the man flirting with and winking at children was more than a little sickening.

"Ah, Miss Potter! You do look ravishing today dear, but I'm afraid not as ravishing as my pictures when I won Witch Weekly's Most-Charming-Smile award …"

The self-important air and the beyond-creepy smile directed at her made her want to throw up in her mouth. She shivered remembering their first lesson, and how she'd subconsciously scooted closer to Blaise who she'd been sitting next to.

Said boy had also been none too impressed with the idiot judging by the look on his face, and he continually rotated and sat next to a different girl each time, seemingly in an attempt to be chivalrous and protect them from Lockhart's attention. Rose found it quite touching.

Blaise had banded together with the other boys from the study group and they all made sure their female friends weren't left alone to suffer the idiocy of their new teacher. The other boys in their year were also disgusted by Lockhart, but they also despised how the girls seemed to adore him.

Thankfully Rose's friends each had a brain.

Initially, Hermione, Hannah and Susan had all had pink cheeks whenever they saw the self-important prat, but they soon became disillusioned when they realised that, not only were his books full of inconsistencies – Hermione almost cried at how more books had failed her – but also how Flophart was utterly incompetent when it came to delivering a lesson and acting like a teacher.

He was unprofessional, disturbingly so, had no idea about the subject matter he was teaching, and didn't seem to care whether or not the students actually retained any knowledge. (Rose actually regretted killing the basilisk, if only so she could have had the idiot eaten by it.)

Every single one of Rose's friends was soon so thoroughly disgusted by the fool masquerading as a professor that they'd unanimously decided to start a siege on him and get him fired. The glint in Susan's eyes when she spoke about contacting Amelia with evidence had been rather terrifying to the other first years. Rose just felt irrationally proud.

She did feel a little bad that her actions may have been responsible for this mess.

Clearly her actions in this time period had resulted in Dumbledore's suicide, and no matter how many times she was told she was innocent she still felt guilty. Indirectly or directly, she was responsible for his death and the resulting emotional turmoil for the Hogwarts staff, which was the only reason she could think of for why McGonagall of all people had hired Gilderoy Lockhart. Not to mention having to balance teaching with her new Headmistress duties, as she hadn't found a replacement yet.

A – quite drunk – McGonagall had once told her that she hated Lockhart with a passion, and could never tell how the idiot had even been hired. There was no way that the woman was currently in her
right mind with Dumbledore's death, and she was clearly so out of sorts she wasn't even paying that much attention to her hiring requirements. That or she was so relieved by her previous success with filling the gaps in the staff that she relaxed a little too much.

The History of Magic post had finally been filled with an actual human being, and the woman who'd been hired was quite a shock to Rose. Her name was Cassandra Yaxley, the daughter of the Death Eater Corban Yaxley who'd recently died after Voldemort bit the dust, and she was surprisingly gentle. The Headship of the family had fallen to her younger brother Cleon and the two siblings were happily enjoying life free from the control of a Death Eater. Cassandra was now free to do as she pleased, and she had begun a complete overhaul of the History curriculum that made many a student moan about their nap time disappearing.

The subject was now considered an actual lesson, and for those interested the classes had become something to look forward to. While DADA might be a bust this year the History reputation was soaring.

Professor Yaxley wasn't the only new teacher garnering praise however, as Potions was now being taught by an individual who was not only capable of teaching the subject, but also didn't care which House the students were in.

The elusive Horace Slughorn had come out of retirement once more.

The rotund man had originally retired just after the First War, after which Snape took over and begun systematically destroying the students' education and depriving the country of graduates with decent brewing skills. Now Slughorn was back and had already made waves by disregarding any previous House favouritism, and had bluntly lectured the snakes on how they were disgraces to the House of cunning – or so Dobby had reported back after spying.

The Slug Club was up and running once more and Rose had just received an invitation, though none of her friends had. She knew that Slughorn usually kept to the older students, and that if her friends were older there wouldn't have been an issue.

He might have had his favourites, but during the actual classes he genuinely helped every student regardless of House or family status, so while his suck-up nature was irritating Rose could appreciate how it didn't affect his teaching.

As it was, while Rose was ecstatic over finally having a decent History professor and a Potions professor who actually taught, she was downright pissed at having to deal with Lockhart again. Just because nobody else remembered him didn't mean she didn't, and her memories were more than enough to give her a migraine from remembering all the problems the moron previously caused.

There was no way she was going to deal with this again.

"So what do we do about it?"

"Do?"

Millicent levelled an unimpressed look at Terry who blushed and looked away. Others might have thought the gesture romantic, but the friends knew that the Ravenclaws hated feeling unintelligent and responded with some awkwardness, or anger in the case of Rose. She knew that she tended to bristle a bit like her Animagus form when she was insulted, and for Terry he felt embarrassed.

The group was currently holding a 'council' of sorts about Lockhart, and how best to rid the school of his idiocy.
"Why don't we just set the Weasley twins on him?"

Everyone turned to Parvati with looks ranging from impressed to concerned.

Wayne looked concerned. "Don't you think that's a bit harsh?"

Daphne snorted at him and drawled, "I think harsh was leaving a bunch of untrained eleven-year-olds to handle a bunch of pixies because he'd run off cowering. Pathetic." Her huff was paired with a disgusted sneer that would have put Snape to shame.

Rose grinned a little remembering how the lesson with pixies had happened for the first-year class with all four Houses this time. Her friends were all much better prepared this time so they'd been able to defend themselves more and Neville hadn't been hung on a chandelier, but Zacharias Smith had been dropped in a tank of water in the corner and Rose nearly wet herself laughing.

"It might be harsh, but can you imagine the stupid man falling prey to those two day after day. I don't know about you lot but I'd pay good money to see that." Blaise's evil grin was mirrored on nearly every face, and even those who were usually calm were still viciously tempted to seek vengeance.

"But how do we contact them? They won't just help a couple of firsties if we ask, even if they want to prank him already?" Su's question was a legitimate query, and Rose was trying to figure out how to offer to talk to them when she caught sight of Blaise's knowing smirk directed right at her. She felt a sinking feeling in her stomach as her friend winked then opened his mouth.

"You could always ask Rose, she is their friend."

As he spoke multiple heads whipped around to stare at her with disbelief and confusion. They were all close friends but that didn't mean that Rose was all that open. Susan and Neville had known about her dads since summer, and Blaise had briefly met her parents at King's Cross, while Hermione was at the least peripherally aware of her family situation. The rest of her friends had no concrete knowledge about her, but had thought they knew all they could about her at school.

Everyone – other than Blaise, apparently – had no clue about her friendship with the red-headed twins if their faces were anything to go by, and she was pleased that she still had the ability to fool (most) people if needed.

"What? Since when? How come you didn't say anything?" Hermione's rapid-fire questions were accompanied with an affronted look at how her blonde friend had withheld information.

Rose mentally sighed. "Yes, I'm friends with George and Fred Weasley. I've been friends with them since before Halloween. I didn't say anything because I knew full well that you'd probably try and speak to them, and they'd probably rope you guys into something that you'd regret. They have a very peculiar sense of humour and if they find someone even the slightest bit interesting they use them as targets in their pranks.

"Not to mention that we've been working on a project together using notes from my dads when they were teenagers. They found something like a family heirloom of mine and I let them keep it, but we've been working on how to create new ones. It's something the three of us wanted to do by ourselves."

Her explanation finished with varying looks directed at her, though she was torn between being amused and being irritated at Blaise's entertained smirk. The 'puffs looked rather interested in their mystery project, while everyone else was looking at her shrewdly or in confusion.

"Can you do it?"
Tracey looked far too chipper and eager for talk of destroying someone's career, but Rose just nodded resignedly, knowing full well that the castle was soon going to be under siege.

When she later received twin manic grins promising untold pandemonium she couldn't tell whether she was looking forward to it or not.

Getting the twin menaces to agree to not try and figure out how she could help in their prank was surprisingly easy, but she supposed they felt indebted to her after meeting the Marauders. It wasn't that she would never tell them, but her Metamorphmagus powers were better kept a secret for now.

She was currently hiding in the toilets and changing her appearance; she slowly morphed into the visage of a woman who'd slain some creature before Lockhart appeared and Obliviated her; she changed her clothes and waited.

Rose had no idea what the twin devils were going to do, but if the grins on their faces were anything to go by it wasn't going to be good for Flophart. Especially because they'd managed to recruit Dobby somehow. Her faithful time-travelling friend seemed just a bit too excited whenever she saw him, but she decided to ignore her mental alarms and focus on scaring the shit out of the fraud.

Soon enough she heard the twat whistling as the came down the hall, as he apparently liked to walk around the castle and garner praise where he could. Wanker.

She casually made her way out into the hallway and stood there for a minute, letting her rage at the idiot's incompetence build.

"Hello, Mr Lockhart. Long time, no see."

He whirled around, and upon seeing the woman before him he paled and forced out a pathetic imitation of a smile.

"H-hello there. I'm sorry, I'm afraid I don't r-recognise you Ma'am. Is there something I can help you with?" The combination of him stuttering and slowly backing away was pathetic, and Rose nearly snorted in disgust.

"Hmm, it's funny you should say you don't recognise me Mr Lockhart. I certainly recognise you. I mean, after hunting me down, wiping my memory, writing a book to get credit for everything I did … Are you sure you don't recognise me?"

He started whimpering.

"I suppose it is difficult to remember though, I mean, haven't you done this to countless others? I wonder, have you actually done anything you've claimed to do?" Rose made sure to paste a cruel, mocking smile on her face as she casually strolled up to the man who was backing away even quicker than before.

"I'm even more intrigued as to what the Ministry would say if they knew that you were nothing but a fraud."

It seemed as if the 'f-word' was something of a trigger for Lockhart, who let out a girlish shriek, screamed "NO!", and tore off down the hallway toward the twins.

She ducked into a classroom, turned back to herself with her uniform, and went through a secret passageway to where they'd hoped he would end up.
Upon arriving at the scene, she couldn’t decide if she wanted to laugh hysterically or throw up.

Strung up from the ceiling and blindfolded, for everyone to see, was a naked Gilderoy Lockhart with cameras floating around him taking pictures every few seconds. He was spread eagled, and his extremely-undersized … *equipment*, was on full display for all to see.

Whenever a picture was developed it was sent somewhere else, and judging from the shrieks echoing from around the castle she had a good idea where.

She ignored the squealing man and ran back to one of the hidden alcoves where she found the twins. She sat down, took one look at them, and burst into hysterics.

The three of them sat for a good while roaring in laughter, before the noise tapered off, only for giggles to permeate the space whenever they caught each other’s eye.

The legacy of the Marauders was still going strong.

Chapter End Notes

I really wanted to include Lockhart just because he’s hilariously stupid, but I didn’t think him in second year would be a good idea, because I don’t think McGonagall would hire him in her right mind lol
While Rose had more or less settled in this new life of hers, it still didn't erase the decades of her old shitty life or how some of the good things would never come to pass. She knew full well that without Voldemort's murderous plans hanging over their heads, or Dumbledore's manipulations creeping up on them, that this world was already infinitely better than her previous one.

Countless people wouldn't be slaughtered in a pointless war, students wouldn't become mere pawns on a chessboard that they didn't know existed, and families wouldn't be needlessly torn apart for no reason.

It didn't mean that she was totally happy though.

Her main thought was Teddy. Her precious and bright Teddy, the little boy who'd been the closest thing she had to a child, and the most important part of her shitty adult life. Just the thought of his childish grin and the way he'd use his hair to show his mood was enough to make her simultaneously content and miserable.

She knew it was a little harsh, but she couldn't help but pray that she had definitely reversed her own timeline instead of disappearing and reappearing in another, so that there wasn't a little boy who'd lost his godmother out there somewhere. Just the thought of him sad gripped her heart painfully.

Teddy would never exist in this universe, at least not the in the same way as before. Remus might have a son, or Tonks might have a son, but not together, and Teddy Lupin wouldn't just magically appear and soothe her feelings.

She'd already made sure to get a new Pensieve for private future memories and had carefully extracted each and every memory she had of him, painstakingly recording them all so she'd never forget the perfect little boy she loved. There was also a way to take pictures from memories and she'd made an album of the two of them together, including some pictures with Andromeda.

In a couple of months it was going to be Teddy's birthday and she was getting more and more anxious; she wasn't sure how she was going to react to the undeniable proof that her favourite little man wasn't around anymore. It was lucky that his birthday was on the weekend this year, as she had no desire to be in classes during what was going to be a difficult time.

As it was she'd already taken to wandering around the castle by herself, trying to get to grips with the reality of the situation. She loved having an actual group of friends this time around, but there was nobody she could really speak to about it. Even her family didn't know everything, and she just knew that Remus would inexplicably end up feeling guilty for not having his future son, even if it was clearly not his fault.

She was walking along an abandoned corridor when she found someone else that she missed from her past life.
Saying that he wasn't having a good time at school was an understatement to say the least. Being looked at by his Housemates with varying looks of condescension and pity was demeaning, as if his entire worth had been determined by the piece of shit who'd called himself his father.

Draco hated that Lucius Malfoy's actions had completely destroyed any stability in his life, and how he had managed to become a pariah even within his own House because his father had decided to rat out every other Death Eater in an attempt to save his own skin. The amount of families who'd been implicated because of his snivelling pleas was staggering, and even if they'd been convicted already nobody had any respect for a cowardly snitch.

Lucius Malfoy had essentially fucked everyone else over to try and save himself and Draco was stuck dealing with the mess at school. He knew that his mother was more than able to handle herself as her husband's imprisonment had more or less rendered their marriage contract void, and her newfound freedom enabled her to take action for the betterment of herself and Draco. He on the other hand was only an eleven-year-old, and while he had been educated on what it was to interact with others in polite company he had no real idea on how to handle a situation such as this.

The protection spells his mother had taught him were thankfully adequate to protect his room and belongings, but they did nothing against the realisation that he was now seen as nothing better than the dirt on the bottom of someone's shoe.

The other Slytherins thought of him as the pathetic son of a traitorous coward, and the other Houses saw him as the son of a Death Eater – the son of a murderer. He was sired by a man who took joy in murdering and torturing others because it apparently reaffirmed his sense of superiority, and Draco was paying the price for being related to the bastard.

He still had Pansy, Vince and Greg, but that was it. He didn't understand the looks from the other first-year Slytherins; Nott looked almost sympathetic at times, but Blaise and the other girls looked rather calculating and he didn't know why.

He sighed to himself from his seat in an abandoned classroom stuffed with old bookcases. He'd found it on the fifth floor after trying to get away from the sharp taunts his older Housemates kept throwing his way, and now he came here whenever he wanted to escape. Which was basically every day.

The room was clean but it was clear that nobody had entered the room in years, and he enjoyed the solace that came with the cramped room. There were a load of books on the shelves, and Draco had spent weeks reading random tomes instead of going back to his tense Common Room.

He was reading an old copy of *The Tales of Beedle the Bard* when he heard light footsteps from the door and he tensed, waiting for an attack. (He hadn't been the victim of an 'accidental' spell yet but he wasn't holding his breath.)

The door creaked open a little wider and a head of light blonde curls poked round the edge to glance around the room. A pair of bright blue eyes surveyed the abandoned room before meeting his own grey set and widening in recognition.

He tensed, waiting for the disapproval, disgust or hatred to cross his cousin's face. It might have been weeks since the trial, but his father had been proven to willingly work for the man who'd killed her parents in cold blood. He had no doubt that she hated him.

A small smile broke out across her face. "Hello. Do you mind if I join you?"
Draco Malfoy really was cute as a child, she thought. Her haughty cousin had tried so hard when he was younger to gain the approval of his arsehole father, before the bastard turned around and offered up his only child on a silver platter to a raving lunatic of a Dark Lord. Narcissa had still been bound by her marriage contract at the time and hadn't been able to get Draco out of the picture, hence her Unbreakable Vow with Snape.

The boy sitting in front of her looked about as bad as he had during their sixth year when he'd been forced into trying to kill Dumbledore. His hair was out of place, his skin was even more pale than usual, and the faint purplish marks below his eyes made Rose worried about his sleeping pattern.

She knew full well that this Draco was vastly different to the one who had started the year. His confidence and composure had been falling all year and he now looked too tired to even think. Rose had heard from Blaise that Draco was having a hard time in the snake pit, but they both knew that rushing in to defend his honour would just make him seem weak and hurt his pride.

After the war she and Draco had come to a truce of sorts during their eighth year, which became a somewhat bizarre friendship after her relationships with Ron and Hermione crumbled. They'd met in a bar where she was drowning her sorrows and he'd proceeded to cheer her up by insulting her ex-friends in increasingly creative ways, smirking whenever she laughed.

They'd even managed to get Narcissa and Andromeda to reconcile, and the four of them plus Teddy started to get along as the remnants of the House of Black.

Rose had even attended Draco's wedding and had been there for him and Scorpius when Astoria fell ill and died just three years after Scorpius was born. The two of them had gotten along to a surprising degree, and they agreed that they'd have been friends earlier if they both weren't as stubborn as they were.

Draco had once confessed that during his first year he'd been confused about his behaviour and his family's reputation, but by the end of the first year he'd decided to ignore it and just go along with their decisions. He was Heir Malfoy and he had a duty to his family. Or so he'd said as he snorted into his whiskey.

The Draco Malfoy of her second life had also been increasingly confused this year (which she only now realised watching things through adult eyes), but Rose knew full well that he had to learn about his family by himself. She wouldn't manipulate him or make him see what she wanted because he needed to come to a decision without anyone telling him what to do.

The evidence gathered during the Auror investigation of the mysterious 'illness' had been the final nail in the coffin of Lucius Malfoy's shady life, and Draco had unfortunately come face to face with the reality of Lord Malfoy.

Rose was inordinately pleased that he'd sided with his mother though, and she hoped that her cousin would grow up to be as confident and determined as the man he was in the future, this time without being used as cannon fodder by his father.

"Hello. Do you mind if I join you?"

She smiled gently, hoping that she wouldn't be turned away. It was strange that she missed him so much, even if a lot of their interactions had been just bitching at each other.

He opened his mouth and went to speak before clearing his throat.
"Not at all. Please, come in."

The hopeful look on his face was more than a little heart-breaking, and she inwardly damned Lucius Malfoy for making his son so lonely. She'd wanted to speak with him sooner but she hadn't seen much of him to do so. Looking around the room they were in she now knew why.

"Thank you." She sat down in a chair facing him and looked up to see wary grey eyes.

"How have you found Hogwarts so far, Cousin?"

Her use of 'Cousin' and her smile seemed to shock him before he relaxed a little.

"Well, it's certainly been interesting, and I suppose it's a lot more enjoyable having professors with actual teaching ability. Except for Lockhart, I cannot bear to even look him in the face after those ghastly photos."

Rose burst into laughter at the offended look on his face and couldn't stop giggling at his reaction to her laughing as well.

"Well, about that …"

She certainly had a ball explaining about her prank with the twins, and how they were responsible for the shocking image being plastered everywhere. The image of Draco Malfoy's eyes growing wider and wider was absolutely hilarious and Rose would treasure the image for a long time.

Grimmauld Place was certainly more habitable than when Walburga had been in charge, and Narcissa Malfoy had to physically restrain herself from gawking at the light and open rooms, the increased space from walls being removed, and the lack of disgusting objects decorating the walls.

She was currently in the old Black house with Sirius and Andromeda. She knew that with Lucius in Azkaban her marriage contract was currently void, but if the bastard ever managed to get out it would reactivate and she would be at his mercy once more.

Especially as she was now in complete control of the House of Malfoy.

A Lord cannot hold the title if he has been convicted (hence why Sirius was Lord Black as he had never actually been convicted of anything) so Lucius Malfoy had forfeited his title, and as Draco was now the sole Malfoy by blood it was his right to become the Head of the family. Draco had promptly taken up the role of Head, before meeting with his family lawyers and Gringotts manager and handing over total control to Narcissa.

She was now handling the family estate and was Draco's proxy on the Wizengamot. If Lucius managed to get free however, the marriage contract would reaffirm itself and Narcissa could be used as collateral to get Draco to comply. She had no illusions when it came to her husband's personality.

Hence the formal meeting with her estranged family.

"What do you want Cissa?"

The look in Sirius' eye made her want to curse herself for ever thinking this man unsuitable for their family. You clearly didn't need to be a Slytherin to be a Black. She was thankful for the childhood nickname however, as it indicated he still cared for her as family.

She took a deep breath. "As you know, as of right now I am in complete control of the House of
Malfoy. All power lies with me. For the House of Black, while Amelia Bones is your proxy on the Wizengamot you retain control of the House of Black. Between the two of us, we control the decisions of the two families. This also includes relationships and alliances."

She paused, taking in the tenseness of Sirius' shoulders and look of anticipation on her sister's face. She smiled ruefully; Andi had always been more observant than others gave her credit for.

"I wish to dissolve the marriage contract between Lucius and I."

She didn't need to elaborate. The twin looks of malicious satisfaction told her than they'd understood the benefits. She would still remain in control of the House of Malfoy thanks to Draco's decisions, meaning the two families would still have good relations; having two families such as theirs allied with one another would be very beneficial in terms of political power.

Sirius stood up and smirked at her like he had when they were children and he'd put salt in Walburga's tea.

"Well then, I think we'd better go to Gringotts."

She wasn't even aware that she'd run like a child before she found herself being held in the strong arms of her cousin.

"Thank you, Siri."

"No problem, Cissa."

"I'm not sure if everyone's been introduced but this is my cousin Draco Malfoy. Draco's going to be joining us, if that's okay?"

It was phrased as a question but the girl's tone was simply daring anyone to object. The hard glint in her eyes reminded Neville of a mother bear or lion with her cubs, and he tried not to snort at the idea of the small girl protecting someone taller and older than her as if she were in charge.

Neville had known this was coming. Rose held family in very high esteem and had been ecstatic when she realised the two of them were cousins, so when he saw her sending speculative glances towards Draco Malfoy he'd known that he'd have to at least be civil with him.

It was surprising to find out that Malfoy wasn't as much of a prat as he'd thought, and he noticed that he seemed to be acting that way on purpose for some reason. After the trial Neville realised he'd probably been forced to.

Malfoy hadn't been doing so well since the trial and he knew that Rose had been looking more and more concerned whenever she saw him, so he was honestly expecting this to happen earlier. Apparently he was a lot sneakier than Rose had anticipated, but she looked quite satisfied at finally snagging their mutual cousin (the Black family tree was getting kind of ridiculous at this point), and he knew that she'd fight for him.

So did everyone else apparently, as at the word 'cousin', the rest of the group just looked exasperated and resigned. Except for Blaise, who had a shit-eating grin on his face when he looked at the blonde pair. He didn't give anyone else a chance before he opened his mouth.

"Sure thing, Draco. Come sit down."

And that was that. He spotted Blaise smirk at Rose and get an answering grin, but Neville just
ignored them. He loved his friends dearly but they were so *weird* sometimes.

Maybe he'd write home and entertain his recuperating parents, and tell *them* about the weirdos he went to school with.
Dads,

So, my Defence professor is actually shit, and somehow he's even worse than last time. Really. He tried to show us a simple fire spell and set a student on fire – literally. Luckily it was just their robes, but the imbecile hadn't even been aiming in that direction and still managed to fuck up beyond all comprehension.

So far he's been winking at and charming girls, and his knowledge of magic is so sub-par it's depressing. I'm even starting to think Snape was a better teacher, and he used to take points for breathing. Flophart is literally the biggest idiot in the school and I cannot deal with him anymore.

Hence why I have decided to finally embrace my Marauder heritage and prank the shit out of him. I won't kill him or anything, but for the sake of my sanity he needs to go.

I was wondering if you guys had any ideas I could use to make his life hell. I know we've got the notes I gave to the twins for Christmas, but I could do with a few more. Muggle pranks would be better for us to use too, just to make sure they can't be traced back to us.

Speaking of 'us', our cute little cousin Draco Malfoy has surprisingly become a friend. I suppose all the shit with the Death Eaters and Lucius kind of gave him a reality check. I feel bad for him but he seems pretty determined to earn respect himself, so I'll leave him be unless he needs help. (Aside from hair help, he really needs to stop using so much hair gel. I can't leave him like that – do you know any hair-care products that aren't so obvious?)

Just out of curiosity, do you know of anyone who could be a DADA professor next year? We really need someone who actually understands that werewolves can only infect others when they're transformed. Flophart also seems to be under the impression that vanishing a werewolf's teeth will fix the problem. Which is so ridiculous, though I can't help laughing imagining someone trying to bare their teeth and just showing gums – stop laughing Dad (Sirius), and Dad (Remus), just hit him over the head with something – hard.

So yeah. While it might be fun to get him arrested, I'd rather make his life a living hell. At least to begin with. I don't give a crap whether he ends up in prison or not, but I really want to drive him mad first.

By the way, I've included some pictures in the second envelope with this letter. Only look at them if you can handle seeing something disgusting. They're the results of the first prank the twins and I pulled against the moron. There are a lot of copies of these photos. This letter was sent just after the event, so you might see some of the others in the media if someone decides to grace the public
with the nightmarish pictures.

Speak to you soon!

Love you,

Rose

Hours later a certain snowy owl made it all the way to Gloucestershire where the ancestral manor of the Potter family stood. A certain dog Animagus and werewolf were deeply immersed in their work creating various prototypes and filling out paperwork for permits and such when they were interrupted by the rhythmic tapping on the window.

After the haughty owl delivered the letter (still not answering to Sirius calling her by name) she gracefully flew out the window and around the manor, presumably to The Pottery's owlery.

Remus looked over the letter and immediately recognised the flowing script of his daughter. He then noticed there was a small note on the front to read the letter first before opening the other envelope, which was presumably inside the first.

"Padfoot, it seems Bambi's got some news."

Sirius lifted his head from his scribbles. "Is she still having trouble with the fraud?"

"Who knows?"

He opened the letter and moved it so that his friend could read it over his shoulder.

They did indeed have to stop when Sirius started laughing about a toothless werewolf and started imagining Remus without teeth. Said man then proceeded to smack the laughing idiot over the head with a hardback book. Judging by the red mark on his head, it was a rather hard hit.

They finally got to the end of the letter, even if Sirius was snickering the entire time.

Sirius cocked his head. "Why is she warning us against looking at some photos?"

Remus didn't answer, but he had a very strong feeling that the small blonde girl who looked like butter wouldn't melt in her mouth was a hell of a lot more devious than he had originally thought. His instincts were telling him that those photos were not going to be pretty. At all.

Looking at his friend it was clear the two of them had the same idea, but they went ahead and opened the envelope, watching as a dozen photos spilled out onto the table.

Remus was suddenly glad he hadn't been drinking anything. Dear lord, that is disgusting.

Sirius widened his eyes before he bent double and started laughing hysterically. He then fell on his knees, smacking his hand against the floor as he was literally crying. He was actually struggling to breathe but didn't seem to care, more focused on the image of what he'd just seen. His demented howling had attracted the attention of the house-elves, but he didn't notice the concerned looks of the creatures in his current position.

Remus just sunk down in his chair with his head in his hands. He didn't know whether he was supposed to laugh or cry at this point, but instead he just groaned and made plans to wipe his own memory. That or drink himself into oblivion until he forgot the travesty that he'd just witnessed.
He was more than a little concerned just how pissed off his daughter was with the idiot's incompetence, as she was usually quite a kind girl despite her adult cynicism. Just because she was a cheeky brat didn't mean she was a bad person, which meant this Lockhart was probably seriously trying on her patience. Not to mention the quick reference to his flirting with students. He blinked and tried to ignore the urge to rip the creep apart.

He sighed and spared a look for his psychotic friend who was still on the floor and looked at the letter again. One the one hand he was a mature adult who should discourage pranking, but on the other he was a Marauder with a daughter who was going to go ahead with her plans no matter what they said. It was clear which path he was going to take.

*Sorry Charity. The school's going to get bloody mad from here on out.*

"Padfoot get your crazy arse off the floor and help me send some stuff to Bambi."

Sirius shot up with wide eyes and a grin. "Moony! I knew we'd done well corrupting you!"

Remus rolled his eyes. "Shut up. Now how do we help?"

The grin he got should have made him feel pity for the recipient, but all he felt was vicious satisfaction. God help anyone who pissed off Bambi.

Looking around the Great Hall to check on his friends had become something of a ritual during each meal for Neville, and it was a weird feeling to look around the massive hall and realise that he now had so many friends. Weird, but warm. His life was definitely livelier than before he started Hogwarts, and he enjoyed making sure his friends and family were safe and happy.

Which is why when he caught sight of a spine-tingling wicked grin on Rose's face he whipped his head back to her blonde head, staring with wide eyes at her maniacal face. He was torn between sighing in resignation or falling face-first into the table. He knew full well that his cousin was beyond devious and enjoyed causing mayhem, but he wanted to make sure she didn't do something that she'd regret.

She was more than capable of looking after herself, but they were both family and friends. Neville felt inordinately protective of the blonde girl who had happily attached herself to him as a friend and didn't seem to care one bit about his magical abilities or how he was more than a little shy.

He would protect her to the best of his ability and hopefully try to stop herself from doing something too much. Just because he had no proof, it didn't mean than the Lockhart incident wasn't because of her. Those horrifying photos were clearly because of her somehow, and he didn't care what anyone said.

Rose potter was diabolical and had a very perverse sense of humour for an eleven-year-old, and she had the brains to cause unparalleled chaos if she chose to. Hopefully she wouldn't do something too bad.

He watched as her grin softened to a smirk which was directed at their most recent Defence professor, and suddenly he didn't feel the need to stop her from harassing the idiot.

*I should probably still help her, though.*

"Hey Susan, I think Rose could use your help …"
After deliberation amongst the first-year study group (which now included Draco), and collaboration with the infamous Weasley twins, a week of pranking hell was decided on for their fraud of a professor. Not everyone elected to participate in the actual pranks, but everyone at least agreed to help with planning and act as an alibi if needed.

The day after, one Gilderoy Lockhart found a letter on his desk addressed to him, and gleefully opened the expensive envelope in the hopes of receiving fan mail or money. He was still trying to forget the horrific photograph incident, and he hadn't had any luck in finding out which of the little shits was responsible.

The parchment inside was more than a little confusing, and later he would berate himself for ignoring the ominous feeling it gave, but at that moment the blonde man simply threw the letter in the fire and started thinking about his new book.

*Hello Gilderoy Lockhart, and welcome to the Week of Hell.*

The first day of the aforementioned Week of Hell began with Rose reinventing a curse that she had previously used on Ron. The spider illusion curse was tempting to use but she wanted to do things without magic, so she had roped Dobby into buying a ton of books from a speciality shop that sold muggle books.

Several books on insects later, and she and Dobby had cut them up into small cards of bugs and hid them all over the classroom for the fraud to find. Dobby added a little house-elf magic to help them move a bit to give the illusion they were alive.

Seeing the ‘great’ Gilderoy Lockhart shriek and jump on his chair from a picture of a cockroach had Rose biting her tongue to stop from laughing. Her friends had no such trouble, and she spotted plenty of her peers roaring in laughter at the idiot.

George told her later that it had carried on throughout the day, and by dinner the moron was pale and twitchy.

Rose just smirked into her goblet. *Day one: complete.*

Draco Malfoy had discovered a vindictive love of pranking after a few talks with his cousin, and their discussions had brought up a few different uses of illusion spells. She had spoken of bug illusions, and that was probably the inspiration behind her prank on Lockhart.

Just the thought of that imbecile made him snort, and he completely agreed with Rose that he had to go. There was no way that that man was able to teach adequately, especially as he was more focused on those garish outfits rather than using magic.

He was obsessed with how others saw him, and it was this fact that Draco capitalised on.

Gilderoy Lockhart spent the day wearing his usual robes, but Draco had spelled them to look like a woman's skimpy nightgown to anyone else just after breakfast. The man was increasingly worried when people kept looking at him with shock and disgust, and he ended up hiding in his quarters for meals, and so the other staff missed out on seeing him wearing next to nothing.

He caught Parvati's eyes and nodded. It would be her turn next.

"Professor, what exactly do you mean by ‘take down’?"
"Professor Lockhart, can you explain to me how to best use fire magic, and maybe a few extra spells that are more complicated?"

"Sir, it's so amazing that you defeated the Yeti that way, but what would happen if someone lied about their talents? I mean, would they go to prison or just get a fine? I just wonder because it's kind of sad how many people lie about things."

Questions upon questions upon questions was the punishment for day three of their campaign to fuck with Lockhart, and Parvati had rallied all the girls in Gryffindor and Hufflepuff to overwhelm him by asking him anything and everything. Ravenclaws were generally more interested in their work and the Slytherins weren't open enough to admire him so much, so the questions were more realistic coming from the lions and badgers.

The idea of him going to prison did make him squeak in fear though, before Hannah (cute little Hannah, with blonde hair perpetually in pigtails) cheerfully giggled and informed him that nobody would ever believe he would do anything like that, which left him in a state of total fear all day. He kept giggling nervously, and the Headmistress kept side-eyeing him all through dinner.

Parvati giggled at something Lavender said, all the while looking at their 'professor' out the corner of her eye.

Remus and Sirius really pulled through with the simple prank ideas and materials, and the second generation of Marauders gleefully took note of how to incorporate basic magic with their pranks without getting caught.

On day four the twins and Rose covered every inch of Lockhart's office and classroom with upside down plastic cups which had water in them, so when a cup was picked up the water would go everywhere.

The original Marauders had gone a step further though, and the cups were covered in tiny runes which anchored spells to them, and they were spelled to protect the contents of the cups from magic. Therefore, if the cups were simply vanished the water would remain and then flood the room in one go.

His shriek when he was soaked after he got rid of the cups (surprising Rose who thought he could only use a Memory Charm) was a joy to listen to. Though the laughter later on was even better, especially as he ended up sitting on a Disillusioned whoopee cushion. In the middle of the Great Hall.

The wide eyes of McGonagall and the snort from Flitwick was hilarious.

Judging by the wary look of caution on his face, Lockhart seemed to be finally getting some hint of what was happening on the morning of day five. Not that his caution was enough to save him with the twin looks of satisfaction from Blaise and Daphne which were more than enough to know the fraud hadn't been spared.

They were getting more than a little frustrated that a core class was being turned into such a circus act, so they hadn't hesitated to join in on the Week of Hell. Seeing as how Susan had said a week was all they'd need with a glint in her eyes, the interest of the snakes had been thoroughly peaked.

Slipping a few laxatives into his drink during lunch was surprisingly easy with the help of one of the elves (who also didn't like the man) and it also allowed him to get increasingly jumpy as he kept
expecting things to jump out at him.

Throughout their class he was quite erratic, and when Blaise flicked a bang snap at the wall behind him he jumped a mile in the air before paling rapidly and running out the room without a word.

Daphne hoped he made it to the restroom in time. She didn't want to see the result of that in public.

The study group had graciously allowed the Weasley twins to have a day of fucking with Lockhart to themselves, and they decided to sit back and be pleasantly surprised when the fun began.

The morning of the sixth day, the students and staff of Hogwarts were treated to the sight of the DADA professor walking in with a smile so forced it looked painful. He kept twitching and scratching himself (sometimes in inappropriate places) as he walked up to the staff table. That wasn't the best, though.

That honour went to the luminous lilac hair he now sported.

Rose could see nearly every single staff member trying not to laugh, including Hagrid, and she nearly choked when she heard Professor Burbage compliment him on his campaign to promote individuality with a straight face.

When classes ended Rose went to her apartment trunk and copied her memories of the week before putting them in shrunken vials and had Hedwig fly them home. They at least would appreciate her campaign against stupidity.

She left and wandered back though the castle, thinking about the next day. They had warned Flophart of the 'Week of Hell', so he was going to be suspecting a full seven days of torment, however they had decided not to do anything on the seventh day as a form of psychological torture on its own.

"Rose!"

She turned and saw two identical faces grinning at her. Rose smirked. Maybe they had some more ideas …

Chapter End Notes

This chapter is more filler than anything, but I wanted to show that while Rose is a mature adult, she still wants to embrace her second chance at childhood. That, and she's proud to be a Marauder.

I'm sorry if the pranks aren't that good, but the only pranks I've ever done were at uni, and I only one I did by myself was to tape condoms to my housemates' doors lol. Don't even ask me, I still don't know why I did it.
Hogwarts hath no fury

Chapter Notes

I don't own 'Harry Potter'.

*Double update for Valentine's Day :D

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Lockhart really needed to shove his ideas up his arse. Apparently the moron had taken 'Week of Hell' to mean that he was going to be left alone after just a week, and while he was still a little jumpy he hadn't learnt his lesson and had slid right back into his old teaching style.

The man was even worse than her past life, and Rose was very nearly tempted to shove him off the Astronomy Tower. Every single lesson the man came up with ended in chaos and/or injury for the students, he'd been spotted flirting outright with some of the older – and more developed – girls, and now the idiot had revived his past ideas for one of the worst days in existence.

Valentine's Day.

As far as Rose was concerned, St Valentine's Day was either a day of genuine emotional expression (which was as rare as one of Luna's creatures), or a day of creepy gestures. Unfortunately, it was usually the latter. Remembering Ginny's fabled crush on her and the god-awful 'poem' she'd sent Rose with a dwarf still made her shiver in revulsion; it wasn't that Ginny had been a girl, it was that she'd been something of a stalker – not attractive in the slightest.

Hogwarts was a school, and as a school the vast majority of the inhabitants were teenagers. Hormonal, overreacting teenagers who didn't have the faintest clue when it came to overtures of romance. The amount of times people had sent very inappropriate or completely uninspired gifts was too numerous to count, and Rose had hated the day at school.

First year she'd been a strange new child (or an exhibition to gawk at), second year she'd been the Heir of Slytherin and was avoided like the plague, third year she'd faded into the background of Ron and Hermione's argument, fourth year had been when she finally became 'popular' – only after being thought a cheat – and the ridiculous number of bouquets she got earned her the envy of her Housemates, fifth year she'd been a lying psycho so was a leper once more, sixth year she'd been interesting again and had jealous girls glaring at her gifts, and seventh year she'd been a criminal on the run.

Eighth year was when she'd employed a mail redirection ward for the countless offers of betrothal and gifts she got. After that she'd always avoided public places on the cursed day, and she'd had Dobby sort through the never-ending tokens of affection. It would have been more flattering if ninety-nine percent of her admirers hadn't been more interested in her money and titles. (Rose never quite figured out why nobody got the message that she wouldn't marry someone like that, especially after she once told someone to fuck off in broad daylight in Diagon Alley.)

As it was Rose had been planning on avoiding everyone on the day, but Hermione had dragged her unwilling body to breakfast where she stared confusedly at her tense roommate, watching as Rose looked ready to flee at a moment's notice.
Rose was trying to eat and pay attention to her surroundings for unwanted attention at the same time, and she missed the bewildered and amused looks her friends were trading.

She'd sent a few little packages to her friends, but the boxes were clearly friendly, not romantic, and everyone would see they had the same as each other. Rose had recently invested in a small chocolatier business in France with Remus' help, and they'd sent her a bunch of sample boxes which she'd used as Valentine's presents for her friends and their families.

Sirius and Remus were also getting chocolate, but she'd had theirs specially made for them. Sirius had a box with liqueur-filled chocolates – *bloody alcoholic* – and Remus had a selection of different traditional flavours to satisfy his sweet tooth.

Sending gifts was something she'd never minded but receiving them always made her feel awkward.

It was even worse with all the pink.

Gilderoy Lockhart had apparently gone ahead with the same Valentine's decorations as in her previous life, and their beloved castle had been attacked with garish pink decorations and banners, sparkling and singing at random intervals to the general consternation of most of the school. Thankfully he hadn't managed to hire the dwarfs, but that wasn't much consolation in the face of the nauseating decorations.

A quick glance at the staff table showed a Headmistress whose lips had pursed so much they'd turned white, and she seemed to be restraining herself from doing permanent damage to her useless colleague.

Flitwick, Sprout and Madam Pomfrey had identical disgusted looks on their faces, while the newly re-employed Slughorn was surreptitiously eyeing the decorations with a morbid curiosity as one might look at a dead animal – it was completely gruesome, but there was a macabre intrigue to it. The rest of the teachers ranged from appalled to resigned, with a hilariously confused Hagrid thrown in.

Rose though the sight of the large man was a nice contrast to her hatred for this day, as the Ministry had finally revoked Hagrid's expulsion – *go Amelia* – and he was now allowed to own his own wand. The man had tearfully explained the events to Rose during tea a few weeks ago, and he was now taking lessons with the other teachers to catch up on his missed education.

The sight of hundreds of owls swooping in obliterated any calm she'd amassed, and Rose sat in resigned anticipation, knowing that there were a couple of people exempt from her owl redirection ward; she'd already explained the ward to her friends, so they knew they had to wait a bit for her to reply – unless they managed to coax Hedwig into delivering for them.

She spotted a beautiful snowy owl who was clearly more striking that the rest of them – yes, she was biased, so what? – and she watched as the owl circled around the room before slowly descending and gracefully landing at the Ravenclaw table in front of her.

Rose took the shrunken package from her feathered friend and offered her a plate of bacon and fruit. Hedwig nipped her finger before beginning to devour the meat which she seemed to have a slight obsession for – not that Rose would ever say anything; her owl was much too smart and she'd understand if she was insulted even the slightest.

She tapped her wand on the box and contemplated its contents as it resized. The box was rather plain, but when she opened it up she saw numerous smaller boxes inside.
The one on top was a mixture of muggle biscuits and chocolates from the Tonks family, and she almost drooled at the sight of the Mars Bars and Jaffa Cakes. Augusta had sent her a nice hair ornament with a rose on it, and it seemed as if she wasn't the only one who'd kept to the theme of her name.

Her newly awakened godmother and her husband had sent her a necklace with a rose pendant and a note that she'd read later, and any lingering guilt over stealing someone else's potion had vanished. Seeing evidence of how Frank and Alice were now awake, and how happy Neville had been since Christmas Break was more than enough for Rose to put her theft out of her mind.

She was taken aback at the sheer detail on the penultimate box, which was a deep red leather embossed with the Potter crest. She wasn't the only one who'd noticed, and the other students who were aware of her family started whispering. Hermione especially had a shrewd gleam in her eye.

Rose opened the flat square box to find a stunning silver charm bracelet with five charms on it: a stag, a dog, a wolf, a lily, and a rose were set at regular intervals around the bracelet, and each charm was decorated with tiny sparkling diamonds. She could also feel that the bracelet was saturated in the feel of Sirius' and Remus' warm magic, and there was no doubt the thing was covered in protective charms. I bet there's a tracking charm on it too. Over-protective gits.

The last box also came from her adoptive parents, and when she opened the box she couldn't stop her gasp. Neither could Hermione.

"Oh my god, that's amazing!"

Hermione might have been the one to squeal in her ear – and her bookish friend had never sounded so girlish – but soon she was surrounded by other females (and a few males) who were trying to figure out where her present came from.

"Where did you get it from?"

"It looks beautiful!"

"That's so romantic …"

She snorted at the last one. It was a present from a couple of men who thought of her as a daughter, not a partner. The muggle-raised students clearly knew the significance of her gift, but even the wizarding-raised could appreciate the aesthetics of it.

The last box had a glass bell jar, inside which was a crystal rose coloured in the appropriate red and green, and the rose was hovering in the centre and emitting a soft glow while small lights floated around the jar, and on the bottom of the jar were a few red petals.

She had received a replica of the rose from Disney's *Beauty and the Beast.*

The animated film had been released last year before Christmas, and even as an adult it had been one of her favourite films. Her parents knew that she loved the film, and apparently decided to give her something else that was exorbitantly expensive.

A very, very large part of her kind of wanted to jump up and down and squeal like the girls around her, but she didn't want to ruin the image of the serious, genius Ravenclaw that most of the school knew her as. She wasn't being stuck up, but if she wanted people to take her seriously then she had to act accordingly. That and if she wanted to be able to get away with more shit like the Week of Hell, it was better for her to seem too reserved to do something like that.
She smiled genially at the crowding students. "It's not a romantic gift, it's from my family."

Her smile froze when she saw the poncey wavy blonde hair and too-white teeth of Lockhart as he strolled over to their group. Images of all the problems he'd ever caused flashed through her mind, and all she could think of was her new crystal rose, shattered on the floor because of the useless tosser.

"Lissy!"

A loud crack permeated the hall. "Yes, Miss?"

"Can you take everything here up to my room and put them on my desk for me please Lissy?"

"Lissy will be doing so, Miss!"

With another crack, the elf who usually cleaned Ravenclaw Tower disappeared with her new gifts, and she breathed a small sigh of relief for saving them even as the students around her started grumbling. She would have called Dobby, but she wasn't exactly sure how she'd explain to Draco how his family elf was now her personal elf.

"Ah, Miss Potter! How are you on the wonderful day? I couldn't help but notice that you received some rather expensive gifts. I understand the temptation to give into admirers dear, but you are a tad young for such relationships. Young girls such as yourself aren't quite experienced enough for older men. I know when I was –"

"With all due respect, Sir, the Valentine's gifts I just received were from my adopted fathers, who have no romantic interest in me, I can assure you. Not to mention, Sir, that as an eleven-year-old, I do not appreciate your insinuation that I am in a scandalous relationship with an older man, and I do not think it wise for you to make such false allusions against a member of The Noble and Most Ancient Houses of Potter and Black."

If Dumbledore were still around she wouldn't have dared to mention her knowledge of wizarding customs, but McGonagall was much more open and fair, and even if she knew about Rose's relationship with Sirius and Remus, one, she couldn't do anything about it, and two, she would actually be happy about it. Besides, it was hilarious to use the stupid pure-blood crap to her advantage for once.

As it was, Rose was resisting the urge to smirk in satisfaction at the immediate silence in the hall at her words, and she was gleefully observing how Lockhart's face lost any colour at all and widened his eyes when he realised his blunder.

She snuck a glance at the Slytherin table and saw nasty smirks on nearly every single face; the snakes were disgusted with Flophart and his attempts at teaching, and to see him cut down in such a political manner was downright amusing for them. Blaise and Draco especially were entertained, and Draco, who was finally regaining his confidence, opened his mouth to make things even worse – for Lockhart, that is.

"Professor Lockhart," he drawled, and Rose nearly snorted at his tone when he addressed the man as such, "I also have concerns about what you just said. In case you are unaware, with Lucius Malfoy's recent incarceration the title of Lord Malfoy has fallen to me, and as the Lord of House Malfoy and a member of House Black, I do not welcome such aspersions on the character of my cousin. Do you wish to officially make such allegations against Rose Potter?"

Draco finished his unhurried questioning by resting his chin in the palm of his hand, and lazily
arching an eyebrow at the now-sweating idiot. If they weren't related, Rose might have kissed Draco for those words.

Lockhart had just made serious allegations against a Potter and a Black, incited the wrath of a Malfoy, and had been reminded by Draco that he had just questioned *Rose Potter*, and while Rose usually hated her fame, using it in this manner was rather useful.

Her peripheral vision revealed a couple of wicked grins from Fred and George, the Hufflepuffs grinning into their pumpkin juice, and McGonagall with her head lowered, which did nothing to hide her shoulders which were obviously shaking from barely-restrained laughter.

The man stuttered over some unintelligible words, before all but fleeing the Great Hall as the students laughed and jeered.

Rose turned a cheeky grin to the Headmistress – unknowing that it was the same exact grin that James Potter used to use on the woman – and smiled at her.

"Headmistress, do we *need* so much pink in here?"

The woman's lips barely twitched, but she could see the amusement in her eyes as she stood up.

"No Miss Potter, we *don't.*"

And with that the woman waved her wand, and the garish additions to the hall vanished as the students cheered.

The following day the wizarding world was once more introduced to disturbing news in their education system, and the Daily Prophet was once more reaping the rewards of printing complete truth that couldn't be contested. The population at Hogwarts were equally disturbed, though a certain group of first years were a little more worried than others.

GILDEROY LOCKHART CONVICTED OF FRAUD & SEXUAL HARASSMENT

A PREDATOR AMONGST OUR CHILDREN?

*The celebrated author and recent professor at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, Mr Gilderoy Lockhart, has been arrested and convicted on charges of fraud and sexual harassment.*

*In a twist that has shocked our community, the fantastical exploits of Gilderoy Lockhart have been revealed to be the work of other unknown witches and wizards. Lockhart is actually only responsible for Obliviating the brave and daring people who triumphed over the various creatures in the books and taking credit for their work!* 

*It isn't a stretch to say that we are all stunned at the audacity of this man, who has taken not only the reputation of others, but also precious memories, which may have had a dire and permanent effect on the victims.*

*As if that wasn't shocking enough however, the man was also the recipient of serious allegations of sexual harassment at Hogwarts, and numerous of-age students and those with parental consent donated evidence consisting of memories and statements concerning the alarming behaviour of a man supposed to protect them, not flirt with them.*
Investigations carried out by the Department of Magical Law Enforcement have determined that there was indeed a wealth of truth behind the allegations, and Gilderoy Lockhart has since been convicted of sexual harassment after disregarding the professional boundaries between educator and student.

After the recent arrest of Potions Master Severus Snape and the removal of Professor Binns, and now this shameful debacle with yet another professor, we must ask ourselves if Hogwarts is truly the best place for our children and how we can avoid these situations in the future.

My question is this: what requirements are there to be a professor?

The various students of the first-year study group raised their heads from their papers and turned towards the Hufflepuff table, where a humming Susan Bones was absentmindedly eating porridge with a shiver-inducing gleam in her eyes.

By now everyone had a fair bit of respect for all the Houses, but Susan was generally considered harmless by all standards. They all turned back to their food with the same thought going through their heads:

Note to self – never piss off Susan Bones.

Chapter End Notes

Happy Valentine's Day people!

Personally I'm not too much of a fan of today, but I'm still single, so go figure lol.

These chapters were actually supposed to be out hours ago, but we had a storm and our internet went :( (But it's back now! :D)

Thanks guys for the reviews and bookmarks, you guys are amazing :)

See ya!
Valentine's for adults 101

Chapter Notes

I don't own 'Harry Potter'.

Valentine's Day wasn't only a difficult day for Rose Potter, and while Sirius had originally laughed himself silly at the letters from his daughter grumbling about the dreaded day, now he was wondering if his precious Bambi hadn't been on to something.

Valentine's Day sucked balls.

Some might ponder his distaste for the day considering his circumstances – he had a beautiful fiancée who enjoyed the simpler things in life, he had enough money to buy her an entire island if she wanted, and they'd known each other for over a decade. If even he was having second thoughts about the romantic event then what hope did anyone have?

Sirius was a brave and daring Gryffindor, but he was honestly finding it difficult to muster up even the slightest shred of motivation for the day's events. All he wanted to do curl up in his bed with the covers pulled over his head, and fall asleep listening to crappy muggle music that would have mortally offended his parents. He really didn't want to do anything today. At least, that's what he was telling himself.

The truth was that he had only been free from Azkaban for less than a year, and he was still terrified that he was going to lose everything he had gained, that he was going to wake up one day and find out that the last eight months of his life were nothing but a dream. His precious and crazy daughter, having fun experimenting with Moony again, being with his beautiful Amy …

The woman who he planned to propose to today.

He knew it was a little cliché to propose on Valentine's Day, but he didn't really care. He'd all but dragged Moony to the Black Family vault and spent hours searching through the generations of family jewellery, trying to find a new engagement ring to suit his fiancée. He knew that he'd already proposed once, but that was over ten years ago and circumstances had changed; they were different people than they were before and he wanted her to know that he was still serious – no pun intended – about their relationship.

After an entire afternoon during which the new Lord Black went a bit cross-eyed looking at the mountain of jewels his family had amassed over the years, he and his best friend found what they knew was the perfect ring for the serious woman.

The band was made of white gold with intricate carvings of runes on the outer and inner sides, spelling out promises of dedication and trust, and the centre had a small diamond sitting in the middle of the runes.

There was a second set of rings with similar runes for a wedding, and Sirius hoped that he would have the opportunity to use them in the future.

Amelia was a woman who disliked the over-the-top extravagance of many older families, and Sirius
knew that she preferred romantic gestures with meaning rather than fuelled by money. It was because of this that Sirius had begged the Potter and Black elves for some lessons in the kitchen, and he decided that he would take her on a picnic and propose to her then.

The location was a small field with a pond where the two had spent many a day in the Auror academy learning how to fight together, and the place was where the two of them had first kissed after admitting their feelings for one another.

The basket was full of her favourite foods and a few other mementos from their dates, including a pot of the same ice cream they had eaten before he originally proposed.

He didn't care if anyone said he was sappy, he knew that he was and he didn't care. His life was finally turning around and he was once more in a relationship with the woman that he loved more than anything.

He was still scared that she'd say no.

Azkaban had really done a number on him, and his already-damaged self-esteem from childhood had taken one too many beatings in the dank and dreary prison. He still had to see Mind-Healers twice a week, his family reputation was in shreds, and he didn't really have a stable job yet – plans with Moony notwithstanding. Amelia could have anyone she wanted, so why would she stick with a damaged ex-inmate who had the mental age of a teenager?

Just because he acted self-confident didn't mean that he was unaware of his faults, and he couldn't help but wonder why she bothered to stay with him sometimes. He'd never told anyone, but sometimes his mind whispered to him that it was just guilt and pity over how she hadn't helped him, that she only stayed with him from a sense of obligation.

Sirius hated listening to those thoughts.

A noise to his left jolted him out of his morose thoughts, and he took a deep breath and steeled himself. He'd been cooking all day and it was evening now, so he would only have a few more hours of panic at the very least.

He took the basket being offered to him by Miffy and piled in the utensils and boxes of food, making sure they were all sealed properly. He added some candles and a blanket, before checking himself over in the mirror and deciding to just go for it.

Apparating away to the small field he set up the blanket with the plates and cutlery to the side, and rearranging the food into a certain order before setting the candles at regular intervals around the clearing.

"Now to get Amy."

With a decisive nod Sirius Black Apparated away with a sharp crack.

Amelia was honestly wondering if she was dreaming right now; this entire date was so beautifully arranged she couldn't believe that she'd ever thought her fiancé guilty.

The small clearing where they'd first kissed was decorated with floating candles, hovering around them casting a warm glow on where they were sitting. Sirius had obviously cast a wide-scale Warming Charm too, as the temperature was a lot warmer for February than she would have thought.

Their blanket was covered in empty boxes of some of her favourite foods, and there was even a cake
that she remembered from their first date. It was a little rough around the edges, but her heart warmed at the idea that Sirius had both remembered it and actually tried to make it himself.

Speaking of her fiancé, the man had been looking increasingly twitchy as the night went on. He still looked like he was enjoying himself, but every so often a panic-filled look would cross his face and she couldn't figure out what was wrong with him.

The sound of a throat clearing brought her back to the moment.

"Amy?"

"Yes Sirius?"

"I – well, that is, I mean – I, oh bugger it all."

The man ran a hand roughly through his hair before he took a deep breath and fixed her with an intense look, causing butterflies in her stomach.

"You and I both know that with me having spent ten years in Azkaban things between us are different, and we're different now. I'm still trying get my head straight, and you're running a whole bloody department by yourself!

"Honestly, I'm not even sure why you want me anymore, but the fact that you apparently do is mental. I … sometimes I wonder if you're still here because of pity or something, and if you are I'd rather you tell me, you know. It's not going to be pretty otherwise.

"Things have changed, but the one thing that hasn't is that I still love you. I still want to be with you, marry you, and maybe even have a couple of kids with you, and if you still want that too, well …"

Amelia's eyes teared up as the man she loved with all her heart moved around until he was on one knee, holding out a new ring.

"I know I asked you years ago but that was then, and this time I'd like to actually follow through, preferably sooner rather than later.

"Will you marry me?"

The hopeful and worried look in his grey eyes was heart-breaking, and she could feel a lump in her throat. She tearfully nodded her head emphatically and grabbed him in a tight hug.

"Of course I will, you silly man!"

She pulled back before leaning in to seal her lips to his, pouring out every ounce of love she had for this amazing person.

After a few minutes Sirius pulled away gently, eyeing her with a soft grin, before he grabbed her hand and slid the new ring on next to the old one.

He admired the ring on her hand for a moment before leaning in once more.

Earlier in the day, Sirius Black was not the only man panicking about his Valentine's celebration. Elsewhere one Remus Lupin had begun a quick descent into a panic attack concerning his plans with Charity.

The two of them hadn't really confirmed anything, but their outings together had been full of enough
signs that they were interested in each other. After months of dancing around the topic, neither one saying anything, Remus had decided to ask her out to dinner on Valentine's Day.

The date was clearly romantic, and Charity had blushed a deep pink as she widened her eyes at the question. Remus had thought it was a very attractive look on her even as he anxiously waited for her reply.

After she stuttered out a quiet yes, he sent a relieved and happy smile at the woman which she returned, if a bit shyly. They'd made plans to visit a nice muggle restaurant in Edinburgh, and Remus was ecstatic that his love life was actually going somewhere for once.

Now he was just plain nervous.

He had no idea what to do anymore and it was already the day of their date; he couldn't just cancel on her all of a sudden, he'd feel like a total prick. She was an amazing woman who deserved so much more than that, and quite frankly, more than he could give her.

She deserved more than a werewolf.

If they were going to begin a proper relationship she deserved to know the truth before things got serious. They were only friends at this point, and while it would hurt if she rejected him it wouldn't be the end of the world. If they were romantically involved and she left, it would be painful.

He didn't know why he was setting himself up for a distressing rejection, but he wanted to be selfish for once and be happy. His life was probably the best it had ever been, and he finally felt like he was living an actual life rather than drifting by in a haze of misery.

This was completely out of his comfort zone though; he had no problems helping Sirius with ridiculously extravagant Valentine's gifts for Rose – even he had an evil grin imagining her paranoia when receiving the presents – but actual romantic behaviour tended to baffle him more than anything.

He'd had only had three disastrous relationships with women – all of whom thought that he was cheating on them because of him disappearing during the full moon – and one of them had also been jealous of Sirius, despite him being engaged.

Laughing in her face at the accusation probably hadn't helped, but he hadn't known whether to laugh or cry, especially with the memory of his confusing teenage crush on Sirius, which now only served to make him cringe or want to vomit. The man was like his brother and after teenage hormones had settled down, he'd felt ill at the mere thought.

The point was, his experience with romantic endeavours was rather limited and the prospect of starting a fully-functioning romantic relationship with a woman, and actually telling her about his affliction, was enough to make him want to pass out.

He was currently sat in the Shrieking Shack for some reason, but the morbid familiarity was calming. The peeled paint, scratches on the furniture, and the broken windows reminded him of school and when there were four Marauders …

He whipped his head around at the sound of steps and gripped his wand tightly, stepping quietly back into the shadows for cover. The door slowly opened with an ominous creak, before a slight figure walked into the room.

"Bloody hell, Rose!"
She shrieked and jumped at the same time, before tripping over backwards and landing in a painful heap on the ground.

"Ow, ow, fucking ow! Damnit Dad, you scared the shit out of me! What are you doing here?!

Remus had to admit her glare was terrifying, and memories of Lily with the same look on her face surfaced in his mind, reminding him not to piss off a woman with the Evans temper. He hoped that helping her up might redirect her anger.

"Sorry about that, I'm just … thinking about my date tonight. I'm going to tell her."

Rose didn't need any further explanation, and her face softened with empathy before dragging him to the dilapidated sofa and seating them both. Remus put his arm around his daughter as she rested her head on his shoulder.

"I think … Professor Burbage is a smart woman, and she probably knows the difference between someone who is a monster and someone who unfortunately has to deal with one every month. If she isn't then she's clearly too stupid for you.

"You need a smart woman and you deserve one too. There's nothing wrong with you, you know? If she, or anyone else, can't see that then that's their loss.

"If she does turn out to be a bitch, then Sirius and I will still be here for you. And you can raid the wine cellar at Black Manor and make the Black ancestors roll in their graves."

Her reassuring words soothed his anxiety, and her last quip made him snort with laughter.

"Thanks, Rose."

He pressed his lips to her forehead and pulled back to look at her smile. She really is extraordinary, he thought. He frowned as something occurred to him.

"Why are you here anyway?"

"Because Valentine's Day is fucking crazy!"

Her paranoid face was hilarious, and no matter how offended she looked, he couldn't stop laughing at her.

Charity Burbage had always prided herself on her observational skills. She noticed things, small things that others usually disregarded, and made conclusions by herself that usually turned out to be correct.

When she was younger, she'd noticed that Headmaster Dumbledore looked to be in pain when he saw young couples together, and with the recent articles about his relationship with Grindelwald it was no longer a mystery as to why.

She noticed that Minerva always took her tea with a dash more milk than others (an effect of the Animagus transformation?), and that Filius fiddled with the cuffs of his robes when he was anxious. She noticed that Quirinus had been increasingly erratic this year and hadn't been all that surprised when he vanished.

She noticed that Rose Potter had a disturbingly mature mask on her face and that she played a quiet child very well, but Charity worried about why she felt she had to act in such a way.
She noticed Remus Lupin.

He was tall and well-built, with a permanently-casual state of dress that made him very approachable. His smile was a little crooked, and his amber-tinted green eyes lit up whenever he spoke of his friend and his daughter.

He was also a werewolf.

Charity noticed small things, and she noticed the very faint scars on his face from claws, and the moodiness in the week before a full moon, and how his hair had a touch of grey at the temples, earlier that what wizards usually got.

She noticed how he looked at her with fear.

She knew that he was scared to admit his affliction to her and she knew why. Just because she didn't care about werewolves didn't mean others were so accepting. It was obvious that Sirius Black and Rose Potter knew and were okay with it, but she was well aware of the disgusting prejudice against werewolves.

When she was younger she'd met a werewolf who'd been thrown out of her home. The girl had only been ten, and seeing the girl in such a sad state destroyed any wariness that Charity felt. She never knew the girl's name, and she soon disappeared without a trace, but not before unwittingly converting Charity into a supporter of werewolf rights.

Whether or not someone was a werewolf was never going to be an issue for Charity, and she'd decided to patiently wait for Remus to tell her about it himself in his own time.

Which was apparently at the end of their Valentine's date.

"I'm a werewolf."

He stood in front of her, hunched in on himself as if expecting physical blows. His eyes held a sad resignation to them already, and he looked to be slowly stepping back. It was a heart-breaking sight.

"I know."

His eyes shot up to hers and his mouth gaped. It was rather amusing to Charity.

"I noticed all the signs months ago but I didn't say anything. It doesn't bother me, you know? You're still you, and unless you go out of your way to infect innocent people – which I highly doubt – then there's no problem.

"I … I really like you Remus, and I'd like to have a relationship with you. I don't care about your illness, or you having a daughter, or anything … But I do care about you."

She finished her statement with a smile as she waited for his reply.

A reply which she got in a few seconds in the form of his lips on hers.

Well then … She stretched up and linked her arms around his neck, forgetting about anything else.
Sometimes Rose wondered if perhaps there was something wrong with how cynical she was. The utter apathy she usually felt accompanied with an expectation for the worst possible outcome spoke of someone who was far too bitter to see the good in life. It wasn't the best attitude for a woman who hadn't even reached middle-aged by wizarding standards.

She was constantly in a state of alert waiting for the other shoe to drop, expecting the result of any given situation to be utter shite as was usually par for the course in her life. However her cynicism did make her worry sometimes, and she thought that she should be a little more optimistic in her day-to-day life.

Other times she felt that she was proven right about how life was utter crap.

At the moment Rose was determinedly resisting the urge to ram her head against the nearest brick wall before curling up in a ball on the floor and crying in despair. Not that she would, but you get the picture.

So many things had changed since her time travel and certain occasions had played out differently, and some events had vanished entirely from the timeline as she knew it. Her actions, minuscule or enormous, had so far resulted in certain aspects of her past memories deviating from what she remembered, while other parts had stayed true, such as the current … situation.

Okay, Rose. Breath in, and out. Count to ten and back again. Don't shout at him, just calmly explain why this isn't a good idea. At all.

Rose opened her eyes – apparently closing them to block out the mental pain wasn't all that effective – and warily took in her surroundings.


Spontaneously-appearing dragon's egg? Double-fucking-check.

Please kill me now.

"Hagrid, you do know that a dragon is a Class XXXXX creature that requires countless permits and licenses to care for, don't you? And that anyone caught with such a creature, even as an unhatched egg, is likely to have their wand snapped and sent to Azkaban?"

She looked at the suddenly wide-eyed man as he gripped his new wand in panic, holding it to his chest in fear. She didn't want to scare him but this situation was actually very dangerous for him; going to prison didn't sound so terrifying when you hear about it at eleven, but being an adult who knew the grisly ins and outs of Azkaban and what it did to people was a completely different story.

The dragon itself had only been a little worrying at that age, and she could admit that she'd been more than a little excited about the possibility of seeing a dragon at that time. The opportunity to see
something so fantastical, something that the Dursleys would have taken extreme offence to, had appealed to her desperation to belong to a world her relatives took so much care to hide from her. She hadn't even fully considered how precarious the position would have been for Hagrid if the dragon was found.

"Hagrid, I know that you would be a very good person to care for this dragon, but your hut is completely unsuited to it. For one thing it's made of wood, and when the dragon gets bigger there won't be enough space inside, or even around the school for a suitable territory.

"By the looks of the egg you've still got about a week until it hatches, at which point you'll really be in trouble. If you'd like I can contact my dads. They can get in contact with a dragon reserve and tell them they've found an egg. We can probably arrange it so that you can visit the dragon in the future, if you'd like?"

Rose desperately hoped that he would agree with her. After all the crap that life had thrown at him, he was now getting his life back on track after finally having his expulsion revoked. He was as excitable as a child right now exploring the fantastical nature of magic, and she would hate to see it all end just for him being too caring towards a dragon egg.

He wasn't the sort of person who wanted to breed dragons, or use them for ingredients, or anything nefarious in the slightest, he just wanted the opportunity to care for something 'cute'. It was just too bad that Hagrid and everyone else disagreed so much on what exactly constituted 'cute'.

The large man looked at her in wild fear for a moment, before his shoulders slumped in a resigned manner as he let out a deep sigh. His beady eyes fell from hers as they dropped to the ground, staring at nothing in particular rather morosely.

"Ah, I know. It's jus' … I always wanted one, and now … I still want 'im, but with me wand, and Minerva said me spells are getting better, I jus' …"

"You don't want to lose your chance to do magic now that you're allowed to again?"

Hagrid just nodded in a depressed movement, showing exactly how upsetting the situation was for him.

"It's okay Hagrid, there's nothing wrong with wanting to keep doing magic. Besides, like I said you'll still be able to visit the dragon when you want, and this way he'll go to people who are trained specifically to look after him and others like him. I'm sure the workers at the reserve would love to have you visit, and I'm pretty sure that Charlie Weasley works at the one in Romania now. That reserve would probably be the best, too."

He perked up a bit at that. "Charlie's a good lad, good with creatures too … I guess it'll be okay."

Thank fuck for that.

After that, Rose got Hagrid to agree to keep caring for the egg before agreeing with him on a plan of action. She would contact Remus and Sirius, and they would then get someone from the Romanian reserve to fetch the egg and take it back with them.

She walked back to the castle, making her way through the hallways before finding the secret passageway that led to Honeydukes. It was only four o'clock at the moment so The Pottery should have someone there; Amelia and Professor Burbage were still at work so the men had nothing to do but work, which they usually did at her family home.

For once she was thankful she was still quite small as making her way through the tunnels was
infinitely easier without having to duck. The dark tunnel was difficult to see in, but she could feel herself getting close.

Just before she got to the end at the sweet shop cellar, she felt the tell-tale ripple of magic as she crossed the wards of the castle. What with her magic being unbound and her exploits with wandless magic, her ability to sense wards had increased a lot. If her body and core were more developed she could Apparate from her location, but splinching wasn't something she wanted to experience any time soon.

All hail the magic of Head rings. She made her Potter ring visible before portkeying to the front of The Pottery and making her way inside quietly. If her dads were working on something dangerous she didn't want to surprise them and have their work explode or something.

She took a look around before deciding to cook some food for her hard-working parents. She loved them dearly, but if they didn't start eating properly she'd strangle them.

Remus was the first one who noticed, as the smell of what seemed to be Shephard's pie hit him before Sirius even registered it. Usually he hated anything to do with his lycanthropy, but his enhanced senses came in handy for protecting himself, even in his own home.

He wouldn't usually be worried, but Miffy had been saying something about pasta earlier in the day and the dedicated elf had never once changed her mind about their food before. It was a little worrying, especially as he heard someone moving around in the kitchen when he got closer.

Whenever anyone visited they always checked in with him or Sirius, but neither of them had heard from anyone and now there was someone in their house.

He and his friend both got their wands out and sneaked closer to the open door of the kitchen. They crept to either side of the door and slowly peered inside, ready to attack if need be.

And promptly wanted to face-palm themselves. Hard.

Their sometimes sweet, sometimes crazy daughter was stood at the oven cooking in a light blue apron with her hair held in a high ponytail, curls falling down her back to her waist. She must have heard them because she turned around to see them looking at her with a stupefied expression on their faces and their wands held loosely up. She gave them a strange examining look.

"What are you doing?"

He and Sirius started chuckling before they dissolved into full-blown laughter, egged on by the bewildered look on the girl's face.

After Rose laughing at them for a good few minutes straight at their paranoia – which the men joined in with, secretly enjoying the happiness that Rose was showing – she all but ran at them and hugged them to death, before stepping back and explaining there was a slight issue at school.

Between her time travelling, Sirius being in Azkaban, and dealing with an immortality-obsessed nutcase, the two parents were immediately wary at something their trouble-magnet of a daughter called an 'issue'. She was the sort of person who dealt with the weird and wonderful on a daily basis, and if even she thought there was a problem then they knew something was up.

Rose explained everything to them as they ate her food, which was apparently very appreciated. As were the comments about their eating habits, even if they were more than a little sheepish at the glare...
from the small girl. It was nice having someone care so much, though.

"Wait a minute, let me get this straight: Hagrid, the man who thinks that hell hounds should be called 'Fluffy', thinks that his wooden hut would make a good home for a fire-breathing dragon? And even though Voldemort is gone, he still managed to win a random illegal dragon egg in a dodgy poker game in the Hog's Head?"

Sirius' incredulous tone was matched by the wide eyes and raised eyebrows and Remus was the same. She wondered if that was what she'd looked like at the crazy antics in her life before they became the norm.

Remus snorted, "I'm not sure who has worse luck, you or Hagrid." His pointed stare was a little insulting.

"At least I've never tried to raise a baby dragon."

"No, you just rode out on an adult one after robbing a bank."

The mocking tone and smirk from Sirius made her want to throw her food in his face. She would have, but it was too good to waste.

Rose sniffed exaggeratedly and put her nose in the air. "I do believe that as a young and innocent girl, I feel more than a little victimised by your commentary on the actions concerning extenuating circumstances. A woman of my station would never be so crass as to commit such a vulgar crime."

She held her pompous demeanour for a few seconds before the three of them broke down laughing. They all found it hilarious mimicking the stuck-up pure-bloods, and it was even funnier for Sirius as he'd been raised to act like that. Rose looked just like a Black speaking like that, but the cheeky grin on her face afterwards was all Potter. James would be proud.

After they ate their dinner Rose whipped out a Victoria Sponge she'd made with fresh cream, and they gorged themselves as they made plans for the egg. Getting into contact with the Romanian dragon reserve would be pretty simple, and as it had connections to the Ministry in Britain it would be seen as notifying them officially; Hagrid wouldn't get in trouble and would even be commended for taking care of the egg before trying to find someone to care for it permanently.

As Lord Black Sirius would contact them tomorrow, but before that the family of three spent the evening catching up with each other and making plans for Sirius' wedding.

Charlie Weasley loved that his job was an adventure every day, and he couldn't bear the thought of having to work in a stuffy office job every day. (He loved his mother dearly but working in the Ministry was not for him.)

It was dangerous, sure, but the chance to work with such amazing creatures was awesome. He loved every minute of it, from helping the baby dragons get settled and learn about their instincts, to rehabilitating new adults who were wary of their environment. Everything about his job was heaven, and just because he was covered in scars didn't mean that he would quit. What was a few measly injuries when he got to hang out with dragons?!

Their reserve was one of the best in Europe and they got new additions fairly regularly, most of which were unfortunately from less-than-stellar circumstances. Some were from good homes though, and some came from some weird places.

This situation was a bit out there though, even for him.
Hagrid was a great guy with such a great ability to interact with animals, but taking care of a dragon in a wooden hut? Not going to happen.

He looked at the crowd in front of him, somewhat amused by the varying expressions. The new Headmistress – and the Dumbledore stuff still had him reeling – looked rather aggravated right now, with her arms crossed and peering at Hagrid as if he were a misbehaving child over the tops of her glasses with a reprimanding glare. Said man was fidgeting in his spot, torn between looking guiltily at the woman and tearfully at the unhatched egg.

The two men to the side had been introduced as Lord Sirius Black, the criminal who wasn't, and his best friend Remus Lupin. Both seemed to be fighting grins at the sight of a rather average-sized McGonagall visually berating a man twice her size. They seemed pretty down to earth, and Charlie could sort of see why his younger brothers looked up to them. Speaking of …

His twin brothers were alternating between looking at the dragon egg with undisguised interest, staring at the two men in apparent awe, or grinning at their friend who had tagged along.

A friend called Rose Potter.

Apparently every single 'reputable' source about the girl was utter bollocks, as the slender girl with blonde curly hair and bright blue eyes looked nothing like any of the supposed 'sightings' of her. She was going to be a looker when she grew up. Not to mention that unlike every other member of the Potter family she was a Ravenclaw instead of the traditional Gryffindor.

She looked infinitely more mature than any first-year student Charlie had ever seen, and she stood calmly surveying the scene – including him – with a patient and politely interested air. He wouldn't have been that concerned if it weren't for the small smirk that she mirrored back at his brothers, and he spent a moment sending a silent prayer for McGonagall's continued sanity.

After finally managing to tear Hagrid away from the egg, he placed it in a specialised box covered with runes for protection and warmth among other things so that it could be transported. He said goodbye to the others, and walked with McGonagall, Lord Black and Rose Potter to the gates of the school so he could take his international portkey back to the reserve.

"Well, despite the … circumstances, it was nice to see you again, Mr Weasley. Feel free to drop by again whenever you wish." The woman still looked a bit harried, but he appreciated the smile.

"Will do Professor, it was nice being here, even if it was to rescue an illegal egg!"

He ignored her pained look as he turned to the others. "It was nice to meet you Lord Black, Miss Potter. Something tells me we'll see each other again at some point." The bemused look he sent the twins didn't go unnoticed.

"Probably. I'll let you know if we find any more dragon eggs." Sirius' grin prompted a glare from McGonagall and a small giggle from the girl.

He grinned at the sound. "Try not to cause too much trouble with my brothers, blondie."

Big blue eyes blinked up at him as a smile curled her lips. "I'll try, but unfortunately I can't guarantee anything. Things just tend to happen sometimes."

He laughed and ruffled her curls before he passed the gates. He turned and waved at the crowd before activating the portkey, sending him home to the reserve.

The last thing he saw was a pair of intense blue eyes, studying him with a strange look. He never
realised the small girl had been eyeing him up the entire time.
Aside from a few random detentions from Snape – which nobody in their right mind would even consider to be legitimate – Rose was the perfect student to the professors. She got fantastic grades in all her classes, she interacted with and even had friendships in all four Houses, and she worked diligently at all her schoolwork. The staff at Hogwarts thought her to be a wonderful student and were ecstatic at her abilities.

The truth was that she regularly used a Pensieve to remember her past essays and improve on them, she created an inter-House study group to create connections in all of the Houses to assist her future political goals, and she spent more time reading her secret stash of comics than she did her text books.

Not to mention the somewhat regular unsanctioned trips outside of Hogwarts to visit her family, and the library of illegal books deemed too 'dark' to be read hidden in her trunk; she was currently researching blood rituals to increase magical power and they were fascinating, even if just possessing the book was enough to earn her a one-way trip to Azkaban.

She wasn't stupid with her outings though, and she knew that if she wasn't seen enough around the school people would become suspicious of her. The fact that she was a Ravenclaw already gave her an initial level of protection, as members of her House usually disappeared for hours on end to finish one form of work or another. That didn't mean that she would become complacent though, as the reality of her situation was dangerous if discovered by the wrong person.

It was a good thing she had a stolen Time-Turner.

Her trip to the Department of Mysteries months ago had given her more than physical proof of Voldemort's demise (said proof was now sat on a display shelf in her apartment trunk to view at her pleasure), it'd also given her the ability to be in two places at once.

She used her Time-Turner whenever she left the school, making sure to live the hours once before rewinding time to sneak off somewhere. Admittedly some of her ventures outside the school were seemingly pointless, but calming her nerves so she didn't accidentally hex someone when they startled her was as good a reason as any, as far as she was concerned.

Her trips to the bank were also fruitful, as she'd been thankfully informed that she was currently ineligible for the Gaunt Heir/House rings. According to law, an individual can only possess up to three Head of House or Heir rings at any given time, so that one individual person cannot be in control of so much power. (Apparently in the past, a bunch of people took offence to someone who'd had six titles and completely dominated the Wizengamot, before the rest of them banded together and passed the law to limit someone's power. Rose thought they'd probably just been jealous; envy was a timeless emotion after all.)

In her past life she had been informed that three Head of House rings were her limit, hence why she'd never enquired after the Gaunt family even after she found out that she was related. What was
the point in researching something she couldn't have? Stupidity wasn't something she subscribed to.

As it stood now, if she lost her status as Heiress Black – which she had a feeling would happen within the next few years – she still wouldn't be eligible to take up the role of Head of House Gaunt. Her Gaunt ancestor may have been born into the main line, but only as the third child, so any of her descendants became a branch family. The Gaunts were strict about regulating power in the family, so controlling power always remained with the main branch unless there was nobody else left. As it stood now the next person in line to inherit was an American witch, and unless she removed herself from the line of succession Rose couldn't inherit.

Not that she minded, as she already had all of Salazar Slytherin's personal artefacts, which she was technically able to take because the Chamber of Secrets and its contents were tied directly to Salazar Slytherin himself, not family heirlooms of his House or a House descended from them. They did not belong to the House of Gaunt, so they now belonged to her – her method of 'finders, keepers' actually worked very well there. Point to me.

She pushed her political musings to the back of her mind as she searched through her wardrobe for some appropriate clothing for the day. While others thought of her as a model student, Rose knew that she was just better than others at hiding her rule-breaking escapades. Such was the advantage of having an adult mind. Not to mention I know what to expect from puberty, so I won't be a wreck like everyone else. Thank fuck for that.

It was useful too, what with having flashbacks to battles in the war, seeing corpses when she looked at people, and generally having a shitty time. She was still suffering from insomnia and nightmares as had been the norm for her since the war, and she was so grateful that Dobby had time travelled with her and knew exactly which potions she would need to sleep. All hail Dobby, crazy elf extraordinaire.

Rose had been having a hard time in the past couple of months, what with sneaking out for Remus' birthday party, the stress of the dragon, not to mention Hermione who'd started to revert back to her devotion to studying and was going crazy about exams and had been hounding people for weeks already. But none of those compared to the past weekend.

Teddy's birthday.

The day that would have been her precious godson's birthday came and went with no recognition of his existence, and it had torn her apart. There'd been no big birthday party for the boy, no well-wishers at the school, and certainly no child with a huge grin on his face, hair turquoise blue in excitement.

Rose and Dobby were the only ones who knew about Teddy Lupin, and if it weren't for her elf friend Rose probably would have had a mental breakdown. As it was the two spent the day using Rose's Pensieve to display memories in her trunk of the happy boy, from when he was a baby right up until she left.

She was grateful when she realised that the last thing she told him was a warm, "I love you." Even if she couldn't see him again she had at least told him how much she cared for him.

The girl and elf duo had also made a cake together which had been their tradition for Teddy's birthday every year. Just like his father, Teddy had had a sweet tooth and a slight obsession with chocolate, and every year without fail he would ask for a double chocolate chip birthday cake with chocolate icing, and every year without fail she would indulge him.

Andromeda would look reprovingly at her, but she maintained that it was her duty as his godmother
to spoil him rotten. She knew full well that if Sirius had looked after her as a child she would have been spoilt beyond belief. Considering he bought her an international professional-level racing broom at the age of thirteen, she had no doubt in her mind that she would have had anything she wanted growing up.

The birthday cake had been eaten between her and Dobby, with Sirius and Remus receiving a slice via house-elf delivery, and though they had been confused they hadn't pried at the obvious birthday cake. She was relieved they hadn't.

As it was she was still reeling from the mournful celebration and she desperately needed some reprieve. She didn't want to go home and burden her parents with her mood, and her friends had no clue about her situation, so they were out.

She needed to be free. Free to sink into something that didn't require deep thought and something that could distract her from the creeping numb seeping into her mind.

Hence why she was about to boldly break school rules in broad daylight.

Dressed in comfortable trousers, a warm jumper and boots, she quickly darkened her hair to a golden blonde as opposed to her usual pale shade, tied it in a bun and left her room with her extended bag. Making her way down Ravenclaw tower and through the castle without anyone paying attention was rather easy, and she ambled along at a steady pace until she came to the Quidditch pitch.

Sneaking out through an abandoned tunnel was one thing, but defying rules when she was still around to get caught was another. It was after dinner and she knew that the pitch was usually free from official practices on a Monday, and as the next game wasn't for about another six-ish weeks – one that she originally missed thanks to Quirrelmort – there shouldn't be anyone flying right now.

She was right and it was deserted. She glanced around before deciding that she would just have to deal with it if she got detention. She flicked her wand towards her bag and pulled out the object at the top. Her new Nimbus 2000 was still shiny and polished, and she admired the view for a little bit.

This broom was from Sirius this time around, and she revelled in the feeling of getting such a gift not because she had talent that was useful, but simply because Sirius loved her. She had no doubt that McGonagall had cared for her too, but she knew that the woman had also been excited for the House team. Her dad didn't give two shits about her skills, and even if she had been utter crap on a broom Sirius would have brought one if she was still interested in flying.

She shrunk her bag and shoved it in her pocket before mounting her broom and kicking off fast.

*This* was the freedom that she had missed. The feeling of weightlessness, the lack of barriers, the ability to move however and whenever she wanted … It was heaven, and she felt herself calm immediately.

Rose spent nearly an hour flying around the pitch, alternating between circling slowly and admiring the view of the grounds and castle, to speeding up and down, indulging in extremely dangerous and precarious moves that would probably make her family shriek in fear. James would probably be proud. Scared, but proud.

After an hour outside she decided to have a little fun with one of her smaller presents that she’d got recently – a snitch. It was designed to not move more than a certain distance away from her. If it failed she could still summon it, but she’d rather not accidentally expose the fact that she knew such an advanced spell.
She let the ball go and watched it circle around her head for a while before she turned her back on it. After a few minutes she turned back to the pitch and began her search for the small glint of gold in the air. The light was dimming already, and though it was April it had been overcast and cloudy all day; finding the snitch wasn't going to be a walk in the park.

Half an hour was spent chasing the elusive flying ball in the air, catching and letting it hide before repeating the entire thing. She finally stopped when she was out of breath; flying on a broomstick might have seemed incredibly simple to some people, but the realities of it were actually rather brutal.

Using a broomstick meant using the magic within one's core, and if the core was too drained the broom wouldn't respond. The constant twisting and manoeuvring also meant that the body's muscles were constantly being used, so if they weren't developed and trained sufficiently serious damage could be done to the muscles and joints. Quidditch players kept to rigorous physical training for a reason, and the exercise also served to increase the size of the core, not that many knew this.

Pure-bloods and traditional families were loath to use physical methods for fights, save for traditional weapons, and the idea of physical exercise was much too plebeian for their tastes. Rose wondered what they'd do if they knew that they were actually limiting their magic by not keeping fit.

"That was amazing!"

She whipped her head around to stare at the figure on the ground below her. It was a boy, perhaps a third to fifth year considering his size, and she could see a hint of yellow on the tie. A Hufflepuff.

He may have sounded excited, but Rose swore viciously inside. She had no contact with the older Hufflepuffs and she knew that some of them were sticklers for the rules. This prat would probably turn her in after they had their Quidditch fanboy moment.

Rose debated morphing her face and giving a false name, but if she accidentally implicated someone else she'd feel pretty bad. Just because she could be a bitch didn't mean she'd throw a random person under the bus for her mistakes.

Ah, bollocks. At least a detention for flying's better than a detention for trying to send a dragon to Romania illegally. Not that she knew that, but – hold on, that hair's familiar …

And familiar it was, and as Rose flew down with the snitch in her grasp she came face-to-face with a painfully recognisable messy-bronze mane that she was well-acquainted with in her nightmares. She landed softly, firmly raising her Occlumency barriers as she lifted her eyes to wide grey ones, darker than Sirius' but no less attractive.

Even at fourteen Cedric Diggory was a heart-breaker.

He still had a little baby fat on his cheeks, and he was rather gangly at the moment, trapped in the middle of puberty with an awkward body, but he was still pretty cute. She could see why he would gain so many fans.

This boy would grow up to be an incredibly brave and selfless young man, and Rose felt a lump in her throat when she realised that she was standing in front of the man whose death sparked the Second War. Others might think of other starting points, but seeing a flash of green followed by Cedric's vacant gaze was when she'd been struck with the realisation that the world had gone to hell.

She'd originally been planning to tell Cedric that she had feelings for him after the tournament but she'd never got the chance. Rose had always known that nothing would have come from her teenage crush - though it had certainly felt deeper that that - on Cedric Diggory, but it was still painful to see
him looking so alive after dreaming of his death so much.

Right now he seemed to be almost vibrating with excitement, and she vaguely thought he seemed a cross between an enthusiastic Sirius and a determined Oliver Wood before a match.

"That was incredible! I've never seen anyone fly like that, and especially for so long! I mean, it takes a lot for a person to fly like that. Do you fly often? You must, right? I mean --"

He broke off for a moment and then narrowed his eyes at her before they widened in apparent shock. Cedric was a lot more animated at fourteen by the look of things.

"Potter?!

Fuck my life.

She cleared her throat. "Hello Diggory, it's nice to meet you." Her nervous smile wasn't exactly faked, what with the memory of his murder floating around in her head.

"What happened to your hair? And you know first years aren't supposed to have their own brooms, right?"

She winced a little. "I used a charm to change my hair – it's less recognisable. And I know about the broom, it's just … it calms me down. Flying, that is."

Rose didn't know what prompted her to tell the truth – more or less – but she still felt guilty for his death; it was as if she owed him any truth she could give him.

From the softening of his eyes he seemed to empathise. She was glad that she couldn't see pity in his gaze though, and she stood with a rueful smile on her face while he looked at her.

"Flying calms me down too, you know. It's … freeing. Don't worry, I'm not going to tell anyone. Flying around's probably not the worst you could do. I mean, I share classes with the Weasley twins."

He grinned at her giggle before he quickly lifted his hand and ruffled her hair.

His grin widened at her shocked bewilderment and he started laughing before he held out his hand.

"I didn't introduce myself properly before. Names Cedric Diggory, third year Hufflepuff."

She took his hand with a grin. "Rose Potter, first year Ravenclaw. Nice to meet you, Mister Diggory."

If anyone had looked at the Quidditch pitch that night, they would have seen two figures at the edge, talking the night away well into curfew.
Among Rose Potter's makeshift family and friends, it was generally accepted that The Noble and Most Ancient House of Black was fucking batshit crazy, if you'll excuse the language. They were people who'd often stabbed each other in the back for political or personal gain, used their own family members as pieces on their own personal chessboards, and inflicted massive amounts of psychological, emotional and physical pain on one another with alarming frequency.

Only those who'd been disinherited or ran away were spared this disturbing reputation, and even those of the family who appeared to be poised and collected, such as the newly renamed Narcissa Black, were given a wide berth with one eye on them at all times.

The family had not always been so volatile. Decades ago the family had been run in a manner similar to a dictatorship, with the family Head holding complete power over the House's members, and in turn the family followed the instructions of the Head to the letter.

This method of running the family had ended when Sirius Black (great-grandfather to one Sirius Orion Black) decided that, as a magical person born into the House of Black, a person was clearly gifted with the ability to manage their own life. Hence why he hadn't been aware of things like Cygnus Black being so abusive towards his daughters that they'd delighted in leaving the family.

While the younger Blacks had grown up with increasing violence and stupidity, the older generation had been raised to be true Slytherins: ambitious, resourceful, and cunning.

Cassiopeia Black was one such individual.

She'd been ten when her grandfather Phineas Nigellus Black died and the Headship fell to his useless son, her uncle Sirius. The man had been an imbecile who'd paraded around announcing his power to anyone who would listen, all the while neglecting to keep his family in line to protect their reputation.

Her grandfather Phineas had been an arsehole who hadn't given two shits about the wishes of his family, but Cassiopeia had respected his intellect and political manoeuvring; he'd known how to maintain the position of their House, all the while ensuring that more Blacks had been born and alliances built. It hadn't been the warmest way of helping their family, but they'd always been protected by their reputation – no one would dare take advantage of a Black.

After Sirius had allowed his family to grow untamed, Arcturus succeeded him, and proved to be as much of an arsehole as Phineas with the brains of Sirius – a ghastly combination that had allowed two cousins to marry and children to be abused right under his nose.

As a woman who'd remained unmarried and who had a wealth of personal connections, both within Britain and outside, Cassiopeia had been in a precarious position as a member of the House of Black. If she'd so much as insinuated that the Head wasn't acting as he should, she would've been married to someone of his choosing and forced to procreate before she could blink.
She'd attempted to get closer to the children as they grew, but Walburga and Cygnus had cut her off, and there was nothing she could do to help the youngest generation of her family. When she'd heard of their antics she'd been disgusted, especially with Bellatrix. It had been obvious that her family could sink no lower if a Black was willingly bowing in servitude to a mass murderer.

She didn't necessarily disagree with the Dark Lord Voldemort, but his methods had been causing too much bloodshed and wiping out entire families, including some of her cousins and their children. Bellatrix was a disgrace to side with the murderer of her kin, and as far as Cassiopeia had been concerned she was no longer a Black.

Though considering the crazy woman was now dead, it didn't really matter what she thought.

When Cassiopeia had opened the paper in November to see news of her niece's death, she'd been puzzled but pleased at the turn of events. Ever since young Sirius had taken the mantle of Lord Black the family's reputation had been on the mend, and though she was sure their views would differ the Black name was no longer being dragged through the mud. Apparently having a Black as the poster-boy for Ministry injustice was a sure-fire way of gaining public approval.

Finding out that Sirius had been exonerated, and that he had in fact been thrown in Azkaban without a trial made her blood boil, and if anyone realised that a few of the Ministry officials from the end of the First War were now experiencing financial difficulties, well … there was a reason she'd done so well in Slytherin.

She'd been keeping up to date with her errant Gryffindor nephew – and honestly, how anyone could think that the headstrong idiot would betray James Potter was baffling beyond all comprehension – and was rather pleased with his caution in handling the family, even if the stupid man gave voting power to Amelia Bones. Though if rumours were to be believed then the DMLE Head would soon be Lady Black if Sirius had his way.

She was impressed that he seemed to be more interested in his reputation now, though she supposed that a decade in a literal hell-hole would change anyone. He was determined to manage their family, and she'd been notified by one of the family elves that all the properties were being re-furbished.

While updating the properties and the finances was all well and good, she was more concerned about the people within her family. And by that, she meant the Heir.

Being connected to the well of Family magic for decades meant that Cassiopeia was very much in tune with the nuances of the family. Whenever someone was born or died their connection to the Family magic changed, and those who were already connected could sense the changes if they were sensitive enough.

This past summer she'd felt a pull on the Family magic as someone finally donned one of the Heir rings, though if it was a boy or girl was unknown. This person had to be a born Black or have a Black relative within three generations to be accepted unless everyone else was dead, and as the magic had felt immature the conclusion was an underage child.

It couldn't be any of the Weasley children, as their grandmother Cedrella's disinheritance had been brutally thorough, removing the Black magic entirely from her and her descendants. Just as unlikely was Neville Longbottom, great-grandson of Callidora; Augusta had always been very clear on her stance concerning the Black family in the past and wouldn't let her grandson near them at all. (Bellatrix's actions had not helped in that regard.)

That had left a three-way tie between Nymphadora Tonks, Draco Malfoy or Rose Potter.
She was one of the few that knew Sirius had never been fully disinherited, so she would have to look from there. Nymphadora was the daughter of his favourite cousin Andromeda, though it turned out that her removal from the family carried over to her daughter, removing her from the line of succession.

Draco Malfoy would have been the politically obvious choice for a Black, but it all depended on Sirius' will. Cassiopeia knew that Sirius actually cared for Narcissa, but he despised her husband – with good reason. He would probably never want to leave anything of his within the grasp of Lucius Malfoy, which left Rose Potter.

His goddaughter. After his trial when she'd found out that piece of information she'd wanted to murder the idiots at the Ministry; godparents were magically bound to protect their charges, and literally couldn't act against them. Imbeciles.

There was no way that Sirius, the man who'd chosen James above the Blacks, the man who'd defended those he loved viciously, would choose anyone else to be his Heir. Or Heiress as the case may be.

The girl was a half-blood, true, but she too had been born into a Noble and Most Ancient House, of which she was already Heiress, and the girl would likely follow in the traditions of Sirius and James. Cassiopeia had resolved to visit her nephew when he recovered from prison.

It would have helped if he'd lived in a Black property.

She'd been barred entry from the properties, but her skill with the family wards allowed her to sense if one of the Blacks was within. They weren't, and she had no clue where the idiot had gone. (Writing a letter was the passive approach to communication, and she would only use it as a last resort.) She would have said The Pottery, but with the Potter girl ensconced away somewhere on the orders of Dumbledore Sirius wouldn't have had access.

Finding out that Rose Potter was now blonde and blue-eyed and had defied generations of Potters by entering Ravenclaw, she mentally revised her preconceptions. Rose was nothing like expected, and her house-elf which had spied on the girl while at school reported a child who was a cunning genius and an intelligent Heiress.

Miss Potter clearly knew how to act, and her statements about her 'Dads' spoke of two men very close to her, one of which sounded suspiciously similar to her vanished nephew.

All through the debacle with the troll, useless teachers, not to mention Dumbledore's surprise suicide, the girl who Cassiopeia suspected to be the Heiress of her family had maintained her composure, and was even sneaky enough to network with the other Houses under the guise of studying. Cassiopeia was impressed by her methods.

The young girl also showed an aptitude to lead her family by maintaining firm control tempered by compassion. She was a leader, a subtle leader perhaps, but a leader nonetheless, and she commanded respect without being overbearing. A good combination.

She also had a good sense of family and maintained close relationships with the Malfoy and Longbottom Heirs – good contacts, one light, one dark – as family and took care of them without forcing them to submit.

It was a shame that she would probably never head the family, what with Sirius finally settling down and giving those who knew him in school a collective heart attack at the thought. Cassiopeia had no doubt that he would be having children at some time in the future, and she desperately hoped that she
could meet the girl before it was time …

Never mind. Cassiopeia Black stood up with a glint in her eye. The House of Black would regain its place if she had to blackmail her own family into complying. First, she had to actually find the new Lord Black …

Said Lord Black was desperately wishing that he could go home and curl up under his duvet, disregarding propriety while he shoved food in his mouth and sang along to childish Disney songs – which were surprisingly catchy, even for a man in his thirties.

He sighed under his breath and took a look around the table he was sat at. Across from him was his arsehole uncle Cygnus, who appeared to be sneering at his two youngest daughters, Andromeda and Narcissa. The latter's ice blue eyes reminded him of Rose, and he prayed that if his daughter ever adopted that glare he would be able to avoid the line of fire. One prison trip was enough, thank you very much.

Andi looked ready to murder the man with her bare hands, and while Sirius honestly couldn't care less if the bastard died, he didn't really want to be in proximity to a dead body and get mistaken for a murderer again. One prison trip was enough, thank you very much.

Next to Narcissa was his Aunt Callidora, who looked as beautiful as always despite being in her seventies. Her face was set with narrowed grey eyes, piercing into Cygnus or looking over at him in a questioning manner. Sirius told himself it was nothing. Probably.

The last occupant at the table sat prim and proper and Sirius wanted to groan in pain, because this woman was a crazy bitch, no questions asked, and if she'd decided to crawl out of whatever hole she'd been in then she was going to do something to rile everyone up just because she felt like it.

Aunt Cassi was a woman that Sirius feared and respected in equal measure; he couldn't say he really liked her, but he did appreciate how she lived her life by her own rules. As a child and teenager she'd been a kind of role model, though he'd never admit it out loud.

That look on her face made him want to run and hide however. The last time Aunt Cassi had looked like that was when they'd been at Aunt Lycoris' funeral when he was fifteen, and she'd said something to his grandfather Arcturus which made the man turn purple with rage. She'd disappeared soon after, but his grandfather had become determined to marry the family off to anyone they could as soon as possible, and he'd run away soon after.

Whatever was happening now, she had something to say to them and he had a feeling it wasn't going to be pretty.

"Well Cassiopeia, exactly why did you call this meeting with such disappointing company?. Callidora married into a simpering light family, and my daughters have proved time and again that they can do nothing but disgrace this family. Not to mention that brat –"

"That would be Lord Black to you."

Cygnus flushed with anger. "I beg your pardon, I am –"

"You are nothing but a bitter old man who still bemoans the fact that he only sired daughters, disregarding any talent they had in magic, simply seeing them as tools for your own gain. Not to mention that you only married Druella because you got her pregnant when you were twelve. Not your finest moment, Uncle."
Sirius's drawling tone filled the room, and he began to enjoy the creeping red of anger on his uncle's face as he tore him down. Sirius wondered if he'd do everyone a favour and have a heart attack.

"In case it has once more escaped your notice, though considering your penchant for seeing only what you wish I am sure it has, I am now Lord Black. That means I am Lord of this House, your House, and I do not have to passively sit here and allow you to insult me in such a manner, nor will I.

"I will be the first to admit that as a child I did my House a great disservice, but in my defence my 'mother's' teachings were too biased and brutal to fully prepare me for my duty to our family. I am not offering platitudes or excuses, simply giving my reasons with an admission that I plan to ensure our family's continued survival.

"However, I will not be spoken to in such a vile manner again Cygnus, do I make myself clear? If you plan to run around and ruin our family by insulting others, action will have to be taken. I dread to think of what our allies think of us if you cannot even practice civility within the confines of a family discussion. If you ruin us Cygnus, I will remove you from the family."

Sirius finished with a glare at his uncle, focusing every ounce of resolve onto the pathetic man. He belatedly enjoyed the way his face couldn't decide between paling or reddening, but he made sure to keep an eye on the others in his peripheral vision.

Andi and Cissa had matching smirks as they looked at the man who'd sired them, while Callidora glanced at him with approval on her face. Cassiopeia was the interesting one though, as she looked both satisfied and melancholic.

"Well said Lord Black, however if we may get back on track," she stopped to throw a frigid glare at her still-red nephew, "I wish to discuss the future of this family. Specifically, our Heir. Or Heiress as I believe it to be."

Bloody hell, that woman is shrewd.

Cygnus whipped his head up. "What are you talking about, Heiress, I thought that my grandson Draco was next in line?" The sexist bastard didn't seem to register the disgusted looks from the women around him.

"My Heiress is Rose Potter of The Noble and Most Ancient Houses of Potter and Black. She satisfies the requirements as her grandmother was Dorea, and considering that she is my daughter by blood-adoption there should be no issue concerning succession."

Sirius was not going to allow anyone to try and get rid of his daughter.

"But she's –"

"What, a girl? Dear Merlin you are pathetic, Father, and for whatever reason you can only see as far as your misogyny allows you, but make no mistake, that girl will be a fantastic leader of this family, and she will be a leader that even my son will follow."

Narcissa was actually kind of terrifying, and Sirius was thankful that she still liked him.

"Would be, you mean."

Gazes shifted to Cassiopeia.

Andi leant forward. "What do you mean?"
"I had assumed that when our Lord got married and had children with his wife, the title of Heir or Heiress would fall to the child so that young Heiress Potter didn't become bogged down with multiple titles."

Sirius nodded in agreement. "Rose is currently Heiress presumptive, and I've made it so that the title will automatically pass when I have another child. Considering that's probably going to happen in the next few years, Rose isn't going to be Heiress for long. You should know that the title is going to go my next child regardless of gender, so if my next child is a girl we'll still have an Heiress."

Cassiopeia smirked and Sirius felt his stomach cramp in anxious anticipation. This wasn't going to be good.

"I personally approve of this plan of action, but for now Miss Potter will have to attend her duties as a member of our House. I wish to train her."

There was a beat of silence before everyone started talking over each other.

Sirius just slouched back and looked at the ceiling. Why do I have to deal with this crap?!
What does 'peace and quiet' mean?

Children will be children no matter who they are, but it was rather interesting how certain events revealed inner characteristics unique to the individual. Or House. All the Houses had their own way of dealing with certain things, and Rose likened it to observing wild creatures in their natural habitat.

The last time around, the week before exams had been spent trying to fade into the background and ignore everyone shunning her and her friends for losing points, or watching Voldemort feast on a unicorn in the Forbidden Forest. She'd even been trying to help Quirrell stay strong. *That* was certainly different.

Now she was looking around at everyone and how they handled the stress of the upcoming exams. True to form, the Gryffindors just couldn't seem to concentrate, and she could see a few books out on the breakfast table, but they remained untouched while the students in red and gold chatted happily.

The 'puffs seemed to be attempting motivated speeches and had split up into a multitude of small groups to test each other. Ever the loyal friends, they left nobody alone and were all desperately trying to smile, though it seemed kind of forced.

Calm and collected seemed to the motto for Slytherin, and they all sat poised reading books or notes, though if you looked carefully you could see a few furrowed brows or widened eyes. Their table was quiet for the most part with a few subdued conversations dispersed throughout.

Her House was certainly an eye-opener for Rose, as the Ravenclaw table was dead silent. Every time someone made a noise that was too loud they were the recipient of a glacial glare that froze them in their seats. Every single inch of the table not covered in food was taken up by parchment, books and quills. The only sounds heard were a mixture of cutlery on plates or quills scratching away.

Rose knew that she was going to have no issue with her exams, but she knew that if she didn't look like she was studying it would be a bit weird, so open on the table she had an old history book that Remus had sent her on the Goblin wars (with actual information, unlike Binns' iconic droning).

Soon enough everyone began clearing away their materials in preparation for the morning post. The owls didn't seem to hold the same regard for their things as the students did, and often food or drink went flying onto their notes thanks to dive-bombing owls. Except Hedwig, of course. Her owl was awesome like that.

The hall was filled with screeching and the flapping of wings and hundreds of owls flew into the Great Hall and descended upon the students. Rose watched Hedwig as she swooped through the sea of birds and land in front of her gently.

"Thanks girl," she said, stroking the head of her feathered friend delicately.

Hedwig barked and preened before starting to eat the bacon Rose set out for her. Rose smiled at her and started to look through the letters she'd just received.
Hmm, one from Uncle Marius, I wonder if he's finished that case without murdering his client … And one from home, seems Dad's going crazy with wedding preparations. Good luck Amelia. What's –

There, in all its glory, was a thick hand-crafted parchment envelope bearing one of her titles on the front in beautiful cursive.

**Heiress Black**

**Of**

**The Noble and Most Ancient House of Black**

The envelope was bordered with an embossed pattern, and she turned it over she saw a thick wax seal bearing the crest of the House of Black.

Rose blinked and narrowed her eyes, trying to figure out where this had come from. She still had her mail redirection ward in place, so any letters from people outside the family went to Gringotts before Manager Sharpfang sent them ahead; sorting through them was time-consuming and she was thankful for the Time-Turner.

Hedwig knew to only deliver letters from people she'd met personally, and of her friends only Draco knew definitively that she was Heiress Black. She had no doubt that some of the others had figured it out, but they had no actual proof.

The Tonks' wouldn't send her something so formal, and the Longbottoms usually addressed their letters to 'Miss Potter'. Her family would likewise disregard formality, but they would be the only ones to give Hedwig a letter to deliver if it wasn't from them.

Which meant that the letter was from someone outside her family, someone who knew of her status, and someone that her family had deemed acceptable to contact Rose. She racked her brain trying to think of who it could be, but she came up blank. With a sigh she flashed her Heiress Black ring to her hand and held it over the letter to see if there were any curses or the like.

It turned up blank, but interestingly there was a faint hum of magic in the letter which seemed to resonate with her ring. It wasn't the all-encompassing warmth of the Deathly Hallows – which she fervently kept separated in case they did something to her – but a flutter of recognition.

The sender was a Black by blood.

She knew that the Black family had dwindled away into almost-nothingness at this point, though there were still some members alive and kicking. She knew that it could possibly be Narcissa, but she had a feeling that wasn't it. Obviously not Andromeda, and from what she'd heard about their father the sexist twat would never willingly contact her.

She mentally went over the never-ending Black family tree and came to two names: Callidora Longbottom nee Black and Cassiopeia Black. She thought that if Callidora wanted to contact her then it would be through her great-grandson, which left Cassiopeia.

From what she'd read of Cassiopeia the woman had never married or had children, and lived her life as an independent Spell-Crafter and Warder on mainland Europe until she originally died. Apparently Sirius' freedom was causing waves in the House of Black.

Sighing she gently broke the seal on the envelope and pulled out the letter written on thick, expensive parchment.
Heiress Potter-Black,

It has recently come to my attention that, as of the summer of last year, the title of Heiress of The Noble and Most Ancient House of Black has fallen into your hands.

From what reports I have had concerning your intelligence, I have no doubt that by now you have correctly narrowed down the possibilities of my identity and have more than likely correctly deduced just who I am.

For the sake of propriety, I will introduce myself nonetheless. My name is Cassiopeia Black, and through your grandmother Dorea I am your great-aunt.

In past years the status of our venerated House has fallen and diminished, thanks in large part to the mistaken belief of previous Heads that the individual members do not need to be personally managed. I do not think that I need to explain to an intelligent young woman like yourself that leaving such a large family unchecked was simply asking for disaster.

Though your Lord and adopted father has had his differences with our House in the past – and yes, I am fully aware of the true depths of your relationship with Sirius – the child he once was has grown to be a fine man determined to raise our family above the tatters of its previous reputation.

I am unsure if you are aware or not, but recently the remaining members of the House of Black met to confirm its continued existence and reacquaint ourselves with our current situation, and during the meeting your status as Heiress Black was revealed. Do not worry however, as prior to the meeting I prepared the room with an old spell that prevents anyone who enters from revealing what was spoken of inside in any manner – I am not unaware of the personalities of some of our less-than-pleasant relatives.

It has come to my attention that with the engagement of Lord Black to Madam Bones, the family line will more than likely be continued in the future, at which point you will most likely be relieved of your title of Heiress Black due to prior duties to the House of Potter.

In the interim however, our family will still be recovering from the actions taken by those who disgrace the name of Black. While I suspect that politics is not your forte, you are the Heiress of our House and there are duties that come with such a title.

In light of this, I have decided that I will impart on you the knowledge that is required for a woman of the House of Black, and how this information should be used for the betterment of our family.

Your father and I have decided that your status as Heiress Black will be best utilised if it is revealed to the public, however the method and time to do so will be discussed in the future.

Before I leave you to your thoughts, I will reveal that the method by which I receive reports of your behaviour is my personal house-elf, who, as a previous elf of Hogwarts, has unfettered access to the grounds and the castle. I am most pleased that you and I share the belief that the intelligent creatures can be used in non-conventional manners. Your creativity with your gift is also most delightful, however I must ask, have you considered training through impersonation?
I eagerly wait your reply when it best suits you.

Sincerely,

Madam Cassiopeia Black

The Noble and Most Ancient House of Black

Rose blinked, utterly bewildered at this turn of events. She couldn't even fathom how something like this could have happened, and there was nothing that she could think to say. Well, nothing polite.

"What the ever-loving fuck did I just read?"

"Rose!"

"Wait a minute, you got a letter from Cassiopeia Black, the woman whose mere name terrifies half of the Wizengamot into submission?"

"Mm-hmm."

"And she wants to train you as Heiress Black?"

"Yup."

"… And she's been spying on you using a house-elf?"

"Indeed. I can't decide if it's more genius or disturbing."

The arched eyebrow and flat glare she received made her grin wryly at her friend-come-cousin. Draco was really the only one she could speak to about this as it was a Black family matter. She knew that Neville was also considered a member of the House of Black, but he was currently occupied with preparing for exams and writing to his parents.

According to Sirius, Frank and Alice had suffered from the Cruciatus Curse so much and gone so long without treatment that there would be lasting damage, but the ex-hospital patients were now fully aware and working with Augusta to manage the Longbottom family. When they weren't in contact with their son, that is.

She wouldn't take Neville's time writing his parents away from him, which left her blonde cousin, the poncy prat. Draco was still rather arrogant, especially now he was being respected again in Slytherin, but he seemed to use the attitude more as a defence mechanism in public rather than actually being a git. Thankfully.

He and Rose actually got along very well, especially when they both realised that the other one also had a mini library of questionable books. Any teachers who saw them would likely be more than a little concerned to see two of the best students in the year bonding over such topics of study, but the blonde duo were very careful not to get caught with anything illegal.

Draco was surprisingly gracious about being passed over in favour of her for the title of Heir Black, but considering his recent revelations concerning his father Rose could understand his reticence to delve even further into politics.

"I've never met Cassiopeia, though I have had the 'pleasure' of regularly seeing my grandfather,
Cygnus Black." Draco's sneer was rather impressive considering his age.

She lifted her head from her exam notes. "What's he like?"

"Well, he's, shall I say, how do I put this, I mean –"

She grinned. "Come now Cousin, forget propriety and tell me what he's really like. There's no one around to hear, come on Draco …"

"Fine, he's a self-centred bastard who seems to think Mother is useless because she's a woman, and the stupid git can't seem to realise he's never going to be Lord Black because his head's shoved too far up his own arse to see anything clearly."

Draco was red and breathing harder from anger, but Rose was impressed. The Draco Malfoy from her future had never been so free with his words unless he'd been plied with enough alcohol to loosen his tongue.

He jolted a bit and his face lost his colour.

"I mean –"

"It's fine, Draco. From what Dad's told me your assessment is actually quite accurate. Don't worry, I'm not going to tell anyone what you said. Nobody will know that your vocabulary is more colourful than they previously anticipated."

Her grin was met with the loosening of his shoulders, though a faint pink flush suffused his cheeks.

"Besides, you're not the only one who thinks he's a wanker."

His gaping mouth certainly didn't conform to propriety.

After sending a letter home calling Sirius a bastard as well as any other synonym of the word she could think of, Rose was rather satisfied and spent the next week compiling her notes into introductory ones that she could use in future years. Or use to write a book.

Before she time travelled, she'd been considering writing as a way to make money for her family for a while and had even been planning on doing it during her spare time as an adult. She was thinking mostly study guides and notes for exams, though she was considering writing something about some of her future Unspeakable work. She'd have to careful with that though, as if the Department of Mysteries caught wind they wouldn't exactly be happy.

Her notes turned out to be incredibly concise and good enough for anyone, but the only ones she gave anyone were her DADA notes. As it was, it seemed that McGonagall had given up trying to find a suitable professor for the subject this year, and the class had been taught by the rest of the staff depending on who was free. Rose hoped that they would have a good teacher for at least one year.

The exams turned out to be just as simple as she had anticipated, and she breezed through them all while making sure to take her time – she didn't want anyone suspicious of why she finished so quickly.

Unsurprisingly when the results came out she received straight O's, and she got a very excited letter from home with a promise that there would be a bunch of presents when she got home. She wished Remus luck with putting up with the hyperactive idiot, though deep down she found it very touching that they cared so much about first-year exams that didn't really matter that much.
She couldn't wait to go home and just relax, even if she would start getting training from Cassiopeia Black. She'd replied courteously and accepted the 'offer' of training – even if it was really a notice – and wrote that she would prefer to wait until the summer so that she would be free of schoolwork. Her idea had been accepted and now she was waiting for a date to begin.

Rose was considering revealing her Head of House status as well, if not for Peverell then at least for Potter. Draco was now Lord Malfoy, and she wouldn't be singled out as the only child Lord or Lady.

She shook of the thoughts of exams and politics and walked slowly towards the lake, waving at her friends as she did. She would enjoy the calm while she could, and so she sat down next to Tracey and Lavender, enjoying the sunshine with her classmates.
Packing her things back into her trunk, Rose Potter felt almost melancholic as she moved around her dormitory in a sedate manner, silent in comparison to the stream of bubbly chatter from her roommate. Hermione was regaling Rose with tales of past family holidays and revealing her summer plans with her parents, yet all Rose could think about was the complete turn-around of her situation.

For countless years Hogwarts castle had been the only home that she had ever had, and every year without fail she would dread going back to her relatives, walking as if to her death with a ball of dread in the pit of her stomach. She'd hated living with the Dursleys and had never wanted to leave the figurative warmth of the gargantuan castle.

Now though the castle was merely her school, and while she would miss the familiar setting and her friends, she had an actual home to go back to and parents that loved her. Her family might be unconventional but it was still her family, and she could think of no better home.

In the space of a year so many things that changed in the wizarding world; Dumbledore had caused a wave of unease that still hadn't settled, with anxious and contemplative looks whenever his name was spoken, and with a few questioning articles from Rita Skeeter the public was torn over whether or not the man was as pure as previously thought.

Not to mention the final destruction of the monster who'd called himself Voldemort; Rose couldn't help but wonder what would have happened if someone on their side would have discovered the truth of the Horcruxes sooner, but contemplation of that sort led to bitterness and regrets so she usually forced it to the recesses of her mind.

People didn't even know that Voldemort was gone for good this time, as even with the deaths and/or magic loss of the Death Eaters the common sense of the public was too scarce for them to realise the connection. Nobody would ever know that decades of murder and terror were all because one teenage boy made a mistake and took things too far, but perhaps that would be best for all.

Focusing on recovery and progress would be best, as the trauma from the First War wasn't nearly as dead and buried as people thought or liked to believe – one need only look at Sirius or Frank and Alice Longbottom to see the truth of that statement. Families and individuals were still being affected by the horrific realities of war, and to keep bringing up the past would be detrimental to their healing.

Her family was certainly focusing on moving forward, and the upcoming wedding was a sure sign of change for this timeline. Rose's previous life had been characterised by death, war, and hysteria; weddings and making friends was a rather big difference to her past-future memories.

She couldn't wait to see her family grow without the threat of a war hanging over their heads; when Remus had originally announced that Tonks was having a baby, Rose had been terrified. Terrified that something bad would happen, that she wouldn't be strong enough to end the war in time, and that that precious baby was going to be a target.
Getting married was one thing, but with how many people had previously died, having children in the middle of the war was stupidity as its finest. Nobody could comprehend bringing a child into the world when the world was crumbling around them, least of all muggle-borns and half-bloods. If they'd wanted a family, they'd had to choose between living abroad in safety or staying in danger. Many left as soon as they could.

Now though things were looking up for the population of magical Britain, and without the metaphorical blade hanging over their necks, the citizens were free to do as they pleased. That they were unaware they had even been in danger was something that Rose felt was best.

She sighed as she gathered up the last of her things and placed them in her trunk, closing the lid and locking it with a discreet wandless spell. This was actually her dummy trunk from her first train journey, and her proper one was already shrunk in her pocket; she wasn't sure how she could explain that she had two of them otherwise.

"... and did you know that there's a magical shopping district in Cannes? Apparently even muggles can go there, so I can show my parents all about magic."

She realised her friend was now talking to her and not at her. What did she say? Cannes? Ah…

"You mean 'La Rue du Ciel'. It's named for the layout of the district; it's characterised by numerous small buildings which allow you to see the sky from wherever you stand. It's a gorgeous place, and it's a great place to watch either the sunrise or sunset. France in general is also a lot less prejudiced when it comes to blood purity, so no one'll bat an eye at a muggle-born bringing their parents along."

Hermione whirled around and narrowed her eyes. "How do you know that?"

_Oh fuck, spoke without thinking. I can't exactly tell her that I took my godson on holiday once during my twenties._

"My dads sent me a few travel brochures in the past couple of months, and I've been reading about a few different places. We're going on holiday this year, and we're thinking of going to Cannes for a bit seeing as the Potter family owns a chateau there." Nice save Potter. Besides, it technically wasn't a lie as Sirius and Remus had sent her brochures – just not for Cannes.

"Oh! Maybe we'll see each other there!"

"Hmm, maybe. By the sounds of it, you're going in early July, and I think we're not heading to France until later. I'm not sure though, I'll let you know."

Rose wasn't sure what was happening with her summer as it was. Between Cassiopeia Black descending upon magical Britain with a vengeance – and judging from Sirius' letters, the man was both apologetic for the turn of events and utterly terrified of his aunt – in order to teach her about being a member of the House of Black, and the upcoming wedding, the summer was going to be busy as hell.

She was hoping that she would be able to spend at least a week with her parents alone, but she also wanted to get them to bring along their partners. Amelia was a definite, and the woman who Rose considered a friend had assured her that she would be around over the summer, but Professor Burbage was something of a mystery. Sirius had, without Remus' knowledge, been sending regular reports of the couple's budding relationship, and everything seemed to be going fairly quickly.

Rose wasn't too bothered about the speed, she was only concerned about Remus' happiness and whether or not Professor Burbage was taking the relationship seriously. She didn't think that would
be an issue though, as apparently the woman had known about Remus being a werewolf for a while already. She was pretty sharp for someone who reminded Rose of an innocent puppy.

It would be interesting to see how the two women interacted with each other. On the surface a Muggle Studies professor and the Head of the DMLE might seem too different, but in the future Rose had managed to get the prim and proper Draco Malfoy and the prankster George Weasley to sit down together and have a drink. Which had turned into ten, and a night of laughter and hijinks. She considered it one of her crowning achievements, and considering she'd assisted with developing revolutionary – and legal – research on Necromancy, that was saying something.

Rose had a feeling that summer was going to be the season of romance for the adults in her life, and she could honestly say she was ecstatic for them. They deserved everything they got, and she was more than a little excited for the wedding.

She swept her eyes across the now-bare dormitory, cataloguing all the nooks and crannies in case either her or Hermione had left anything behind. She knew that the Hogwarts elves would be checking later and that any items forgotten would be sent ahead to them, but it didn't hurt to check.

"Rose, are you done? If you don't hurry, we'll miss the train!"

"I'm done Hermione, calm down. Do you honestly think nobody's ever missed the train before?"

Her bushy-haired friend was silent for a second, before she began a rant about the different possible solutions for the hypothetical situation. Rose just smiled at her, and the two friends made their way through the castle talking about the different ways to get to and from school.

"What about a flying car?"

Hermione's bewildered expression was priceless.

The carriages on the train weren't quite big enough for all their friends, and the journey home saw Rose sitting with her two cousins Neville and Draco, Hermione, Blaise and the twins. She was sandwiched between the two redheads on one seat, the other four were across from them.

Draco and Hermione were bickering once more about something only they knew, while Neville was trying to wrangle Trevor the toad into staying still, 'aided' by Blaise's sarcastic commentary. The plant enthusiast had a pained look on his face, until Blaise decided to be genuinely helpful and suggested a sleeping charm, which Fred promptly performed before turning back to his hushed discussion with Rose and his brother.

Rose was eagerly informing her fellow mischief makers of the status of the shop, and how her dads had graciously offered to teach them the Animagus transformation. The Marauders hadn't gotten it until fifth year, but that was because they'd done it alone. They reasoned that with someone helping them it would be a lot quicker. For the twins that is; Rose already knew how to transform, she just needed to wait a year or two until her core developed a bit more. Then she could show off her completely unimpressive animal form; she liked it, but it was rather ordinary.

Fred and George looked at her with wide eyes, faces lighting up in unholy glee at the news which caught the attention of everyone else.

"Merlin, what are you three up to now? The last time I saw that expression, Flint ended up speaking troll and passing gas for an entire day. Granted it was entertaining, but that's not the point."

Draco's suspicious face was hilarious, but considering he was aware that they were the ones behind
Lockhart's ... exposure, he was right to be worried. Blaise and Neville knew enough to have guessed their involvement, but they weren't completely certain. Hermione, bless her naïve heart, was still under the impression that Rose was a serious student that valued her education above all else. She hadn't been that involved in the Week of Hell, so wasn't all that informed on Rose's hobby of pranking. Hermione was always going to be book-focused, and considering that she hadn't been dragged along on spontaneous perilous adventures this time around, still operated under the assumption that Rose was a calm and quiet Ravenclaw. Rose had no intention of dispelling this illusion – not until her friend figured it out on her own anyway, and it was going to be spectacular when it happened.

"I remember that," Blaise smirked, "for once Flint's voice matched the exterior. Very inspired, by the way."

The twins stood up and bowed exaggeratedly and in unison. "Thank you, thank you. Your kind words are much appreciated. We couldn't have done this without our little Rosebud."

She giggled right up until she heard the new nickname, then she groaned into her hands. It seemed just like her mother, she too had gained a ridiculous flower nickname. First James had decided that 'Lily-flower' was perfect – and no Dad, it's not perfect, it's cringy – and now the Weasley twins had decided that 'Rosebud' was a good name to give her. No matter how many times she asked them to stop they didn't relent, and she dearly hoped that this wasn't an indication of romantic interest.

It was nothing against them personally, but her body was only eleven, and when you added in the adult mindset, the idea of entering into a relationship with anyone underage was more than a little nauseating. She would put off all thoughts of romance for a good few years at least before revisiting the idea.

As for the twins, she could see their amusement clearly, so she decided for now their interest in her was platonic. Not to mention that they were probably too in awe of her fathers to disrespect them by going after her.

"Rosebud?"

The question was repeated simultaneously by the other four students, though with different tones. Hermione looked rather calculating, while Blaise was still smirking in amusement. Bastard. Neville just seemed bemused and resigned, while Draco's voice was dripping with disgust.

"Yeah, Rosebud-

"-small, delicate, kind of cute-

"-the potential to become deadly with thorns-

"-going to grow up beautiful-

"-Rosebud."

They finished their back and forth in tandem, grinning at Rose as they did. If Rose had been her original eleven-year-old self she would have been blushing up a storm, but being a woman of thirty who'd had extremely inappropriate offers of sex in public, their attempts didn't faze her a bit.

"Thank you for the compliments, truly. I'm grateful that you think so highly of me. I wonder what my fathers will think of such comments, though."

Her placid smile did nothing to hide the wicked amusement in her eyes, and the paling of their faces
was very satisfying.

She soon started laughing which everyone else joined in with before they spent the rest of the journey playing Exploding Snap. The atmosphere was loud and cheerful as they knew that they'd all be in contact with each other over the summer.

When the train pulled into London, last minute promises were made to write to each other before the friends split up in different directions, Draco staying with Rose and Neville.

"Neville, there you are! And you too Miss Potter, Mister Malfoy, how are you two?"

"I'm well, Madam Longbottom, thanks for asking. Looking forward to going home."

"Regent Longbottom, thank you for your enquiry. I am very well, though I am looking forward to resting over the holidays."

Neville and Rose shared a grin over Draco's formality, though he didn't sound at all arrogant. He was getting better every day. She resisted the urge to pat his head like a dog; she didn't think it would be very appreciated.

"That's good, after some of the dreadful things happening with those professors I had worried about the well-being of the students. A period of rest will do you all some good I think."

She turned to her grandson with a fond smile, though you had to look closely to catch it. "I'm afraid it's time for us to depart Neville, your parents are waiting for us at home. They wanted to come but crowds aren't the best environment right now. Say goodbye to your friends, though I'm sure we'll be seeing them again soon enough."

The platinum blonde children quickly said goodbye to the Longbottoms who Apparated from the platform, leaving the cousins to find their parents. They walked around for a bit before they caught sight of a head of pale blonde hair mirroring their own. A moment later Rose heard a loud barking laugh near the person and knew they were in the right spot.

She dragged Draco along the platform before they found Remus apparently face-palming, Sirius bent double clutching his stomach as he howled with laughter, and Narcissa glaring at her cousin.

"Dads!"

Rose let go of Draco and ran at the two men who straightened up in time to catch her and envelop her in a tight hug between their arms. She breathed in the familiar scents of firewhiskey, smoke and chocolate, and tried to burrow deeper in their arms.

She turned her head after a moment to see Draco looking at her with clear jealousy, but before her stomach had a chance to twist unpleasantly she saw Narcissa stride towards her son determinedly, before wrapping her thin arms around his shoulders and holding onto him tightly. The misery drained from his face, which turned a pink hue of embarrassment even as a pleased smile found it's way onto his face as he hugged his mother back.

After the parents finished squashing their children they went to remove the trunks from the train and said a few last-minute words before Narcissa and Draco Apparated back to Malfoy Manor.

Rose turned back to the gleaming red train, the faint remnants of smoke furling upwards gently, swirling into random shapes that couldn't be predicted. She knew that even with her knowledge of the future that nothing could ever be predicted, not with what she had done this year. One measly year and everything had changed beyond all recognition.
She turned away from the Hogwarts Express at the sound of her family. She smiled at the thought of her beloved school. Only six years left to go.

Chapter End Notes

And done!

Yes, I'm afraid you read that correctly, this is the final chapter ... for this part. I've decided to carry on a year-by-year story of Rose's life in this changed world, which will be coming shortly.

I'm not sure when I'll start posting, because I want to have more chapters done before I upload it, in case writer's block rears its ugly head and I get stuck. At the very latest I'll start posting in May.

I'd just like to say I'm so grateful for all the support I've gotten over the course of this story, and I honestly can't believe that so many people enjoyed it. I can't thank you guys enough for all the comments and kudos, you're amazing. I only started writing because I was sad there wasn't many time travel stories with a female Harry, so I thought I'd have a go at it myself. (If anyone has any recommendations for a fem Harry time travel story, let me know :D).

Happy reading guys, and I'll see you soon! Promise :D
Hey guys, just a quick announcement that the first chapter of part two is up now. Check out 'Temporal Displacement and Everyday Headaches'!

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!