Shouyou Hinata and the Mirror of Erised

by Killthespare

Summary

On a rare sunny morning in late August, a man stood poised to knock on the front door of Privet Orphanage. His name was Ittetsu Takeda, Transfiguration Professor and Deputy Headmaster of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. Takeda was here to deliver a very special invitation to a very special boy by the name of Shouyou Hinata.

A Harry Potter style AU featuring friendship, prejudice, adventure, and mystery

Notes

This story is a weird mix of me trying to preserve the origin cultures of both Haikyuu and...
Harry Potter. So, it results in a hodgepodge of both. All characters will generally be referred to by last names with teachers or other adults generally getting a respectful prefix (Mr., Ms., ext.) rather than suffix.

See the end of the work for more notes.
The personnel of Privet Orphanage were proud to say that it was perfectly normal, thank you very much. Indeed, the orphanage sat right on the line between mildly interesting and dull enough to take note. The staff followed every regulation by the book—nothing less and certainly nothing more. The children there lingered until adopted or simply aged out of the system with no more notice than a few signatures and an empty bed. If there was any variance at Privet Orphanage, it was certainly few and far between. The kind of monotony an institution could take pride in.

Except for one slight blemish named Shouyou Hinata.

Newly eleven year old Hinata could be called many things but none of these included dull, scheduled, or monotonous. If the workers of Privet knew what they were getting into when they opened the door on a drizzly Monday nine years ago to find a baby with orange fluffy hair snoozing away in a wicker basket with only a small blanket monogrammed with his name, then the staff would have certainly notified the authorities and sent the babe to another state orphanage. Sure, the scandal of an abandoned baby and a morning of questioning police would have certainly broken the monotony of that particular Monday but, in the long run, the orphanage’s order would have certainly been better maintained. Instead, they contacted the authority with complete proper procedure and after no leads were found in the case, gave indication to accept another ward into their dull grey facilities.

From an early age Hinata was...odd. He never lost a toy as a child and, in fact, acquired many that had been lost years ago. The staff would wonder if Hinata was taking the toys from others except for the fact that Hinata always gladly shared any of his prizes with the first child who asked. Things got stranger with age. At age five, Hinata was running from some of the other facility children who took advantage of a lazy teacher to bully those younger or smaller. The worker would later swear that one second Hinata was running and the next he was gone. He would later be found at a park three streets over and proclaiming again and again that he did not know what happened. There were the smaller things, too. Hinata’s bruises and cuts always healed faster, his hair seemed to always stay right at the length he preferred, he had an uncanny knack for avoiding teachers when he was in trouble. As a toddler, the workers would put away one of Hinata’s favorite toys and turn around to see him holding it. Yes, Hinata was odd. While his easy going good nature should have made him a favorite, his well known oddities put him at odds with both caretakers and the other children.

On a rare sunny morning in late August, a man stood poised to knock on the front door of Privet Orphanage. This man was also odd.

Ittetsu Takeda, Transfiguration Professor and Deputy Headmaster of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, loved his job. As a boy, he would imitate his mothers wand movements with common sticks he found on the ground. As a student, he absorbed every iota of knowledge placed in front of him. As a teacher, one of his favorite tasks was introducing the muggleborn children to the wizarding world. Seeing their faces as they realized that they were part of a new and spell bounding world was the truest joy he had as an educator. Which is why this visit made him so anxious.

While most Hogwarts letters to muggleborns were delivered earlier in the summer by an experienced Hogwarts’ professor, this particular child’s had almost slipped through by clerical error. In fact, if Takeda had not happened to be doing a review of the number of muggleborn wizards over the last two centuries compared to the attendance rate at Hogwarts, Shouyou Hinata
name might have entirely slipped through the cracks. Because of the late notice, Takeda had
decided to deliver this letter personally.

Takeda knocked twice on the entrance to what was, in Takeda’s opinion, a drab if clean state
institution. The door was soon opened by a middle aged woman with a tight bun and an austere
face.

The woman looked down at Takeda’s transfigured black suit and briefcase.

“Ah, you must be the state inspector,” she surmised. “You can come right in. Everything is in order
and any of my workers would be happy to talk to you. I am the main supervisor for Privet
Orphanage, Henrietta Snuck.”

She gestured for him to come inside.

“Oh...no, I’m sorry, Ms. Snuck. I’m afraid there has been a misunderstanding. My name is Ittetsu
Takeda. I’m the Deputy Headmaster of the private school Hogwarts. It’s a school for particularly
gifted students. I’m here to talk to one of your charges about attending.”

Sensing possible recognition for her orphanage, Ms. Snuck immediately pounced.

“Oh my, I’m sorry for the confusion. Of course, come to the main office.” She motioned for
Takeda to follow her into a sterile looking office right inside the door. “May I offer you any tea? Water?”

“Thank you for the offer, but I’m fine for now,” Takeda said, sitting in a plastic chair across from a
tidy metal desk where Ms. Snuck sat.

“Now, at Privet, we have a number of gifted children. Which child are you inquiring about?”

“Ah,” Takeda replied pulling out a small file from his briefcase. “He is a ten year old boy named
Shouyou Hinata.”

The way excitement drained from Ms. Snuck’s face was rather off putting for Takeda.

“Hinata? Are you sure? His grades have never been spectacular.”

“My school is looking for students gifted in other ways than just academics,” Takeda commented
politely.

Ms. Snuck looked relatively confused before her face briefly cleared. “Oh, are you one of those
schools for at-risk kids, children you’re worried might get into legal trouble?”

“No,” Takeda retorted, taken aback. “Is Hinata in any kind of legal trouble?”

Ms. Snuck looked confused again. “Ah...no...sorry, it’s not any thing like that. Hinata is a perfectly
well mannered kid. It’s just...” Ms. Snuck looked as if she was getting ready to confide something.
“Well, it’s just he’s rather odd.”

Takeda gained a sudden comprehension. “Oh, no, rest assured, Ms. Snuck, odd is exactly what I’m
looking for.”

Ms. Snuck, if anything, now looked like she was considering Takeda odd.

“Exactly, what type of school is yours, Mr. Takeda?”
Takeda prepared the usual answer. “Hogwarts is a school that looks at special aptitudes children might have in a number of areas. If proficient in variety of fields, the children are invited to private boarding school in the beautiful--”

“Boarding School?!” Ms. Snuck interrupted. “You mean Hinata would be leaving.”

“Er, yes if he and your institution accept this offer?” Takeda answered nervously. “Will this be a problem?”

“Problem?” Ms. Snuck laughed. “Of course not, how much will it be?”

“Well, for orphans, Hogwarts normally includes a full stipend for tuition and room and board.” Takeda explains.

“Free?!” Ms. Snuck looked possibly the most overjoyed that her face allowed. “I’ll take you to see Hinata right now. He’s right upstairs.”

Feeling as though he was recovering from a confounding curse, Takeda followed the woman out of her office to meet his new student.

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Eleven year old Shouyou Hinata was sitting in his room that he shared with two of his few friends, Izumi and Sekimukai.

“But I’ve got it this time” Hinata began. “As soon as we get to Junior High, we can try out for the school’s sports team. Then, we’ll be super cool and everyone will want to be friends with us.”

“Except for the fact that Privet is never going to pay for us to be on a team,” said Izumi, laying on the ground and sighing at the ceiling.

“And the fact that we don’t even know a sport we’re good at,” Sekimukai tiredly agreed from his bed.

Hinata paced the room. “But, we can find that sport! And if we’re really, really, really good at it, then the team will make Ms. Snuck let us play.”

“I’m pretty sure that Ms. Snuck isn’t going to bow to a junior high sports team, Hinata,” answered Sekimukai.

“And being that good takes practice and we don’t even know what sport.” Izumi finished dismally.

“I’ll find the sport!” Hinata argued, “And then I’ll work hard every night and on break and on the weekend and I’ll be the greatest--”

A knock on the door cut off Hinata’s impassioned rant. The boys quickly looked around to make sure that everything was in order.

“Izumi, Skimukai,” Ms. Snuck called out as she and a petite man with a black suit and briefcase entered the room. “You two go help in the kitchen while Mr. Takeda talks to Hinata.”

Hinata paled. Talk to him? Did Hinata do anything? He quickly thought through the last week and
couldn’t think of anything. Did something bad happened!? Hinata frantically thought about Natsu.

Izumi and Skimukai threw him sympathetic and worried looks as they followed Ms. Snuck out to the kitchen.

“Hello, Hinata,” began Takeda, “I’m here to talk to you about--”

“Am I in trouble?” Hinata blurted out suddenly. “Did something happen to my sister, Natsu?”

“No, no, relax, Hinata,” Takeda reassured, holding up his hands nervously. “I’m here to talk to you about going to my school.”

Takeda waited until Hinata had relaxed some. “Our files didn’t show you had a sister.”

Hinata put his hand on his chest to keep his heart from pounding out. “Gah...oh, no...I don’t officially...we just call ourselves siblings because we have orange hair and she’s been here since she was a baby. Wait. Wait! Did you say something about a school?”

Takeda nodded, glad that the boy seemed to be calming down. “Yes, my name is Ittetsu Takeda, I’m a professor at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry.”

Hinata had to have misheard. He wondered if he had hit his head recently and broke his brain. Wait, if his brain was broken would he remember hitting his head? “Sorry, sir, I think I misheard you.”

“Ah, yes,” Takeda admitted sheepishly. “I might have skipped over some parts. Hinata, would you mind sitting at the desk?”

Hinata went to the small wooden desk in the corner of the room.

“Alright,” Takeda started. “First off, magic is very much real. It’s just hidden from people who don’t have magic. Understand?”

Hinata refrained from nodding out of fear it would worsen possible-now-probable head wound.

“I, as someone with magic, am referred to as a wizard.”

“But, if you have magic,” Hinata interrupted, “could you show me something cool. Like make my hair turn blue or pull out a rabbit?”

Takeda smiled, pulled out a stick from his jacket, and gestured to the desk next to Hinata. The desk suddenly shrunk down to a third of its size while coarse hair grew out from the wood. A small terrier ran at Hinata’s legs, barking and jumping.

“WHOA!” Hinata launched himself at the puppy. “You were like GAAHHHH and then the desk was like SHWAMMMM”

“Not exactly, the words I’m used to,” Takeda gave a small smile. “Is it alright if I continue?”

Hinata nodded frantically as the puppy settled into his lap.

“I teach at a school for witches and wizards called Hogwarts. And we would very much like it if you considered attending next year.

“But-t-t,” Hinata stuttered disappointed, “I-I can’t do magic. How can I go to a magic school?”
Takeda quickly conjured a chair, noting Hinata’s wide look of amazement. “Hinata, I want you to think back. Is there any time that something happened around you that was strange or unusual? Something you couldn’t describe?”

Hinata thought back to the time he was running from the mean scary older kids. He was scared and wanted to go somewhere safe to play. All of the sudden, he had found himself alone at the park. Privet was convinced he ran away, but Hinata just remembered he was at Privet one minute and then there was a whoosh and he was at the park.

Slowly, Hinata nodded.

“That was magic,” Takeda explained, seeing the look of wonder in Hinata’s eyes. “And at Hogwarts, we’d teach you how to control it. Would you like that?”

Hinata nodded eagerly.

“Wonderful, now Hogwarts is a boarding school, so you would have to leave later this week. Normally, we’d give you more time, but the--”

“I’d have to leave Privet?” Hinata suddenly yelped.

“Oh...yes, you would. But only for the school year.” Judging by the reaction of the Ms. Snuck, Takeda honestly didn’t think this would have been a problem for Hinata.

Hinata thought about his friends and Natsu. How would Natsu handle being alone without her big brother?

“What would happen to me if I don’t go to Hogwarts?” Hinata asked nervously.

Takeda swallowed, normally this didn’t come up in the initial interview. “I’m afraid then, for secrecy’s sake, we’d bind your magic and erase your memory of the magical world. Your life would continue like normal.”

Hinata felt his stomach roll and almost ran to the bathroom. Get rid of his magic? Erase his memory? Even though he only found out about magic this afternoon, the thought made him feel wrong to the point of nausea.

He loved Natsu, but surely she would be okay for a few months every year, right? And he could still write her. And show her magic whenever he got back.

And a small voice in the back of Hinata’s mind whispered maybe she’d do better without all of your oddness around her.

“Hinata?” Takeda prompted, worried about the boy’s silence.

“I’ll do it.” Hinata declared suddenly. “I’ll learn magic and be the best wizard I can be. I promise.”

Looking into Hinata’s eyes, Takeda found a seriousness and determination that was not at all common for a ten year old. Suddenly, he wondered if Ms. Snuck’s odd comment had to do with more than just the magic.

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That night, Hinata silently looked out the window by his bed. Mr. Takeda had left with a promise that he would come back tomorrow to take Hinata shopping for his school things. He gave Hinata strict instructions not to tell Ms. Snuck or his friends about what Hogwarts school really taught. Despite this, he snuck Natsu to his room after dinner and told her everything that Mr. Takeda had told him about magic and Hogwarts. Watching her eyes light up at the story, Hinata felt something in his stomach settle. He’d miss Natsu something awful but if he learned magic, maybe they could finally leave Privet and find somewhere they could both be happy. With this and thoughts of desks and puppies in his mind, Hinata closed his eyes to go to sleep.
Friends and Foes

Chapter Notes

Compared to future chapters, this chapter is probably the most reminiscent of its Philosopher's Stone/ Sorcerer's Stone counterpart. Later chapters will veer off the main course but I had to give Hinata the magic of a first trip to Diagon Alley. I tried to avoid established Hogwarts characters when possible but it felt to odd to not have a Madam Malkins. Also, I decided to use Gregorovitch instead of Ollivander because Ollivander's characterization has already been firmly established in Harry Potter.

Hope ya'll enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

This was the absolutely best day of Hinata’s life!

After having pulled Hinata off of various window displays as the two made their way across the street, Takeda was now valiantly trying to corral Hinata in the general direction of Gringotts.

“MR.TAKEDA! Did you see that?!” Hinata asked a few decibels above preferred speaking volume.

“Er-yes,” Takeda answered, quickly ushering Hinata away from another store front. “That’s the Owl Emporium. That’s where we’ll go for your magical familiar later today.”

Hinata took a second to puzzle through that familiar must mean animal. His eyes widened. “Y-you mean I get to have a magical animal!”

“Yes,” Takeda remarked absently, navigating through the school rush crowds. “All students are encouraged to have some kind of familiar for posts and delivery. Of course, you could use one of the school owls. But, I rather thought that you would prefer one of your own to write to Natsu frequently. There’s a wide variety of animals allowed. There’s the most common--owls, toads, and cats--but some students do petition the school for exceptions for certain family pets. If you find one that you--Hinata?”

Takeda cut off as he noticed the glazed, amazed expression on Hinata’s face. “Hinata?”

Hinata shook his head lightly. “I really get to have my own? The orphanage hates pets and we were never allowed to keep any of the strays we found.”

Hinata always tried to stop by the animal shelter on his way back from school and play with all the abandoned cats and dogs. Though he would never admit if asked, Hinata felt an odd sense of kinship with the animals.

Takeda’s face softened. “Ah, yes, I think it should be in the budget. Though, of course, first, we have to stop at the bank and get your stipe--”

Takeda cut off again as Hinata started walking determinedly to the bank, weaving in through the crowds almost like a Seeker.
“Well, I guess that’s one way to get his attention,” Takeda chuckled, quickening to catch up to Hinata’s flaming red hair.

Once they made it to Gringotts, Hinata was once again distracted. Staring in amazement as Takeda handed over his key to the goblin at the desk, Hinata was frozen to the spot.

_They’re as short as me!_ Hinata thought before shaking himself to follow Takeda and the goblin.

They were led to a small cart on what looked to be a railroad track. Hinata looked up at Takeda who was starting to look vaguely nauseous.

“Oh, I always hate this part,” Takeda said softly before smiling down at Hinata. “Remember to hold on tightly, okay?”

Hinata didn’t quite understand but climbed into the cart after Takeda and gripped the rail. The goblin pulled on a lever and suddenly the cart lurched on the tracks, barreling faster than Hinata had thought possible. After the shock, Hinata almost screamed in delight as the cart took turn after turn and, at one point, Hinata was sure it went upside down.

When the cart pulled to a stop, Hinata was practically buzzing with excitement as Takeda looked as if he was trying to hold onto his breakfast.

“Vault 785,” the goblin announced. “Hogwarts’ Scholarship Trust. Key, please?”

Takeda handed over the key before turning to Hinata.

“Hinata, this is very important. To certain students in need of assistance or without guardianship, Hogwarts grants a set stipend every year for school supplies and clothes along with a small allotted amount to spend on whatever you wish. During your first few years, myself or another wizarding adult with proper authority will come with you at the start of the school year to help you go to the bank and get the supplies. If ever you need any of the extra allotment during the school year, just come to me or your Head of House and we can come to Gringotts for a withdraw. Understand?”

While Hinata was still slightly blown away by having any money at all, he quickly nodded.

“Now, the Scholarship vault is distinct from other vaults at Hogwarts. Each student under the trust has a specialized key that will only open the vault to their specific allotment. This,” Takeda motioned to the key that the goblin had just handed back, “is your key. It will be held by me during your first three years before I will hand over responsibility to you. If you ever need it, just come find me at Hogwarts. Okay?”

With his habit of losing things, Hinata felt rather relieved that he wouldn’t have to hold onto it quite.

Takeda smiled and led Hinata to the now opened vault. Hinata gasped as he saw a small pile of what looked like gold sitting in the largely empty room.

“Now, this won’t be much once we get your school supplies and robe,” Takeda commented before smiling down confidingly at Hinata, “but we should still have a bit to get you your familiar.”

_Best Day Ever,_ Hinata thought happily.

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While Hinata wanted to go straight back to the Emporium, Takeda insisted on getting his other school supplies and robes first rather than trying to carry an animal through their shopping trip.

And so, Hinata ended up in a bookstore surrounded by books on things that Hinata had never even heard of let alone thought of.

“Opening Your Inner Eye,” Hinata read off as Takeda haggled over cauldron pricing. Hinata wondered around the store before picking up a copy of *A Beginner's Guide to Animagus Transformations*. Hinata was originally interested by the cover which depicted what looked to be an animated wizard transforming into a frog.

“Find something you’re interested in?” Takeda asked before looking over at the book in Hinata’s hands, “Ah, animagus transformation. Well, I do love Transformation, but that’s a bit too complex for first years. Why don’t you look at this *Basic Transformations for Beginning Wizards* first. Though if you’re really interested in animagus transformation in a few years, I can recommend you some really great master’s programs in transformation.”

Takeda continued discussing the wonders of transformation as he led Hinata out of the shop. Hinata wasn’t quite sure about all that Takeda was talking about and it sounded really difficult. But, Hinata didn’t think he’d might being able to change into some kind of cool animal.

When Takeda paused, Hinata quickly asked, “Where are we going to next?”

“Oh,” Takeda said, diverted momentarily from his lecture on animated to non-animated transformations. “Next, we’re going to Gregorovitch’s to get your wand.”

“A wand!” Hinata shouted. He thought back to when he and the other children at Privett had watched an animated movie where the wizard had a long staff that he banged on the floor whenever he did magic. Hinata thought it would be pretty awesome to have his own giant staff to do spells with.

Takeda nodded, leading Hinata to the shop. “I do have to warn you. Gregorovitch is the best around but he’s rather...prickly. So, do try not to take any of the things he says to heart.”

Looking confused, Hinata followed Takeda inside.

“WHAT DO YOU WANT!” a voice bellowed from the back, causing Hinata to jump.

“Hello, Mr. Gregorovitch, it’s Takeda bringing an upcoming first year for his wand.” Takeda answered serenely.

“Bloody first years!” a wrinkled old man emerged from the back with his face twisted in a scowl. “Don’t know a wand handle from a wand tip. Never take proper care of their wands, do you?” he questioned Hinata. “Never give proper respect to the magic. You ask me--not that they ever do--shouldn’t get wands until we know you can bloody behave first.”

“Well, be that as it may,” Takeda continued. “Hinata must have his wand before he can start school.”

Gregorovitch harrumphed before hobbling over to a wall that seemed filled to the brim with small boxes. “Well, let’s see what we’ve got here.”

He took a quick look at Hinata. “Doesn’t look like much. With red hair like that though, he’ll
Hinata quickly moved to hold out his hand for a hand shake. Gregorovitch rolled his eyes, grabbed Hinata’s wrist and turned his hand palm up. He opened the box, muttering to himself, and carefully removed what looked like a stick from the box. He gently placed in in Hinata’s hand.

“Well, let’s see what you can do.”

Hinata stared at him.

Gregorovitch looked like he was getting ready to yell again before Takeda quickly stepped in. “Just wave the wand, Hinata.”

*Oh!* Hinata thought and gripped the wand pointing it forward and waving it in a downward arc. The clock on Gregorovitch desk quickly caught fire.

Gregorovitch signed melodramatically before putting it out. “No, that one won’t do.”

He walked to the shelf again. “Let’s try this. Hippogriff hoof, oak, ten and three quarters inches.”

He handed Hinata a slightly longer wand. Hinata waved it the same. A rush of air came through and knocked down an entire shelf towards the back.

“Hmm,” Gregorovitch’s scowl depended but this time Hinata thought it was about the problem rather than directed at him. Gregorovich retreated to the back of the store before coming out with four plain black boxes and one old looking one.

He went through, each time handing Hinata a wand and letting him quickly wave it. Hinata didn’t know what he was looking for other than continued property damage. When he came to the fifth wand, he sighed. He looked up at Hinata and his glare took on a searching edge. Without a word, he took out the wand from the fifth box and gave it to Hinata to try.

As soon as Hinata touched it, he felt as if he was filled with light. He felt a small breeze travel up his body. He had barely began waving it when a pile of assorted feathers drifted from Gregorovitch’s desk, levitating and weaving through the air delicately.

*It’s beautiful,* Hinata thought, still caught up in the rush of power. *If this is magic then I never want it to stop.*

“How?” Takeda said gently, breaking the trance, “trace the wand up and sharply down.” He motined the movements with his finger.

Hinata did and the feathers dropped with an almost disappointed air back to the ground.

Hinata looked excitedly at Gregorovitch. *This was it!* He thought *This is my wand!*

Gregorovitch was looking at him pensively. “You know, an old colleague of mine was always fond of saying that the wand chooses the wizard.” He paused and his eyes shifted to the wand. “*That* wand I almost threw out.”

Startled, Hinata drew back the wand to his chest protectively.

“Not because it’s ill made,” Gregorovitch angled his head down and appeared to be talking to
himself. “No, no, ten inches, birch, a base of woven together thestral hair and phoenix feather. The craftsmanship is beautiful.”

He jerked his head back up at Hinata suddenly. “No, that wand is so unique as to only have one twin. And that wand’s twin has done dark, terrible things.”

Hinata noticed Takeda turning pale beside him.

“So, I have to ask myself, should I let you have it?” Gregorovitch continued, walking around and leaning on his desk. “After all, if the wand chooses the wizard, then what does that mean about you, Shouyou Hinata.”

Hinata couldn’t remember telling Gregorovitch his full name. Nevertheless, it seemed like Gregorovitch expected him to speak if he wanted this wand.

“M-maybe it wasn’t the other wand’s fault? Maybe that wand chose wrong. I-I don’t want to do terrible things and I don’t think my wand does either. I don’t think my wand would want me to do terrible things, but even if it does, isn’t it still my choice? I don’t think anyone can make my choices for me, I think that’s up to me.”

Hinata nervously kept eye contact with Gregorovitch.

“Hmm,” Gregorovitch finally said, “We shall see.”

Gregorovitch turned to Takeda “That will be ten gallons for the wand.”

“What?!” Takeda shook himself, “but for any other wand purchase, you’ve never charged more than eight!”

“Yes,” Gregorovitch agreed, looking at Hinata. “But this one’s annoyed me.”

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Hinata was still thinking about his trip to Gregorovitch by the time Takeda led him to the robe shop. Takeda had boxed up his wand after they left the shop and explained that, for Hinata’s safety, the law didn’t allow magic unsupervised until a wizard turned seventeen. Hinata would not allowed to use his wand until he boarded the train for Hogwarts. Normally, Hinata would be put out by this; but, he was currently still caught up in his own thoughts.

When Gregorovitch threatened not selling Hinata the wand, Hinata felt fear like he had never felt before and, surprisingly, a rush of anger. Hinata didn’t know but both emotions seemed rooted in his magic. Hinata wanted desperately to be a wizard but...what if he was a bad wizard like the owner of the wand that Gregorovitch talked about. At the orphanage, some of the younger kids were scared of Hinata because of his strangeness. What if he was still strange even at Hogwarts? Hinata didn’t want to feared and disliked in two worlds when he was already used to it in one.

“You think you’ll be alright on your own for the robe fitting, Hinata?” Takeda interrupted his thoughts. “I have to run to the potions shop for the rest of your ingredients and I don’t want you to be bored while I try to bargain for the best prices.”

Hinata quickly shook his head. Except for his sister Natsu, Sekimukai, and Izumi, Hinata was used
to doing things on his own.

“Wonderful, I’ll be back to pay for the robes, of course. Don’t get any of the specific House clothing since you don’t know what House you will be in yet. We can worry about House scarfs closer to Winter, anyway. I’ll go in and tell Madam Malkin what you need. She’ll probably know even better than me with how many students she sees coming through.”

Hinata nodded and tried to get his thoughts away from wands and strangeness. He brightened again when he thought of Houses. Takeda had explained the concepts of Houses during Hinata’s initial interview and Hinata thought it was so cool that students got sorted based on what sorts of stuff they cared about most.

Takeda talked to the woman who owned the shop before checking on Hinata again.

“I’ll be back quickly.” Takeda assured him “Just let Madam Malkin know if you need anything, okay?”

“Got it!” Hinata agreed, smiling.

Taked smiled back before exiting the shop. Through the display window, Hinata watched him walk down the street before turning a corner.

“Now,” A smiling woman with her hands on her hips came up to him, “If I can just show you to our waiting room, I’ll come get your measurements in a bit.”

Madam Malkin directed him to a small but cozy room to the side of the shop. In it were a few comfy chairs, a table with magical moving magazines called *Witch Weekly*, and a boy with a truly magnificent scowl.

Hinata privately thought that this boy’s scowl might actually beat Gregorovitch’s which was impressive considering the boy looked not much older than Hinata.

“Hi!” Hinata greeted excitedly. “Are you here getting your school robes, too?”

The boy looked at him as if confused why someone was speaking to him.

“Yes.” he said shortly.

“I am, too! My name’s Shouyou Hinata. Are you going to Hogwarts, too?”

“Of course,” the boy agreed, crossing his arms. “It’s the best wizarding school around. Both my parents went there.”

“OHHHH, you’re parents can do magic, too! That must be so cool! Do they like do magic at home or fly on broomsticks and stuff?”

“What? Of course, my father does magic at home.” said the boy who seemed to be starting to get annoyed. A look of comprehension crossed his face. “Oh, are you muggleborn?”

“Huh? What’s a muggle?” Hinata asked.

The boy shifted restlessly. “A muggle is someone who can’t do magic.”

“Oh.” Hinata replied confused, before shaking his head. “No, I’m not a muggle. I can do magic. I made the feathers float with my wand.”
The boy looked irritated again. “Of course, you can do magic, Dummy. If not, you wouldn’t be going to Hogwarts! A muggle is someone who can’t do magic. A muggleborn is someone who is born from non-magical parents. Having non-magical parents doesn’t mean that you can’t do magic. One of the best students at Hogwarts is muggleborn.” The boy seemed to get distracted by something else.

“Huh,” Hinata replied, thinking. “I guess I could be muggleborn. I never knew my parents. They died when I was like one.”

The boy looked stricken and then mildly annoyed at himself. “I’m sor--”

“Anyway,” Hinata interrupted happily. “What’s your name? What House do you want to be in?”

The boy glared at Hinata for interrupting him, momentarily forgetting that he had been about to apologize. “My name’s Tobio Kageyama.”

“Kageyama,” Hinata repeated. “Cool! What House do you want? I don’t know for myself, they all seem kind of cool. I’m not sure about Ravenclaw though. I don’t really like books.”

Kageyama puffed out his chest. “I’m going to be in Slytherin.”

“That’s awesome!” Hinata responded excitedly. “How do you already know? Takeda said I wouldn’t get to find out until I got to Hogwarts.”

“Oh,” Kageyama looked momentarily taken aback. “Well, I don’t know technically. But, I have to be. Oikawa is in Slytherin. And if I want to be like him, then I have to be in the same House.”

“Who’s Oikawa?”

Kageyama looked briefly stunned. “You don’t know?! He’s the best student in his year. I think he might be the best student in all of Hogwarts. And he’s a muggleborn! He lives in my neighborhood and, if I want to be as great as him, then I’ve gotta be in Slytherin.”

Kageyama said this all as if it were basic logic.

“Huh,” said Hinata, thinking. “But that doesn’t make any sense. Just because you want to be like someone doesn’t mean your personalities are the same.”

Kageyama looked now like he was truly getting angry. “Yes, it does! And what do you know, you didn’t even know who he was until I told you a few seconds ago.”

“Just because I don’t know who he is doesn’t mean your logic isn’t stupid!” Hinata shouted.

“You’re such a dummy!” Kageyama yelled, standing up and stomping one foot. “You don’t know anything about me! I’m going to be just as good and get into Slytherin!”

“But, you don’t even know if you belong there!” Hinata argued.

“As if you--”

“BOYS!” Madam Malkin came in, interrupting Kageyama. “You two and your screaming match are disturbing the other customers. If you do not stop this second, I will have to ask you to leave.”

The boys looked momentarily abashed before glaring at each other.

Madam Malkin signed. “Well, in any case, it’s time for your fittings. Kageyama, you will be in the
“Alright, dear,” Malkin said, leading him to the room. “It should be just a quick few spells.” She flicked her wand to and fro as tape measures swung out and wrapped around Hinata’s body. “There, we go. Now, we’ll just get a few of the robes tailored up for you.” Fabric flew in the background as a needle and thread broke through. “Alright, while that’s being worked on. Why don’t you tell me about Hogwarts while I get some final measures.”

Malkin grabbed some chalk while Hinata made sweeping gestures and enthused about how excited he was.

It was not long after Madam Malkin had finished that Takeda returned with a bag of assorted potion materials. He quickly paid Madam Malkin, who shrunk down Hinata’s robes for travel.

“Well,” Takeda asked as they exited the shop. “Did everything work out alright?”

Pushing Kageyama to the back of his mind, Hinata nodded. “It was great.”

“Wonderful! And I got you some great prices on potions ingredients enough to make up for that deplorable price gouging at Gregorovitch’s. I think we have some time to stop by the Emporium before lunch.”

Hinata’s face lit up. He was going to get his very own animal! Hinata checked himself so that he wouldn’t immediately run to the shop while Takeda laughed good naturedly at his excitement.

When they got to the Emporium, Hinata couldn’t corral his enthusiasm any more.

“WHOAH! LOOK!” Hinata excitedly gestured at the snakes section before running to the cats section.

He asked the store worker politely if he could hold one of the animals. The store owner smiled and handed him a large grey animal.

“That’s a Keezle,” Takeda explained, smiling. “It’s a special type of magical animal. Is that the one you want?”

Hinata looked down wonderingly as he petted the cat like animal. She purred heavily under his touch before meeting his eyes apologetically. “No,” Hinata said, slightly sadly. “I think this Keezle is meant for someone else.”

Takeda nodded. “It’s been said they do have a certain understanding for that.”

Hinata carefully handed her back to the store worker before going to the small rodents section. He looked curiously into the toad habitats, smiling at them but not risking disturbing them by trying to pick any up.

Slowly, Hinata made his way over to the avian section. He looked up and suddenly met a pair of large golden eyes. Hinata gasped. Slowly, he held up his hand and the bird flew to land on his finger, preening. Not breaking eye contact, Hinata questioned with a note of wonder in his tone. “This one. May I please bring her home?”

Takeda noted that the bird nodded as if Hinata was asking the bird instead of Takeda. Which,
looking back, Takeda was not entirely certain he wasn’t.

“A crow is certainly off the usual pet items.” Takeda answered cautiously. Hinata looked at him with pleading wide brown eyes. The black crow crooned softly on his hand. “But, I’m sure we can get a petition approved if you’d like.”

Both Hinata and the bird looked up at Takeda in symmetry as if he was one of the best people on the entire planet. Takeda was almost a bit disturbed at the synctricity if not for the clear joy.

“What are you going to call him?” Takeda asked.

“Her.” Hinata corrected absently, meeting his crow’s eyes again. He looked questioningly at her before a thought struck him. “Karasuna”

“That sounds perfect,” Takeda assured. “Let me go pay for her and then we can go to lunch.”

After leaving the Emporium, Karasuna happily sat on Hinata's shoulder while they ambled to the Leaky Cauldron. Hinata would every now and then make comments to the bird that, Takeda would swear, the bird seemed to be responding to in answering caws. Takeda decided it was pertinent to remind Hinata that he would have to keep Karasuna in a cage while in the Muggle world until he left for Hogwarts later this week.

While sitting with their food at the Leaky Cauldron, Takeda noticed that Hinata had taken on a pensive look. After Hinata tore off a piece of his bread to feed to Karasuna, he finally spoke.

“Mr. Takeda, were my parents wizards?”

Takeda looked down sadly. He should have expected this would come up.

“I’m afraid we don’t know, Hinata. We’re not sure who your parents were. Your family name doesn’t sound familiar to me. But, your parents could have easily been foreign wizards who came down to fight in the war. Unfortunately, some of the records were lost during that time and not all of the official deaths were recorded,” Takeda finished softly.

Hinata nodded slowly. He half-expected that Takeda wouldn’t have an answer for who his parents were. Still, it would be nice to finally answer the question he had been yearning and reaching for his entire remembered life. The only way he even knew his name was because of his baby blanket.

Hinata then jerked his head up as he thought through the latter half of the sentence. “Wait! What war?”

“Oh,” Takeda looked slightly absashed as though he did not mean to reveal that. “A little over twelve years ago, a civil war broke out amongst the country’s wizarding community. There were a large number of deaths before the war ended after three years. It’s a dark mark in our history and we’re still trying to move past it.” Takeda paused before lightly shaking his head. “But, you shouldn’t worry about that now when you should be looking towards your first year of school.”

“But, what was it about?” Hinata continued to question.

Takeda sighed and silently weighed his concerns over Hinata innocence with whether Hinata had the right to know. He apparently eventually sided on the latter. “A large contingent of wizards were rather vocal about not letting any muggle born students into Hogwarts. They suggested that these students should simply have their magic bound when recognized and their memories wiped. You have to understand they centered it all around protection of the magical community from discovery.”
“But, that’s not fair!” Hinata insisted. He thought back to Kageyama’s words. “Besides, isn’t one of the best students at Hogwarts now muggleborn?”

Takeda looked surprised that Hinata knew that. “Yes, Oikawa Tooru. However, his path isn’t always made easy.” He waved his hand as if forcing the subject away “But, that’s beside the point. The matter was a larger number of wizards agreed with your point that it was unfair. The two sides fought and, while the larger number of wizards were for inclusion, the other side was led by a very powerful wizard that was almost impossible to defeat.”

“What was he?” Hinata asked, wide eyed.

Takeda shook his head. “Nobody knows. He went by a pseudonym even years before the war broke out. Because of his immense power, he was simply called the Giant. It was rumored that he could wipe out whole cities in a night. Though, personally, I think that is a bit of an exaggeration.”

“What happened to him?” Hinata wondered how anyone so powerful could be defeated.

“Oh,” Takeda said, brightening. “This is where the story gets mysterious. No one quite knows what happened. According to some of his followers, he was going to lead a raid on one of the muggle parts of the city. He was known for going in alone, destroying entire streets, and then leaving before any major defense could be mounted. One of his younger followers had decided to follow. According to him, another shorter wizard covered in a dark hood approached him. They began to duel, destroying large parts of the street. Finally, two of their spells ricochet off of each other and caught the Giant in the chest. The Giant was killed instantly. After the battle, the follower quickly fled the scene to report back. He told the followers that he had never witnessed such power and that if someone like that was fighting that they would be fools to continue.”

“Who was the hooded man?” Hinata asked in amazement.

“Like the Giant, no one knows his true name. He disappeared after that night and was never heard from again. Because we don’t know his name, everyone in the Wizarding World simply calls him The Little Giant.”

“The Little Giant.” Hinata repeated.

Takeda nodded. “After that, the Giant’s side was dealt a major blow both in power and morale. The inclusion side quickly overcame with their greater numbers. The worst of the Giant’s followers were sent to a magical jail called Azkaban. All in all, the sides reunited and it was agreed that muggleborns could continue going to Hogwarts.”

“Will people still be okay with me going there?” Hinata asked quietly. Karasuna gently nuzzled his head while he absently pet her.

Takeda met Hinata’s eyes with a look of determination. “If ever they’re not, then you come and tell me right away.”

Hinata smiled even though he did not completely believe him. In Hinata’s experience, bullies were rarely deterred by a few words from a teacher.

“Alright, I think we’re just about ready to get you back home.” Takeda said with forced cheer, trying to change the subject. If anything, that made Hinata look more morose.

Takeda gently urged Hinata and Karasuna away from the table, directing them once more to the street. He concluded the trip by telling Hinata all about the Hogwarts Express and how to get to
Dodging the looks of extreme skepticism from the orphanage workers, Hinata introduced an incredibly excited Natsu to Karasuna. As expected, they loved each other instantly. Thinking back on all he learned that day and looking at his exuberant sister’s face, Hinata firmly decided it didn’t matter what other people thought on if he should be there. Hinata would work the hardest he’d ever worked in his life and show everyone that he belonged.

Chapter End Notes

I just finished the LSAT, so decided to post this chapter early. As always, comments or Kudos are appreciated and thank you for reading!
As a note, I try very hard not to make any canon HQ!!! characters actual villains. Instead, I try to stick with canon characteristics. In other words, they have flaws and may go through significant character development but they're not going to be bad people.

Next, I try to avoid OC's when possible. For the Defense Against the Dark Arts teacher, I'm following book logic and having a new one every year. Because of this, I elected not to waste a canon character for a one year position. All other students mentioned are actual HQ!!! characters.

Hope you enjoy!

Tobio Kageyama was, in general, not a very happy person. He was awkward, terrible with people, and--worst of all--highly aware of both of these facts. His face was almost permanently set in a scowl he was told was not at all appealing on a ten year old. His speech was sharp and perpetually sounded angry. When he tried to smile, he was informed it unnerved people.

Every now and then, Kageyama would try to make friends with the various children. The attempts had never gone well before and often succeeded only in further alienating Kageyama from the rest. Eventually, Kageyama had learned to stop trying.

The neighborhood had a number of children in it. His parents had originally chosen it thinking it would be a wonderful place to raise their newly born son. His mother, a muggleborn witch, wanted to raise Kageyama in the more quaint style she remembered from her childhood. And so, they had chosen a muggle neighborhood. However, when his mother had been killed while fighting during the end of war, this dream had been shattered. His father--a pureblood, though without much status--could not bare to sale the house that his wife so loved. Yet, as he didn’t know how to interact well with muggles and he was still devastated by his wife, he shut himself off from both the outside world and to his young son.

When Kageyama thinks of his mother, he still remembers a bright smile and his parents both laughing. All of her pictures had long ago been boxed up by his father. It wasn’t, Kageyama mused with too much seriousness for his age, that my father doesn’t take care of me. It’s just that I don’t think he loves me.

His father was sad. This was one of Kageyama’s earliest thoughts and one that he still thought with frequency.

Instead of with his family, Kageyama instead ventured outside for companionship. In his neighborhood lived the two best friends Tooru Oikawa and Hajime Iwaizumi. Remembering back, Kageyama originally attended to approach Iwaizumi as he had remembered his father once commenting that Iwaizumi’s parents were a muggleborn wizard and a muggleborn witch like his mother. Once he had seen them, however, he was quickly pulled in also by Oikawa’s natural leadership and charm. Kageyama held both deep admiration and, at times, aching envy for
Oikawa’s talent to make friends amongst the neighborhood. Growing up, the two were his heroes.

He had tried initially to be best friends with the two. However, he quickly learned that there was no way to break into the small circle the two friends had created, especially not for someone two years younger. He settled for being their friend and, as Oikawa would sometimes laugh and say, their junior.

The two were some of the few that seemed to accept Kageyama’s presence. Iwaizumi even taught him how to play some spots. And, while his remarks could turn bitting if he felt Kageyama was encroaching on his friendship with Iwaizumi, Oikawa often gave Kageyama scattered advice and helped him with his homework.

His hero worship, Kageyama now thought he realized, had taken a downturn a couple of years ago. It was known that Iwaizumi would get his Hogwarts letter; but, nearly everyone was surprised that Oikawa received one, too! Kageyama watched without much bitterness as the two friends’ excitement about going to the same school. He even smiled at Oikawa’s passing comment that Kageyama “try to survive without them for a year” for which Iwaizumi quickly hit him in the back of the head. It only started to hurt Kageyama when Oikawa started progressing by leaps and bounds.

It wasn’t that Kageyama envied his hero’s success. Honest, he was glad that he was doing well, really.

It was just that, as Oikawa started to succeed, his father had started making wistful comments about his mother before looking at Kageyama. His mother had been the brightest witch of her age. And as news of Oikawa’s accomplishments stated to filter in, his father started morosely questioning why Kageyama couldn’t be more like his mother or Oikawa. Kageyama’s started to turn from admiring the boy to wondering what was wrong with Kageyama that he couldn’t be like him.

Oikawa must have sensed it. When he and Iwaizumi came home over the summer, their young mentee’s gloomy mood affected them all. I was bound to screw it up, thought Kageyama morosely.

Finally, Oikawa yelled at Kageyama asking him why he was so jealous of his friend’s success and openly questioned if it was because of Oikawa’s blood status. Startled, Kageyama was too ashamed to admit that it was due rather to his own inadequacies. After that, the friendship between Kageyama and Oikawa was fractured with Iwaizumi’s sadly following. Kageyama was left alone again.

But not anymore, Kageyama thought with determination. He had a plan. He was going to be sorted into Slytherin, try to repair his relationship with Oikawa, study hard, and become a wizard that his father could be proud of.

But how do you know you can get in? Asked an inner voice that sounded disturbingly like a chipper ginger that Kageyama had only met once.

Shut. Up. Kageyama told the voice firmly before realizing he was basically arguing with himself. He scowled.

“Well, if it isn’t the King scowling down on his subjects.” A voice interrupted.

Kageyama looked up.
Just great. It seemed like going to his neighborhood playground today--a weird moment of nostalgia before he left for the Hogwarts Express--had been a mistake. It appeared that two of the other neighborhood kids, Kunimi and Kindaichi, had also chosen to play here today. Kindaichi had apparently decided to take offense.

“What do you want?” Kageyama directed his scowl from his spot on the swing. “Why are you here?”

Kindaichi glared and was about to make another comment when Kunimi softly interrupted: “We’re sorry, Great King. We didn’t know us commoners had to request permission before coming to the neighborhood playground.”

Kindaichi laughed and Kageyama sighed, recognizing the futility in trying further. He got off of the seat and stomped off of the playground back to his house.

“It appears that the King is too good to hang out with his subjects.” he heard Kindaichi call behind him before they both laughed.

When I get to Hogwarts, Kageyama thought furiously, It’s going to be different.

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Watching Ms. Snuck’s car furiously screech away from the train station, Hinata stood and also mused about how different life would be. He was also fairly sure that when Mr. Takeda gave him directions for the Platform that the deputy headmaster had assumed that one of the orphanage workers would be accompanying him so as not to leave a ten year old alone in a train station. However, as Hinata’s day of departure grew closer and closer there was a kind of frantic excited energy about the orphanage workers. This might possibly have offended Hinata if he did not share their enthusiasm--albeit for different reasons.

Hinata walked into King’s Cross, absolutely thrilled to be on this new journey.

“Today’s the day we get to go to Hogwarts,” Hinata whispered to Karasuna who sat in her cage, eagerly jumping from foot to foot. She gave a short caw back echoing her excitement.

Hinata looked up quickly to catch the platform he had just passed. Platform 5, Only four more to go.

As Hinata ambled on and--at one point--barely escaped being crushed by his luggage.

Hogwarts is going to be the best, most coolest thing ever! He thought of the magic, of course, and--possibly more excitingly--all the new friends he could meet.

Though, Hinata thought disgruntledly, There is one person I could wait to see again.

Thinking back on his conversation with Kageyama, Hinata wondered how did they sort people anyway? When he had asked Takeda, the professor had winked and told him he’d have to wait to see. What if they made them take a test? What if they had to fight a monster--like a troll?! Worst of all, what if they looked at Hinata and said “Sorry, we’ve made a mistake. You can’t come to Hogwarts”. Then, Hinata would have his magic bound and his memory erased.
Hinata felt his stomach lurch painfully and he ran to the bathroom, his trolley rattling behind him.

In the bathroom, Hinata frantically tried to calm himself down. *It’s okay, you’re definitely a wizard. The wand worked and everything! And, if you’re a wizard, then you have to go to Hogwarts! So, there, I’m going to be sorted. I’m going to be an awesome, super cool, amazing wizard. And then I’m going to have tons of friends."

Feeling reassured, Hinata dragged his trolley out of the bathroom with his held high. But maybe not high enough as he immediately collided with someone on his way out.

“Ow!” he yelped, falling backwards.

“HEY!” blurted the person he’d ran into, also on the ground.

The two both looked up to apologize before screaming in unison: “IT’S YOU!”

“Ow, Dummy!” shot out Kageyama, standing up and rubbing his head. “I can’t believe you ran into me.”

“Ran into you?” Hinata said, waving his arms. “I was coming out of the bathroom, you ran into me!”

“Well, maybe if you were so short, I would have seen you!” retorted Kageyama.

“Well, maybe if you weren’t so dumb, I’d have seen you!” said Hinata, pointing at Kageyama, angrily.

“That doesn’t even make sense!”

“You don’t even make sense!”

“Just watch where you’re going!”

“I was going out of the bathroom. Watch where you’re going!”

Kageyama growled. “Well, maybe just avoid me altogether.”

“I’ll gladly ignore you.” Hinata glared. “Why don’t you ignore me, too.”

“FINE!” Kageyama shouted. “We’ll just ignore each other.”

“Works for me.” Hinata crossed his arms.

Suddenly, Karasuna cawed and motioned with her beak to the clock on the wall.

Hinata looked up and suddenly yelped. “GAH, we’re going to miss the train!” Hinata took off running with his trolley.

Kageyama, also appeared to have noticed the time, and started running alongside Hinata.

“You know,” Hinata panted, “We wouldn’t be late if you didn’t start arguing with me.”

Kageyama’s entire face turned red and it looked like steam was about to start coming out of his ears. “ME-YOU-GARGH! JUST KEEP RUNNING OR WE’LL MISS IT!”

Hinata skidded to a stop between Platforms 9 and 10. “How do we go through it.”
Kageyama scowled. “Just follow me.” he said and appeared to walk through the brick wall like he was transparent.

“Cool,” Hinata said quietly and followed the boy.

As the two got through, the train was already blowing the horn while the conductor made the last call.

“Wait! Wait!” cried Hinata. The two quickly packed up their suitcases with the help of the conductor’s levitation charm and then the boys stumbled aboard, briefly shoving each other to be first through the door.

“Great,” Kageyama said. “Now, all the compartments are going to be filled up.”

Hinata rolled his eyes. “We’ll just ask around until we find one. Lighten up, Kageyama. We’re going to Hogwarts!”

Kageyama continued to scowl, but reluctantly followed the ginger. The first four or so compartments were filled and the next two had scary looking older students that had Hinata stumbling into Kageyama in his haste to get away. Finally, the two found a compartment with only two boys who both looked to be around their age. The first was rater mousy looking with freckles covering his face and one piece of hair sticking straight up. The other one was reading a book and had black glasses, a bored expression, and seemed way too tall to be a first year.

“Hi!” Hinata said chipperly. “I’m Hinata, this is Kageyama. Do you mind if we sit with you?”

“Yes.” The blonde said flatly.

“Tsuki,” the mousy one cautioned before laughing nervously. “Go ahead, I’m sure the other compartments are almost full with the train about to leave.”

Hinata and Kageyama both nodded.

“I’m Tadashi Yamaguchi,” the mousy one continued. “This is Kei Tsukishima, we’re both first years.”

“That’s so cool!” Hinata said, taking the seat next to Yamaguchi. “So are we!”

“Yes, I can tell by your stature.” Tsukishima drawled.

“Stature? Do you mean stature?” Hinata asked, confused.

Tsukishima sighed. “Stature means your build.” He spoke with considered slowness. “You’re. Short.”

“HEY!” Hinata yelped. “Just because you’re like...like...like something that’s really, really tall, doesn’t mean the rest of us are short.” He crossed his arms and said quietly almost to himself. “Besides, I’m still growing.”

Kageyama continued to glare through the exchange. Yamaguchi started to look worriedly between the three. “S-so, what Houses do you think you’ll be in?”

“Slytherin.” Kageyama said instantly.

“He doesn’t really know that.” Hinata whispered conspiratorially to Yamaguchi. Kageyama altered his general glare to one focused on Hinata.
“I’m not really sure what House I’ll be in,” said Hinata, who had apparently moved on from his tiff with Tsukishima back to his bubbly sunny usual mood. “I like all the Houses, though I’m not sure about Ravenclaw. That sounds like it would involve a lot of tests or reading.”

Tsukishima rolled his eyes before going back to his book.

Yamaguchi stepped in before things could get tense. “I’m not really sure what House I’ll be in. Slytherin sounds kinda scary.” Kageyama glared here causing Yamaguchi to yelp and Tsukishima to glare back. “I think Hufflepuff would be nice. Ravenclaw does sound like a lot of reading but it would be cool if people thought I was smart. Gryffindor sounds really amazing but I know I’m not brave enough to be in there.”

“I’m sure you are!” said Hinata excitedly. “Gryffindor is all about being daring and besides you just stood up to Tsukishima a second ago and you’re hanging in through Kageyama’s glare.”

Yamaguchi noticed that indeed Kageyama was still glaring at him and paled slightly.

“What about you?” Hinata directed the question to the still reading Tsukishima.

“I don’t particularly care,” said Tsukishima not looking up from his book. “People think Slytherins are evil, Ravenclaws are boring, Gryffindors are reckless, and Hufflepuffs are stupid. Any way you go, there’s a negative.”

“Well…” Hinata trailed off, slightly thrown. “Maybe, but how can you just not care? Besides, it doesn’t matter what people think if what they think isn’t true. Just be what you think the House is.”

Tsukishima shot Hinata a look like he was disparaging Hinata’s intelligence but ultimately chose to remain silent.

All of the sudden, a fast knocking came from the door. Being the closest, Hinata opened it to see a short, blonde, and panicking girl.

“Sorry! Sorry! I interrupted your group! It’s just--do you mind if I sit with you?” The girl said quickly while her eyes darted to one way and the other.

“Sure!” Hinata agreed instantly and moved closer to Yamaguchi, allowing the girl more room.

“Er-are you okay?” Yamaguchi asked. “You seem to be slightly nervous.”

“Oh,” the girl sagged a bit. “Well, I was running late to the train. I kept thinking I had forgotten something while packing so unpacking and repacking my suitcase to check. But, then what if I forgot something when repacking it? So, I was late for the train and the only seat left was by a bunch of older students. So, I sat there but then everyone was silent and I started thinking ‘Oh, no, what if they hate first years. What if they’re going to use me in some terrible blood sacrifice.’ So, I kept trying to quickly get up and then one asked me if I needed help finding the bathroom. And, then I panicked and started running and this was the first compartment I checked on.” The girl was breathing rather heavily by the end of her speech.

“Oh,” said Yamaguchi for lack of anything else. “Okay?”

“That sounds so scary!” broke in Hinata animatedly. “I’m Hinata!”

The girl nodded relieved that someone seemed to understand. “I’m Hitoka Yachi.”

“Tadashi Yamaguchi,” Yamaguchi said, falling into the routine. The other two quickly introduces
themselves before returning to their individual brooding.

“We’re all first years” informed Hinata.

“Oh, really?” Yachi looked excited. “So am I.”

“What House do you want to be in?” Hinata asked. “We were all just talking about it. Kageyama wants to be in Slytherin. Tsukishima says he doesn’t care. Yamaguchi and I think all of them sound cool.”

“I guess I want to be in Ravenclaw or Hufflepuff,” explained Yachi. “Gryffindor and Slytherin just sound too scary.”

Yamaguchi nodded feverently in understanding.

The five sat and talked--or rather three of the five sat and talked while the other two sat silently--until the candy trolley came around.

Hinata, while not buying anything, looked excitedly at the others’ small purchases.

“I got another Morgana,” said Tsukishima, quickly catching and biting into his chocolate frog while Hinata let out a small “eep”.

“Hmm,” said Kageyama, grimacing after biting into an earthworm Bertie Botts. “My father used to collect those. I grew up in a muggle neighborhood, never saw the point in starting to collect.”

“Tsuki has collected over a hundred,” Yamaguchi commented.

“Shut up, Yamaguchi.” Tsukishima said without much bite.

“Sorry, Tsuki,” Yamaguchi recited as though finishing a refrain.

“We have to be almost to Hogwarts,” remarked Yachi, leaning over to look out the window. “I’m going to go change into my robe.”

“That’s a good idea,” agreed Yamaguchi, grabbing his robe. The two left for the separate changing stalls.

“So,” Hinata asked Tsukishima, “how long have you known Yamaguchi.”

Tsukishima sighed as if put upon. “Our family’s estates are next to each other. We both grew up having to attend the same political functions.”

“Ugh,” Hinata scrunched up his face. “That sounds super boring.”

“Quite,” Tsukishima agreed, grabbing his robes and heading out in the same way Yamaguchi went.

Kageyama and Hinata waited until the rest of the group was back before changing into their robes, barely making it back to the compartment before the train stopped.

The students were ushered out of the train with the first years being pulled into a separate group than the rest. Hinata looked around at the rest of the first years, noting that some of his classmates already seemed to know each other.

“Hi!” said a voice from behind Hinata. Hinata turned around and looked up...and kept looking up
to an incredibly tall boy with grey hair and green eyes.

“I’m Lev Haiba, but you can call me Lev” he greeted, sticking out his hand. “I’m a first year.”

“I’m Shouyou Hinata,” Hinata said, shaking his hand enthusiastically. “I am, too!”

“That’s awesome,” Lev grinned. “My parents are both from Russia and went to Durmstrang like my sister is. So, I’m the first in my family who gets to go to Hogwarts!”

“Whoa! That’s so cool! I don’t know anything about Russia’s wizards.”

“Well,” Lev leaned down, “apparently at Durmstrang, my sister told me that they had all the first years fight bears.”

Hinata looked distinctly terrified.

“It’s okay, though,” Lev reassured, “I’m going to be the greatest wizard ever! So, I can use my magic to fight the bears.”

Hinata was not all that reassured by this.

“Alright, First Years,” an incoming voice bellowed, interrupting Lev and Hinata’s conversation. A blonde haired man who looked to be in his early thirties motioned for all of the first years to follow him. “My name is Yuusuke Takinoue, I’m the Keeper of the Ground and Keys at Hogwarts and the Professor for Care of Magical Creatures. If you all will follow me to the Great Lake, we can get you to Deputy Headmaster Takeda for sorting.”

All of the first years followed him to small boats, magically enchanted to start sailing towards the castle once the a group of students entered them.

Hinata, after entering with Lev, Tsukishima, and Yamaguchi, looked up in amazement at his first view of Hogwarts. The sprawling castle looked as if it was glowing set against the dark night sky. The boats lanterns all formed a disconnected line that, over the reflective lake, made the boats appear to be floating. For the first time in his life, Hinata felt like he was home.

Takinoue was joined by Takeda as they urged the students out of the boats and into a hall.

“Alright,” Takeda began, smiling briefly when he noticed Hinata standing up front. “I’m going to call you in alphabetical order where you’ll follow me into the Great Hall for sorting.”

The students, including surprisingly Tsukishima, looked apprehensive.

Takeda continued to smile before walking through the closed door to the adjacent hall. “First off,” his voice was magnified to be heard in the adjacent hall, “Jingo Fukiage”

A boy with short cropped brown hair and a serious face followed Takeda. In the hall with the fellow first years, it was so silent that you could hear a quill drop.

Suddenly a booming voice shouted “RAVENCLAW”

If anything, the students looked more scared. There was no sound indication of what they would face. Hinata looked over to see that even Lev looked slightly worried.

A few other names were called before Takeda announced “Lev Haiba”

Lev shot Hinata a quick grin before following the Deputy Headmaster.
There were a few seconds of silence before “SLYTHERIN”. Hinata looked over to see Kageyama looking a mix of envious and nervous.

Hinata barely had a second before Takeda called out “Shouyou Hinata”. Fighting his rebelling stomach, Hinata nervously trailed after Takeda.

Walking into the Great Hall, Hinata saw that one side of the room had a raised table filled with what Hinata assumed were the teachers. Taking up the rest of the hall were four giant tables filled with students. Above the tables, each had a banner in yellow, blue, green, and red each with a House crest on them. However, what most confused Hinata was in the center of the room sat a stool with an old battered hat on it.

Takeda was motioning him to the stool and the hat. Nervously, Hinata sat on the stool while Takeda slipped the hat over his head.

_Hmph_ Hinata heard suddenly in his head _Interesting_.

_Who is that?_ Hinata thought.

_Hush, boy, I am the Sorting Hat. I go through your mind to see which House will do you best._

Hinata didn’t think that this was exactly comforting. He hoped the hat didn’t see anything embarrassing.

_Concerned about your reputation, eh, boy, the Hat commented. Maybe, you should be a Slytherin...Not much of a planner but a good bit of ambition. Friendly, that’s for sure. Plenty of bravery, I can tell that. Not Ravenclaw, I don’t think, a unique perspective but that’s not your goal._

_I’m okay with any of the Houses, thought Hinata. Just find me somewhere I can make friends._

_I think I have, commented the Hat. But before you go, boy, I feel I should give you a piece of advice. If ever you’re in doubt, look towards your past but focus on our future. Your very nature will keep your friends close, but your enemies may be closer than you think._

_Thank you_, Hinata thought, puzzling through the words.

He had barely finished thinking it before “HUFFLEPUFF”.

Hinata beamed as the hat was lifted off of his head and he headed for the leftmost table. When, he got there, he heard a booming voice exclaim “HEY, HEY!” before he was lifted into the air by strong arms. After he was sat back on the ground, he looked up to a large grinning face and the strangest hair that he had ever seen.

“Welcome to Hufflepuff!” said the teen, puffing out his chest. “I’m Kotaro Bokuto, I’m a third year here and, if you need any help, just ask me.” He finished by shaking Hinata’s hand enthusiastically with a giant grin that Hinata answered immediately.

“Bokuto,” commented a serene looking teen with a blue tie at the adjacent table. “Remember, that not every first year will react as well to being picked up upon meeting.”

“Right, right,” Bokuto said, waving the concerns away. “That’s Akaashi. He’s a Ravenclaw; but, if you ever need help with studying, he’s the one to ask.”

“Only because he helped you through Charm despite being a year younger,” commented someone good naturedly a few seats down from Akaashi. The new teen looked as though he had not brushed
his hair in months and, possibly, years.

Bokuto stuck his tongue out briefly before turning back to Hinata. “That’s Kuroo, he’s a Ravenclaw even though everyone who knows him thinks he should have been Slytherin.”

“I’m multi-talented,” commented Kuroo, smirking.

“After sorting, I’ll introduce you to the rest of the House,” Bukotó assured Hinata, before turning back to clap as a first year named Inuoka was sorted into Hufflepuff. Inuoka smiled at Hinata and dropped into the seat next to him after receiving a slightly more restrained greeting from Bokuto.

Hinata looked up as Takeda called out “Tobio Kageyama”

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Kageyama was not nervous. He was not nervous. He was absolutely 100% NOT nervous. After all, what was there to be nervous about? Ambition? He had that. Cunning? He could get by. He would get into Slytherin and that was all there is to it.

He hadn’t mentioned it to Hinata earlier, but Oikawa and Iwaizumi had let it slip over their first summer how they had gotten sorted. Iwaizumi had even mentioned that the hat had almost immediately sorted him into Gryffindor.

Kageyama sat on the stool and waited for Deputy Headmaster Takeda to drop the hat on his head. Such conviction. Kageyama nearly jumped when he heard the hat’s voice in his head.

But what exactly do you want, boy?

I want to be in Slytherin, though Kageyama furiously.

So, I see. But just why do you want to be in the House of Snakes? Ambition is more than just having a goal, you know.

I have to be in Slytherin. Kageyama thought edging towards desperate. It’s the only way I can be like Oikawa and for my father to accept me.

Well, you certainly have a Slytherin’s determiness. Not a good mind even if singularly focused. But your goals? Loyalty. Acceptance. Repairing friendship. Not to mention the work ethic. You’ll thank be in the long term, boy. But it will have to be “HUFFLEPUFF!”

Kageyama felt cold as the hat was removed from his head and he was ushered to the left. He looked up as he walked and briefly saw Iwaizumi clapping for him at the Gryffindor table and Oikawa looking curious in Slytherin. He quickly looked away. He’d messed up. He’d thought the wrong things. He had ended up in the wrong House and there was no way to fix it. All his goals destroyed with one word.

And it got worse, too. He looked up to see Hinata grinning at him from the table.

“Kageyama!” Hinata cried happily. “See I told you! Now, you can be in the House you belong rather than just following someone else.”
Kageyama very badly wanted to punch him. Instead he sat and turned pointedly back towards the sorting, giving a clear message of “Leave Me Alone” that even Hinata followed.

He didn’t know how long he sat there silently contemplating before he heard Tsukishima’s name called. He watched as Tsukishima sat on the stool under the hat. The hat barely touched his head before “SLYTHERIN”.

Of course, the student that didn’t even care what House he was in got the House that Kageyama desperately wanted. That was just typical for Kageyama by now. He looked over to see Hinata clapping politely.

The next name Kageyama recognized was Yamaguchi. The timid boy slowly approached the hat before placing it on his head. The hat seemed to deliberate for some time before “GRYFFINDOR”.

Kageyama had to admit that he had not seen that one coming. Neither, apparently had Yamaguchi as he walked in a seeming daze to his new House.

Yachi was the last student called and she seemed to dart to the stool as if she expected something to be chasing her. Curiously, the hat was barely on her head before shouting out “GRYFFINDOR”. Yachi seemed to pale before making her way over to sit by Yamaguchi.

After the last cheering died out, Deputy Headmaster Takeda announced “Before we eat, we’ll have a few words from Headmaster Ikkei Ukai.

An elder man with short cropped grey hair and minimalist black robes stood up at the center of the staff table. “Welcome, students, to another year at Hogwarts. Once again, I leave you with the brief reminder that both in dark times and light times, a Hogwarts student never lets one stand alone.” He paused to let this sink in before continuing. “Now, I’d like to remind you that with the exception of Care of Magical Creatures class, the Forbidden Forest remains off limits for any student who does not want to die a foolhardy and pointless death. Also, I’m pleased to announce our new Defense Against the Dark Arts and Duelling professor, Mr. Sora Takara.” A bulky strong looking man with light blonde hair stood up at the left side of the table. “As that is all, feel free to begin.”

The students all around Kageyama began reaching for the food that had just appeared. Kageyama grabbed a few things but mainly moved them around his plate rather than eating. Hinata was talking animatedly to an older student with grey and black streaked vertical hair while two other first years watched on eagerly. Kageyama sighed.

“Are you alright, son?” called a soft voice to Kageyama’s side. Kageyama looked over and then looked through the speaker.

“I’m the Fat Friar, the Hufflepuff House ghost,” the elder kind looking man explained, hovering next to Kageyama in what looked like old monk robes.

“I’m fine,” Kageyama muttered, feeling guilty about complaining with his problems to a ghost who had obviously been through more than him.

“You know,” the ghost commented, “It’s okay to be sad about not getting what you want.”

Kageyama looked up. Had he been that obvious? No wonder he didn’t get into Slytherin.

“But,” the ghost continued. “Take it from someone who’s dead. Dwell on the past too long and you forget about the present. Try to enjoy your first night in the castle, son. It’s a wonderful experience.”
The Fat Friar smiled at Kageyama before introducing himself to the rest of the first years. Kageyama almost smiled as Hinata gasped so hard he fell over the other side of the bench.

He didn’t know quite what to think of the Fat Friar’s words. He still would rather be in Slytherin with Oikawa. Also, he still had to reevaluate all of his plans. But maybe... maybe...there might be one or two good things in Hufflepuff. After all, a small forgotten part of Kageyama’s mind mused, no one’s ever called me “son” before.

Chapter End Notes

So, there's the Sorting. I'm not going to change any of the character's Houses, but I'd love to know all of y'all's opinions on what House you think characters relate to. As is probably assumed, I'm a big Harry Potter and HQ!!! nerd so love to talk about both subjects.

As always, kudos and comments are appreciated. Next chapter is being edited and should be up Friday.
First Nights, First Days, and First Meetings

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Yamaguchi was pretty sure there had been a mistake. A boy, slightly smaller than Yamaguchi, gave a loud “WOOOT” and started sprinting up the common room stairs pursued by a boy with a buzzcut.

No, scratch that. Yamaguchi was definitely sure there had been a mistake.

“Noya! Tanaka! Stop that,” called out a third year, who had earlier introduced himself as Daichi. Daichi sighed before turning to Yamaguchi and offering a sheepish smile. “Sorry, about that. They’re just excited to be back.”

Yamaguchi tried to look understanding rather than terrified. It was a hard task. It was possible that the only person who might be more scared than him right now was Yachi. The nervous girl looked as if she was on the verge of a heart attack every second that Yamaguchi saw her before she was herded to the girls dorm by the Gryffindor prefect.

“Um,” Dachi said, rubbing his hand on the back of his neck, “Look, I know that I’m not a prefect or anything. But, if you ever have any problems...just, you can come to me and I’ll help you out.”

Yamaguchi gave a small smile as the two boys from earlier ran back downstairs followed sedately by a boy around the same age with short brown hair and a calm demeanor.

“DAICHI!” The shorter boy yelled. “The elves found our candy stash. They cleaned us out.”

“All that candy!” The buzz cut boy moaned, “Basically, a perfect mountain of sweets.”

Daichi wasn’t as distraught as he crossed his arms and looked down at the two. “Why did you even keep a pile of candy here over the summer anyway. You’re going to get bugs or mold.” He looked over at the calm boy who followed and asked in a slightly less aggrieved voice, “Ennoshita, I expect it from these two; but, why would you let them?”

Ennoshita shrugged. “I figured it was either this or risking them sneaking out to the kitchens.” He paused. “Besides, I knew the elves would take care of it once we left for summer.”

“Traitor,” the buzzcut boy muttered under his breath

“But, Dachi, Enoshita’s right. Now, we have to go raid the kitchens.” said the short boy. He looked up with pleading eyes. “Do you want us to starve?”

“Noya, I highly doubt you or Tanaka will starve in the few hours we have between opening feast and bed.” Daichi said, looking like he was already getting a headache.

“Especially given the amount you ate at the feast,” absently commented the boy, who Yamaguchi assumed was Tanaka.

“But, I need that food for-” Noya stopped suddenly and appeared to think for a second. “For my new spell ROLLING THUNDER!” He turned quickly to one of the chairs next to him, pulled out his wand, and did a quick circular motion and a short jab. The chair exploded into a pile of cotton and colorful fabric drifting through the air.
Daichi’s shout of “NOYA” drowned out the screams of both Yamaguchi and what looked to be a panicked seventh year. Tanaka and Noya quickly ran upstairs rather than facing Daichi.

Daichi turned back and sighed deeply. “Asahi, it’s okay the explosions should be over for tonight.”

The panicked seventh year emerged from behind a nearby couch, slightly abashed. “Um, sorry about that, Daichi.” he then seemed to notice Yamaguchi. “H-hi, I’m Asahi Azumane, I’m a third year. I’m p-probably not as helpful as Daichi, but if you need anything…” he trailed off.

Daichi came over to slap him on the back. “Asahi’s a good guy even though he normally has the disposition of a frightened puffskein.”

Daichi ignored Asahi’s murmur of “you don’t have to say it like that” before turning to look at Ennoshita.

“Where’s Obara? Shouldn’t he have been back to the common room by now?” Daichi asked.

Ennoshita shook his head. “He’s out with Dragon Pox. According to his owl, he’ll probably be out all year or risk infecting the whole House.”

Daichi winced. “So, it’s just you with Tanaka and Noya.”

Ennoshita nodded grimly. “I’ll corral them as best I can.”

“Do what you can,” Daichi agreed before turning towards Yamaguchi. “Want me to show you to your dorm? I think I saw some of the other first years follow Iwaizumi up.”

Yamaguchi nodded, not seeing any other options. Some of the other Gryffindor’s looked scary and Yamaguchi really was not sure how he would survive the next seven years. At least, Daichi and Asahi seemed nice enough.

Daichi led him upstairs to the first door on his right. “Alright, I’ll leave you to meet your new roommates. Nice to have you in the House, Yamaguchi!”

Yamaguchi swallowed nervously and headed inside.

“Hi!” an excited and extremely tall boy bounded up to Yamaguchi. He kind of reminded Yamaguchi of Hinata if Hinata had an extra foot...or maybe two. “You must be our last roommate. I’m Kanji Koganegawa! I took the bed by the window, I hope you don’t mind.”

“A-ah, no, that’s fine with me,” responded Yamaguchi, not wanting to get on the wrong foot.

“I’m Tsuyoshi Matsushima,” another boy with light brown hair came up and waved briefly at Yamaguchi.

“Hello,” said the last boy, who seemed slightly shy like Yamaguchi. “Aoi Himekawa”

“Tadashi Yamaguchi,” he introduced himself.

“You were that guy who was with that blonde scowling guy earlier, right?” asked Matsushima.

“Yeah,” Yamaguchi brightened. “That’s Tsukishima. He got sorted into Slytherin.”

“Oh man, tough break,” winced Matsushima.

“What do you mean?” asked Yamaguchi, furrowing his brow.
“Well, it’s just, you know…” Matsushima trailed off.

“Yeah,” Koganegawa continued, “My dad alway said that Gryffindors and Slytherins are the biggest rivals. If your friend’s in Slytherin, well…”

There was an awkward pause.

“It might not still be like that though,” Himekawa put in softly, obviously attempting to reassure Yamaguchi.

“Y-yeah,” Yamaguchi said both for himself and the group. “Tsuki and I have been best friends forever. We won’t stop being friends because of some kind of House rivalry.”

Himekawa smiled even if Matsushima and Koganegawa didn’t look convinced.

“Whatever you say, man,” Matsushima subsided.

Conversation dropped off and Yamaguchi headed to his bed. He found his suitcase had already been brought by the house elves and occupied his mind with that. This is stupid, Yamaguchi thought before going to bed. I’ll talk to him tomorrow. Tsuki doesn’t even care about Houses, it’s not like he’s going to leave me for being a Gryffindor.

Yamaguchi feel into a fitful sleep.

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Hinata had slept fantastically. The Hufflepuff dormitories were all split into rooms for five and--while Hinata still had to room with yucky Kageyama--his other roommates Inuoka, Shibayama, and Sakunami seemed really awesome. Also, this was by far the nicest bedroom that Hinata had ever seen, let alone slept in.

There were five canopy beds each with yellow and black bedding. Covering almost the entire castle floor was a super soft woven rug that the first years had gathered on to talk until late into the night. In one corner of the room, there was a super cool looking fireplace with what looked like running badgers engraved on the sides. Inuoka and Sakunami had already placed some of their family photos they had brought on the fireplace mantel--Hinata was still not used to the fact that the pictures would move and visit other frames. In the morning, he noticed the windows were angled to let in warm morning light that made the room glow.

Best of all, Hinata thought happily, Bokuto told me that the Hufflepuff rooms are right next to the kitchens! Hinata tore into his breakfast scone while he daydreamed about all the late night snack runs he could go on.

“Oi, Dummy,” a peeved voice to his side commented, “stop getting crumbs on my schedule.”

Broken from his fantasy, Hinata looked toward Kageyama. The boy had been quiet for most of last night, briefly introducing himself to the rest before heading to bed. In a way, Hinata understood why Kageyama was upset. It was obvious that Kageyama really, really, really had wanted to be in Slytherin. Still, Hinata thought, the hat wouldn’t have put him in Hufflepuff if it was the wrong decision.

Hinata just hoped Kageyama would see that soon. After all, if you can’t believe in a magical enchanted old hat, who can you believe?

“What does it matter if crumbs get on your schedule?” Hinata asked through a mouth full of scone.
“You have the same classes as the rest of the House’s first years. You can just follow us!”

Kageyama continued to frown but didn’t dispute the point.

“What class are you most excited for, Hinata?” Inuoka asked from across the table. “Mine’s definitely Defense Against the Dark Arts. My dad told me the new teacher’s incredible!”

The Hufflepuff first years had Potions, Transfiguration, and Defense Against the Dark Arts today with Charms, Herbology, History of Magic, and the first Quidditch lesson tomorrow.

“Definitely Quidditch,” said Hinata eagerly. Once he heard that there was an entire magical sport, Hinata had immediately wanted to try it. Besides, according to Sakunami, the players got to fly!

“Quidditch sounds fun,” commented Runa Kuribayashi, a first year Hufflepuff girl. “I think I’m most excited about Transfiguration, though. It will be really nice to be in our Head of House’s class.”

Another thing that Hinata loved about Hufflepuff: Takeda was his Head of House!

“I’m looking forward to Potions,” Kageyama commented quietly, looking down at his food. “It was my mother’s best subject.”

“That’s awesome, Kageyama!” Hinata interjected, happy to see Kageyama coming out of his shell.

“Yeah,” Sakunami commented from further down the table. “But, I hear that the professor is super intense.”

“Matsuuuu,” singsonged an incoming voice followed by a slightly older boy with light red brown cropped hair and a sleepy looking boy with messy black. Both boys wore Slytherin ties. “Do I hear some of the first years talking about our darling Head of House?”

“Maki, my friend, I do believe you do,” commented the messy black haired boy that had to be Matsu. The two took a couple of empty seats amongst the Hufflepuff first years.

“What’s he like?” Hinata asked them eagerly.

The two looked at each other before smiling. Hinata missed the mischievous edge.

“Weelllllll,” Maki began. “He’s alright if you show the proper respect.”

“Yeah,” agreed Matsu. “You always have to bow before speaking to him. If you don’t bow low enough, he sends out a stinging hex.”

Hinata’s eyes widened.

“And, of course, you can never meet his eyes.” Maki continued.

“Oh, no,” agreed Matsu shaking his head. “One first year did that last year and I hear he used him as potion ingredients.”

“He also prefers to be addressed as His Majesty,” added Maki.

“Or My Liege.”

“But, most of all…” here both Maki and Matsu leaned down dramatically as Maki continued. “Everytime you enter his classroom, you have to recite the Hogwarts school song.”
“Quite right,” Matsu nodded. “He’s a stickler for school spirit.”

“BUT I DON’T KNOW THE SCHOOL SONG” Hinata close to wailed.

“Better learn it quick!” advised Matsu.

“It’s an immediate detention if not,” Maki nodded.

“MATSUKAWA! HANAMAKI! STOP MESSING WITH THE FIRST YEARS!” A booming voice called out.

“Well, we simply must go,” said Matsu, dragging Maki from the table.

“Remember, our advice!” threw in Maki as the two ran out of the hall. An older boy with spiky black hair followed after them but stopped at the Hufflepuff table when he realized they were too far ahead.

“Rotten pranksters.” muttered the boy, glaring. “Sorry, about that. You can just ignore everything they told you. Those two have made it a habit to prank the most first years today, no house excluded.”

“You mean I don’t have to know the entire school song?” Hinata asked relieved.

“Is that what they’re telling them?” the boy asked. “No, no one ever bothers to learn the school song until at least fourth year.”

The boy faced the rest of the table and Hinata noticed his Gryffindor tie.

“By the way, I’m Hajime Iwaizumi, third year Gryffindor,” the boy introduced, rubbing the back of his head as if he didn’t quite know what to do when confronted with a gaggle of first years from another House.

He paused in rubbing his head to look down at Kageyama. He quirked a smile. “Nice to see you again, Kageyama. Congrats on your sorting! Hufflepuff’s a great House.”

Kageyama looked slightly torn, before nodding.

“Look,” said Iwaizumi looking at Kageyama in the slightly awkward silence that followed. “I’ve got to go to class, but... if you want to catch up later, you know where to find me.”

Iwaizumi gave a farewell nod before heading back over to the Gryffindor table.

“That’s so cool that you know one of the third years!” commented Inuoka with a grin. “You’ll probably be one of the coolest in our class.”

“And speaking about class,” Sakunami remarked, looking at his watch. “He was right that we’re going to be late if we don’t hurry.”

The first year Hufflepuffs quickly packed up their stuff and headed to their first class: Transfiguration. Barely catching a few of the moving staircases, the troupe arrived just before Takeda introduced the start of the lesson.

“Hello, class,” Takeda greeted warmly. Hinata spotted Yachi in the front corner and scooted in to sit next to her. Based on a lack of available seats, Kageyama followed and sat next to the two.

“Today’s class will mainly be theoretical since we’re all just getting started, but later I might have
“Alright, class, I’m going to split you into groups of three and each give you a feather. I want you to try to change it into a quill. I’ll award points to whoever completes it first. Remember the spell and try to imagine the feather transforming to have a tip.”

He waved his wand to levitate a feather to each group. Hinata ended up in a group with both Kageyama and Yachi.

“I’ll try first,” said Yachi nervously. She executed the proper wand movements slightly stumbling through the spells pronunciation. Nothing seemed to happen.

“You said it wrong,” Kageyama commented, frowning.

“S-sorry,” Yachi squeaked.

“No, it’s just-” Kageyama broke off, looking frustrated. He angrily waved his wand with the movements Takeda showed them earlier and intoned the spell. The feather remained unchanged.

It was Hinata’s turn. Hinata scrunched his eyes shut and imagined really hard a perfect quill like the ones he and Takeda saw in Diagon Alley. He opened his eyes and breathed out, focusing. He tried to mimic the wand movements from earlier as he recited the spell. He thought he felt his magic in a rush with an answering call. The feather immediately turned a deep emerald color with its tip elongated to a sharp point. Hinata thought he might’ve even seen ink drip from the top.

“Excellent, Hinata. A beautiful transformation. Five points to each of you.” Takeda beamed, picking up the quill. Hinata looked up to see Yachi smiling encouragingly and Kageyama frowning slightly.

“I want you all to practice this spell before next class. Anyone who can perform it by next class will receive two House points.”

Takeda dismissed them and Kageyama and Yachi followed Hinata out.

“That was amazing, Hinata!” Yachi enthused.

“How did you get it to transform so fast?” demanded Kageyama.

“I don’t know.” Hinata shrugged. “I just focused really hard and it was like swooom a quill was there.”

Kageyama’s eyebrows furrowed but he didn’t press further.

“I’ve got to go to the Gryffindor and Ravenclaw Quidditch lessons,” Yachi told them, her eyes taking on a slightly panicked edge. “I’ll see you in Defense later today. I mean, unless I get hit by a Bludger and knocked unconscious, or my broom flies off and I get lost in the Forbidden Forest, or I hit into one of the castle walls, or…” she walked away, continuing to mutter dire predictions.

Kageyama and Hinata met up with the rest of the Hufflepuff first years who had waited for them and the group began their trek down to the dungeons for their first Potions lesson.

When they made it to the classroom, Hinata saw the teacher and immediately had to fight the urge to bow while singing the virtues of Hogwarts. Professor Irihata exuded an immediately
intimidating aura. Even to students at the back of the room, the professor’s eyes seemed shrewd and calculating, making it no wonder on why he was the Head to the House of Snakes.

“Students,” Professor Irihata called out with an authoritative air. “Quickly find your seats.” Hinata saw that Lev was already at a table and hurried to sit next to him.

“The art of potions is not an easily mastered skill,” Irihata began once everyone was seated. “It will require your intense focus and time both in the classroom and studying outside of it. At an advanced level, mistakes can be quickly dangerous and often deadly. For both yours and your fellow classmates’ safety, follow my directions. Any student improvising without permission, or worse intentionally interfering with another students potion, will have an immediate detention and loss of House points.”

All of the students, both Hufflepuff and Slytherin, listened to his words with rapt attention.

“Rather than immediately starting you on brewing, this class will focus on safety and prior knowledge so I can assess your skills.” Irihata waved his wand and question sheets were distributed to the students.

“Remember,” Irihata cautioned, his face taking on an even more severe edge, “It is not, by itself, foolish to be ignorant of material. What is foolish is to not ask for help at the cost of yours and others’ safety. I urge you to answer all of the questions truthfully.”

Hinata looked down at the sheet and, despite Irihata’s words, felt an immediate dropping in his stomach as he failed to recognize any of the terms. Morosely, he indicated the responses labeled “Needing Further Instruction” under almost all of the sections.

After collecting the sheets, Irihata spent the rest of the class lecturing on safety concerns and precautions that all of the students were expected to follow. By the time class was dismissed, Hinata felt like his brain was buzzing with new information.

Hinata waved a farewell to Lev and joined the other Hufflepuffs first years on their journey up to the third floor for their final class--Defense Against the Dark Arts. Inuoka was practically skipping in excitement. His enthusiasm proved contagious and soon most of the other first years were talking about how excited they were for the class, the seriousness of the Potions’ classroom pushed to the back of their minds.

When they got to the classroom after their long walk from the dungeon, they were greeted with a sunny open class filled with diagrams and models. Hinata spotted that Yachi had, once again, already arrived and went to ask her about Quidditch lessons.

“Hey!” said Hinata cheerily. “See, I knew you would survive.”

Yachi looked up and smiled before her eyes widened. “Hinata, I was so scared. I could hardly get my broom up and I just kind of hovered there for awhile. And, oh, it was terrible! Yamaguchi lost control of his broom and broke his arm! He had to be sent to the infirmary.”

“That’s awful,” Hinata agreed. “Will he be alright?”

Yachi nodded. “Professor Oiwake said it would be a quick mend and he’d be patched up by dinner. But, Hinata, it was so scary! I don’t know how I’m going to go to the next Quidditch lesson! Poor Yamaguchi!”

Hinata nodded feverently. He didn’t know how much he should be looking forward to Quidditch if he was going to break his arm!
The teacher suddenly walked into the classroom, cutting off the chatter. The professor was rather tall and had a bulky look that showed he was clearly in shape. His hair was a slightly ruffled light blonde and a wide smile cut across his face.

“Welcome, First Years!” He announced, striding to the front of the room. “As Headmaster Ukai mentioned at the feast, I’m the new Defense Against the Dark Arts professor, Sora Takara. But you can just call me Professor Sora.”

He paused and looked around at the students sitting eagerly in their desks. He shook his head. “Well, we can’t have a defense class like this. Everyone, push your desks to the side of the room and get into a circle.”

The class excitedly rushed to comply. This is so cool, thought Hinata animatedly.

“Alright, so today, we’re going to start with one of the basic charms Lumos,” he looked around as some of the kids more familiar with the Wizarding World failed to be impressed. “Hey, now, Lumos is one of the most important spells to know. I remember this one time in Africa, some colleagues and I were exploring an enchanted lost cave when suddenly one of us must have tipped a trap. BAM! A huge rock wall covered up the entrance knocking out our only source of light. You can bet I was happy to know Lumos then.”

The students looked suitably impressed and boarded on amazed. Professor Sora then proceeded to show them the wand movement. When everyone seemed to have the wand movement down, he nodded firmly.

“Excellent! Now that everyone’s got the movements, let’s try the spell in its entirety.” He looked down at his class roster. “Hitoka Yachi? I went to school with your mum and aunt! Why don’t you go first, alright?”

Yachi, seemed vaguely terrified, but nodded. She took a deep breath and traced the wand movements. Like in Transfiguration, she stuttered through the spell and nothing happened. Hinata thought he heard a couple of students laugh under their breath and looked around to glare at them.

“Hey, that was a really great try,” Professor Sora commented. “Your wand movements are perfect. Why don’t you take a breath and try again, okay?”

Yachi nodded and looked slightly comforted. She took a breath and raised her wand. This time Yachi was able to recite the spell in a small but determined voice. Her wand immediately lit up to Yachi’s surprised face.

“Wonderful,” beamed Professor Sora. “Now, let’s go around the circle and have everyone try. Let’s go with Koganegawa…”

The class went methodically around the circle with Professor Sora calling out the next student to try. When Professor Sora got to Hinata’s name, slightly stumbling over the unfamiliarity, Hinata followed his instructions to Yachi and took a deep breath. He imagined his magic flowing through his wand and repeated the spell in a strong intent voice. Hinata’s wand instantly glowed with a bright warm light.

“Good job, Hinata!” congratulated Inuoka as Professor Sora moved on to the next student.

“Thanks,” Hinata smiled back. “You, too.”

Hinata watched Professor Sora go around the room, congratulating students as they got it right.
This has to be the greatest class ever!

---

“I’m telling you, Iwa-chan, Defense Against the Dark Arts is the worst class ever,” commented Tooru Oikawa morosely over dinner.

“You’re exaggerating,” replied Iwaizumi, who’s Gryffindor presence had long been accepted amongst the Slytherin third years.

“No, I’m not.” whined Oikawa before leaning down in a conspiratorial manner “and I’m pretty sure the teacher hates me.”

“You’re just jealous because you heard some of the Ravenclaw girls talking about how cute he was” responded Iwaizumi, unconvinced.

“Rude, Iwa-chan,” huffed Oikawa. “You’re my best friend. If I hate the teacher, you have to hate him, too. It’s how these things work.”

Iwaizumi rolled his eyes “I’m not starting a pointless vendetta with a teacher just to settle your wounded pride.”

“Is he still talking about Professor Sora?” asked Hanamaki sitting down and interrupting what was sure to be a long rant about friendship from Oikawa.

“You’re still mad because he mispronounced your name, aren’t you?” Matsukawa remarked, taking the seat next to Hanamaki.

“That’s not it!” Oikawa defended loudly before saying in a quieter voice “Though, I mean, it is kinda weird he didn’t know who I was.”

“Because who couldn’t know Tooru Oikawa?” asked Hanamaki.

“The Great Muggleborn of the Evil Slytherin House” continued Matsukawa.

“Defender of the Weak.”

“Protector of the Poor.”

“Champion of the Bigheaded.”

“Okay, okay, I get it,” Oikawa interrupted, annoyed. When Oikawa had first gotten sorted into the Slytherin—the first known Slytherin Muggleborn in a century—a number of small articles had been printed championing Oikawa as evidence that the aftermath of the war had finally ended. Truthfully, Oikawa kind of hated it. Sure, it was nice that people were happy about him. But for every person who was glad, there was another who was annoyed or angry—and those were the ones who tended to be in his House. While he was close friends with Hanamaki and Matsukawa in his House, he tended to avoid the rest of his House.

“Relax, Oikawa,” said Hanamaki. “I’m sure you’ll blow Sora away with some impressive feat of magic and he’ll love you like all the other teachers.”

“Besides, don’t you two have the Duelling elective with him later tonight?” asked Matsukawa.
“Ugh, don’t remind me,” Oikawa moaned laying his head on the table despondently.

“What elective did you two choose, again?” asked Iwaizumi at Oikawa’s side.

“Divination” the two answered, grinning.

“Ack, why?” Iwaizumi scrunched up his face. “That stuff’s all seems fake anyway. And isn’t Professor Onikobe a real stickler and only let’s those with the ‘true sight,’” Iwaizumi made angry looking quotation marks, “stay in his class?”

“Ah, but that’s the thing” Matsukawa said, holding up his finger like he was about to make a point.

“He doesn’t know we don’t have true sight.” Hanamaki continued.

“All we have to do is make probable predictions for after the semester ends,” Matsukawa said.

“He won’t know if they’re right until after he grades us. Instant O’s” The two high fived.

“There is no way that’s going to work.” Iwaizumi said, glaring at them.

“Won’t know until we try,” Hanamaki shrugged. They both packed up their bags and headed to the Divination tower.

Iwaizumi shook his head and looked down at Oikawa still on the table.

“Come on, Stupidikawa, we’re going to be late to class,” Iwaizumi stood up and lightly kicked his friend. Oikawa moaned but got up to follow Iwaizumi.

“By the way, I saw Kageyama earlier today,” Iwaizumi told him as they walked.

Oikawa hummed in acknowledgement.

“I invited him to talk later.”

“Ew, why?” Oikawa asked with disgust.

Iwaizumi glared. “You’re being too hard on him. He was just a kid. And we still don’t even know for sure that he was upset because of...well, that.”

Oikawa wisely stayed silent. For years, the two had argued back and forth on why Kageyama was upset with Oikawa. Oikawa still thought it was because he was a muggleborn while Iwaizumi argued that they didn’t know the whole story. Though he had never told Iwaizumi explicitly, Kageyama’s rejection had hurt Oikawa more than any of the others he’d gotten since. To go from being hated in his own House to going home and seeing a kid that had looked up to him now hated him, too...well...maybe, Oikawa didn’t handle it well.

Still, Oikawa sniffed, Kageyama had plenty of time to apologize since.

The two entered the large chamber where Duelling lessons were held. Third years had the option of taking one of three electives: Healing, Duelling, and Divination. Oikawa had immediately jumped for Duelling, hoping to be on the Duelling team once he go to fourth year. Defense had dampered his excitement somewhat.

“Welcome to the first Duelling class,” Professor Sora boomed in a loud voice, beginning class. “As those of you who have had me in Defense know, neither Defense or Duelling are subjects where you can sit around; so, I’m going to start off by sorting you off into pairs.”
Oikawa shifted closer to Iwaizumi as Professor Sora came around sorting student pairs and directing them to one side of the class or the other.

“Iwaizumi,” called Sora when he got to them, “You go over to the left with Kamasaki” Iwaizumi nodded to his dorm mate before following the instructions. Oikawa frowned but looked back to the teacher.

“Oikawa, you go to the right corner with Daisho.”

Oikawa fought back a sigh. Though he didn’t share a dorm room with him, Oikawa knew Daisho as a fellow third year Slytherin with a reputation of doing anything to win. Oikawa looked over and saw that Daisho had already taken the spot further down the wall leaving Oikawa with the less maneuverable corner.

“Alright, class were going to start off with a basic protection spell.” Professor Sora demonstrated the wand movements before calling out “Protego” a light shimmery silver mist spread out from his wand. Oikawa was reluctantly impressed. “This shield should protect you from all manners of light curses. The stronger the spell, the better the protection. I want you all to copy the movements.”

The class dutifully copied the movements.

“Good, now try saying it with the spell.”

The class complied and Oikawa was pleased to note that his shield appeared on the first try even if the mist didn’t look as thick or strong as the teachers.

Sora waited until most of the class had managed somewhat of a shield. “Alright, now that most of us have our shields I want you to practice it against this minor shocking jinx. Those facing me try the shield first, those with their backs to me try the hex. I’ll walk around the room helping those who need it.”

Oikawa just pulled up his shield as Daisho sent the shocking jinx at him. The spell bounced harmlessly off the shield.

Oikawa glared and Daisho just shrugged. Somewhat pettily, Oikawa sent back his own quick shocking jinx but Daisho was already expecting it and shielded quickly, laughing at the attempt.

“For those pairs who have both successfully defended try your shield from multiple jinxes.” Professor Sora called out.

Oikawa barely finished the spell before Daisho fired another jinx at him. Because of the rush, Oikawa noticed his shield looked somewhat shaky this time and seemed to shudder at the first jinx. Daisho fired a second and the shield almost broke. On the third one, his shield broke causing Oikawa to dodge and whack his shoulder painfully on the wall.

“Excellent job, Daisho.” Sora remarked from a bid down the line. “Oikawa, remember to be aware of your surroundings if you’re going to try to dodge.”

Oikawa let out a quick huff of breath but turned to face Daisho. The snake like boy smirked behind his already pulled up shield. Daisho’s shield held up against four shocking jinxes but broke under Oikawa’s fifth causing the boy to quickly slide to the side to avoid.

The pair continued to trade off with Oikawa more often than not narrowly avoiding missing the wall when his shield broke. Daisho was a formidable opponent making well use of his space and
Oikawa being thrown off balance. Finally, Professor Sora called an end to the class advising them all to practice their shield charms. Glancing briefly at Oikawa, he gave a final reminder to be aware of their surroundings.

*Yeah, Oikawa thought, rubbing his shoulder, this class is the worst.*

Chapter End Notes

Hope you enjoyed! Comments or kudos are always welcome!
Hinata’s stomach stubbornly rebelled as the first years made their way down to the Quidditch pitch.

GAHH! He was so excited about learning how to fly! But, he thought worriedly, Yamaguchi broke his arm at the flying lesson yesterday! What if Hinata did something worse and ended up in the infirmary for a month!

Hinata shook his head. He was starting to sound like Yachi.

“Come on, Hinata! Quidditch!” Inuoka ran by him, jostiling his shoulder excitedly.

Inuoka is right, Hinata mused. This was going to be awesome!

“Listen up, First Years” Professor Oiwake declared once everyone had gathered on the pitch. With a severe looking face, Professor Oiwake seemed liked the type of teacher who would not hesitate to give detentions or deduct points.

“Today, we’re going to learn how to get our brooms to hover.” He scanned the class. “Now, I know many of you heard about the accident yesterday. However, I can assure you,” he paused and lowered his voice ominously, “that was the least of the injuries you can receive if you don’t respect your broom.”

Hinata gulped nervously.

After looking over the class again, Professor Oiwake led them over to individually layed out brooms and instructed them to find their spots.

“Everyone, repeat after me.” Professor Oiwake held his hand over the broom and declared in a firm voice: “UP.” The broom immediately hit in his hand.

Hinata swallowed while he watched the rest of the class repeat. He noticed Kageyama got it instantly.

Okay, broom, I really want to fly you, Hinata thought at the object. I promise I’ll take good care of you and we can go really fast and really high...but maybe, don’t break my arm

He took a breath. “UP.”

The broom seemed to twist a little but did finally come to his hand. Hinata breathed out.

Professor Oiwake went around helping the other students before ordering the students to mount their brooms. Hinata looked over to see Lev looking excited and bouncing on his feet.

Suddenly, two black dots appeared in the sky and dived to the Quidditch pitch. Hinata squinted his eyes but they were too far away and going too fast for him to see. Simultaneously, the two dropped what looked like small colorful balls down onto the pitch. Hinata held up his hand and caught one of the first orange balls before it hit the the ground.

As the balls started to hit the ground, pandemonium started to ensue as they exploded into bright
colorful patches painting the pitch in rainbow patches. Hinata quickly looked down at his ball waiting for something to happen, but nothing did.

Professor Oiwake looked like he himself was about to explode and quickly mounted his broom to chase after the pranksters. “EVERYONE, STAY HERE! I’ll be right back after I catch up with them and WRING THEIR NECKS.”

Hinata looked down at the orange ball again and waited. He really didn’t want to be covered in orange.

“Look,” Lev said, pointing at him. “Hinata’s caught one.”

Everyone in Hinata’s immediate vicinity backed away. Except for Kageyama.

“Oi, I recognize those. Those are the new Explodo Color Balls that Zonko’s are selling,” Kageyama said, daringly looking in for a closer look.

“They’re charmed not to explode as long as someone's touching them but the moment they impact anything, they’ll go off with an at least 3 metre range.”

“Epp!” Hinata squeaked, quickly dropping the ball. Kageyama deftly shot out his hand, catching it moments before it hit the ground.

“DUMMY! WHAT DID I JUST SAY!” Kageyama yelled, now looking apprehensively at his own hands. “TAKE IT BACK”

He threw it at Hinata who quickly snatched it from the air. Kageyama hovered away on his broom, avoiding either the explosion or Hinata returning it.

“HEY!” Hinata called after him. “I DONT WANT IT EITHER”

He threw it at a retreating Kageyama, before kicking off with his own broom. Kageyama quickly angled his broom down to catch it.

“NEITHER DO I!” He threw it back at Hinata. Barely snagging it this time, Hinata noticed that the rest of their classmates were quickly running back and forth in their attempt to avoid whichever had it.

“Stop throwing it at me!” Hinata said, before hypocritically lobbing it up at Kageyama. Kageyama quickly angled his broom down to catch it.

“You STOP THROWING IT AT ME!” Kageyama gave it a long toss, this time angling it to hit the ground a few meters under Hinata.

Oh, no you don’t, Hinata thought and drove his broom down at an almost ninety degree angle, his fingers barely grasping it less than a foot away.

“GAH!” Hinata yelled, catching his foot on the ground. Hinata tripped off of his broom, rolling and quickly pulling the ball to his chest to avoid impact. Hinata came to a stop a few feet away and let out a quick sigh of relief at the non-exploded ball.

“What ARE YOU TWO DOING?” Hinata and a now landed Kageyama both looked up to see Professor Oiwake and Professor Takinoue barrelling towards them. Professor Oiwake looked red faced and about to explode while Professor Takinoue was practically bouncing on his feet with a huge smile.
When the professors arrived in front of them, they both started speaking at once:

“THAT WAS RECKLESS!”

“AMAZING!”

The two teachers looked at each other and had a moment of silent debate before Takinoue subsided to Oiwa’s impressive glower.

“What were you thinking? I leave for five minutes and you two nearly break your necks!”

Both Kageyama and Hinata looked down ashamed. Hinata wondered briefly what he should do with the ball.

“Both of you detention for a week and ten point loss each!”

Ten Points! Hinata thought. His House was going to kill them for sure.

Professor Oiwa continued to glare at them. Around thirty seconds into the glare, Professor Takinoue started bouncing on his feet again. After roughly a minute, Professor Oiwa finally gave a large sigh. “Fine, go ahead. But this doesn’t get either of them out of detention.”

“That was amazing!” Professor Takinoue practically shouted. Professor Oiwa shook his head frustrated but returned to the rest of the first years, leaving Hinata and Kageyama with the groundskeeper.

“Have either of you ever played Quidditch before?”

Hinata shook his head while Kageyama gave a quiet “Some”.

Takinoue shook his head with a note of amazement. “You two have to be the most natural Chasers I’ve seen in years.”

Hinata and Kageyama looked at each other with the realization that they weren’t going to get in more trouble.

“How would you both like to try out for the Hufflepuff Quidditch team?”

“THE TEAM!” Hinata yelled while Kageyama looked wide eyed.

Takinoue nodded feverently. “We’ve been losing for years. Most of the team is made up of younger members.”

“You mean we can really be on the Quidditch team?!” Hinata asked, leaning forward excitedly.

Takinoue nodded again absently. “Well, of course, you would have to try out. But if you can play together like today, you’re practically a shoe in.” He looked down and added more to himself. “I’ve got to go get Takeda’s permission.”

He looked up at them and asked a final time “So, you’re in?”

“YES!” Kageyama and Hinata answered immediately.

“Great! Come to the practice field tonight after dinner and meet the team.” He smiled at both of them. “I’ve got to go talk to the Captain and your Head of House.”
Kageyama and Hinata watched him go before looking at each other. Despite their usual arguments, Hinata thought that for once they were both in astonishment.

Hinata clapped his hands together in excitement, forgetting about the ball.

**BOOM**

“DUMMY HINATA!”

---

Yamaguchi looked nervously around the Charms classroom. His week was going horribly. First, he got sorted into what had to be the scariest house. Then, he broke his arm. And now, he had ran late to his first Charms class and couldn’t sit next to Tsuki!

Yamaguchi sighed and put his head on his hands, trying not to put too much weight on the newly healed right arm. He had been meaning to talk to Tsukishima before class about the whole House rivalry thing. Now, he would have to wait for lunch when Tsukishima would probably want to sit with all his cool new Slytherin friends.

He looked up to see Tsukishima glaring at a loud grey-haired Slytherin first year. They probably already call him Tsuki.

Yamaguchi was lost in his thoughts for the rest of class causing him to bungle the levitation recitation they were supposed to learn. The teacher Professor Ukai looked really scary. Not to mention he was Yamaguchi’s Head of House and the Headmaster’s grandson!

Professor Ukai finally dismissed class and Yamaguchi tried to hurriedly pack up his things and catch up to Tsukishima before he left.

Luckily, when he got out of the classroom, Tsukishima was waiting by the wall.

“Oh,” said Yamaguchi surprised. “Are you going to eat lunch with me?”

Tsukishima looked at him as if he’d hit his head. “Why wouldn’t I?”

“Ack, I just thought you’d rather...Nevermind.” Yamaguchi rubbed the back of his head. “Sorry, Tsuki.”

Tsukishima shot him another confused look but started the walk to the Great Hall.

“Have you had Quidditch lessons, yet?” Yamaguchi asked, catching up.

Tsukishima sighed. “Yes, two of the older kids dive bombed the field with Explodo Color balls. Then the two idiots from the train decided to play catch with one of them and got yelled at by Professor Oiwake. How was yours?”

“Oh, ah,” Yamaguchi started. He had figured Tsukishima had heard but if he hadn’t Yamaguchi didn’t really want to tell him.

“It was fine! Not as exciting as yours. I might’ve kinda sortabrokemyarm.” He said the last bit in a quick mutter.

“You what?!” Tsukishima asked, mildly breaking his composure. He had stopped suddenly in the middle of the hallway.
“Oh, it w-was nothing,” Yamaguchi said quickly, urging Tsukishima to keep walking and not make a scene.

Tsukishima complied but raised an eyebrow at Yamaguchi, obviously expecting more of an explanation.

“It really was nothing.” Yamaguchi sighed. “I got startled when one of the others took off and I lost my balance. The infirmary healed it really fast. I didn’t even have to stay overnight for observation.”

Tsukishima didn’t look convinced but allowed Yamaguchi to lead him to one of the empty Gryffindor tables in the Great Hall.

“So, ah, how have your classes been?” asked Yamaguchi once they were seated.

Tsukishima sighed. “Fine, from everything I’ve heard the professors are clearly skilled but having to spend the classes with the rest of the…,” he paused and frowned while searching for a word, “students isn’t how I’d choose to spend my time.”

“Are you getting along with your House?” Yamaguchi questioned, grabbing one of the rolls.

“As much as I expected,” Tsukishima sniffed. “How is it with the Gryffindorks?”

Yamaguchi laughed nervously thinking about Noya and Tanaka’s frequent yelling and some of the scary upperclassman. “It’s fine, I guess.”

Tsukishima glared again, waiting for Yamaguchi to continue.

Instead, Yamaguchi changed the subject to what he had been itching to talk about.

“We’re not going to change, right,” he blurted before shaking his head. “I mean--just because we’re in different Houses, we’re still going to be friends right?”

The questioning-Yamaguchi’s-sanity look was back on Tsukishima’s face.

“Why wouldn’t we,” he replied, sounding perplexed. “You know I don’t care about any of that House stuff. Why would you even ask?”

“It’s nothing,” Yamaguchi responded, smiling with relief. “Sorry, Tsuki,”

Tsukishima continued looking at him for another beat before going back to his meal.

See, Yamaguchi thought happily. I knew Tsuki wouldn’t care about a stupid House rivalry.

---

“Hey, Hey, Hey, so you want to play on the Quidditch team?” Bokuto asked loudly, putting his hands on his hips.

“Yes!” Kageyama and Hinata both answered at once.

“I asked do you think you can be on the Quidditch team?” Bokuto questioned again, growing in volume.
“YES!”

“I asked do you want to be on...THE GREATEST MOST BEST HOUSE TEAM IN ALL OF HOGWARTS?! ”

“YES!!!” They replied again, yelling in excitement.

“WELL, YOU BETTER--”

“Bokuto,” a calm voice interrupted. “You need to have them try out first.”

“Er, right,” Bokuto said sheepishly. “Thanks, Akaashi!”

“So,” Bokuto started again. “I’m team captain and--”

“OHHH, THAT’S SO COOL!” Hinata interrupted, his eyes shining. “You must be like the best player ever if you’re captain as a third year.”

“Well…” Bokuto began hesitantly.

“Not really, the team just kinda sucks.” a second year named Futakuchi remarked, leaning on his broom. “We hardly have any of the upper years. Why do you think we don’t mind another House sitting in on our practices?”

To the side of the Quidditch pitch, Akaashi nodded serenely before going back to his book.

“Okay, well that may have been slightly true in the past.” Bokuto took a deep breath. “But this year we’ve got new players and we’re going to train hard and we’re going to be THE BEST TEAM EVER AND WIN THE HOUSE CUP!”

“YES!” Hinata and Kageyama both shouted.

“HEY, HEY!” yelled Bokuto, emboldened by their enthusiasm. “Alright, now let me introduce you to the rest of the team. You’ve already met Futakuchi,” he nodded to the smirking second year. “He’s a Beater with Aone,” he pointed to a silver haired giant that nodded at them, causing Hinata to “eep” and hide behind Kageyama.

“The Beaters job is to protect the rest of us and to hit the Bludgers at the opposing team’s Chasers.”

Hinata couldn’t imagine being hit by anything that someone so big swung at him.

“Next, we have our Keeper. That’s me!” Bokuto pointed to himself and grinned. “I guard those hoops up there and make sure that none of the Chaser get any of the Quaffles through.”

“Then, we have our Chasers--that’s the position you’ll be trying out for!” Bokuto told them excitedly. “Here’s our current Chaser, he’s a fifth year: Koki Wasure. You can just call him Koki.”

An older boy with light brown hair gave a brief wave.

“We used to have some more upper years,” Bokuto confided. “But they dropped this year to study for their OWL’s and NEWT’s.”

“And last we have our Seeker--Mad Dog.”

Hinata eeped again and even Kageyama looked taken aback when a second year boy with yellow
and black hair turned and growled at them.

“Mad Dog’s great!” Bokuto told them with a big smile. “Just, er, don’t get in his way too much.” He paused a moment considering. “And if you need any help, he always listens to Aone!”

The silver haired boy sent Mad Dog a fairly placid look and the growling subsided.

“So, now that you’ve met the team, let’s see what you’ve got!” Bokuto went over to a chest on the side of the pitch and removed what looked to be a dented brown leather ball. “Alright, so this is a Quaffle. I want you to fly up and toss it back and forth for as long as you can. Try to be constantly moving and don’t stay in one place, got it?”

The two nodded and Bokuto grinned and threw the Quaffle to Kageyama.

This was going to be so cool! Hinata thought and flew off after Kageyama.

The two threw the Quaffle back and forth for a bit, each remembering to keep moving. On one of the catches, Hinata caught it awkwardly and used the momentum to throw it back to Kageyama but at a slightly odd angle.

“HEY!” Kageyama yelled, barely catching it.

“S-sorry,” Hinata apologized before having to swerve to catch it when Kageyama threw it way to the side. “JERK”

From there, the two were at a tug of war, each throwing more and more hard to reach throws with the other struggling to receive.

“GAH, STUPID HEAD!” Hinata called, barely catching it a foot from the ground. This time, he managed to keep his balance. He threw it hard, realizing a second too late that the trajectory was right at Kageyama’s head.

Kageyama adjusted to catch it and threw him a murderous glare before throwing it in the opposite direction of Hinata.

THAT--GAHH! Hinata thought and pushed his broom as far as it could go, He wasn’t going to make it. Hinata leaned down on the broom and angeled his body. He stretched out his arm.

Just a little more... Hinata’s fingers grazed the ball before... Got it!

He pulled the Quaffle against his chest, turning sharply back to throw it at Kageyama’s stupid face.

He heard a whistle. Bokuto was calling them back to the center of the pitch. The two flew back, aggressively bumping each others shoulders as they walked to the captain.

“OhHHH-HO-HO!” Bokuto shouted, grinning. “You two did great! Hinata--I thought you were going to totally miss that ball and then boom, you were there! Great speed! Kageyama, your throw is amazing! We can definitely get in some new tosses with that.”

Bokuto looked at them both. “You two totally made the team!”

The two looked at the captain in excitement before Akaashi cleared his throat.

“Oh, er, right,” Bokuto said, rubbing the back of his neck. “You two totally made the team...if you
Kenma Kozume preferred both the quiet and to be alone. Unfortunately, neither of these came naturally to one living in a dorm. Instead, Kenma tried to find his own quiet.

All of these factors found Kenma reading on a stone bench in a almost entirely forgotten hallway of the sprawling Hogwarts castle. Peace, thought Kenma briefly.

A bang echoed somewhere a bit down the hallway followed by a loud “ACK”.

Well, mused Kenma, sighing. That was nice while it lasted.

An orange haired and incredibly short student turned a corner onto Kenma’s hall, frantically trying to get a bucket unstuck from his foot. After finally succeeding, he gave a short triumphant “Aha!” before looking up to see Kenma and giving a brief yelp.

“Oh, er,” the boy began. “Are you a g-ghost?”

“No,” Kenma told him with a completely blank face. “A Ravenclaw.”

“OH,” Hinata said excitedly, looking towards Kenma’s face. “Your hair is so cool! How do you get it to fade like that?”

Kenma gave another sigh. He allowed his hair to go completely black before letting the yellow come back in like a wave. Finally, he left it at his preferred style.

“I’m a metamorphmagus.” Kenma stated briefly.

“Like a butterfly?” the boy asked confused. “But, how did you get your hair to change like that?”

“No, not metamorphosis.” Kenma corrected. “A Metamorphmagus can change their appearance at will.”

“OHHHHH,” the boy said, nearly vibrating in excitement. “That’s so cool! Do you learn to do that in class or something.”

“No.” Kenma shook his head, allowing a brief smile. “Some wizards are born with it.”

“WOW,” the boy responded awestruck. “Then, you’re like super unique then. You can be like whatever you want.”

Kenma fought back a small blush at the boy’s amazement. He was much more used to people demanding him perform certain changes on the spot once they found out.

“Hey, what are you reading?” the boy asked, tilting his head to look at Kenma’s book.

Kenma sighed. “Quidditch Through the Ages. My friend Kuroo is making me join the House team.”

“That’s so cool!” the boy nearly yelled, his attention instantly redirected. “I just joined my House team...well, kinda.”
The boy looked down and rubbed the back of his head. “If me and stupid Kageyama can get along.”

Kenma raised an eyebrow questioningly and allowed the boy to do the talking.

“I don’t even know what his problem is! It’s like he just decided to hate me when we met. How can I even learn to play with him if he doesn’t want to talk to me? All he does is frown and he makes a face like GAH! Ugh, but now they’re going to kick me off the team if he keeps being all...all...,” he paused in his rant before glaring, “Kageyama.”

Kenma really didn’t feel qualified to give advice on how to get along with people.

“Do you have to get along with him to play Quidditch?” Kenma certainly didn’t get along with many of his teammates.

Hinata deflated. “The captain told us we had to stop fighting.”

“Well, stop fighting doesn’t exactly mean being friends,” Kenma remarked, uncertainty. “You just have to learn to play with him.”

“I guess...” the boy said, not sounding fully convinced. He turned to Kenma and brightened. “Thanks, you’re a really good listener.”

Kenma didn’t really feel like he did much. He gave a short smile anyway.

“Ughhhhh, I got to go back to cleaning the floors for detention.” The boy glared at the bucket that still laid on the ground.

He picked it up and started to go back down the hall where he came. He paused and looked back.

“Oh, sorry, I forgot to ask. What’s your name?”


The boy smiled. “Nice to meet you, Kenma! I’m Shouyou Hinata. You can call me Shouyou, too.”

The boy--Shouyou--turned back and around the corner.

Kenma allowed another smile to appear. “Nice to meet you, Shouyou.”

Chapter End Notes

Here is the first of two chapters that will be posted this week. Hope you enjoyed! As always, kudos and comments welcome.
“I still think you’re being over dramatic,” said Iwaizumi, intently trimming his Mimbulus Mimbletonia.

“I AM NOT-”

Oikawa cut off as Professor Shimada made the rounds to their workstation.

“Excellent work, Iwaizumi.” Shimada commented before looking over at Oikawa’s plant. “Er, Oikawa, remember to make sure your hood is covering all parts of your body.”

Oikawa halfheartedly checked to make sure the tarplike hood was covering him.

“I am not being overdramatic,” Oikawa whispered furiously as Professor Shimada moved to the next workstation. “Professor Sora is out to get me.”

Iwaizumi sighed. “Oikawa, you had one bad duel. I don’t think that means Professor Sora hates you because he’s, to quote you, ‘jealous of your excessive charm and grace’”

“Oh, I don’t know about that.” Matsukawa commented, giving the plant a quick pet and causing it to nuzzle his hand.

“Yeah,” Hanamaki agreed. “I mean why wouldn’t a famous,”

“World traveling,” Matsu added.

“Daring,”

“Handsome,”

“Adventuring teacher be jealous of our dear Oikawa.” Hanamaki finished. He looked to Matsukawa. “Matsu, did you see his Most Eligible Wizard spread in Witch Weekly?”

“That I did, Maki, he was practically seething in envy. I could tell.” Matsu shook his head in mock pity.

“UGH, why do I even hang out with you two,” Oikawa asked, snipping at his Mimbulus Mimbletonia with a bit too much force. “Besides, didn’t you two just get a months detention for the Quidditch field prank?”

“Prices to pay, my friend.” Hanamaki answered serenely.

“Besides,” Matsukawa commented. “We almost outran Professor Oiwake if we didn’t have to dodge the Weeping Willow.”
Oikawa rolled his eyes and continued grooming his plant. “Whatever, Professor Sora is out to get me and, eventually, you’re all going to believe me.”

“Er, Oikawa,” Iwaizumi said cautiously.

“What?” Oikawa snapped, pulling out from his angry glare at a pretend Professor Sora.

“You might not want to cut there…”

“What are you--ACK!” Oikawa cut off as the Mimbulus Mimbletonia suddenly spat out foul smelling liquid, covering the front of Oikawa’s hood.

Across the room, Professor Shimada sighed and walked back to their station.

---

“Hinata, may I speak to you after class?” Professor Irihata asked after Potions.

Oh, no, Hinata thought. I probably messed up the last potion so now he’s going to use me as potions ingredients![1]

Or worse, what if those two third year Slytherins weren’t lying?! Hinata looked up to Professor Irihata, accidentally made eye contact, and strangled a small yelp. He’s going to kill me! A dirge version of the Hogwarts school song played through Hinata’s mind.

“You’re a muggleborn, right?” Professor Irihata asked, cutting off Hinata’s predictions of doom.

“Er, yeah, I think so,” answered Hinata, confused.

Professor Irihata nodded. “We have this problem with a lot of muggleborn first years. Based on the questions you answered in first class, your knowledge of basic potions ingredients is lagging behind the rest of the class.” Professor Irihata met Hinata’s eyes with a serious expression. “This isn’t your fault. Most of them have been around these ingredients their whole lives. Understand?”

Hinata nodded bemused. Professor Irihata tore off a piece of parchment and scribbled a name. “This is one of my best potions students from third year. He’s agreed to individually tutor students that need a bit of extra help. Are you free Thursdays evenings?”

Hinata took the paper and nodded.

“Good, meet with him in the library.” Professor Irihata motioned to the door. “You’re dismissed.”

Clutching the paper, Hinata walked out of the classroom and found his roommates--including a sour looking Kageyama--waiting for him.

“Oh, wow, you survived!” cried Sakunami when he saw him.

“What did Professor Irihata want?” asked Inuoka, scrunching his brow.

“Oh, he said that, since I’m a muggleborn, a third year was going to tutor me in Potions to help me learn all of the weird ingredients.” Hinata explained, handing the paper to his roommates.

“Whoa, you’re being tutored by him ,” Inuoka exclaimed, looking at the paper.
Sakunami grabbed the paper and winced. “I’ve heard of him. He’s a Slytherin and he’s from a really, really dark family.”

“Yeah,” Inuoka agreed. “I heard that he hates all the muggleborn students.”

Sakunami shook his head. “Good luck, mate.”

Hinata looked between them, panicked. He already told Professor Irihata he would meet with him. What was he going to do?!

Hinata starting walking with the rest of the first years. *One thing’s for sure*, thought Hinata. He was sure not looking forward to Potions tutoring with Koushi Sugawara.

---

Hitoka Yachi was going to survive this. Hitoka Yachi knew that, really, there was nothing to be afraid of. This was a little thing. A little thing that Hitoka Yachi could definitely totally survive!

Hitoka Yachi was terrified.

Yachi sat in her House common room for the first time since she had been sorted into Gryffindor. 

*Basically, all alone and completely vulnerable to the scary older students who are much better at magic than me!* Yachi shook her head and clutched her wand protectively closer to her chest. *No! I am not going to think like that. The other students are probably really nice and just...loud...and energetic...and big...and OH MY GOSH, THEY WERE GOING TO HEX HER AND THROW HER OFF THE TOWER!*

Someone tapped her shoulder causing Yachi to shriek and gold sparks to fly out of her wand.

“Oh, er, sorry,” Yamaguchi said, wide eyed. “You were just sitting alone and I wondered if you wanted some company?”

Yachi clutched her chest, hyperventilating. “S-sorry...Yamaguchi...I was...just...nervous.” She caught her breath. “Feel free to sit down.”

Yamaguchi gave a hesitant smile and sat opposite to her.

“So, how are you liking your dorm?” asked Yamaguchi.

“Oh...it’s alright” Yachi said. She didn’t think she made a very good impression on her roommates. On her first night, she was so scared she could barely stutter through her name.

“Yeah, mine’s alright, too,” Yamaguchi said half-heartedly. He brightened. “Though, I met some really nice third years.”

“Really?” Yachi asked. The only older student she knew was the Gryffindor girl prefect, who seemed nice but was already incredibly busy preparing for her OWL’s.

“Yeah, I can introduce you later if you’d like,” offered Yamaguchi.

Yachi nodded excitedly. It would be great to know some nice older students if she needed help...or if she was being chased by a mob of angry seventh years or something.
“Awesome,” Yamaguchi smiled. “Dachi just went up to his dorm to work on homework. He’s been great about showing me around and stuff.”

Yamaguchi got up and motioned for her to follow. Yachi bounced up, eager to be out of the scary common room.

“Oh, how is your arm?” Yachi asked, following him to the stairs.

Yamaguchi laughed sheepishly. “It’s fine. I’m really embarrassed that I fell off on the first lesson.”

“No,” Yachi quickly shook her head. “It was really scary. It was super scared that my broom was going to fly off and I’d get lost in the Forbidden Forest and they wouldn’t find me for days and that I’d—”

“How are the rest of your classes?” Yamaguchi asked quickly, looking queasy.

“Oh, they’re fine. I thought that I’d be struggling more, actually,” she looked down. “I know I’m not very powerful...but, the teachers are all really nice!”

“Yeah, they are,” Yamaguchi agreed, not quite knowing what to do with the first part of Yachi’s confession. “At first, I was really scared of Professor Irihata but Daichi and Asahi have been really helping me out with my homework.”

“That sounds great!” Yachi enthused.

“They’re super awesome,” agreed Yamaguchi. “Okay, this one on the left is my room, the one on the right is one of the second years. Daichi’s is a bit down. He told me it was always okay to ask him if I needed help so he shouldn’t mind if—”

**BOOOM!**

“Er-what was that?” asked Yachi, pointing to the second year dorm.

“I-I’m not sure,” said Yamaguchi, looking apprehensive.

“**RYUU, I told you to put the fire over there not** here.” a loud voice shouted.

“**Merlin.**” another voice swore.

“Quick, hide the evidence before Daichi or Enoshita come!”

Yamaguchi anxiously looked to the door down the hall.

“**NOYA! TANAKA! WHAT WAS THAT NOISE?!”** a booming voice echoed followed by a murderous looking Daichi banging open the door.

“Um,” Yamaguchi said, taking in the scene. “Maybe, I’ll introduce you later.”

Wide eyed, Yachi quickly nodded.

---

*Ow! Thought Oikawa as another shocking jinx broke through his shield.*
His partner, a Hufflepuff names Sasaya, shot him a commiserating look.

"Do you want to try again?"

Stifling his internal annoyance, Oikawa nodded and readied his wand.

"Locomotor Wibbly." Sasaya yelled, pointing at Oikawa.

Oikawa’s shield held for a second before breaking, causing Oikawa to dive quickly to the floor.

Today’s class was focused on learning how to deflect different types of spells with their shield. According to Professor Sora, a caster could get too used to defending from one spell that their shield was useless against another. The class was told to fire all the minor spells they knew at their opponent to test shield strength.

Oikawa was starting to get irritated. While his jinxes and hexes were fine and as powerful as always, his shield kept failing after the first few spells. Professor Sora had already come over a number of times to give Oikawa a dismayed look before praising some other student.

"Something’s up with your casting," Sasaya told him. "Your power levels are fine, judging by the spells you’re sending back. But when you cast, your shield looks...well, weak."

Oikawa sighed. Figures, this would be the one class besides Herbology that he had to ask the teacher for help.

He traded a few spells back and forth with Sasaya before Professor Sora called for an end to class.

"Great job, guys." Sora told the class. "We’ll start moving on to stronger shields next week. You’re dismissed."

Oikawa hung back, motioning for Iwaizumi to go on without him.

Oikawa waited for the room to empty before approaching the professor.

"Professor Sora"

The professor looked up from some of his notes. "Oh, Oikawa, right? How can I help you?"

Oikawa took a breath, steadying himself. "I’m having a bit of trouble casting my shield. It always comes up when I cast it, but it looks weak and doesn’t hold up after the first few spells."

"Hmm," Professor Sora answered, distractedly.

"The spells I cast back are fine so I think it’s something to do with my casting…" Oikawa trailed off as Professor Sora met his eyes.

"Oikawa, you seem like a strong enough lad. Let me talk to you for a second." Sora gestured to two of the pushed aside desks.

"Um, okay," Oikawa said, sitting in the desk across from him.

"I know it must be really hard for you with all the media attention in your first year," Professor Sora said kindly.

"I guess?" Oikawa said, not sure where this was leading.
“And I’m sure being with all those powerful wizards in Slytherin didn’t help.”

Oikawa just continued looking at him.

“Having people put all those expectations on you had to be difficult.” Sora continued. “Especially unfair expectations.”

Oikawa was starting to get slightly anxious.

“I know firsthand being in the center of the spotlight is hard.” Sora met Oikawa’s eyes. “It has to be even harder if you feel you don’t deserve it, right?”

“Um, I suppose?” Oikawa answered hesitantly.

Sora seemed to take that as answer enough. “What I’m getting to, Oikawa, is that the shield spell might always be hard for you. A strong shield spell requires someone who can maintain a certain power level. I’m afraid I just don’t know if you’ll be capable.”

Oikawa blinked rapidly, parsing through that statement. “Wait-”

“It’s unfortunate that a shield spell is one of the essential spells of Duelling.” Sora paused and looked at Oikawa sympathetically. “I will, of course, understand completely if you chose to pursue a different elective.”

“I…” Oikawa began and trailed off, not knowing what to say.

“I’ll understand completely,” Sora repeated.

There was a moment of silence before Sora looked down at his watch. “Well, it’s about time for me to get going. I think it’s a good thing we had a chance to talk, Oikawa. Why don’t you go off and try to enjoy your night.”

Oikawa nodded numbly and headed for the door. Professor Sora closed it behind him, leaving Oikawa in an empty hall and feeling incredibly small.

Chapter End Notes

Hope you enjoyed! Next chapter is planned to be posted Monday.
Hinata sat in the library waiting for his sure untimely demise.

This is it, thought Hinata as he waited for his terrifying and probably homicidal tutor. This is how I die.

His friends had given him brief and mournful goodbyes when he left the table at dinner. Hinata took a spare moment to hope Izumi and Sakimukai would take care of Natsu and protect her from the older kids at the orphanage. Hinata gave a heartfelt groan. He hadn’t even gotten to play Quidditch yet!

The door to the study room opened. Hinata braced himself. An angel walked in.

Hinata shook his head and looked again. A third year with a Slytherin tie walked up to Hinata’s table. His entire aura had the most calm and comforting nature that Hinata had ever felt. Under the library’s warm glow, his hair seemed to shine bright silver.

“Hello,” the boy said politely. “You must be Hinata. My name’s Koushi Sugawara, but you can call me Suga. I’m your Potions tutor!”

Hinata thought there must be some mistake. This boy couldn’t be about to kill him! He let Hinata call him by a nickname!

When he realized he was still staring at him, Hinata gave a quick high pitched “N-nice to meet you.”

Suga looked vaguely perplexed before apparently deciding to move on. “I thought we would go to the Potions classroom so you can see all the different potions ingredients in person. I checked with Professor Irihata and he told me that it would be fine.”

Hinata nodded quickly, still uncertain what was going on.

Suga led Hinata down to the dungeons while gently steering the conversation around Hinata’s first couple of weeks at Hogwarts.

“Wow,” Suga remarked. “You must be really excited for the game this Saturday.”

“It’s going to be awesome!” Hinata told him, almost skipping down the hall. “Bokuto told us that both me and Kageyama would both get to play even though Ravenclaw’s like one of our top rivals or something.”

He looked at Suga. “Do you play Quidditch?”

Suga laughed. “No, not me. The Slytherin teams mostly filled with the older students and I’m not
The best at sports anyway.” Suga paused. “I do like flying, though.”

“Flying is the best thing ever,” Hinata sighed in agreement. “It’s like, when I’m up there, being at the top of the world—the highest point ever and I can see everything.”

Suga nodded and opened the door to the Potions classroom.

“Professor Irihata told me to mainly focus on the different ingredients you’ll need to know for the week. Why don’t we start by me showing you how to find different ingredients in your potions case, alright?”

Hinata nodded and slowly watched as Suga revealed all the different compartments that he never even knew his case had—let alone what was in them.

By the end of the potions tutoring, Hinata was able to correctly state where all the ingredients in his case were stored but still had trouble identifying them by sight.

“That’s really good progress for today,” Suga told him, pleased. “Next week, we’ll work on the specific properties of some of the basic ingredients. Good job for today, though!”

Hinata beamed. “Thanks, Suga! You’re a really good teacher.”

Suga sent him a warm smile in return. “I’m glad I could help.”

“I’m really glad I came,” Hinata continued without thinking. “My friends told me you were really scary and were going to be super mean. But, you’re not like that at all.” Hinata stopped when he realized he could have accidentally offended Suga. “Ack, I’m sorry. I didn’t mean it like that. You’re really, really nice and my friends were probably just thinking of someone else.”

Suga smiled sadly. “No, they were right.” Hinata widened his eyes, looking slightly panicked. “Oh, no, sorry, not about me specifically. My family is what you would call a, well, a rather dark family. Historically, they’ve been very...traditional. Not very open to change.”

He paused and started again with a kind of quiet hopelessness. “I’m not, though, I promise. I think, no, I know that my family has had it wrong on a lot of things, especially their political agenda.” He met Hinata’s eyes. “Hinata, I promise you that you will never have reason to be afraid because of me.”

“I believe you,” Hinata said immediately.

“Oh,” Suga said, taken aback. “Um, most people rather don’t agree with that so instantly.”

“Well, you’ve been really nice to me,” Hinata answered, logically. “You talked to me about Quidditch and you helped me with all the Potions stuff.” Hinata paused, thinking. “Besides, just because your family thinks something doesn’t mean you do. My sister Natsu and I disagree all the time!

“My friends and I were just being stupid,” Hinata admitted. “I’m sure once people get to know you, they’ll see you’re really cool and not scary like at all.”

Suga gave a somewhat wistful smile to Hinata. “Thank you, Hinata. That’s very kind of you. I really hope you’re right.”

Hinata smiled.
“Well,” Suga remarked, changing the subject, “I need to finish my homework and you need to go get some sleep for the big game. Why don’t I walk you back up?”

“Awesome!” Hinata replied. He couldn’t wait to surprise his dorm by showing them he hadn’t gotten murdered by his “supper scary” Potions tutor.

---

“You should tell Irihata,” Iwaizumi said firmly from his side of the small practice room.

“What good will that do?” Oikawa asked absently while trying the shield charm again. As usual the spell emerged but still looked fairly translucent and weak. Frustrated, Oikawa ran his hand through his hair.

“He’s your Head of House, Oikawa,” Iwaizumi prodded, gently. “He’ll have your back if you tell him Sora’s discriminating against you.”

Oikawa sighed. “With what proof? It’s not like he said anything about me being muggleborn or was spouting off about blood purity. All he did is imply I’m not powerful enough for the shield charm,” Oikawa looked down at his wand before muttering “which he might be right about.”

Iwaizumi watched his friend for a moment, taking note of his slumped shoulders and furrowed brow. “Oikawa... you know that Sora isn’t right, don’t you? You’re just as powerful as everyone else there.”

Oikawa shrugged. “Maybe...but everyone else already has this stupid shield charm down.”

Iwaizumi walked over to Oikawa’s side. “So what? I struggled with the basic levitation charm for ages in first year. Just because you’ve gotten straight O’s in everything doesn’t mean you’re weak now because you’re having trouble. If Sora was a good enough teacher, you could have just gone to him and already have it down.”

“No one else needed this much help,” Oikawa commented, still looking down.

Iwaizumi sighed. “Look, Stupidkawa, I’m not saying this again. You’re a great wizard. Merlin, you’re the best in our year and everyone knows it. One teacher being a dick isn’t going to change that. Okay?”

Oikawa gave a wane smile before giving a mock gasp. “Iwa-chan, you cursed. You cursed twice.”

Iwaizumi rolled his eyes and gave Oikawa a light whack to the back of the head.

“Mean, Iwa-chan!” Oikawa yelped with finally a little bit of energy.

“Come on, let’s go catch the Quidditch game.” Iwaizumi said, heading for the door.

Oikawa hummed. “You go on. I’ll catch up in a bit. I want to practice this charm a few more times.”

“Oikawa,” Iwaizumi said, warningly. “Wearing yourself out isn’t going to help with the spell.”

“Thirty more minutes, I promise” Oikawa told him. “I’ll meet you in the stands.”
Iwaizumi sent a glare but finally subsided. “If you’re not there by then, I’m coming back down and showing you why you’d need a shield.”

Oikawa stuck out his tongue and watched him leave.

Alright, he steadied himself and called for his magic. This time, for sure.

---

“You look...more cheerful than I expected.” Tetsuro Kuroo commented as he and his friend looked out to the Quidditch pitch.

Kenma blinked and realized that a minuscule smile had snuck onto his face when he wasn’t paying attention.

“Have you decided to finally get fired up about Quidditch?” Kuroo joked. “Hufflepuff is our historical rival...even if they’re supposed to be kinda weak this year.”

Kenma gave a small shrug and fidgeted slightly in his Quidditch gear.

“Although, Bokuto’s team captain this year so Akaashi’s probably helped him some with strategy. That traitor!” Though as Kuroo rubbed his hands together and looked eagerly at the pitch, Kenma noted he looked more anticipating than angry.

Kenma followed his gaze absently.

“It should be...interesting.” he finally remarked softly.

“Oh, ho, Kenma’s getting interested in a Quidditch match.” Kuroo commented curiously. “Do tell what’s making you think that?”

Kenma frowned.

“We need to get down,” he noted rather than answering.

Kuroo sighed but subsided, probably due to familiarity with Kenma’s taciturn nature.

“Besides,” Kenma began, feeling slightly mischievous. “Shouyou’s on their team.”

“Wait? Kenma?...Kenma, stop walking away! WHO’S SHOUYOU?!”

---

Hinata felt like he was going to throw up.

He tried to pay attention as Bokuto gave the team a rousing and incredibly energetic opening speech. As a member of the opposing house, Akaashi was not actually allowed into the Hufflepuff changing room right before a Ravenclaw game. This meant that Bokuto had gone on for nearly ten minutes about energy and team work and how they were going to beat Kuroo and his stupid hair.

“Captain,” Futakuchi interrupted, having finally reached his limit. “We’re going to be late for the starting pitch.”
“Oh,” Bokuto stopped suddenly. “Right. TEAM TO THE PITCH!”

The team gave an answering shout and followed Bokuto out. Bokuto veered back to walk beside Kageyama and Hinata.

“Hey, so I know this is your first game and all. So, you might be really nervous, right?” Bokuto asked them in a loud whisper.

Hinata nodded emphatically while Kageyama gave a hesitant nod.

“Well, don’t worry. You two have some of the best natural Chaser instincts I’ve ever seen and Koki’s definitely got your back if you need any help.”

Hinata did feel slightly better with that.

“Just, whatever you do, don’t start fighting!” Bokuto finally told them before heading back to the front of the group.

Hinata sighed.

“Look,” he started, meeting Kageyama’s eyes. “I know we got off on the wrong foot but I--”

“I’m not going to throw to you unless I know you can score to win.” Kageyama cut him off. “I don’t think you can, so I’m going to throw to Koki.”

“What?!” Hinata yelled. “Didn’t you just hear what the captain said?”

Kageyama nodded. “I won’t fight with you. I’m just not going to throw to you.”

Kageyama stepped onto the field before Hinata had a chance to respond.

_That...That...That STUPID JERK!_ Hinata thought furiously. _I’ll show him I can score. I’ll make him throw to me!_

Hinata raced to the field and took to the air as Professor Oiwake blew the whistle to start the game.

An older Ravenclaw Chaser immediately took control of the Quaffle and headed towards the goals.

Hinata saw Futakuchi quickly counter and send a Bludger flying towards her. She swerved to dodge it but her throw was off, allowing Bukoto to easily catch it and throw it to Kageyama.

“HEY, HEY,” Bokuto shouted excitedly.

Kageyama raced to the other end of the field, narrowly dodging a bludger sent by Ravenclaw’s Beater Tetsuro Kuroo.

Hinata, who was closer to the goal, frantically tried to get Kageyama’s attention. Instead Kageyama made a desperate but accurate toss to Koki, who was quickly surrounded by both Kuroo and the other older Beater. Attempting to toss it back to Kageyama, Ravenclaw Chaser Watari intercepted the ball.

Hinata nearly growled as he watched Watari swiftly dodge both Futakuchi and Aone and score a goal before Bokuto could make it. The announcer duly noted the score: Ravenclaw up by 10.

The game continued with Ravenclaw gaining two goals for every one Hufflepuff made. Even after about an hour into the game, Kageyama still had not thrown to Hinata once. If Kageyama lost this
game by being stupid, Hinata was going to kill him.

Hinata flew up to Kageyama.

“If you don’t start throwing it to me, we’re going to lose, Stupid.” Hinata called to him.

Kageyama growled and flew away.

The Ravenclaw Chaser Misaki had made it most of the way to Bokuto before a Bludger from Aone made her lose her hold on the ball. Kageyama caught the ball before it hit the ground.

From half-field, Hinata watched him survey the pitch. The Ravenclaw team had apparently realized that Kageyama was refusing to throw to Hinata so had instead used double the numbers to block in Koki.

Kageyama hesitated before trying to make it down the pitch on his own, quickly being blocked by the other Ravenclaw Beater. The ball was intercepted again.

_Idiot_, Hinata thought furiously at Kageyama as a Ravenclaw Chaser scored another goal.

Kageyama was thrown the ball again and faced with a similar conundrum. He hesitated, clearly torn.

This was Hinata’s chance. He dove, swiftly getting into Kageyama’s line of vision.

Hinata saw Kageyama look towards him before finally giving a quick jerk of his head. Hinata couldn’t explain how, but in a moment of almost telepathy, he knew what was about to happen and raced forward.

Kageyama threw a long toss while Hinata was still moving. With barely a glance, Hinata snatched it from the air before racing, unobstructed, to the Ravenclaw goal. Without stopping, he threw it to the goal, making it in an entire second before the Ravenclaw Keeper Yaku could reach it.

One of the Ravenclaw Chasers made a frantic gesture and Professor Oiwake whistled for a time out. Hinata landed and rushed to his team.

“THAT WAS AMAZING, YOU TWO!” Bokuto shouted. Aone gave a firm nod to his side and even Mad Dog’s glare slightly lessened.

“I’m not sure what was up with you two earlier. But, keep playing like that and we might be able to catch up!”

Kageyama and Hinata gave each other a brief considering look before nodding.

The whistle sounded and the teams took to the sky.

It soon became apparent that the Ravenclaw team had decided that Hinata was important enough to block, too. After an interception, Kageyama took note of the Beater and Chaser that were hovering around Hinata before throwing it to Koki for a score.

Hinata frowned, thinking. He had to get away from the guard.

Bokuto barely caught a Quaffle thrown by Ravenclaw Watari and threw it back to Kageyama. Hinata recognized his chance. He flew at a ninety degree angle to the ground, followed by one of the Beaters, before angling up and to the left. Hinata felt the wind flying through his hair and looked back to see the Beater failing to keep up. Hinata motioned toward Kageyama who saw him
and threw the Quaffle while Hinata was flying past. Hinata reached out his arm to catch it and speed to the opponent’s goal...and missed.

Hinata watched as the ball went flying past, a few inches from his hand. Ravenclaw Misaki caught it and quickly used it to score on Bokuto. Hinata looked at his empty hand before up to Kageyama’s glare.

“What are you doing, Idiot?!” Kageyama asked, furiously.

“I-I don’t know, I just looked for it and it flew by.” Hinata answered, confused.

Kageyama let out a loud huff. “Next time, don’t look for it, just be there!”

The boy angrily flew off as Hinata nodded. Don’t look.

Watari had the Quaffle and headed for the goal before being stopped by Futakuchi. Koki intercepted the Quaffle and threw it to Kageyama.

Just be there, Hinata thought and raced to mid field. While flying, Hinata closed his eyes and reached out his hand...He closed his hand the second he felt something land in it and opened his eyes to see the Quaffle.

Hinata grinned and quickly maneuvered to the hoops, scoring another goal.

“Did you just--Did you,” Watari, the Ravenclaw Chaser, stuttered. “Did you just catch that with your eyes closed?!”

All of the flyers in the immediate vicinity paused. “HUH?!”

“Yeah,” Hinata nodded absently. “Kageyama told me not to look, so I closed my eyes.”

The gathered Quidditch players looked at Kageyama, who looked just as thunderstruck.

“I didn’t mean--I didn’t think,” Kageyama shook his head. “Stupid Hinata, it could have hit your stupid head.”

“Oh,” Hinata complained. “You threw it at my hands, I knew it wouldn’t hit me!”

The amassed flyers looked even more baffled.

Professor Oiwake blew the whistle. “If you all are done loitering around. You might want to go back to the Quidditch Game you’re in the middle of playing.”

The flyers shook off their curiosity and flew off, noticing that Ravenclaw Misaki had almost made it to the Hufflepuff goals.

“Just-just keep doing whatever you’re doing,” Kageyama told him before flying off. “I’ll bring the ball to you.”

Bokuto barely blocked and threw it back to Koki only to have it intercepted by a smirking Kuroo. He threw it off to one of his team’s Chasers, who was able to score the second time. Ravenclaw was still in the lead by forty points.

Hinata angled down his head and focused. The next time Kageyama got the ball, Hinata glided quickly to the other side of the field. Sticking out his hand and feeling the impact, Hinata raced to the goal. We can still catch up …
Moments before Hinata threw the ball, Professor Oiwake blew the whistle.

“RAVENCLAW’S CAUGHT THE SNITCH!” The announcer yelled. “NEW RAVENCLAW SEEKER KENMA KOZUME GRABS IT SECONDS BEFORE HUFFLEPUFF’S RESIDENT MAD DOG!!!”

Hinata looked up to see a slight silver and blue figure with multi-colored hair clutching something in his fist. Hinata sighed and flew down to meet his team.

By the time he got there, the Ravenclaw team was cheering and holding up an uncomfortable looking Kenma. *At least, Kenma looks like he’s enjoying Quidditch!* mused Hinata before going to his team’s changing room.

“YOU GUYS WERE AWESOME!” Bokuto shouted excitedly. Akaashi, whose presence in the room no one apparently cared about following a game, gave them a small congratulatory smile.

“But, we still lost,” responded Hinata, confused.

“Meh, we lost most of the games last year, too,” reassured Bokuto, absently. “Besides, Ravenclaw has a number of older players and Kuroo’s been talking about their new Seeker all Summer.”

Akaashi cleared his throat.

“The point is,” Bokuto continued. “That was the best game we’ve had in years. Ravenclaw is especially strong this year and we were only behind by four goals before they caught the Snitch. If we keep this up, we might have a shot at the House Cup!”

Bokuto took on a longing expression as he thought of the coveted award. The two Beaters took this opportunity to approach Hinata and Kageyama.

Aone nodded at Hinata and gave a quiet “Good job” which Hinata nervously thanked him for.

“What was up with that throw,” Futakuchi asked Kageyama. “That was almost pinpoint accuracy at 50 yards away.”

Kageyama gave an embarrassed shrug. “I practiced throwing a lot in the field outside my house.”

“And you!” Futakuchi said, turning to Hinata. “That had to be the fastest I’ve ever seen anyone go using a school broom. And those turns!” Futakuchi shook his head. “We’re definitely using those in the next game.”

Hinata smiled at the second year.

“Hey, hey,” Bokuto interjected, apparently finished with his Quidditch glory fantasy. “Futakuchi is right. We’re *definitely* going to adapt those plays!”

Futakuchi and Bokuto started talking strategy with Akaashi quietly interjecting every now and then. Standing in the Quidditch changing room and surrounded by his team discussing future matches, Hinata thought that--even with the loss--he had never been happier.
Sorry for the late update. I got sick yesterday and was too groggy to edit. Feeling much better today! The next chapter should post Friday. As always, hope you enjoy!
Even over a month into the school year, Yamaguchi was still kinda terrified of the Gryffindor dorms. The common room was constantly in a state of booming energy. Older students would gather to excitedly tell stories or gossip while younger students eagerly listened in. In addition to this, Gryffindors would constantly be trying out minor spell and transfigurations at the tables. Most likely because of this state of constant disturbance, the Gryffindor common room was also a favorite pranking ground for infamous Slytherin third years Hanamaki and Matsukawa. No one was still quite sure how they managed to get in; but, Yamaguchi had twice just barely missed eating candies that would make his tongue turn different colors or intermittently bray like a donkey.

_The Gryffindor dorms are terrifying_, thought Yamaguchi, walking past the second year room where there had been mysterious crashes and explosions all week.

On the bright side, Yamaguchi was now fairly certain that his roommates were wrong and that Tsuki would definitely still be his friend despite being in different Houses. Tsuki still met him for almost every meal!

_Except for dinner_, Yamaguchi mused, furrowing his brow. At dinner, more than any of the other meals, nearly all of the Hogwarts students filled the massive House tables. Normally at lunch and breakfast, Yamaguchi and Tsukishima were able to find a mostly empty spot of whatever House’s table, which allowed them to eat unimpeded by the rest of their Houses. At dinner, though, Yamaguchi was much _much_ too scared to eat with the rest of Tsuki’s Slytherin dorm mates. At Gryffindor tables, while Tsukishima was of course not _scared_ per se of sitting there, it was obvious that many of the other Gryffindor first years were obviously uncomfortable with Tsukishima’s presence. Because of this, the two tended to solely sit with their own House at dinner.

_They still walked over together, though!_ Yamaguchi reassured himself. In fact, Yamaguchi was now walking to the History of Magic classroom where the Slytherins and Hufflepuff’s had their last class. The four Houses swapped off on their last free period with Slytherin and Hufflepuff having the last class on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday free while Ravenclaw and Gryffindor had History of Magic. On Tuesdays and Thursdays, it was the opposite. Because of this, Yamaguchi and Tsukishima swapped off on who was meeting who for the walk to dinner.

“Yamaguchi,” a voice called to his side. “Are you walking over to History of Magic?”

Yamaguchi looked over to see Yachi, catching up from beside him.

“Yeah,” answered Yamaguchi. “You, too?”

“Mhm, do you mind if I walk with you?”

“Go ahead,” responded Yamaguchi with a smile. “Why are you heading there?”

“Oh, I wanted to talk to Hinata and Kageyama about one of our Transfiguration essays.” Yachi paused. “Well, more remind them that we have it.”

Yamaguchi frowned. “I thought that they were doing fairly well in that class?”
“They are,” Yachi reassured. “They both get the practical side really quickly, especially Hinata. But...well, they can both be a tiny bit forgetful.

Privately, Yamaguchi thought that the only thing that fully stayed in their memory was each and every obscure Quidditch fact that they had ever picked up.

“That’s really nice of you to help them,” Yamaguchi commented to Yachi.

“Well...” Yachi blushed. “They’re my friends, you know? They’re both always so nice to me, even if Kageyama is a little bit growly. I just want to help them back. That’s what friends do, right?”

I’m probably not the best person to ask, Yamaguchi stopped himself from saying. For all of his life, Yamaguchi had only had Tsukishima as a friend. He couldn’t even imagine growing up without his one friend.

But, then again, Yamaguchi mused. Maybe she can. Yamaguchi knew that Yachi came from a wizarding family like him; but, he couldn’t remember seeing her at any of the gatherings for wizarding children. In fact, even at Hogwarts, he hadn’t seen her talk to many people besides Hinata and Kageyama. It’s possible, Yamaguchi realized, that they were her first friends.

“Right,” Yamaguchi reassured her. If nothing else, Hinata seemed like the type of person to make friends fast and never let go. Maybe, Yachi needed someone like that.

Yachi smiled at him and they continued walking, with a few interspersed comments, to the History of Magic classroom.

When they got there, the class had already let out and Yamaguchi heard loud arguing.

“Finally,” Tsukishima commented when he saw him. “Let’s get out of here before the two idiots get us all in trouble.”

“What-” started Yamaguchi before Tsukishima grabbed his arm and dragged him in the way fo the Great Hall. Yamaguchi briefly looked back to see Hinata and Kageyama in one of their usual bickering matches.

Ah, Yamaguchi realized before turning with Tsukishima and heading for dinner.

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Kageyama is being SO STUPID, Hinata thought angrily. The two had started off discussing a Quidditch strategy that Bokuto had briefly mentioned last practice. Kageyama had commented absently that Hinata might make a better distraction than an actual chaser. Hinata had taken offense...vehemently.

“I’M JUST AS MUCH A PLAYER AS EVERYONE ELSE!” yelled Hinata.

“I NEVER SAID YOU WEREN’T” Kageyama argued back.

“Um, you guys,” Hinata heard Yachi say to the side.

“YOU SAID ALL I AM IS A DISTRACTION!” responded Hinata angrily.

“NO, I DIDN’T!” retorted Kageyama, before muttering to the side “an annoyance more than anything.”
“I’M NOT ANNOYING! YOU’RE ANNOYING!”

“Hinata? Kageyama?” Yachi asked, looking frantically between the two.

“YOU’RE THE MOST ANNOYING PERSON EVER!” Kageyama told him.

“UGH, I AM NOT! YOU ARE! ALL YOU EVER DO IS GROWL AT PEOPLE WHO ARE TRYING TO BE NICE TO YOU! YOU’RE NEVER GOING TO MAKE ANY FRIENDS LIKE THAT!”

Kageyama growled and lunged himself at Hinata. “TAKE THAT BACK!”

“NO!” Hinata yelled and the two eleven year olds rolled on the ground, grappling without doing any serious damage.

“You guys?” Yachi called nervously. Both were too trapped in their own argument to hear her.

“HEY? WHAT’S GOING ON?” a new voice called, followed by footsteps.

“YOU’RE SO STUPID!” Kageyama yelled, finally managing to get back on his feet.

“Guys!”

“NO, YOU ARE!” bellowed Hinata, getting to his feet, too.

“GUYS!” Yachi finally yelled.

“What?” The two turned and screamed at her.

Yachi looked nervously at the two before her lip started to wobble and her eyes began to fill with tears. She turned quickly and bolted down the hall.

Hinata and Kageyama looked at each other in surprise. Hinata felt a strong twist in his gut. He directed it at Kageyama. “Great, you just make Yachi cry!”

“I made Yachi cry?” responded Kageyama, angrily.

“Yeah-” Hinata cut off as both he and Kageyama got whacked in the head from behind.

The two turned to see a furious Gryffindor third year.

“What do you two think you’re doing making one of my first years cry?” asked the teen murderously.

“Um,” Hinata and Kageyama responded.

“I don’t think we’ve met,” the teen continued, exuding an aura of power and intimidation. “My name is Daichi Sawamura and I try to watch out for my House. How do you think it makes me feel when I see one of my first years crying?”

“Um,” the two answered again.

“So, I want to know exactly what. What did my first year do to make you yell at her?”

Daichi paused, obviously waiting for an answer.

“It was an accident,” Hinata told him quickly. “Me and Kageyama were arguing over...something
stupid. Yachi was just trying to stop us. We…” Hinata trailed off, ashamed. “She was just trying to help us.”

Next to him, Kageyama also looked deeply uncomfortable.

“So, what I’m hearing is that my first years stepped in the middle of your fight, tried to get you to stop, and you two yelled at her?” asked Daichi, incredulously.

“Yes,” Hinata and Kageyama told him, miserably.

Daichi watched the two and allowed them to stew in their guilt for a bit longer.

Finally, he sighed. “I accept that this was an accident.” He met both of their eyes and Hinata was sharply reminded of a predator hunting his prey. “A one-time accident. I know that both of you are Yachi’s friends…which is also why I know that you two will immediately apologize to her when you see her again. And, after you have begged for her forgiveness, we will see if I need to have another talk with you. Do you understand?”

“Yes, sir.” the two answered the teen immediately.

Daichi almost gave a small smile. “Dismissed.”

Hinata and Kageyama quickly made their way away from Daichi and to search for their friend.

Hinata felt a terrible, awful guilt pooling in his stomach. He can’t believe he yelled at Yachi. Yachi?! When she was always so nice to him and reminded him of his homework and helped him learn about the wizarding world.

Other than Kageyama--who was sorta kinda almost maybe a friend--Hinata had never yelled at a friend before. Told them off if they were being rude or too hard on themselves, sure. But yell at them because of his own anger, Hinata thought he would never.

Hinata glanced at Kageyama and saw that he also seemed like he was going through an internal struggle. Hinata waited a while before speaking.

“When we find her, we’ll immediately apologize, right?”

Kageyama nodded instantly.

Hinata hesitated. “Ugh, I can’t believe I yelled at her. What kind of Hufflepuff treats his friends like that?”

Kageyama looked taken aback for a second before his face kind of crumpled. His eyebrows furrowed, his scowl deepened, and Kageyama looked distinctly miserable.

“Um, Kageyama?” Hinata asked, somewhat concerned. “Are you alright? I’m sure if we show Yachi we’re really, really sorry that she’ll be our friend again.”

Now, it was Kageyama’s turn to hesitate. “It’s just that…Oikawa…he, he never would have believed me…even if I did apologize.”

Hinata was not sure if the comment was meant for him or if Kageyama was trying to convince himself.

“Umm,” Hinata finally responded. “I, um, I didn’t have a lot of friends at the orphanage. But…I know if that they made a mistake…and apologized and felt really bad for it…well, I think I’d
forgive them...even, even, if it was something really bad, you know?”

Kageyama didn’t answer and, if anything, looked even deeper in thought. Hinata made the rare decision to stay quiet.

The two trudged on and still didn’t find Yachi. Finally, they decided that she might have doubled back or something to go to dinner. They both headed for the Great Hall, hoping to find her there.

On their way, they heard two older Ravenclaw girls talking.

“Did you see that first year crying in the bathroom?” asked one of them.

“No, where was it?” the second one responded.

“First floor, I saw her run in on my way back from Potions.”

“Did you check on her?”

“I thought about it but,” the girl shrugged, “sometimes it’s better to just let them have their moment to cry their heart out, you know?”

The other girl nodded. “I hope she’s okay.”

The two walked off and Hinata looked quickly over to Kageyama.

“Kageyama, that has to be Yachi! Let’s go find her!” He turned and started to walk out before Kageyama caught his arm.

“We can’t,” Kageyama told him. “Did you hear what they said. She’s in the bathroom. The girl’s bathroom. We can’t go in there.”

“Then what do you want to do?” Hinata demanded.

Kageyama sighed. “I think it’s better to just wait for her to come to dinner. Then, we can ask if she has a moment to talk.”

As much as Hinata wanted to immediately find her and apologize, he admitted that Kageyama had a point. He begrudgingly nodded and the two walked over to the Hufflepuff table.

“Hey!” called Inuoka brightly. “You two finally made it. Did you get lost or something?”

“Yes,” responded Hinata, absently. He really didn’t feel that hungry. Grabbing a piece of ham from the table, he mainly prodded and nibbled on it as dinner commenced. Looking over, he saw Kageyama doing much the same. The rest of the table had apparently picked up that something was wrong with the two and directed conversation around them. Every few minutes, Hinata would look over to the Gryffindor table to see if Yachi had arrived. Halfway through dinner and Yachi still hadn’t showed up.

Hinata sighed. He didn’t know how he’d stomach it if he had to wait until the next day to apologize.

Suddenly, a loud boom echoed through the Great Hall causing the tables to shake and the floating candles to flicker ominously.

Conversation in the hall came to a stop as students looked around, shooting each other concerned glances. Another boom sounded from somewhere outside the hall. The students and teachers
listened closely for the source. Soon, Hinata could just make out what sounded like footsteps quickly making their way to the Great Hall.

Professor Takinoue soon was seen bounding through the entrance. He came to a stop halfway through the hall and put his hands on his knees, panting.

“Collapse…” he panted as the students listened close to hear. “A hall...collapsed...on the first floor...I saw it...on my way to dinner.”

“STUDENTS,” announced Headmaster Ukai, “stay in the Great Hall while some of the professors investigate. Prefects, check to make sure that all of your House in present.”

Ukai quickly turned to the rest of the faculty and pulled them into a discussion. Students frantically got up and headed for their prefects.

“Kageyama,” Hinata whispered frantically. “Yachi’s still on the first floor! She could be hurt!”

Kageyama’s eyes widened.

“We need to go find her!” Hinata told him.

After a moment’s hesitation, Kageyama nodded and the two slipped out amongst the chaos of the Great Hall.

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Yachi didn’t know if she had ever been more terrified. What she did know was that it was dark and cramped and she very very badly wanted to be at home.

Yachi’s life at home was a solitary existence. Her father dead since she was a child. Her mother closed off, both figuratively and often literally within her office. With her anxiety, Yachi never seemed to quite fit in with others her age--too unnerving, too different.

But, there was a lake outside of her house and almost every evening Yachi would go to the shore and watch the sunset. Watching the gold and orange hues and feeling the grass between her toes, Yachi’s mind settled and for a few minutes--just a few--Yachi felt normal.

Now, scrunched down in the dark small space that used to be a bathroom stall, Yachi desperately thought of that lake.

Yachi whimpered. Why hadn’t she just gone ahead to dinner like everyone else. She could have seen Hinata and Kageyama and maybe apologized for bothering them earlier. They might’ve even forgiven her and let her hang out with them again.

When the two had first yelled at her, Yachi had felt scared. But then the shame creeped in. Who was she to bother them? Some nervous anxious girl that they had just met a few months ago? Why would they want her as a friend?

Yachi couldn’t help it when she felt tears gathering and quickly ran to the bathroom before they could see more. She didn’t know how long she had spent crying and feeling sorry for herself. When she finally decided to pull herself together and head down to the Great Hall, she had barely made it out of the bathroom when she felt the walls start to tremble. She quickly ran back to the stall and barely made it in when the walls collapsed.
Luckily, the stall’s wall had fallen at an angle and was shielding Yachi from any of the damage. Unluckily, chunks of rubble had fallen on the other sides and trapped her in.

_I wonder if anyone has even noticed I’m missing_, thought Yachi miserably. She closed her eyes and thought of the lake and her first few weeks of school with a boy who smiled like sunshine and another with a fierce face that hid what Yachi believed was a kind heart.

“Yachi?”

Yachi opened her eyes as she thought she heard her name. She still couldn’t see anything from outside the rubble.

“Yachi?” another voice called out.

“H-hello,” Yachi responded, raising her voice.

“Kageyama, I think I hear her!”

Yachi was pretty sure that was Hinata’s voice.

“Hinata?” Yachi called back.

“YACHI!” shouted Hinata. “We can hear you! We’re just on the other side of the rubble!”

“Y-you are?” asked Yachi, scared to hope. “Who all are you with?”

“It’s just me and Kageyama,” answered Hinata. “We’re trying to figure out how to get you out.”

Yachi felt a brief rush of overwhelming joy. She was going to get out.

“Hinata,” she heard what had to be Kageyama call hesitantly.

She didn’t hear anything for about a minute before Hinata answered with a nervous note.

“Um, Yachi, there’s a bit of a, uh, a bit of a problem.”

“What’s wrong?” Yachi asked anxiously.

“Uh, it’s, it’s the rocks on the lower part. They look a bit...um...Kageyama’s says they look a bit unstable. We don’t know how long it’s going to hold up.”

Yachi listened and heard the rocks shift eerily.

_If they fall, Yachi thought with an odd sense of serenity brought on by panic. There’s no where I can go. They’ll crush me._

“Geeze,” she heard Hinata say from the other side. “Yachi, don’t worry, we know some of the teachers are coming. I can stay here with you while Kageyama goes to get them.”

Yachi was just about to respond before she heard a loud rumble followed by a screech of metal. The stall wall that was protecting her slid a foot, causing Yachi to scream.

“YACHI?! YACHI, ARE YOU OKAY?!” yelled Hinata.

“I-I’m fine,” shouted Yachi. “The wall holding off the rubble just fell a bit.”

“Yeah, some of the supporting rocks just broke.” Hinata told her with a panicked edge to his voice.
“Yachi, everything is shifting. Kageyama went to go get the teachers but I don’t know if it will hold. Do you want me to try and get you out.”

Yachi didn’t know much about building structures but she knew that Hinata helping was just as likely to cause it to break down faster as to get her out.

She closed her eyes. “Yes, do it!”

She heard Hinata frantically start moving a few feet away.

“I’m checking the rocks before I move them to try and make sure it doesn’t fall.”

Yachi nodded even though she knew Hinata wouldn’t see. She felt tears slide down her face.

“I think I…” Hinata trailed off and suddenly light broke through to Yachi.

“Hinata! Hinata! I’m through here! I can see your hand!”

“You can?” Hinata moved his face down to the opening and Yachi gave a breathless laugh.

“Oh, Yachi, just hold on. I’m going to try to make a bigger opening so you can get through.”

She saw Hinata bend over and move another rock, allowing more light in. Yachi thought that with a few more she might be able to climb through.

Suddenly, the rocks shifted again and started to fall.

“HINATA!” screamed Yachi.

“YACHI!” she saw Hinata reach into his robes as the stall wall above her creaked and started to move down rapidly.

“Wingardium Leviosa”

The wall stopped.

Yachi looked up terrified. “Hin-Hinata?”

“I-I think I stopped it.” Hinata told her with an obvious strain in his voice. “But, but I don’t know how long I can hold it.

Yachi met Hinata’s eyes through the small opening and she saw sweat run down his forehead as he maintained the spell, holding up what had to be a large section of what used to be the castle’s bathroom wall.

Yachi started quickly dragging heavy rocks out from the opening, making the opening bigger and bigger.

“Yachi, I really don’t know how much longer this spell can last,” Hinata told her through his teeth.

Yachi had just barely gotten a big enough opening when the rubble started to shift under Hinata’s spell.

“YACHI!” a new voice called out and Yachi felt arms wrap around her, dragging her out just as Hinata’s spell broke and the rubble crashed down.
Yachi found herself on the remaining bathroom tile with Kageyama’s arms around her and Hinata panting to her side.

“Are you okay,” Kageyama asked her as both got to their feet.

Yachi nodded, tears still running down her face.

“Oh, my,” Yachi heard a soft voice exclaim from behind her. She turned to see Professor Takeda examine the rubble where Yachi had been a few seconds ago.

“Merlin’s balls,” swore Professor Ukai to Takeda’s side. “You all could have been killed.”

“Indeed you could have,” announced Headmaster Ukai, coming around his grandson’s side. “Just what were you three thinking?” He looked at Hinata and Kageyama. “Sneaking out from the Great Hall under an emergency warning?” The two hung their heads before he swung over to Yachi. “And, Ms. Hitoka Yachi, exactly what were you doing out of the Great Hall at dinner time?”

“I-” Yachi started.

“It was our fault,” Hinata interrupted while Kageyama nodded adamantly.

“We yelled at her before dinner and she was upset,” Hinata looked shyly at Yachi. “We tried to find her before dinner to apologize and heard that she had came here.”

Yachi blushed. “But, but, I was just being, um, dramatic.” Yachi told the headmaster. “Hinata and Kageyama saved me...even though they didn’t have to. Without them, I’d be...I’d be dead.”

“Of course, we saved you,” Kageyama told her, regaining a bit of his scowl.

“Yeah,” said Hinata. “We’re your friends. We’ll always be here for you.”

_Oh, Yachi realized absently. That’s what friends do._

Headmaster Ukai looked between the three of them. “While it’s nice that you seemed to have all learned something...I suppose I can not take off points for being absent for dinner.”

All three of them gave a sigh of relief.

“Unfortunately, well intentioned or not, all three of you did put yourself in immediate and grave danger by disobeying the rules and going into a known dangerous situation. Therefore, 20 points off to both Mr. Hinata and Mr. Kageyama for breaking emergency protocol and actively going into a dangerous situation.”

Hinata and Kageyama deflated.

“Sir?” Yachi protested.

Headmaster Ukai rolled his eyes. “And 10 points each for requesting a teachers help and for saving a fellow student. Now, if all three of you would go with your Heads of Houses back to the dorms, maybe I can see what made this hall collapse in the first place.”

Professors Ukai and Takeda ushered the three down the hall and to the dorms.

“Oh, and Mr. Hinata,” called the Headmaster. “That was an impressive use of a levitation charm. Please, meet me in my office tomorrow at 8 a.m.”
Yachi saw Hinata nod slightly confused. The three headed back to the dorms with Hinata and Yachi regaling Kageyama with what he missed while Kageyama detailed his frantic search for the teachers.

Maybe somewhere in another world, three eleven year olds would need something else to secure a friendship. A dragon, perhaps. Maybe a pack of Cornish pixies. Possibly, even a twelve foot mountain troll. But here, in this world, for these three eleven year olds, saving each other from a magical enchanted rock slide was evidence enough.

Chapter End Notes

Hope you enjoyed! Next chapter will be posted Monday at the latest.
Hinata sat in Transfiguration class and tried his best to not let his mind wander. It admittedly wasn’t going that well.

After the incident with the falling bathroom wall, the three first years had immediately become the talk of the school. Once they had returned to their dorms, Bokuto had instantly pounced on Kageyama and Hinata and demanded to know where they had been. The two ended up telling the story to the entire Hufflepuff dorm and apparently, in Gryffindor, Yachi had haltingly told hers. The entire story spread like wildfire with details changing and distorting until one version had Hinata holding up the wall for an hour while Kageyama crawled through meters and meters of debris.

With the buzz surrounding the school, Yachi had taken to using Kageyama and Hinata as a shield—going everywhere with them, even more so than before. The three now spent almost every moment together, changing between Hufflepuff and Gryffindor tables at meals. The scary third year Daichi had even given them a supportive nod once!

Now, a couple of weeks after the incident, attention had finally died down. In a lot of ways, Hinata was glad for the support—it seems like his House wasn’t even annoyed at the massive loss of House points Kageyama and Hinata had received. In most other ways, he was rather relieved for it to be over. As Kageyama and Yachi were both leery of social interaction, Hinata had become the main contact point between the trio and the rest of the school. Sure, he had gotten to meet and talk to a number of people; but, he felt oddly uncomfortable in the center spotlight. After all, the only thing he had done was hold up a wall! Yachi was the one that had faced certain danger and Kageyama the one who had pulled her out in the last second.

Hinata would be happy to go back to focusing on Quidditch. Especially if it meant no more meetings with the Headmaster.

Hinata shivered. The meeting with the Headmaster had been...odd. When he had gotten to the office, the Headmaster had told him to sit down and looked at him for what felt like ages.

“You’re the one from Privet Orphanage, correct?” the Headmaster finally asked.

“Um, yes, sir.” Hinata had replied, trying not to fidget in his chair.

“Hmm,” remarked the Headmaster and continued his stare.

“That was an impressive levitation spell.” commented Headmaster Ukai without any inflection. “There’s a reason most first years start off with feathers. Even more impressive with how long you held it.”

“Um, thank you? I really just panicked and was trying to help Yachi.” Hinata told him.

The Headmaster gave a considering nod. He met Hinata’s eyes and Hinata felt a shiver up his spine. “Helping a friend is an admirable task.”

A silence fell again as Headmaster Ukai looked down at his papers. “Almost all of your teachers have commented that you are an inordinately powerful wizard.” He looked up at Hinata again.
“Thank you, sir.” Hinata finally settled on.

“It’s not a compliment,” Headmaster Ukai told him. “Power in and of itself is never something to be proud of, nor is it something to admire. What is admirable is what someone chooses to do with it.”

This time, when the Headmaster met his eyes, Hinata felt the full power of his gaze like a physical force.

“The question that you should be focusing on,” continued the Headmaster, “is exactly what you intend to do with yours.”

Hinata open and closed his mouth again, unsure what to say.

Headmaster Ukai waited for another moment. “You are dismissed, Mr. Hinata.”

In the present, Hinata shook his head. *Transfiguration, focus on Transfiguration. Do not think about weird meetings that make you feel oddly depressed. Think about Transfiguration class.*

“And class is dismissed for today,” Professor Takeda announced.

*Darn it!* Hinata gathered up his things and followed Yachi and Kageyama out the door.

“I’ll meet up with you after Quidditch lessons,” Yachi told them and headed down to the pitch.

“Lucky her,” sighed Hinata wistfully. Since making the team, both Kageyama and Hinata were exempted from Quidditch. In fact, Hinata was sure he had heard Professor Oiwake mutter “good riddance, the two can break their necks on their own if they want” as he signed off on their paperwork.

While Yachi got to go to wonderful and amazing Quidditch practices, Hinata was still stuck in gloomy Potions with Kageyama. Though his weekly tutoring with Suga was definitely helping him, Hinata still felt mostly lost in the class. He supposed that he could ask his lab partner; but, Lev seemed almost more lost than him. Kageyama, meanwhile, seemed to have a natural aptitude in it. Whenever Hinata asked him for homework help, Kageyama would give long wielding answers that usually went over Hinata—and sometimes even Yachi’s—head.

Kageyama and Hinata walked to the Potions classroom, filling the way with light hearted bickering. Almost to the class, Hinata spotted a familiar multi-colored head and told Kageyama to go on without him.

“Kenma,” called Hinata happily.

The metamorphmagus turned and his usual blank face took on a slightly pleased air.

“Shouyou,” replied Kenma.

“I haven’t seen you in like weeks,” Hinata complained. He took on an eager look. “Have you been planning some super cool move in Quidditch?”

Kenma shook his head. “Not on my part. Though, I do think Kuroo is working on something for the match against Gryffindor.”

Hinata nodded. The Hufflepuff team was all gearing up for their upcoming match against Slytherin. Apparently, Slytherin had just been beaten out by Gryffindor last year and still had a
chip on their shoulders.

“It’s actually been rather hard to find you alone lately,” commented Kenma.

“Oh, yeah,” Hinata rubbed the back of his head. “Everyone keeps coming up to me to ask me about the whole rock slide thing. You heard about it?” Kenma nodded.

“I think they should stop asking me soon. I mean it was exciting and all after it happened. But, during, I don’t if I’ve ever been so scared in my life.” Kenma tilted his head. “People often forget that heroics are not quite as fun in the moment.”

Hinata nodded back. “Mostly, I just wanted to help Yachi.” Kenma gave what might in certain lights have been a smile. “I’m glad you ended up being able to help your friend.”

Hinata smiled back. “Thanks, Kenma. You always know what to say!” He looked down at his watch. “I gotta go to class. Hey, I’ll make sure to cheer for you in the game this weekend.” Kenma grimaced, causing Hinata to laugh.

Hinata started to head off in the direction of class.

“Hinata,” called out Kenma. Hinata turned back to his friend.

“Please try to avoid the heroics next time. You had a lot of people worried about you when they announced you weren’t in the Great Hall.”

Hinata nodded, somewhat abashed.

“Don’t worry, Kenma. I think I’m going to try to avoid heroics for at least the rest of the year.”

---

Dachi liked to think he was a fairly calm man...or, er, well teen. Dachi liked to think he was a fairly calm teen. He tried to watch out for his House, especially the younger years. He liked to think he appeared friendly and easy going. He worked hard on the Quidditch team. And, no matter what Asahi might say, he was absolutely sure he did not intimidate the younger students...well, maybe only if they deserved it.

And Daichi, as the fairly calm teen he was, did not consider himself to be paranoid. No, if there was something going on, then there was something going on and Daichi would find out about it. If there was not something going on, then Daichi would...well, then Daichi wouldn’t worry about it.

All of this being said, there was something going on with Noya and Tanaka.

Daichi had known the two since even before they arrived at Hogwarts. His mom had gone to school with Noya’s parents and Tanaka’s uncle and he still remembered them vaguely from various functions that wizarding parents held to socialize their children as most wizarding children were home-schooled. And, for all the time Daichi had known them, the two had never been as quiet and unobtrusive as they had been this school year.
Something was up. Daichi knew it. Now, Daichi just had to find out what it was.

Going to Ennoshita had been no help as, after Daichi had asked, the younger boy had just shrugged and looked away with a vaguely guilty air. Repeated questioning of Ennoshita had similarly proven fruitless. Daichi was surprised. Normally, it was Ennoshita who would come to Daichi when something was up with his roommates.

He had talked it out with Asahi who had just muttered that maybe the two were growing up. Please, as if even Asahi believed that. When Daichi had told Asahi just that, Asahi had just shook his head and told Daichi that he was being paranoid.

Daichi glared and started muttering under his breath. He was not paranoid.

“Um, excuse me,” a voice asked, interrupting Daichi’s paranoid muttering.

Daichi looked up to the kind voice and angelic face of his Herbology partner.

“Oh, ah, sorry about that,” blurted Daichi, embarrassed.

“It’s fine,” Suga told him with a smile. “I was just going to warn you that you were about to cut off the bloom rather than the leave.”

Daichi looked down and realized that his shears were placed precariously around the bloom they were supposed to be nurturing.

“Ack, sorry about that,” Daichi apologized again.

“No worries,” Suga’s face took on a mischievous air. “You can go back to you muttering now.”

Daichi’s face took on a light blush. Oh, now, I’m definitely going to find out what those two are up to.

---

Rubbing his knee, Oikawa sat heavily on a stone bench far enough out of the range of the Duelling classroom. He rolled up his pants leg and winced. Apparently when he dodged that spell, he had hit the ground with a bit more force than intended.

“Let me help you,” remarked Iwaizumi, who had followed his friend after the class.

Oikawa rolled his eyes but let Iwaizumi continue.

“Tergeo,” recited Iwaizumi, clearing Oikawa’s scraped knee of blood.

Oikawa sighed and laid back on the bench. “Stupid shield charm.”

“It looked stronger this time and held up a bit longer,” commented Iwaizumi, sitting in the space left on the bench.

“Still not strong enough,” Oikawa responded pessimistically. “Sure, it will hold up under more of the minor spells now. But, one major spell and it’s gone.”

Iwaizumi frowned. “You’ve gotten better at dodging though.”
Oikawa gave a *hmm* in mild agreement.

“Have you asked any of the other professors for help?”

“No.” Oikawa shook his head. “They’ll just tell me to ask Professor Sora first.”

Iwaizumi looked at his friend. “So, have you still decided that there’s nothing you can do about him?” If there was one thing Iwaizumi knew, it was that Oikawa did not stay passive for long. Whatever his decision was it was going to be either be fiendishly clever and several moves beyond the opponent...or it was going to get both Oikawa and Iwaizumi into more trouble. But, Oikawa would act before too long. Passivity didn’t suit him.

“Actually…” Oikawa looked around the empty hallway. “Here, come with me back to the dorms.”

Iwaizumi quirked an eyebrow. “Oikawa, you do know I’m not *actually* in your house, right?”

Oikawa stood up and waved away Iwaizumi’s concern. “It’s still visiting hours and Matsu and Maki are both out late planning their next prank. The dorm should be empty.”

Iwaizumi sighed and got up to follow his friend into the dorm rooms he was absolutely sure he was not technically allowed to be in.

“Besides,” commented Oikawa almost absently. “You know my House likes you more anyway.”

Iwaizumi shrugged, but didn’t actually disagree. He didn’t want to get into a discussion about Oikawa’s relationship with his Housemates when his friend was already upset from Dueling class.

Oikawa led Iwaizumi down to the dungeons and to the damp stone wall that marked the entrance to the Slytherin House.

“Um, okay,” Oikawa said, turning to Iwaizumi. “So, you might, maybe not be allowed to be in here. But, here just hold still.”

“**Colovaria,**” said Oikawa, waving his wand. “There.”

Iwaizumi bent to look at his reflection in one of the knight’s armor. His hair had lightened to a mousy brown. All in all, it didn’t look like much of a change.

“That will keep you from being instantly recognized,” Oikawa told him. “Now, when I walk in, their attention is going to be drawn to me.” Oikawa paused. “A lot of the older students like to make a show of ignoring me; but, often pointedly ignoring something draws more attention to it than doing nothing would. If you follow about a minute behind me, everyone still should be focused on me and won’t give you a closer look.”

Iwaizumi gave him a skeptical look which Oikawa ignored.

“Ready?” asked Oikawa.

Iwaizumi sighed but nodded.

“Poise beyond measure,” Oikawa told the stone which slid open, revealing an entrance way.

“Just wait about half a minute, the wall shouldn’t close by then.” Oikawa told him before setting a purposeful stride through the entrance.

From the side of the wall, Iwaizumi noticed students look up and then studiously away with tense
Iwaizumi worked to keep his face expressionless and followed a measured distance behind Oikawa.

The plan worked surprisingly well with Iwaizumi making it up the dorm stairs to an empty hall without anyone stopping him.

Oikawa had stopped by a door and ushered Iwaizumi quickly inside. Iwaizumi looked around and took note of the four luxurious looking four post beds, one with light green drapes pulled around it. A fire gently roared to the side, combating the green glow coming from the floor to ceiling windows. Iwaizumi glanced out the window and took note of fish and an eel swimming by the dorm room.

“I still can’t believe your dorm room is actually underwater,” remarked Iwaizumi. “Doesn’t that ever get claustrophobic?”

Oikawa shrugged. “You get used to it in the first year. Now, come on.”

Oikawa led him to the bed furthest from the door and plopped on it, sitting with his legs criss crossed. Iwaizumi was oddly reminded of countless sleep overs from their summers and before Hogwarts.

Iwaizumi sat next to Oikawa on the bed before running his hands on the duvet. “Is this actual silk? How come you guys get actual silk?”

“Only the purest fabric for the purest House, of course,” commented Oikawa sardonically. “Stop getting distracted and listen to my plan!”

Iwaizumi rolled his eyes back but made a get on with it gesture.

“Alright, so, you know how that wall collapsed a few weeks ago?”

Iwaizumi shot him a look. “Yes, Oikawa, I was amazingly well informed enough to hear about the news that was announced to the entire Great Hall.”

“Iwa-chan, now is not the time for your snark,” chided Oikawa. “I think Professor Sora caused it.”

Iwaizumi was immediately at attention. “You what?”

Oikawa nodded. “Think about it. Hogwarts walls don’t just collapse. This castle is how many centuries old and not once has a wall collapsed for something short of major spell damage. I’ve been checking the old maintenance reports in the library. Sure, things have been knocked down as the castle expanded. But, not a single time has a wall suddenly fallen without cause.”

“Okay,” Iwaizumi agreed hesitantly. “But how do you connect this back to Professor Sora?”

“Well, first off, timing,” Oikawa commented. “He’s the only thing that’s changed from one year to the next.” Oikawa paused. “Well, except the first years, but I highly doubt any of them caused it even if apparently Kageyama and his little gang were involved after.”

Iwaizumi held off on commenting about Kageyama, instead focusing on the more important matter. “That’s still circumstantial. What more do you have?”

“Second,” Oikawa held up two fingers. “Why is someone like Professor Sora even here? He’s a world famous adventurer, right? Why randomly decide to teach? He’s not even ostensibly doing it for the press since reporting of it has been scattered and far between.”
“Weird,” Iwaizumi agreed. “But still doesn’t connect him to the wall.”

“Third,” Oikawa declared, triumphantly holding up the third finger. “He wasn’t in the Great Hall when the wall collapsed. All of the other teachers were there, except for Professor Nekomata who normally stays in the infirmary and Professor Takinoue who we all saw come in later.”

“Hmm,” Iwaizumi replied. “Still not exactly solid evidence. What do you think he was doing that caused the wall to fall?”

Oikawa deflated a bit. “That I don’t know. But, you have to agree that he seems a bit suspicious.”

“I don’t know, Oikawa,” responded Iwaizumi, thinking through the evidence. “I really want to agree with you and say that he’s plotting some kind of destruction of Hogwarts. But, that’s just it. I want to agree with. You sure you’re not just suspicious of him because he’s an asshole.”

“But he is an asshole,” Oikawa remarked bitterly. “And just because I want it to be him. Doesn’t mean it’s not him. We need to investigate further.”

“I might be able to help you with that,” commented a new voice, causing both Iwaizumi and Oikawa to jump.

“AGHhhaah, Suga,” Oikawa replied, turning his yell to a greeting at the last second. “When did you get here.”

“Oh, I was here the whole time.” Suga gave a soft smile. “It’s remarkable how few people check behind a bed curtain even if one shares a room with them.”

“Ahh,” responded Oikawa, looking to the now empty bed closest to the door. He then narrowed his eyes at Suga. “It’s almost as remarkable as how most people behind the curtain would choose to call out a greeting rather than continue to hiding behind it. Listening for something, Sugawara?”

Suga batted his eyes with a faux innocent look before waving the question away. “Anyway, I’m sure how I got here isn’t nearly as important to you as how much I heard.”

“And exactly how much is that?” asked Iwaizumi.

“Just that you two suspect a Hogwarts professor of purposely causing destruction to the school—a destruction, I might add, that nearly killed three students.” Suga pretended to think for a second. “Oh, and also that you two are planning to investigate him further which will almost certainly invade Professors Sora’s privacy and break probably a number of school rules.”

Iwaizumi and Oikawa looked at each other, silently evaluating how screwed they were.

“So, exactly what are you going to do with this information?” Oikawa finally asked.

“Hopefully, a lot,” replied Suga, keeping his smile. “I want in.”

---

Yamaguchi should have been back in his dorm by now. In the hour between visiting hours end and the call to bed for the the younger students, the Gryffindor common room was always at its loudest and busiest. Yamaguchi swore that the Hogwarts Express could have started to fly and barrel past the window without any one in the entire common room noticing. As such, Yamaguchi always
tried to get up to his dorm room before the end of visiting hours. Since his roommates were
generally all in the common room, it gave Yamaguchi a rare chance for peace and solitude.

Unfortunately, this night found Yamaguchi studying late in the library with Tsukishima and just
making it in before the end of visiting hours. Now, he was trying to navigate—with varying success-
passed what felt like the entirety of his house to make it to the sanctuary of his dorm. He
maneuvered to the stairs, barely avoiding being stepped on by one of the fifth years.

Okay, almost there...just a bit further and-- “oof!”

Yamaguchi ran into what felt like a solid mass of muscle at the top of the stairs and almost lost his
balance.

“S-sorry about that,” Asahi immediately apologized, reaching out to steady Yamaguchi. “I was
just--um, you haven’t happened to see Daichi have you?”

Yamaguchi shook his head, rubbing at his nose.

“Oh,” Asahi said with a disappointed air. “It’s just that I keep hearing these noises coming from
Noya and Tanaka’s room and I’m not quite sure what to do.”

“Um, would you like me to go check with you?” Yamaguchi asked uncertainly. Truthfully,
Yamaguchi tried to avoid that room as there always seemed to be the vague scent of smoke coming
from it along with strange sounds.

Asahi nodded. “That would be great. I just want to check that both of them are okay.”

Yamaguchi gave a brief nod in return and followed the third year down the hall.

Right as they got to the door, it slammed open and Tanaka bolted out while frantically patting
down what looked like small burns that had started all across his pants legs.

“Merlin,” cursed Noya from inside the dorm. “Tanaka, get back in before anyone sees--oh.”

Asahi immediately moved to try to help Tanaka; but, Yamaguchi was frozen looking into the
dorm.

Inside sat an aggrieved looking Ennoshita sitting on the bed, a shocked Noya standing halfway to
the door, and--and…

“Is that a dragon egg?! ” asked Yamaguchi incredulously.

Chapter End Notes

As always, thanks for reading! The next chapter will be posted Friday.
“Hinata, remember to add in the porcupine quills before you stir it five times clockwise,” patiently reminded Suga.

“Er, right,” Hinata laid down the stirrer and picked up the quills. Suga was teaching him how to make a Boil Cure, a potion that was known for its many ingredients and was favored by Professor Irihata on first year exams.

“So, why exactly does it matter what order you throw in the ingredients?” asked Hinata. “They’re all getting boiled down anyway.”

“Excellent question,” answered Suga, causing Hinata to smile at the praise. “Certain ingredients need a bit more time to let the magic seep in. For example, if you threw in the quills after stirring, then the magic would already be mostly ingrained in the potion and the quill’s properties wouldn’t mix in quite right.”

Suga smiled. “That’s just the basics of it. You don’t get into more of the theory behind potions making until fifth year. Interested in being a potions master, Hinata?”

Hinata scrunched his nose. “I think I’ll be good. I’ll just ask Kageyama if ever I need a potion. He loves them.”

Suga’s smile grew. “Well, every class always seems to have a few potions naturals.” He paused. “Speaking of Kageyama, how is Quidditch going?”

“Awesome,” responded Hinata enthusiastically. “We have our next game this weekend. Me and Kageyama have been practicing like every night.” He smiled, somewhat abashed. “Akaashi had to come out and stop us last night or we’d have forgotten our homework.”

“From what I saw in your game against Ravenclaw, the team has definitely improved since you’ve joined,” commented Suga, leaning down to look at the pink smoke coming off of the cauldron. “A bit dark, but still a success.

Hinata beamed.

“I think it’s time to finish it off. Wave your wand like this, Hinata.” Suga made a slightly tricky wand movement that Hinata struggled with but eventually imitated.

“The Slytherin match is Saturday, right?” asked Suga as he helped Hinata bottle the potion.

“Yep,” confirmed Hinata. “Me and Kageyama have this new move that’s going to be so cool. I start of on one side of the field and then it’s like SWOOM and BAM and then I can get the ball. But, Kageyama’s super excited about this other thing that Futakuchi is calling ‘The Decoy Strategy’. I think it’ll be alright but it won’t be as cool as the first thing.”

Suga nodded along even though he was pretty sure he only understood about half of that. “Listen, Hinata. You should be careful in the game. Slytherin is...well,” Suga sighed, “my House doesn’t exactly have a reputation as a nice team.”
Hinata waved his hand. “Bokuto already told us that they were angry about the House Cup match last year. But, I’m sure that we can still win with the new moves we’ve been working on.”

“That isn’t exactly what I meant,” said Suga. “Just, promise me you’ll all be careful, alright?”

Hinata shrugged. “I promise.”

---

Tsukishima Kei narrowed his eyes. “Is something wrong?”

Tsukishima’s best friend looked up from the porridge he had been staring at for three minutes straight. “Hmm? No! Of course not, why would you think something is wrong?”

Tsukishima glared as he watched Yamaguchi’s eyes dart from side to side.

“You mean other than the fact that that’s the third time you’ve zoned out just this breakfast?”

“Er, yeah, other than that,” Yamaguchi answered before shaking his head. “I mean I, ah, just haven’t been sleeping well. You know we’ve got that big Potions test coming up, right? I’m...really stressed.”

Tsukishima nodded, thinking this through. “Would you like me to help you in Potions? I’ve gotten O’s on the last three assignments.”

“No, no,” Yamaguchi hastily reassured. “I’m sure it will be fine. I just need to study more to make sure I’ve got all the terms down. Nothing you need to worry about, Tsuki.”

“We can always go over Potion terms tonight,” Tsukishima offered. “The library should be fairly empty on a Friday night.”

Yamaguchi shook his head. “I can’t tonight. I’m meeting with some of the guys from my dorm.”

Tsukishima thought he heard a trace of anxiousness in Yamaguchi’s voice. He restrained a frown.

“How are things going in Gryffindor? Still too loud?”

Yamaguchi gave a bark of too loud laughter. “Yeah, things definitely aren’t quieting down…”

A suspicion was gathering in the very back of Tsukishima’s mind.

“Are you getting along with the other Gryffindorks?” he asked mildly.

“Hmm?” asked Yamaguchi, absently biting his nails. “Oh, um, yeah. Actually, I’ve been hanging out with some of the older students. They’re really, ah, cool!”

Silence fell over the two for a long moment before Yamaguchi realized Tsukishima hadn’t responded.

“What about you, Tsuki? Are you getting along well in Slytherin?” questioned Yamaguchi, obviously making a concentrated effort to refocus his attention.

Tsukishima shrugged. “They’re alright. The older students tend to leave us alone and the ones in my dorm are fine enough,” he frowned, “well, except for Lev. Onaga and Kuguri are both quiet so they’re easy enough to room with. Lev’s loud and usually a disaster; but, I think saw Professor

At seeing Tsukishima’s disgusted face, Yamaguchi let out a laugh. Tsukishima noted he had seemed to calm down more.

“Don’t even joke,” Tsukishima told him. “Honestly, I’m not sure how he even got into Slytherin. He’s all ambition, no cunning.”

Yamaguchi tilted his head and looked thoughtful. “It could be he’s just cunning in other ways.” he gave a shrug. “Or maybe the hat put him in Slytherin so he could learn the cunning to match his ambitions.”

“Or maybe it’s an old hat and is bound to make at least a couple of mistakes every hundred years,” posed Tsukishima, raising an eyebrow.

“Don’t blame the hat just because you hate your roommate,” chided Yamaguchi with a smile.

Tsukishima smirked and the two went back to their food. Tsukishima was just about to ask Yamaguchi if he was planning to go to the Quidditch game when he noticed his friend look up and his eyes widen.

“I have to go and talk to some people about...a thing,” Yamaguchi said, quickly packing up his bag. “I’ll see you at lunch.”

Tsukishima nodded, internalizing his confusion at the abrupt exit. He watched as Yamaguchi went to the entrance of the Great Hall and pulled another student with spiky hair over to talk. The two plus a bald headed Gryffindor left the Great Hall. A few seconds later, a tall Gryffindor that looked to be at least a fifth year followed the three.

Tsukishima narrowed his eyes.

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“Yamaguchi! We’re going to miss breakfast,” Tanaka whined, once the four had gotten back to the Gryffindor dorms and into the second years’ dorm room.

“Who cares about breakfast?!” Yamaguchi near yelled. He lowered his voice to an intense whisper. “You guys are keeping a dragon in your dorm room.”

“Just an egg right now,” Noya commented absently. “It shouldn’t hatch until sometime over the winter break.”

Yamaguchi was not reassured and Asahi was looking panickedly at the egg as if it might hatch early.

Yamaguchi folded his arms. “You told us last night that you’d give us answers today.”

Tanaka gave a sigh and looked to Ennoshita, still sitting on his bed. Ennoshita gave him a glare that clearly communicated ‘you got yourself into this, you get yourself out’.

“So,” Tanaka began. “Last summer, Noya and I were going through Diagon Alley.”
“My parents and Tanaka’s uncle stayed at the Leaky Cauldron to talk and let us shop alone as long as we stayed together,” Noya added.

“And we were *totally* planning to stay in Diagon Alley,” commented Tanaka quickly. “But...well...”

“Knockturn Alley has cooler stuff,” finished Noya.

“You two went to Knockturn Alley *by yourselves*!” asked Asahi alarmed.

“Weelllll, I mean not for very long,” answered Noya, looking slightly abashed.

“Yeah,” agreed Tanaka. “I mean if we were gone too long, my uncle and Noya’s parents would have gotten curious.”

Asahi looked like he wanted to comment further but Tanaka waved him off.

“Anyway,” Tanaka continued. “So we were in Knockturn Alley, completely minding our own business, when we saw...”

“A poacher,” Noya said with a note of deep disgust.

“Exactly,” Tanaka replied. “Anyway, we watched him for a bit and saw that he was trying to sell off this dragon egg.”

“Probably took the whole nest from some poor dragon mother,” said Noya darkly. “Just to sell it to some spoiled pureblood.”

Tanaka nodded. “Anyway, then the poacher got into a fight with the owner of the store he was in front of”

“And the table got knocked over” Noya explained.

“And the egg slid off,” added Tanaka.

“And landed right in front of us,” finished Noya. “It was fate. We had to save the egg.”

Ennoshita pinched his nose and sighed.

“How did you hide it from your parents?” asked Yamaguchi.

“Oh, that part was easy,” Noya answered, waving his hand. “They don’t check our school stuff too closely ever since we tried to start a Flobberworm nesting community.”

“But why did you bring it to *Hogwarts*?” questioned Yamaguchi with a hint of desperation.

“Because we’re going to raise it, of course” replied Noya as if it was the most obvious thing in the world.

Asahi had gone a few shades too pale. With a trembling voice, he asked “you two want to keep and raise a dragon in *your dorm room*?”

Yamaguchi had reached a conclusion. “You two are insane.”

“Obviously, we wouldn’t raise it in the dorm room,” Tanaka replied, offended.
'Yeah, once it hatches, we can move it to the Forbidden Forest,” explained Noya. Noya and Tanaka high five.

“That’s...that’s a terrible plan?!” yelled Yamaguchi. He whirled around to face Ennoshita. “Why did you agree to this?”

Ennoshita sighed. “They can’t move it.”

“What do you mean they can’t move it,” demanded Yamaguchi.

Noya took on an educational tone. “Once a dragon egg has started gestation, it cannot be moved to any great lengths until hatched. To do so would greatly endanger the gestating egg.” He finished in a tone that heavily conveyed that endangering the dragon would not be an option.

“I didn’t find out about it until after they had started the gestation fire,” explained Ennoshita. He glared at both Noya and Tanaka. “If I had, I would definitely have informed Daichi or Professor Takeda.”

“You two are going to get expelled,” stated Yamaguchi with a kind of mournful finality. “We’re all going to get expelled just for knowing about it and not informing anyone.”

“No one’s going to find out about it,” Noya reassured, looking slightly guilty.

“Yeah, if Daichi hasn’t found out yet, then I guarantee no one else is suspicious,” Tanaka answered.

“Once it’s two months old, we can move it from the dorm room to the forest and then, even if they do find out, it’s not like they can prove we’re the ones who brought it,” Noya explained logically.

“What are you going to do if someone hears a newborn dragon,” asked Asahi, furrowing his brow.

“Oh, don’t worry about that,” answered Noya. “After you found out last night, we set up like twenty silencing charms all around the dorm. We’re working on booby trap ones today.”

“We probably should have set them up earlier when we were trying to manage the fire,” commented Tanaka, ruefully.

Noya shrugged. “Live and learn.”

“We’re doomed,” said Yamaguchi, sitting heavily on the floor. “We’re all doomed.”

“Listen,” said Noya, sitting on the floor next to him. “Even if—for some reason—we do get caught, Tanaka and I will take the full blame. The worst you’ll get is a few months of detention for not immediately telling a teacher. And,” Noya gestured to the egg, “look at her, we couldn’t let her be snatched up by some rich wizarding lord, who would probably only chain her up so he could show all his rich friends his exotic pet.”

Yamaguchi sighed. “Fine, I’ll keep your secret.”

Noya and Tanaka beamed and started eagerly thanking him. Yamaguchi, in an oddly Tsukishima-like moment, could already feel he was going to regret this.

“Oh, by the way,” Noya asked. “Are you interested in egg sitting?”

Yep, he was already regretting it.
“Do you think we can really trust him,” Iwaizumi asked as the two friend walked to the library late Friday night.

“No,” answered Oikawa, keeping his voice at a harsh whisper. “I emphatically do not think we can really trust him. Koushi Sugawara is without a doubt the sneakiest asshole I have ever met and I’m in Slytherin.”

Iwaizumi raised an eyebrow and gestured for Oikawa to continue.

Oikawa sighed. “He’s too quiet. I’ve lived in the same dorm with him for two whole years and I still don’t think he’s told me anything about himself other than his name. Also, he looks way too innocent for anyone who get sorted into Slytherin which means he has to be hiding at least something. Case in point, listening in on us from behind a curtain. Why? Was he waiting to hear something?”

Iwaizumi shrugged but didn’t comment.

“And...” Oikawa fiddled mildly with his robe cuff. “Maki and Matsu told me he comes from a really snobby pureblood family so he probably hates me already.” Oikawa sighed before Iwaizumi could comment. “Unfortunately, we don’t really have a choice on whether or not to trust him. He heard us talking and, now, if we want to get anywhere with Sora, we have to let him in.”

Oikawa shot Iwaizumi a smirk. “Besides if he works along with us, he implicates himself just as much as us. He can’t tell on us.”

The two entered the deserted library and immediately spotted Suga beside a shelf dedicated to Potions making. He gave them a wide smile, causing Oikawa to restrain an eye roll.

“Well, don’t you look refreshing,” commented Oikawa. “Ready to look into the dark dirty details of our dear professor?”

“Always,” replied Suga and led the two back to the far corner of the library where a study table sat, hidden between the shelves. The three sat and Suga quickly cast a Muffliato Charm.

“It never hurts to be prepared,” Suga commented with a shrug. “So, where were you two thinking of beginning?”

“Wait,” said Oikawa. “How do we know that we can trust you? Why should we let you in on this if we don’t know you’re going to run to a teacher the moment you get something incriminating?”

“You mean beside the fact that I didn’t give you a choice and I already have something incriminating?” asked Suga.

“Pft,” Oikawa bluffed. “If students got in trouble for disliking a teacher, than everyone one would have detention every weekend.”

“I think it goes a little bit beyond disliking when you’re accusing him of endangering the castle,” commented Suga mildly.

Oikawa and Iwaizumi continued to look at him for an answer.
Suga sighed. “Well, largely because I agree with Oikawa about his motives. It doesn’t make sense why he would choose to teach at Hogwarts this year. His credentials have never shown an interest in teaching and, in fact, I’m pretty sure he prefers jobs that are always on the move.” Suga tapped his chin thoughtfully. “The public relations benefits don’t seem to be a major appeal either. As Oikawa mentioned, he hasn’t been in the news significantly more this year than he was previously. Also, based on interviews, Sora has never seemed to much like press attention. I heard that he’s turned down *Witch Weekly’s* Most Eligible the past three years before accepting. It’s not like we have anything particularly special going on at Hogwarts this year. It just doesn’t make sense why he’d abruptly go from world traveling to teaching at a school, even one as prestigious as Hogwarts.”

Oikawa seemed somewhat appeased that at least one person valued his questions on Sora’s motive. Iwaizumi wasn’t convinced.

“And that’s it?” he asked. “You just thought it was weird he wanted to be a school teacher?”

Suga held Iwaizumi’s stare a second longer before giving an awkward grimace.

“And…” admitted Suga, “my parents were friends with him in school.”

“And that’s suspicious, why?” questioned Iwaizumi.

Suga gave him a bland look. “My parents don’t know very *nice* people.” Suga said in a tone that warned against further discussion.

An awkward moment passed before Iwaizumi shot a look to Oikawa. “Well, Oikawa, you started this. How are we going to go about investigating a professor?”

Oikawa sighed and pulled out a slim book from his school bag. “I started by looking up Sora’s school record when he was at Hogwarts. The library keeps a copy of every student who graduated since sometime in the 12th century. Sora graduated roughly thirty years ago from Slytherin, played as a Beater on the Quidditch team, served as Dueling captain in his seventh year, and was middle of the rankings in every subject except History of Magic and Defense.”

“What about after Hogwarts?” asked Suga.

Oikawa grimaced. “That’s where I need some help.” Reaching in his bag, Oikawa pulled out a second much heavier book. “This is one of the recall books the school keeps for old copies of the *Daily Prophet*.” He flipped it open.

At first glance, the recall book appeared like a heavy bound tome with surprisingly blank pages.

Oikawa tapped his wand on it. “Pull articles featuring Sora Takara.”

The boys watched as the pages immediately filled with print and pictures mirroring that of a *Daily Prophet* spread.

Iwaizumi let out a low whistle. “That’s a lot of articles.”

Oikawa shook his head and flipped to the front page of the book. He pointed to a line in the middle of the page.

“*Volume One of Seven?!*” demanded Iwaizumi. “There are seven volumes worth of articles about him?”

“Oh my,” breathed out Suga. “No wonder you needed help.”
“Not all of them are useful,” explained Oikawa. “Some of them just mention him appearing at different events or just discuss him in passing. But, still…” Oikawa shrugged. “We’ll have a lot to get through.”

Suga came around to the book and started flipping through the pages.

“The library has a number of copies,” Oikawa told them. “So we should all be able to--”

He cut off as a bang sounded from close by them followed by a swear.

Oikawa pulled out his wand and noted that Suga and Iwaizumi had done the same. Suga quickly cancelled the Muffliato charm.

“Who’s there?” demanded Oikawa. “We already heard you so there’s no use hiding.”

A moment passed before a sheepish Bukoto emerged from the shelves, holding a book and followed by a cocky looking Kuroo.

The three lowered their wands.

“Ugh, what are you two even doing in the library on a Friday night?” asked Oikawa.

“We could ask you the same question,” replied Kuroo, easily. “And with a Muffliato charm, too. That’s some advanced magic, Sugawara.”

Suga shrugged, unaffected.

“I was here to study with Akaashi,” responded Bokuto, awkwardly rubbing the back of his head. “But, I think I might have gotten the day wrong.”

“And I was here, accompanying my dear friend Bokuto and innocently checking out a book on Quidditch strategy,” Kurro said, holding up the mentioned book.

Oikawa let out a sigh. “Well, now, that that’s been handled. We should all probably just--”

“But,” Kuroo interrupted. “What should I see but two Slytherins and a Gryffindor acting awfully sneaky.” He looked between Suga and Oikawa. “Correct me if I’m wrong, but you two don’t normally hang out together, right?”

Neither of the Slytherins answered.

“And, of course, as a concerned student, I took it as my duty to make sure nothing untoward was going on.” Kurroo said, holding a hand dramatically to his chest. “And what do I find but the three choosing a table in a hidden section of the library and casting a Muffliato spell. Sounds like you three are trying to hide something.”

“Oh, I can see where that was confusing,” Suga answered with a sweet smile. “We’re not trying to hide anything. It’s just that well…” he shot Oikawa and Iwaizumi an apologetic look. “Professor Irihata asked me if I could tutor Oikawa and Iwaizumi in Potions since I’m top of the class in it.”

“Hmm,” mused Kuroo. “Convincing, except for the fact that Oikawa was best in our year the past two years running.”

“That’s why the secrecy,” Suga quickly explained. “Oikawa was embarrassed that he’s been struggling with the latest Potion’s experiment.”
“It’s the stupid gillyweed,” muttered Oikawa under his breath.

“Well, that would make sense,” admitted Kuroo. “Since you all are being so honest, I guess Bokuto and I better fess up to something, too.”

Kuroo reached under the study table and pulled off something stuck to the bottom. Oikawa looked closely but couldn’t see anything more than a slight shimmer.

Kuroo tapped his wand to it. “Revelio”

A long pink string looking thing appeared in his hands.

“I might’ve levitated an Extendable Ear under your table,” Kuroo confessed easily. He looked down at it. “Honestly, I don’t know why anyone hasn’t thought about using an Invisibility Spell on them before. Sure, there’s a bit of a shimmer but virtually undetectable otherwise.”

“Should’ve been a bloody Slytherin,” muttered Bokuto to his side.

Kuroo looked at the three shocked faces.

“So, let’s try this again. Investigating Professor Sora, are you?”

Another moment passed.

“No, absolutely not,” declared Oikawa, who had apparently snapped out about it. “Not another person can find out about this. Merlin, at this point, I should have just sent a bloody missive to the entire school.”

“If it helps I agree with you,” put in Kuroo and Bokuto nodded to his side.


Suga gave an amused smile. “I think what Oikawa means is ‘What made you two suspicious?’”

Kuroo shrugged while Bokuto and him walked around the table and took the remaining seats—ignoring Oikawa’s glare.

“Nothing really specific for me,” responded Kuroo. “Just a bad feeling.”

“A bad feeling?” asked Iwaizumi, leaning forward. “That’s all you’re going with?”

“Weelllll,” Kuroo drawled. “My bad feelings are a little bit more sensitive than other people’s.” He shifted in his chair. “My mom’s a bit of a Legilimens, not a full one but she can hear people’s thoughts as long as they’re not concerning her. I didn’t inherit the full gift, just get flashes of whether I can trust someone or not.” Kuroo frowned. “And Professor Sora...he makes my skin crawl.”

The three took this in before looking at Bokuto.

“I don’t think Akaashi likes him.” Bokuto answered.

“That’s all?” prodded Oikawa.

Bokuto nodded. “That’s all I need.”

“Either way,” Kuroo cut in. “We know about it now, we want in, and you have more work than
you three could possibly finish before the end of the year. So are we in or are we not?”

Iwaizumi shrugged, but nodded. Suga gave a small smile and inclined his head. The two looked at Oikawa.

Oikawa huffed. “Fine, the five of us will look into Professor Sora.” He turned to look at each of them. “But, I’m serious nobody else can know. The more people who know, the easier it will get back to him. And if he finds out, we’re screwed.”

The other four nodded seriously before Bokuto let out a big smile.

“This is awesome!” enthused Bokuto. “We totally need a code name! OH, we can call ourselves the Investigators’ Club! That would be so cool!”

“We are not calling ourselves the Investigators’ Club.”

Chapter End Notes

As always, hope you enjoy. The next chapter will be posted tomorrow (Saturday) actually as it is my birthday and that is my gift to myself. Also, I tend to write chapters ahead of what I post so I have plenty of time to edit and I am officially half way done with this story!
“Shouyou, are you sure you’re ready for the game against Slytherin?” asked Kenma, watching his friend shovel down eggs.

“Totally,” replied Hinata, while preparing another bite. “Kageyama and I have this awesome strategy worked out. I can’t wait for you to see it. You’re still coming, right?”

(Of course,) Kenma affirmed.

Earlier this morning, Yachi had told him that she had to do some homework first if she wanted to go to the game today and Kageyama had actually growled at him when he tried to wake him up early on a Saturday, so Hinata had gotten to eat breakfast with Kenma before the game.

“Besides I’m sure the Slytherin team isn’t that bad. They’re always super nice to me!” Lev had also decided to tag along. “Well, except that one time, a fifth year tried to push me down the stairs. But, I caught myself in time and looked pretty cool. So, I guess that was okay.”

Kenma shot Lev a withering look before turning back to Hinata. “Just be careful, the team has a reputation for playing dirty.”

“Pft,” dismissed Hinata. “You’re starting to sound like Suga.”

“Oh, yeah,” Lev commented, rubbing the back of his neck. “How is Potions tutoring going? Professor Irihata told me I probably needed some; but, he recommended me a tutor I don’t know. I thought about asking for Suga instead.”

“Who did he recommend?” asked Kenma.

“A third year from your house,” answered Lev. “I think he might be on the Quidditch team actually. Morisuke Yaku.”

Kenma gave a smile that, in Hinata’s opinion, might’ve looked a tad bit malevolent if it was on someone else’s face.

“Do you know him?” questioned Lev.

“Yes, I know Yaku,” replied Kenma serenely.

“Is he, um, nice? Will he be an easy tutor? Or do you think I should swap?” continued Lev.

Kenma shook his head. “No, you definitely shouldn’t swap. Yaku will be perfect.”

“Great!” Lev smiled. “Thanks for the help, Kenma!”

Lev looked at Hinata. “I gotta go, but good luck at the game...just not too much luck because, you
know, Slytherin.” He gestured to his green and silver striped tie.

Hinata nodded, his enthusiasm unhampered.

Kenma was still frowning at him.

“I’m sure it’ll be fine, Kenma,” Hinata reassured him. “I mean it’s a school match. What could go wrong?”

Kenma sighed. “I hate it when you say things like that.”

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As Professor Oiwake blew his whistle, Kageyama took to the air. A sense of exhilaration rushed through him. This was it. This was where Hinata and him would finally get the chance to try out their new trick.

Over the past month, Kageyama and Hinata’s practice had revealed how fast the smaller boy was. Hinata could be on one side of the pitch to the other faster than the school’s brooms should have allowed—not to mention, Hinata’s sharp turns and quick maneuvers. Kageyama, on the other hand, had near pinpoint accuracy in his throws. While Hinata still struggled with catching the ball at times, the two had quickly found a synchronicity that belied the amount of time the two had known each other.

Recently, the two along with the third Chaser had worked out a new strategy that Bokuto dramatically called “The Greatest Decoy”. Once Hinata’s speed and agility had been established, he would draw the Beaters in as guards. That’s when Kageyama would change tactics and start throwing to Koki.

Focusing on the pitch, Kageyama swerved under Bokuto who had just caught a throw from a Slytherin Chaser. Bokuto redirected and threw it to Kageyama.

A quick survey of the pitch showed that Hinata and Koki were each blocked in by one Beater with the three Slytherin Chasers at key points in between them and Kageyama. Kageyama smirked and saw Hinata answer with a fierce grin.

During the split second the Beater focused on Kageyama, Hinata was off like a shot, shooting high in the air before dropping in a graceful nimble arch in front of the Beater. In that brief moment, Hinata caught Kageyama’s Quaffle and raced to the Slytherin goals. He threw it in to score while the Slytherin Keeper was still struggling to catch up.

The Slytherin team looked momentarily frozen while the Hufflepuff team gave fierce grins.

The game moved on with a Slytherin Chaser catching and racing to Bokuto’s goals. He dodged two Bludgers—one from Aone and another from Futakuchi—before narrowly scoring a goal with Bokuto’s fingers slightly brushing it.

Bokuto threw the Quaffle back to Kageyama, who looked toward Hinata. The Beater was still blocking Hinata, though more sharply now.

It’ll take more than that to shut him out, Kageyama mused. Sure enough, Hinata pulled downward at a ninety degree angle and swerved up at a rate the Beater was unable to follow with his bulky size. Kageyama threw the Quaffle and Hinata scored again.
After the third time Hinata scored, the Beater obviously had taken a different tactic and was closely following next to Hinata with barely a hand width between them. Kageyama threw it anyway and Hinata barely avoided a shoulder to the face as he caught it--using his speed to make up for the Beater’s longer reach. Hinata flew to the other hoop, closely pursued, and managed a close goal. Hufflepuff was up by 30.

The Slytherin captain called for a time out and both teams returned to their sides of the pitch.

“It looks like they’re going to fall for it,” said Futakuchi, excitedly. Aone gave a stoic nod to his side.

“Koki, are you ready for when they start to go after Hinata?” asked Bokuto.

The older teen nodded with a grin.

To the side, Mad Dog gave Hinata and Kageyama what Kageyama thought might be an approving growl.

Professor Oiwake blew the whistle and the game commenced.

As expected both Beaters were now guarding Hinata, closely sandwiching him between them.

Koki caught the Quaffle and threw it to Kageyama, deftly avoiding one of the Chaser that tried to intercept. Kageyama looked toward Hinata, who nodded. Hinata dove to the ground, similar to how he had done earlier, this time closely pursued by one Beater while the other circled directly above.

At the last second, Kageyama changed his throw to direct it at Koki. The older Hufflepuff caught it and quickly flew to score another goal.

Kageyama heard one of the nearby Slytherin Chasers swear.

The Beaters both looked toward the captain, the Slytherin Keeper, who shook his head. Next, two of the Chasers redirected to stop Kageyama from getting the Quaffle at all. Unfortunately, this was only effective half of the time as the two didn’t have time to reposition after trying to score their own goals. Koki managed another two goals with the Slytherins only getting one, putting Hufflepuff up by 50.

One of the Beaters started to back off of Hinata and refocused on Koki. Kageyama and Hinata had been waiting for this. Once less guarded, Hinata maneuvered past the remaining Beater to catch one of Kageyama’s Quaffles and score.

Slytherin’s Keeper threw the Quaffle back into play and it was picked up by the Slytherin Chasers, who kept the ball constantly passed between the three of them while Aone and Futakuchi struggled to focus on any one. Kageyama saw one of the Slytherin Beaters fly up to Hinata and seem to shout something at him.

Slytherin scored and Bokuto threw the Quaffle to Kageyama. Looking around, Kageyama saw that one of the Beaters had placed himself equally between both Hinata and Koki. The Chasers circled around Koki while the other Beater scowled close to Hinata’s side.

*This is going to be a close one*, Kageyama thought and shot barely a glance at Hinata, knowing the boy would understand. Kageyama threw the Quaffle and Hinata dove and wove around the Beaters, at one point flipping upside down to avoid the closest. Hinata caught it and raced down, a Bludger hitting into his back hard while Hinata struggled to keep hold of both the Quaffle and his broom. Hinata scored and Slytherin called their second time out.
“Way to go, Hinata!” Bokuto told the boy as the team landed. “I thought, for sure, you were going to lose the ball with that Bludger hit.”

Hinata smiled but winced slightly.

Futakuchi eyed him. “You sure you’re alright to keep going. A hit to the back is a lot to shrug off. We can get some bruise salve probably before the time out ends.”

Hinata waved him off. “I’ll be fine. I think it just grazed me.”

After another minute, the whistle blew to call the teams back to the sky. Once in the air, Hinata hesitated by Kageyama for a second.

“Hey, Kageyama,” the boy asked, keeping his voice low so as not to be heard by other players. “What’s a ‘mudblood’?”

Kageyama jolted on his broom, causing the handle to fly up briefly. “What? Where did you hear that word?”

Hinata shrugged. “One of the Slytherin Beaters called me that after I scored one of the goals. It’s bad, right?”

“Yeah,” admitted Kageyama, quietly. “I’ll, um, tell you what it means after the game, okay?”

Hinata nodded in agreement and the two flew off. Slytherin had possession of the Quaffle and one of the Chasers quickly threw it to another at the unprotected goal, scoring for Slytherin. Hufflepuff was still ahead by 50.

Kageyama caught the Quaffle that Bokuto threw back into play. The Slytherin team had not seemed to change much of their strategy during the time out. The Chasers still circled around Koki while one Beater stayed in the middle and one around Hinata. Kageyama noticed that the one beside Hinata was flying close and smirking.

Kageyama threw the Quaffle and watched Hinata dive and maneuver. Something had changed. One of the Beater stayed close to Hinata’s tail, limiting Hinata’s movements. The other dove at an angle with a clear trajectory to collide with Hinata. Hinata apparently saw him just in time and pulled back and to the side, missing both the Beater to the side and the one behind him. However, the Quaffle sailed passed him, allowing one of the Beaters to catch it and direct it to a Slytherin Chaser.

The Chaser scored before Bokuto could catch up. Kageyama caught a look at Futakuchi and Aone, the former seemed to be fuming while the latter had a stony look on his face.

The game continued with the Slytherin Beaters obviously targeting Hinata and just avoiding fouls. Kageyama couldn’t get a shot to him and the Slytherin Chasers quickly intercepted any pass to Koki. Slytherin brought the game to a tie.

Hinata caught Kageyama’s eye and sent him a determined nod. He wanted Kageyama to try again.

Kageyama sighed and gave the game his full focus. If they were going to pull this off, this throw had to be perfect. Bokuto sent the ball to Kageyama.

Kageyama threw the ball with pinpoint precision.

A whistle blew.
Hinata swerved and angled past the first Beater.

The Quaffle was two hand widths away.

Hinata was slammed into viciously from the side.

Hinata fell.

Kageyama felt his heart stop. He sat frozen as he watched Hinata’s body twist in the air, hurtling rapidly to the ground. He thought he heard Yachi scream from the stands.

“ARRESTO MOMENTUM” a voice called.

Hinata’s fall slowed but he still hit the ground with a sickening thud and a crack.

The thud broke Kageyama’s stupor and the boy raced to the ground, followed by the rest of the Hufflepuff team.

Kageyama got to Hinata just as Professor Oiwake did. Kageyama felt his stomach join his heart in his throat. Hinata laid in a heap, obviously unconscious with his leg twisted the wrong direction and a bone in his arm exposed.

Professor Oiwake quickly checked his pulse.

“Still alive,” he reassured them before yelling, “Where is that bloody Nekomata? He needs immediate medical attention.”

Professor Nekomata shoved his way through the crowd and quickly cast diagnostic spells.

“Unconscious,” the Head Mediwizard told them. “Not a coma, three breaks in the right leg, one in the left arm, and a minor skull fracture.” He summoned a stretcher and efficiently levitated Hinata on to it. Nekomata shot the rest of the Hufflepuff a look. “You all won’t be able to see him until at earliest tomorrow afternoon. He’ll be knocked out until then. Understand?”

The team nodded, still in shock.

Nekomata gave a swift nod in return and levitated Hinata off the field, followed by Professor Oiwake.

Once Hinata was off the field, Bokuto turned to the Slytherin captain. The normal jovial and enthusiastic captain looked murderous. Kageyama didn’t know if he had ever really noticed how tall and strong looking Bokuto was, especially for a third year.

“What,” asked Bokuto in a low dark voice, “exactly was that?”

“An accident, of course,” the Slytherin captain waved away. “Our Beater was just trying to block the Quaffle. Your Chaser dove in front of him.”

“That’s dragon piss,” Futakuchi swore, coming to stand by Bokuto. Kageyama noticed that Aone was standing back with his arms crossed and glowering. Mad Dog had started a constant low growl on the other side.

“Surely, you’re not suggesting our Beater did that deliberately,” the captain asked with a smirk. “Why would he?”

“You’re so full of troll shit,” Bokuto told him, hands clenched to the side. “Your Beaters have been
playing dirty all game.”

“Prove it,” the captain shrugged. “Besides, I really don’t think my Beaters would risk getting
kicked out of the game for one measly first year Chaser.”

Akaashi, who had just gotten to the field, caught Bokuto’s arm before his punch connected.

Professor Oiwake, who had just returned, blew his whistle and shoved both captains apart.

“BOTH TEAMS, BACK TO YOUR CHANGING ROOMS. THE FIRST PERSON I SEE
THROW A PUNCH IS BANNED FOR THE NEXT SIX MONTHS!”

“But, Professor,” Bokuto argued. “They just tried to kill our Chaser.”

Professor Oiwake looked to Bokuto and then shot the Slytherin captain a serious look. “The faculty
will review the pensieve to see if disciplinary action will be taken. Now, I will not ask again, all
teams to their respective changing rooms.”

Kageyama saw that Yachi had made it from the stands and was running to him on the field.
Awkwardly and unsure, he held out his arms and Yachi ran into them, holding him tight.

Kageyama saw tears streaming down the girls face and, for a very long moment, desperately
wanted to join her.

Yachi sniffled. “Hinata’s going to be okay, isn’t he?”

Kageyama tried to fight back down the slowly building terror that had been with him since he saw
Hinata fall.

“Of course, he will,” Kageyama told her, hoping it wasn’t a lie. “He’s too stubborn to be anything
else.”

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When Hinata next woke up, he immediately wished he hadn’t.

He groaned. His head hurt, his body ached, his arm was on fire, and his leg was killing him--by the
feeling, possibly literally.

“Nice to see you’re awake,” a voice from above commented. Hinata cracked open his eyes and saw
the lined face of the Head Mediwizard, Professor Nekomata.

Nekomata leaned back on the chair beside Hinata’s bed. Hinata looked around and saw that he was
in a bright room with rows of made beds on either side. His was the only bed occupied.

“I bet you’re feeling rather thirsty now,” Nekomata told him. “You’ve been out cold for the past
day and a half.”

Once he mentioned it, Hinata’s throat did feel scratchy and dry. Nekomata grabbed a glass of water
on the table and brought it to Hinata’s mouth. When he tried to reach for it, Nekomata lightly bated
his hand away.
“You’re still feeling woozy from the magically induced coma.” informed Nekomata. “I try to hand this to you, you immediately spill it all over your hospital gown. Trust me, I’ve seen this for longer than you’ve been alive.”

Hinata subsided and allowed Nekomata to pour the water into his mouth. Once he’d had enough, Nekomata returned the glass to the table.

“So, Hinata, what exactly do you remember?” asked Nekomata.

Hinata searched his brain. It all felt kind of fuzzy. “Um, Karusona brought me a letter from Natsu, no, that was earlier, um, I was eating breakfast with Kenma and Lev, no, wait, there was stuff after that, um...QUIDDITCH! I was playing Quidditch, it was against Slytherin, Kageyama threw me the Quaffle, I scored, um, one of the Beaters nearly hit my broom, I scored again, the Beater told me I was...something, I don’t know exactly, Kageyama threw me the Quaffle again, and I was about to catch it...um, sorry, I don’t think I remember anything after that.”

Nekomata nodded and made a note on a nearby chart. “Good news, we can rule out extensive memory loss with the concussion. How’s your stomach?”

“Kind of turned around” Hinata answered. “What happened?”

“One of the Slytherin Beaters collided with you during the game,” Nekomata answered, sitting down the chart. “You fell from 25 meters in the air and broke your arm nearly in half, your leg in three places, and sustained a minor skull fracture.

Oh. Hinata thought. That would probably explain why he felt like he’d been run over by a bus.

Nekomata gave a grim nod and continued. “Now, luckily, everything should be able to heal without any lasting damage.” Nekomata met Hinata’s eyes. “Here’s the unlucky part. We’re going to have to do some serious magic on you. The bones in your leg are temporarily set right now. But, if we leave them they’re going to set at an awkward angle. We’re going to have to vanish at least two of them and regrow them. Unfortunately, the arm and skull fracture are already taking a good bit of your magic to heal so we’re going to have to space this out.” Nekomata sighed. “I’m afraid you’re going to have to stay here for at the very least a significant portion of the Winter break.”

Hinata frowned. While he wouldn’t exactly miss Privet Orphanage, he had been really excited to see Natsu and his friends and tell Natsu all about his first semester at Hogwarts. He’d already told her a good bit though letters and he supposed he could send another one; but, getting a Christmas letter just wasn’t the same as actually seeing his sister.

Unfortunately, looking at his leg, it didn’t seem like he had much choice. Hinata sighed and nodded for Nekomata to continue.

Nekomata gave him a small sympathetic smile. “We’ve already contacted the Head of Staff at Privet and she’s agreed to allow you to stay here.”

Hinata was not surprised by that.

Nekomata gripped his shoulder in a comforting gesture. “However, there are a number of students outside this room who have been waiting a while to see you. Think you’re up for company?”

Hinata nodded, curious. He assumed it was Kageyama and Yachi.

Nekomata went to the closed entrance of the Medical Wing and called out. “Alright, he’s cleared for visitors. But, don’t crowd him or I’m immediately throwing you all out.”
Nekomata opened the door and the entire Hufflepuff team plus Akaashi and Yachi bustled into the room.

“Hinata!” Yachi immediately got to his side first. “Are you okay? I was watching from the stands and I saw you fall and I was so scared and Kageyama told me that Professor Nekomata had said you were okay but there was still some blood on the field and you were so high up and,” she stopped herself. “Are you okay?”

Hinata smiled. “I’m fine, Yachi! Professor Nekomata told me there wasn’t going to be any lasting damage.”

Hinata saw Kageyama nod on his other side, but the boy still refused to meet his eyes.

Instead, Hinata refocused on Bokuto. “Did we still win the game?”

Bokuto nodded, giving a somewhat subdued smile. “Yeah, Mad Dog actually caught the Snitch right after Kageyama threw the Quaffle to you. Technically, you got hit after the match was already over.” Bokuto’s eyes took on a dark look that Hinata had never seen on the captain. “The pensieve was apparently inconclusive since the other Beater blocked most of the view. The Slytherin team got a warning but no major penalties.”

Hinata gave a small grimace. “Well, at least, we still won, right?”

Bokuto nodded and gave a brighter smile. “That we did. You guys were all terrific. If not for stupid Slytherin and their stupid cheating, I’m pretty sure we would have won that game from just goals alone. The next two games are gonna be awesome!”

Akaashi stepped from behind Bokuto and handed Hinata a colorful box. “Kageyama mentioned you had never had any wizarding candy, so the team got you this as a ‘Get Well Soon’ present.”

Hinata looked down and saw that there was at least five different kinds of the magical candies Hinata had last seen on the Hogwarts Express.

Hinata grinned. “This is so cool! Thanks, guys!”

The team all visited for a while with Hinata, Yachi, and Bokuto doing most of the talking. When the end of the afternoon visiting session drew near, Professor Nekomata came out to hurry the team off to dinner. Akaashi gave Hinata a brief nod and a farewell smile while Bokuto shot him a huge grin and two thumbs up. Mad Dog gave him a light punch on his uninjured arm and a gruff “get better”. Futakuchi followed and told him that he better be well again before the Gryffindor game because they had just gotten a good team again and they were not going to lose it because of stupid Slytherin. Koki sent a farewell wave. Last, Aone gave Hinata a small smile and patted Hinata gently on the head.


“Ugh,” Hinata finally sighed. “Just out with it, Kageyama. What’s wrong?”

Kageyama flickered his eyes up then down and muttered something.

“What was that?” Hinata asked.

“I said there was no way you could have gotten that Quaffle when you were covered” Kageyama told him before looking down at his lap.
A couple of months ago, Hinata would have immediately jumped at Kageyama for implying that Hinata couldn’t dodge his blockers. However, constant light bickering with Kageyama had given Hinata a new perspective on the weird internal workings that were Kageyama’s mind. Well, plus, the whole hand wringing was probably a sign Kageyama was not trying to pick a fight while Hinata was still in the hospital.

“It wasn’t your fault,” Hinata told him. “I asked you to do it, remember. It was those stupid Slytherin Beaters who hit me.”

Actually that reminded Hinata of something.

“Oh, yeah, also you told me you’d tell me later. What’s a ‘mudblood’?”

Yachi gasped and brought her hands to her mouth which really didn’t make Hinata feel like it was going to be anything good.

Kageyama seemed similarly, if less obviously, stricken. But, on the bright side, at least it had pulled him out of his funk.

“It’s, um, well, it’s...” Kageyama started before sighing and visibly bracing himself. “It’s a really, really rude term for someone with non-magical parents. It, um, implies that person is...dirty or...that they have dirty blood.”

Hinata nodded. That would make sense given how the Slytherin Beater sneered when he called him that.

“It’s horrible is what it is,” Yachi told him, a fire in her eyes. “It’s completely disgusting that people still use it. It should have died out during the war.”

Kageyama nodded awkwardly. A tense silence fell between the three friends.

“Um,” Yachi started. “Are you okay, Hinata? I mean I’m sure that was horrible, not to mention the...” she gestured to his injuries and winced.

Hinata hesitated before shrugging. “Sure, I guess. I mean I only learned what the word meant today, so how can I be that hurt by it?”

Despite his words, Hinata could feel a cold and gnawing sense of unease and loneliness that he had only ever associated with the darkest days at Privet.

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At the end of the afternoon visiting hours, Yachi and Kageyama had told Hinata that they would let him get some rest and that they both promised that they would be back tomorrow before class.

After eating his own dinner, Hinata decided to follow the advice of both his friends and Professor Nekomata. He fell asleep before he was even fully done with his pot roast.

When he next woke, the hospital wing was dark with only a small lamp on his bedside table lighting the room.

Hinata looked around and jolted when he noticed a figure reading in the visitor's chair beside his
bed.

The visitor looked up and noticed Hinata was awake.

“Oh, good, I didn’t want to light to many lamps in case it woke you up.” The visitor flicked his wand around to the lamps for the beds on either of Hinata’s sides. “Incendio Minima”

Lights flickered into both of them, providing much more light for the room.

Hinata got his first real look at his visitor. He seemed to be only a few years older than Hinata with wavy brown hair and a cocky smirk.

The visitor squinted back at him.

“You know, for some reason, I expected the Chaser that enraged so much of my House to be taller.” The visitor shrugged. “Oh well, I guess a shrimp can bother them as much as a shark.”

Hinata took in the visitor’s Slytherin tie and swallowed.

The visitor followed his gaze. “Don’t worry, anything that pisses off most of my House is good to me. Besides, I don’t think anyone stupid enough to attack someone in the Hospital Wing would be sorted into Slytherin anyway.” He hummed. “Though, I have been proven wrong before.”

The visitor waved. “I’d shake your hand but really is there a part of you that isn’t injured. I’m Tooru Oikawa and, trust me, it’s a pleasure to meet you.”

Hinata racked his brain for the name. “Oh, you’re Kageyama’s friend.”

Oikawa looked surprised. “Weellll, friend is probably a strong word. Why? What did he tell you about me?”

“He said that you were the greatest wizard in your year,” Hinata told him, trying to remember everything that Kageyama had said back at Madam Malkin’s. “Oh, he also said that you were muggleborn.”

“Figures he’d mention that,” Oikawa muttered before turning to Hinata. “Yeah, I knew little Tobio from back before Hogwarts.” He waved his hand dismissively. “But, I didn’t come here to talk to you about him. From what I hear in my common room, you’re the new muggleborn to beat, literally.”

“Um, what did you hear?” asked Hinata nervously.

Oikawa propped his head in his hands and shrugged. “Just them alternatively cursing your name or bragging about your fall.” He met Hinata’s eyes. “I also heard you might have learned a new word.”

Hinata looked down. “Uh, yeah, one of them called me a...a...mud--”

“You don’t have to say it,” Oikawa interrupted. “Trust me, I’m familiar. That’s actually what I wanted to talk to you about. Hinata, do you know how many muggleborns there are in Hogwarts?”

“No,” admitted Hinata.

“The highest in any year is 10 percent,” Oikawa told him. “Almost all of them in Hufflepuff and Gryffindor, but I have my own theories about that. Anyway, what has anyone told you about the Wizarding War?”
Hinata thought back. “That there was a super powerful wizard called the Giant and he hated muggleborns and he had an army and was impossible to defeat. Until, some guy called the Little Giant challenged him and he was killed and all his army went to jail.”

Oikawa tsked. “Just what I thought. All the theatrics, none of the politics.” He looked to Hinata again. “I figured that no one had really explained it to you proper what it actually means to be a muggleborn in the Wizarding World. So, I figured I might as well give you some pointers before it actually gets you killed.”

“Oh, don’t thank me,” Oikawa told him. “I’m not much of a giver and trust me seeing my House this pissed is gift enough. Normally, I can only get them this annoyed once final grades come out.”

Oikawa lightly shook his head to refocus himself. “Okay, so first off all of the things you just said about the war are technically correct. But, you’re missing some of the implications.” Oikawa sighed. “The main selling point for the Giant’s side was a cleanse of the Wizarding World. He wanted to bind all muggleborns’ magic, erase their memories, and prohibit them from attending Hogwarts. His vision was a Wizarding World ‘untouched by Muggles’”

Oikawa gave Hinata a serious look. “And the Giant’s side almost won. If not for a single small victory, we wouldn’t be attending Hogwarts right now.”

Hinata swallowed and tried not to think of his life before Hogwarts.

“Another major implication is that the war was just ten years ago,” Oikawa continued. “The Wizarding World is still dealing with the fallout.” Oikawa rolled his eyes. “And not every wizard that fought on the Giant’s side went to Azkaban, that would’ve cut down on a significant portion of the population. Only his major generals were locked up, the rest were granted clemency albeit with a blow to their reputation. A lot of the Giant’s fighters are still high up in the Ministry. They’re in the Wizamagot, serving as barristers, parenting your schoolmates.”

Oikawa held Hinata’s gaze. “Do you get that? Do you really understand that, Hinata? Some of your classmates will hold the same views as their parents. Some of them will think you don’t deserve to be here.”

“What can I do?” asked Hinata, feeling somewhat helpless.

Oikawa shrugged again. “If I knew that I would’ve tried it ages ago.”

“What to you do?” questioned Hinata.

Oikawa paused.

“I’m really not much of a mentor type,” he told Hinata. A second passed before a sharp looking smile passed on Oikawa’s face. “What helps me is...well, Iwa-chan would say this is petty and they’re stupid so I should just ignore them or tell a teacher.” The older boy rolled his eyes. “But, what does Iwa-chan know...What helps me is, well, it really helps to see them pissed off.” He shot Hinata a wink. “Again, that’s part of the reason I came down to see you.”

Oikawa got up while Hinata muddled through the advice. He didn’t quite know if he wanted to piss anyone off intentionally when this is what it got him when he did it on accident.

“Of course, that’s not the only way to go about things,” Oikawa added almost absently. He met Hinata’s eyes again and continued in a quiet voice that did nothing to lessen the intensity. “But,
Hinata, there is one thing I have definitely learned. Never let them make you forget your pride.”

The Slytherin third year broke the tension and gave another cheerful wave. “I expect entertaining things from you, Hinata. Don’t let me down.”

With that, he left the Medical Wing and Hinata with his thoughts.

Hinata felt...Hinata didn’t quite know what to feel. He wiped his un-injured hand to his face and noticed that tears were falling down his face.

This was so...this was SO STUPID, Hinata thought, scrubbing his eyes. Privet thought he didn’t belong because he did do magic and part of the Wizarding World thought he didn’t belong because his parents couldn’t do magic. Why couldn’t people just look at Hinata and just see Hinata? What right did other people have to tell someone whether they belonged?

They don’t, Hinata thought. Look at Oikawa, he was the strongest wizard in his year and he was muggleborn. Hinata had a brief moment of feeling vicious pleasure at how much that must have rankled the rest of Oikawa’s House.

And...and...look at Hinata?! The rest of the team had repeatedly told him that he and Kageyama were natural Chasers. How could he be a natural if he didn’t belong at Hogwarts, huh?

They’re wrong, Hinata thought with fierce determination. They’re wrong and I’m going to show them.

Hinata still didn’t know about Oikawa’s strategy of pissing them off just to see them mad. But, if they were mad because a muggleborn did better than they were expecting...well, Hinata thought that was what they deserved for thinking they knew if someone belonged or not, what they deserved for not knowing how much someone worked to be here.

With Kageyama and Yachi and Kenma and the rest of Hinata’s Quidditch team, Hinata sometimes felt like he was standing on the top of the world. He wasn’t going to let someone, anyone, knock him down--even if he had to show the entire Wizarding World.

Chapter End Notes

Warnings: Hinata gets purposefully injured in a Quidditch game resulting in broken bones in arm and leg plus a head injury. All injuries are treatable and recoverable. Also, there is discussion of magical medical treatment. Last, warning for discussion of magical racism and Harry Potter related slurs.

This was definitely a more serious chapter, but hope you still enjoyed it anyway! This chapter I decided to post early for my birthday. Next chapter will be at the latest on Wednesday.
“Is there at least a good reason we have to be here at seven in the morning on the first day of winter break?” asked Kuroo, rubbing his eyes as he sat at the library table.

Bokuto yawned and took the seat next to him.

Suga, who looked to be the only one of the group that was truly awake, nodded. “I figured we’d want to meet in a time when the library was sure to be deserted. Plus, I wanted to tell you this before we left for the holidays.”

Oikawa jolted from where he was leaning sleepily on Iwaizumi.

“You found something?” he asked eagerly.

The entire table looked to Suga.

“I’m not quite sure,” admitted Suga. “It’s just something that’s...odd.”

He took out his copy of the recall book. “Pull articles featuring Sora Takara and any of the words ‘discovery’, ‘treasure’, or ‘expedition’”

The book immediately filled with articles.

“Well, that certainly less articles to go through,” Kuroo said, flipping through the pages. “But, I think we might miss something if we only go through these.”

Suga shook his head. “No, I wasn’t suggesting we just go through these articles. I noticed a trend on articles about Professor Sora’s discoveries.”

The table waited for an explanation.

“Right,” Suga started to explain, “so Sora’s official job title, before he became a professor, is a magi-archaeologist--someone dedicated to the study of ancient magical communities and artifacts. The Prophet always sensationalizes it as some kind of magical treasure hunt, which is not technically inaccurate but cuts down on a lot of the background research.” Suga shook his head, refocusing. “Anyway, magi-archaeologists, when they begin an excavation, generally go out on teams.” Suga pulled out another book from his bag titled Major Magical Discoveries of the Past Century. “I looked into it and teams are generally made up of at least five and can sometimes be over a dozen people--though they generally get some of the natives in the area to help then.”

“So, Sora’s a team player? Weird, I guess,” Iwaizumi shrugged. “But, I mean he is famous, just because we know he’s an asshole doesn’t mean others wouldn’t want to work with him.”

“But, he’s not!” Suga announced, triumphantly.
“An asshole?” Bokuto asked, confused. “I thought that’s why we were here.”

“No, a team player,” corrected Suga. “I noticed in the articles about the excavations that Sora is the only one quoted.” He flipped to a few pages. “And look, in all of the pictures, it’s just him or whatever he found or just a picture of the sight.”

“He works alone?” asked Oikawa.

“That’s what’s weird,” explained Suga. “It’s not just that he is choosing to work alone, he literally shouldn’t be able to. Magical excavation sites are booby trapped and incredibly dangerous. Working at them alone is practically suicidal.”

“So, who is he working with?” asked Iwaizumi.

“I can’t find them,” Suga told them. “I’ve looked through all the articles and I can’t find any mentions of his team.”

Oikawa thought a second. “So, we have a few options. First, he is somehow working at the excavation sites alone, which--from what Suga told us--would make him incredibly idiotic.”

“Not to mention probably dead,” Iwaizumi put in.

Oikawa nodded. “Second, he’s not actually at the excavation sites.”

“Unlikely,” commented Kuroo. “There’s no way another magi-archaeologist would let him steal the credit. Plus, how would he find out about the sites before the real team reported it?”

“I actually looked into that a bit,” mentioned Suga. “Sora gives interviews where he talks about things that happened during the excavation rather than after it. It would be hard for him to have those details if he wasn’t on site.”

So, he was probably there throughout the excavation,” Oikawa agreed. “Option three, Sora has a secret excavation team that works with him to find the treasures and then mysteriously doesn’t want credit.”

“Why would a team not want credit?” posed Kuroo.

“They could be just like really really loyal to Sora,” put in Bokuto.

“Or there could be another option that we don’t know about,” finished Iwaizumi.

The group looked at each other, acknowledging their options.

“We should definitely look into a possible team over break,” Oikawa commented.

Suga nodded, “Honestly, if Sora is up to something, I don’t know which is more worrying. Either he’s got an incredibly loyal team skilled in dangerous spells or,” Suga paused, “he’s dangerous enough to do it on his own.”

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Yamaguchi looked at the egg skeptically.
He was, as Noya affectionately referred to it, “egg sitting” while Noya and Tanaka were at their last Quidditch practice before breaks. Apparently, after Hufflepuff’s win against Slytherin, the captain had called for double the practices. Since the egg was within a month of hatching, Noya had insisted that it had to be watched at every moment. As Noya and Tanaka were both at practice—as was Ennoshita as a reserve Beater—and Asahi still couldn’t go near the egg without looking somewhat faint, the egg sitting had fallen to Yamaguchi.

Yamaguchi continued looking at the egg. According to Noya, it wasn’t supposed to hatch for another few weeks; but, Yamaguchi really didn’t want it to come early.

He sighed. Yamaguchi, Ennoshita, and Asahi had tried multiple times to convince Noya and Tanaka that no really they couldn’t raise a dragon in the Forbidden Forest. So far, their attempts were futile. Apparently Tanaka’s sister worked on a dragon preserve that the two visited every break, so they “knew what they were doing”.

Yamaguchi was beginning to suspect that they might have to get Daichi involved. He gulped. Surely, the third year wouldn’t kill the two...probably just maim a bit. And, really, could it be any worse that what a dragon could do?

At least, Yamaguchi had somehow been able to keep this a secret from Tsukishima. The freckled boy was well aware that he was rather a complete disaster when it came to keeping secrets from his oldest friend. Before this, his longest record of keeping something from him was a measly five hours. Yet for some reason, after the first couple weeks of constant questioning, Tsukishima had apparently decided to accept Yamaguchi’s pitiful excuses. Yamaguchi honestly wasn’t sure how he felt about Tsukishima’s apparent surrender.

“Yamaguchi!” announced Noya, slamming open the door to the room. Tanaka and Ennoshita followed him in with Ennoshita quickly closing the door and reactivating the silencing charm.

“How is our precious, darling, ferocious little dragon doing today?” asked Noya, looking at the egg.

“Still an egg,” remarked Yamaguchi in a dry tone he’d picked up from Tsukishima.

“Aww,” Noya cooed at it, sitting right outside of the fire’s range. “But such a good little egg, aren’t they.”

Ennoshita rolled his eyes. “The rest of us, who aren’t staying here like Noya, need to go get packed if we’re going to make the train.”

Yamaguchi looked down at his watch and suppressed a sigh. He was suppose to have met Tsukishima five minutes ago so that they could make sure to sit together on the train. He quickly called out a farewell and happy holidays to the other three and ran to get his trunk.

By the time he made it down to Tsukishima, he was significantly out of breath.

“Sorry...I’m...running...late. I...got caught up...with my dormmates,” Yamaguchi explained, panting.

Tsukishima looked at him with a raised eyebrow. “Hmmm, we still have a few minutes. There about to call for boarding.”

“At least I made it in time,” Yamaguchi said with a smile.

The conductor called for boarding and the two walked on, quickly finding a seat.
“Are you excited for the holidays, Tsuki?” asked Yamaguchi.

Tsukishima shrugged. “As much as ever. Mother should already be in the middle of planning our annual Christmas Eve Ball so I suspect I’ll have to go right into robe fittings. Akiteru should be back sometime next week so I’m sure I’ll have to put up with him.”

“Don’t act like aren’t a little bit excited to see him,” Yamaguchi told Tsukishima. Yamaguchi’s family estates boarded Tsukishima’s so he, too, had grown up watching the relationship between the brothers. He also knew--due to long familiarity--that Tsukishima was secretly happy to see his older and much more cheerful brother.

“It’s a shame he graduated the year before we started,” commented Yamaguchi.

“Why? So I could have him constantly trying to ‘check up on me’ even at school,” Tsukishima rolled his eyes.

Yamaguchi smiled, imagining a seventh year Hufflepuff eagerly making that a first year Slytherin was eating right or was getting enough sleep.

“What about you?” asked Tsukishima.

“Hmm,” replied Yamaguchi, distracted.

“Are you excited for the break?” questioned Tsukishima. “Getting out of the dorms?”

Yamaguchi thought about the dorm room he had just left, complete with rambunctious second years and an actual dragon. He gave a short bark of laughter.

“Yeah, getting out of the dorms will definitely be a nice break.”

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Hinata squirmed uncomfortably in his bed. It was the first night of winter break and Hinata was super uncomfortable. According to Nekomata, they were going to start vanishing and regrowing the first leg bone tomorrow morning so it could finish growing in that day. That way he wouldn’t have to deal with the pain at night while he slept.

His leg was currently set and he could sort of hop around if he used the crutches. One of his arms was now out of the sling and his head no longer bandaged.

Yachi and Kageyama had stopped by this morning and had told him--ordered him, in Kageyama’s case--to get well soon and that they would both be sending Christmas letters. Other than the team and that one weird visit from Oikawa, Hinata had gotten two other visitors.

Lev had stopped by a few days after he had woken up.

The first year Slytherin had looked incredibly guilty and wrung his hands for a while before even attempting to talk.

“IT’S REALLY SORRY THAT MY HOUSE ALMOST MURDERED YOU,” he had finally blurted.
“Um, it’s fine?” Hinata had responded.

“I promise that I didn’t know that my House was going to do that or anything, Hinata, really.” Lev looked stricken and desperate for Hinata to believe him.

“I really didn’t think you did,” Hinata told him truthfully.

Lev deflated as if a weight had been lifted.

“Oh, um, good,” he said, somewhat awkwardly. “We’re still friends, right?”

“Uh, I think so,” Hinata answered, perplexed. He thought back to what Oikawa had told him.

“Why? Does your House not want us hanging out or something?”

Lev shook his head. “No, it’s not that. The ones in our year are less, um...like that and they older years mostly ignore me. I just thought you might not want to be because of the whole...you know.”

Hinata nodded. “Nah, I mean I know you and I know you’re not like your House, so...I think we’re still good.”

Lev smiled with relief. “Awesome, so...those dives you made! How did you do that?! Those were insane.”

Hinata and Lev chatted happily about Quidditch for the rest of Lev’s visit. A day after that, Kenma had came to visit. The visit consisted mainly of Kenema just giving Hinata a blank face while Hinata apologized and swore up and down that yes, he would take the Slytherin team more seriously and yes, he would listen to Kenma’s advice more and no, he was definitely not planning on pulling any more dangerous stunts this year.

When he had finished, Kenma had given a brief smile.

“I’m glad you’re okay, Shouyou,” Kenma told him and gave him a book on Quidditch strategies. “An early Christmas present. I figured you would probably have a lot of time to read while you’re in here.”

Hinata looked down in the book and felt the ridiculous urge to cry. Hinata had never had a present that was meant just for him. Sure, the orphanage always got in more toys and games during the holiday months and they were always split evenly among the wards. But, Hinata had never gotten something that was picked out with Hinata specifically in mind.

“Thank you,” he told Kenma sincerely, holding the book close to his chest.

Kenma gave another minuscule smile. “Happy Holidays, Shouyou.”

Currently, Hinata looked over to the book on his bedside table. During the final week of classes, while Hinata was still stuck here, he had already read the book cover to cover once and had started it a second time.

Hinata squirmed again. Professor Nekomata had already retired to his office, giving Hinata a bell to ring if he had any trouble. The problem was Hinata kind of...really had to pee.

While--with the way his leg was splinted--he could definitely make it to the bathroom on his own, there was a bit of another problem. Some of the older years faced with midterm exams had decided to try Puking Pastilles and had rather underestimated the dosage. The Medical Wing was inundated with students puking their guts out while Nekomata simultaneous mixed an antidote and lectured
them unsympathetically.

Anyway, while the mess had been cleaned up, the smell...point is Hinata didn’t really want to use the Medical Wing bathroom.

Hinata looked at his crutch and to the Medical Wing door. Surely, Professor Nekomata wouldn’t miss him if he went out just for a bit and in the middle of the night.

Hinata decided to take the chance and grabbed the crutch to limp out the door, easing it carefully open.

Now, Hinata thought there was a bathroom right down the corridor if you took a left by the statue of a one-eyed witch and past the portrait of a sleeping shepherd.

*Everything looks kind of different in the dark,* mused Hinata. Maybe, if he turned back that way. No, that was the corridor to the Hufflepuff. He might be on the wrong floor. He found a staircase and went up it for awhile. Now, Hinata really needed to pee.

He continued walking, even though he was pretty sure he had passed that painting at least twice.

*Oh, there it is!* Hinata thought as a wall melded into a door clearly marked as the boys lavatory. *Finally!*

Hinata quickly went to the bathroom and left, watching the door meld back into a wall--which Hinata thought was a pretty bad idea for something as important as a bathroom.

*Now, how exactly do I get back,* Hinata wondered, looking around at the dark halls that were lit only from the moonlight in nearby windows.

Hinata thought he saw a light down the hall. Maybe someone else was up this late and could help him find his way back to the Medical Wing.

He followed down the corridor, but when he got there the light had already disappeared down another pathway. He limped after it, trying to go faster with the crutch.

When he got to the next hall, Hinata couldn’t see the light and instead found himself surrounded by what looked like empty classrooms. He didn’t know if he had ever been to this part of the castle before. He peered into a room, trying to see if he could tell which classroom it was. Instead, the room appeared dusty and like it hadn’t been used in years. The desks had all been moved to the sides of the room and in the middle sat what looked like an old standing mirror.

Curious, Hinata limped into the room. Despite the rest of the room being covered in dust and cobwebs, the mirror still seemed impossibly clean. Hinata limped closer.

“GAHH,” Hinata yelled as he noticed someone standing beside him. He quickly looked behind him but didn’t see anyone. He looked back at the mirror.

“Oh,” he said in recognition, looking closer. “How are you at Hogwarts?”

In the reflection, Hinata saw himself holding hands with his smiling sister. At his words, Natsu just shook her head.

“What do you mean ‘no’,” Hinata asked. “I can see you.”

The mirror version of Hinata shook his head, gesturing back.
That doesn’t seem like a normal mirror thing to do, Hinata mused, looking closer.

On Hinata’s right side, he held his sister’s hand with Izumi and Sekimukai smiling behind her. In his other hand, he held a Quidditch broom with Yachi and Kageyama visible around him. Hinata looked closer and saw that all of the orphanage was there, too. They all looked happy to see him as if he was a friend that they hadn’t seen in awhile. Hinata looked again and the Quidditch team was there with Bokuto cheering to the side. Even behind them was the rest of Hogwarts, all looking happy even Oikawa and Tsukishima. They all smiled at Hinata.

“What are you showing me?” asked Hinata, still in a dusty unused classroom.

Acceptance. The thought whispered through Hinata’s mind like a leaf blows in the breeze.

Hinata looked as his friends tried to urge reflection Hinata into a game of Quidditch, everyone was laughing.

“But, how?” he asked the mirror. “How do I get it?”

No answer appeared in Hinata’s mind.

“Are you showing me the future?” questioned Hinata.

Nothing.

“Please,” Hinata said, softly. “You can’t show me something and then not tell me how to get it. Please help me.”

In the reflection, Hinata laughed and gave Natsu a piggy back ride.

Outside of the reflection, Hinata sat down, carefully laying his crutch beside him, and watched.

Chapter End Notes

And I finally get around to mentioning the other part of the story title. As always, hope you enjoyed! Next chapter will be up on Friday.
On Christmas Eve, Kageyama sat quietly for a dinner with his father. Neither Christmas Eve nor Christmas Day were really major occasions within the Kageyama household. The only thing that really distinguished them was an exchange of presents the day of, his father making a point to eat their meals together, and the air around the house was maybe a touch more maudlin.

Kageyama silently pushed his peas around the plate as both he and his father looked down toward their meals rather than risking eye contact.

“I heard you made the Quidditch team,” his father broke the silence without looking up.

“Yes, sir,” Kageyama answered. “Chaser for the Hufflepuff team.”

His father hummed, briefly glancing up to scoop more mashed potatoes on his plate.

“I have to say I didn’t expect you to be a ‘Puff...more thought of you as a Ravenclaw like your mother...maybe Slytherin like your friend from the neighborhood.”

Kageyama stayed silent, not quite knowing how to respond.

“Hufflepuff’s a good house, though. Good people.”

“I’ve found so,” Kageyama replied after a moment of quiet. “Definitely...friendly.”

His father nodded. “You know I was a reserve Beater for my House team back in Hogwarts. Beater’s job is all about protecting the Chasers, protecting the team.”

For a long moment after, the only sounds were the scraping of silverware against dishes.

Kageyama decided to break the silence for once.

“Um, I’m top of my class in Potions, currently.” he told him with a touch of pride.

Kageyama’s father let out a low sigh. “Just like your mother.”

His father paused for so long a moment that Kageyama even glanced up briefly to make sure he was okay.

“Did I ever tell you how I met your mother?”

Kageyama silently sucked in a breath.

“You were at Hogwarts together,” Kageyama answered quietly.

“But the specifics, did I ever tell you the specifics?” asked his father, setting down his utensils and gazing at this left hand.

“No, sir,” Kageyama replied, trying not to let any eagerness show in his voice.

“We were both in the same House, of course, your mother was two years below me...I had seen her
for years and it was bloody *impossible* not to know her. She just...she had this way where she would constantly get into academic arguments at the drop of the hat—not the bad kind where you try to argue the other person down. She’d just...start talking about it and she’d get this fire in her eyes and suddenly you were picking a side you didn’t even agree on just to listen to her talk.” His father quirked a small smile. “Anyway, I think I’d been half in love with her for years but I had never quite gotten the courage to ask her out. Not until my seventh year...I had decided to stay in the castles for the winter break so that I could try to prepare for my NEWT’s. I’d even got permission to use one of the spare Potions labs to practice...I can’t remember, one of the potions that was always favored on the test. I had waited until late at night when I thought the labs would be clear and when I walked in, there she was fighting with a potion.” his father wiped a stray tear. “Of course, it was your mother so I heard her before I saw. There she was with her long black hair wrapped up in a bun with her wand sticking out of it and cursing up a storm fouler than what you’d ever heard.” His father gave a wet sounding laugh. “I dropped my potions kit I was so shocked. And, and, she looked up at me and down at the potions kit and she said ‘Idiot, no wonder you need to practice potions if that’s how you’re treating the ingredients’” He looked down. “Right after she said that, I asked her out immediately...I still don’t know if it wasn’t just the sheer surprise that made her agree.” His father stopped suddenly and reached for his drink.

When he was finished, he sat down the drink with an odd heaviness

Kageyama waited, seeing if his father would say more.

The house sat in silence around him, as it it was waiting with him.

A long moment passed.

Finally, his father sighed and looked back down at his hand. “You know, Tobio, I’m rather tired tonight...I think I’m going to turn in early.”

His father eased himself out of the chair, put his dishes in the sink, and headed for the stairs. He paused briefly by Kageyama and gave his shoulder a fleeting grip. “Happy Holidays, Tobio.”

“Happy Holidays,” Kageyama responded, going back to scooting his peas around the plate.

---

From the balcony, Tsukishima glared out onto his family’s famous annual Christmas Eve Ball. He watched as his best friend, Yamaguchi, was cooed over and had his cheeks pinched by all the old matrons of the pureblood families. For some reason, they all treated him as some lost forgotten grand nephew who immediately needed coddling. Probably because, even after eleven years, Yamaguchi still had trouble saying no and was polite to the point of fault.

“You’re scowling,” a voice said from behind him.

Tsukishima scowled at it.

“Sorry, you’re scowling more than usual,” his brother Akiteru came and leaned on the railing next to him. “And at a Christmas party, too.”

Tsukishima sighed. “What are you even doing up here instead of down at the party. Shouldn’t you be trying to see if she’s here yet so you can--”
“She can’t come this year,” Akiteru interrupted hastily. “Besides, how about instead of talking about my love life, we talk about what’s got you so down at a party.”

“I hate parties,” Tsukishima responded sourly.

“True, but you’re normally better at hiding it,” Akiteru countered. “I know you didn’t get into Slytherin if that’s your poker face.”

“You’re a Hufflepuff. What would you know about poker faces?” Tsukishima muttered.

Akiteru leaned his head on his hands, maintaining eye contact as Tsukishima tried to direct his attention back to the party. “Quite a lot, when it comes to my dear younger brother’s”

“Tt,” scoffed Tsukishima, but otherwise didn’t reply.

Akiteru smiled. “Sooo, I ask again, what’s the matter?”

“It’s nothing,” Tsukishima eventually answered.

“Ah, and does nothing have to do with why you’re glaring at Yamaguchi?” asked Akiteru, enjoying the rare moment of surprise on his younger brother’s face before he covered it with a customary scowl.

“So, I guess I should be asking what’s the matter between you and Yamaguchi?”

“There’s nothing the matter between me and Yamaguchi,” Tsukishima muttered.

“The scowl says otherwise,”

“There’s something the matter between Yamaguchi and his House mates,” clarified Tsukishima.

“Now we’re getting somewhere,” Akiteru said. “I must admit I didn’t quite expect Yamaguchi in Gryffindor. Honestly, I more expected he’d be a fellow ‘Puff. Though, I guess dealing with your sour expressions for a decade is bravery enough.” He smiled at his little brother’s glare. “What’s the matter with Yamaguchi in the Lion’s Den?”

“He’s been hanging around some of the older Gryffindor’s lately,” Tsukishima said, frowning. “Also, he’s always late to our study sessions when he can even make them at all.”

Akiteru took in his brother’s sullen mood. “You know, Kei, I know that you and Yamaguchi have been together since you were in diapers. Heck, I consider Yamaguchi basically a second brother. But...well, it’s normal to make other friends...especially when you just get to a new school.”

“I’m not jealous of Yamaguchi’s friendships,” snapped Tsukishima.

“It’s okay if you are,” Akiteru reassured, “Really, it’s natural since both of you--”

“I think they’re bullying him,” interrupted Tsukishima.

Akiteru stopped short. “Bullying Yamaguchi?” He looked down at the boy in question before muttering, “that’s like kicking a baby Hippogriff. What makes you think that?”

“He’s always nervous lately,” Tsukishima held up a hand to his brother’s interjection. “More than his usual nervousness. He always tries to evade when I try to talk about it, especially when I mention the dorm. And the Gryffindors who have been following him have a reputation as being loud and temperamental.”
Akiteru scratched his chin, thinking. “You might have a point... But, then again that’s not exactly proof. Have you seen them bully Yamaguchi?”

“No,” Tsukishima reluctantly admitted. “But, they could be waiting until they’re back in the dorms.”

“Has Yamaguchi told you he was being bullied?”

“I’ve tried! He just changes the subject!” Tsukishima huffed. He waved his hand at Akiteru. “Your House is all about friendships and group hugs and stuff. What would you do?”

“You’re not going to like my answer,” Akiteru told him, bluntly.

Tsukishima raised an eyebrow.

“You’ve got to wait for him to come to you,” Akiteru told him, ignoring the subsequent scowl. “No, listen, you don’t have any proof he’s being bullied. Sure, he might be more skittish than normal, but it’s Yamaguchi. He’s a skittish person.”

Akiteru smiled at his brother’s crossed arms and glower.

“The best thing you can do is keep being Yamaguchi’s friend. Reassure him that you’re always there if he wants to talk to someone and gently try to get him to open up. If you try to force him, he might just deny it.”

Akiteru clapped his brother on the back. “You two are good friends. One year at Hogwarts isn’t going to change that. Now, go on and save him from being smothered by ninety year old women.”

Akiteru turned and headed for the stairs. “And, Kei, do try to enjoy the party. It is Christmas Eve.”

Tsukishima frowned down as he watched his brother descend into the gathering.

“Honestly,” Tsukishima muttered. “You’d think after eleven years, he’d know me better than that.”

---

“Bokuto, the faster you go to sleep the faster it will be Christmas,” Akaashi said tiredly from his side of the room.

“But, Akaashi, the faster I go to sleep, the quicker Christmas Eve will be over,” Bokuto argued back.

The two were forced to share Akaashi’s room with both of Bokuto’s older sisters back in the house for the holidays. Luckily, Mrs. Bokuto was excellent at Transfiguration so both boys got their own beds.

“Considering it’s thirty minutes from midnight, I really don’t think that’s a long lasting concern,” commented Akaashi.

“Pft, everyone knows Christmas doesn’t really start until you wake up on Christmas morning.” Bokuto sighed happily. “It’s the one day a year where no one minds waking up early.”

“I really think that your parents might kill both of us if you wake them up before six in the morning like last year.”

“That’s just silly, Akaashi. No one can be that angry on Christmas morning!”
Silence fell over the room and Akaashi made an attempt to go to sleep even if he knew it would end in futility.

“Hey, Akaashi”

Akaashi sighed. “Yes, Bokuto”

“What do you think we’re going to end up getting for Christmas?”

Akaashi rolled over in his bed and faced the ceiling.

“Doesn’t it ruin the surprise if you guess your presents before you open them?” he asked.

“No way,” Bokuto told him. Akaashi turned to meet his eyes across the room. With the light of the moon, they reflected gold. “Guessing is half of the fun.”

Akaashi hummed, neither agreeing nor disagreeing.

“Besides, you don’t really know until you open it,” Bokuto continued. “I mean even if you have a really really good guess or like you accidentally saw my parents buy it, you still could be wrong. They could’ve put it back or expected you to see to try to trick you. Nobody can predict every possibility, not even if you’re a Seer or something.

Akaashi gave a slight smile. “I guess that’s one way to look at it.”

Silence fell again.

“So, Akaashi, what did you get me?”

Akaashi thought about the broom service kit wrapped under the tree. He also thought he might strangle Bokuto if he didn’t go to sleep soon.

“You’ll have to wait and see, Bokuto.”

“Aww, but it’s just a few more hours.”

“Have to wait.”

Bokuto seemed to finally decide to go to sleep after that. Akaashi cautiously closed his eyes.

“Hey, Akaashi.”

Strangling him was becoming a very real option.

“Yes, Bokuto.”

“Merry Christmas.”

“...Merry Christmas, Bokuto.”

Maybe strangling him could wait until at least New Years.

---

Oikawa had only a vague kind of awareness when the clock struck midnight and it officially
transitioned from Christmas Eve to Christmas Day.

The teen was surrounded in his bedroom, sitting cross legged on the bed and surrounded by notes of all sorts scattered haphazardly around the room. Oikawa sat in the middle of the notes with the *Daily Prophet* recall book open in his lap.

“That’s another reference to the Cairo expedition,” he muttered distractedly, grabbing blindly at a page labeled “Cairo, Spring Five Years Previous”.

He looked over the article again. “No witnesses interviewed, no team members mentioned.”

His mother was away on yet another business trip--Oikawa absently thought it might be somewhere in the Cayman this time--and his sister was spending it with her new husband’s family, so Oikawa was spending Christmas alone. Well, almost alone. He, of course, was invited and--as Iwaizumi put it--demanded to be at the Iwaizumi house for all of the Christmas meals. He had just barely begged off staying the night following the Christmas Eve dinner.

“You’re not going to stay up all night looking at old *Daily Prophets*, are you?” Iwaizumi had asked when walking Oikawa out.

“Pft, of course not,” Oikawa answered. “Why would you think that?”

“Gee, I don’t know, because you’ve hardly put the recall book down since we got back?”

Oikawa rubbed the back of his neck. “Yeah, but come on, even I know to take a break for Christmas.”

Iwaizumi gave him his patented not-believing-your-bullshit glare.

“Well, would you look at the time,” Oikawa looked at his wrist and realizing he actually hadn’t worn a watch today. “I should be getting home if I want to keep up my refreshed and well rested looks. You wouldn’t understand, Iwa-chan.”

Iwaizumi snorted. “The only reason you look well rested is because you mastered Pepperup Potion and basic Illusion charms in first year.”

Oikawa held a hand to his chest as if struck. “Vicious lies from my own best friend. Now, I have to go home to try to mend the damage.”

Iwaizumi rolled his eyes. “Try to get some sleep tonight. Even trash decomposes eventually.”

Currently, Oikawa gave a brief glance at the clock. He’d go to bed in an hour or so, that would be enough to still appease Iwa-chan.

He got to an article about a South American expedition ten years ago. Skimming through the article, he made marks on his Timeline page. He suddenly stopped and read a section out loud.

“Native wizard Marco Oliveira comments that ‘members of the excavation team frequently stopped by his shop for bruising salve and healing remedies’ speaking to the intense danger of the site.”

Oikawa hummed. Well, maybe Iwa-chan wouldn’t mind him staying up a few more hours.
Brother,

I am sad you are not here and you are hurt. School is cool. I want to come and do magic. I talk about magic but they call me liar. Miss you. Bird is pretty. Merry Christmas.

Love,

Natsu

Hey Hinata,

It’s Sekimukai but Izumi is reading over my shoulder, too. Natsu’s doing fine. She keeps asking where you are and insisted on sending the drawing when we told her you got injured. How did you get injured? You know other than “falling of your magic broom”? Speaking of, Natsu still totally believes you’re a wizard or whatever you told her so you being off at school isn’t bothering her much. Ms. Snuck yelled at her the other day for waving a stick--sorry, “magic wand around”--but we managed to get her another one and sneak it under her pillow. Sucks that you are hurt for the holidays. Tell us all about the fancy boarding school. Also, what’s up with the whole carrier pigeon thing. Do people even still do that? Happy Holidays!

Sekimukai and Izumi

Hinata had the letters laid out in front of him as he looked into the mirror. This was his first time visiting it since the initial discover. Waiting for his leg bones to regrow, Hinata had begun to wonder if he only dreamed about the mirror. Tonight was the first night after Nekomata had cleared him for limited movement and finally removed the leg binds. Honestly, Hinata had begun to consider risking coming back even with the leg binds.

In the mirror, it was now Christmas. The orphanage that the mirror showed had a warmth that made it barely recognizable to the one Hinata remembered. The mirror Natsu opened a present from Hinata and giggled at a toy Hinata knew he could never actually afford. All of Hinata’s friends flitted around the mirror image. Yachi was looking relaxed and was laughing at a joke with Kageyama and Hinata. Bokuto was wedged in the corner showing Sekimukai how to ride a broom. Kenma played Wizard Chess with a smiling Ms. Snuck while Karuasuna flew overhead.

The mirror version of Hinata smiled out from the mirror and waved to the Hinata sitting in the classroom.

The entire night, Hinata sat on the cold stone and watched until the first light of dawn touched the room.

Chapter End Notes

Hope you enjoy the mild break for the Hogwarts holidays in March. As always, thanks for reading and hope you enjoyed! I plan to post next on Monday.
Daichi walked into the Gryffindor common room with a new attitude and a new resolution. Over the holiday break, Daichi had come to the realization that Asahi might actually have had a point. Maybe he was being too paranoid.

After all, it was already halfway through the year and Noya and Tanaka hadn’t done anything too egregious. They showed up to Quidditch practice on time, they ate meals in the Great Hall, and by the looks of it they were even taking first year Yamaguchi under their wings. While Daichi wasn’t quite sure this meant turning a new leaf, he was now willing to admit that it did not have to mean they were planning an elaborate scheme.

Daichi resolved that in this semester he was going to be a new man--a more laid back man who didn’t spend large portions of his time worrying about two second years. He might maybe even possibly try talk to the cute guy in his Herbology class. That was just how chilled and relaxed the new Daichi was going to be.

Noya burst out of the second year boys’ room while frantically trying to put out his robe sleeve which appeared to have caught on fire.

“Aguamenti” shouted Tanaka, slamming the dorm door behind him.

Water shot out, covering both Noya’s arm and Daichi’s face.

*Well, Daichi thought while feeling his blood pressure rise. That was nice while it lasted.*

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“I told you we are not calling ourselves that,” groaned Oikawa.

“I like it. It’s catchy,” said Kuroo, smirking at Oikawa’s glare.

“How was everyone’s break?” asked Suga, moving on from Oikawa and Kuroo’s staring match. “Was anyone able to find anything?”

Kuroo sighed, breaking is stare. “Well, we were definitely right about him being shady. Bokuto and I worked on articles from the first fifteen years or so after his graduation. The first six or so years aren’t that exciting.” He pulled out a scroll and unrolled it to show a series of notes. “Graduated from Slytherin, middle of the road student except for a few subjects. Right after Hogwarts, he decided to get his masters in History of Magic. He was one of five apprentices to a Professor Horlax Istoria in Athens. One of the articles mentions him working with the Professor in an excavation of a magical section of Ancient Rome.”

“Until…” Bokuto dramatically interjected. “He suddenly moves.”
Kuroo nods. “History Masters candidates generally apprentice under a true Master for at least five years before going on to supervised field studies for a couple of years. Sora seems to have left after just two years of apprenticeship.”

“Sora dropped his master’s work?” asked Iwaizumi.

Bokuto shook his head. “See, that’s what we thought, too. But then a year or so later, he’s mentioned as an apprentice to another guy in New Guinea.”

“Also, one of several apprentices,” Kuroo put in.

“So, Sora decides to change who he’s studying under,” commented Oikawa, propping his head on one hand. “Any evidence of a dispute?”

“Or maybe a personal issue,” suggested Suga.

“No evidence for either,” Kuroo answers. “Though, it’s not like that’s the kind of thing they’d print in the paper...Anyway, that’s not what’s really interesting.” He pauses dramatically. “What’s really interesting is he does the same thing a couple of years later.”

“He changes Masters again?” asked Iwaizumi.

Bokuto nodded. “Yeah, a couple of years after New Guinea, he’s mentioned with another guy in Spain.”

Iwaizumi frowned pensively. “Wouldn’t the Masters have problems with him changing so much? I mean it’s hard to get a real basis if you’re constantly changing teachers.”

Kuroo shrugged. “Probably, they did. But, it gets even more crazy after that.”

Bokuto pulled out a recall book and flips to a page. “So, he’s about a year or so into his masters in Spain.” He pointed to a line. “He’s mentioned here as a member of the excavation team so me and Kuroo looked up more about this excavation.” He turned a couple of pages. “Here’s where *The Prophet* printed about the excavation being finished and some ancient cauldrons and stuff being found.” Bokuto paused and drew in a breath for a big reveal.

“Sora’s not mentioned as being part of the team,” Kuroo cut in with a smirk before Bokuto can start.

Bokuto stuck his tongue out at Kuroo, who winks.

“He must have left and not finished his masters,” concluded Suga. “But, why? Coursework wise he was only about a year away.”

“Did he move places again?” asked Oikawa.

Kuroo shook his head. “Not that we can find...In fact, he--” Kuroo stopped when he saw Bokuto was practically bouncing in his seat. “Fine, you can have this one.”

“He disappears,” Bokuto almost shouted.

The table looked at each other.

“What do you mean ‘he disappears’?” Iwaizumi asked eventually.

“Pretty much just that,” Kuroo answered. “There’s no mention of him for the next three years. Not
even just a small reference...Until, he resurfaces again in the Mediterranean with his first big discovery, tablets from the Lost City of Atlantis. That’s the discovery that basically put Sora on the map as a magiarchaeologist.”

Suga frowned. “So, he probably finished his masters somewhere…”

“We just don’t know where,” finished Oikawa.

Kuroo and Bokuto both nodded.

Suga hummed. “This is a point for the ‘Sora has a team of secret accomplices’ theory.”

“Good find,” complimented Iwaizumi, causing Bokuto to grin and give him two thumbs up. Smirking, Kuroo held up his hand and Oikawa rolled his eyes, but gave him a high five.

“I guess I’ll go next,” started Suga. “While I was home, I tried to find out more about what Sora was like in school...My parents weren’t that open about it but I did find out a few things from looking through their old school stuff.”

Suga went to his bag and pulled out a couple of moving photographs. He pointed to the top one featuring eight students laughing in one of the Hogwarts halls. “The one with the Quidditch broom is Sora.”

“Merlin,” swore Kuroo. “That’s a dark bunch.”

Suga nodded in agreement. “It seems like half of Sora’s friend group either went on to Azkaban after the war or were some of the higher ups who bought their way out of it. The one to his left was killed in a duel with the Aurors after the Giant’s fall. The one on the right is the older Uragiri sister, she went to Azkaban after killing the heir to a well known Light family. At least two of the people in this photo were killed in the Battle of Spinner’s End, the last fight of the war.”

“The others?” asked Iwaizumi.

“Prominent figures in the Ministry, of course,” Kuroo answered with disgust. “I remember a couple from the Ministry Christmas Party a few weeks ago.”

Oikawa laughed without an uneasy edge. “So, was Sora…”

Suga shook his head. “No, from what I found earlier, Sora was out of the country during all but the first parts of the war. He couldn’t have fought for the Giant.”

“So just a probable sympathizer. Wonderful.” responded Oikawa with a noted blank expression.

“I knew there was a reason I didn’t like the bastard,” muttered Bokuto.

“Did you find anything else?” asked Iwaizumi.

“Nothing that we didn’t already know,” answered Suga. “That just leaves the two of you. How was your holiday searches?”

Iwaizumi shrugged. “Oikawa and I split up the most recent fifteen years. I didn’t find much. Sora traveled around, started to get a name outside of just the magiarchaeologist community, got into Witch Weekly for the first time, was considered for an Order of Merlin but eventually passed over for that year.”

“I, however, did find something interesting,” Oikawa said, pulling out of his gloomy
contemplation.

He pulled out the recall book and opened it to the page he found Christmas Eve. He showed it to the rest of the table.

“You found an excavation team besides Sora,” commented Suga, impressed.

“And you found a name,” added Kuroo.

“Hey, hey,” said Bokuto, grinning. “Why don’t we just send an owl to that guy and find out if he knows anything?”

“That’s what Oikawa and I were talking about over break,” replied Iwaizumi.

Oikawa grimaced. “We just have a little possible problem.”

Suga realized the issue. “You don’t want Sora to find out we’re looking. Or his apparent team.”

Oikawa nodded.

“It’s not like owling him will mean that it automatically gets back to Sora though,” interjected Iwaizumi.

Kuroo hummed. “The question is will it be worth the risk.”

Silence fell around the table as they thought.

“I think it’s worth it,” announced Oikawa. “We have to risk something eventually if we’re going to get anywhere.”

“I think we should look more at the risk. If Sora is hiding a secret excavation team, he’s been working pretty hard on keeping them out of the press,” added Iwaizumi. “He or someone on the team has to have a close eye on possible leaks.”


Suga nodded. “This is our first solid lead, we might not have a choice but to take it.”

“Why don’t we owl the Masters he apprenticed under, too?” asked Bokuto.

Suga frowned. “We might have to if this falls through.”

“We should definitely wait on that,” argued Iwaizumi.

“They’re more likely to notify Sora if someone is asking about him,” agreed Kuroo.

“So, it’s settled,” questioned Oikawa. “We owl Oliveira.”

The table traded looks with each other but no one disagreed.

Bokuto raised a fist in the air. “The Investigator's Club has spoken.”

The sound of Kuroo and Bokuto’s high five covered up Oikawa’s groan.

---
Yachi sat on the Quidditch pitch and read her Charm’s book while Kageyama and Hinata practiced throwing and catching a Quaffle mid-dive.

Hinata’s leg, arm, and head were newly healed and Kageyama had immediately dragged him to the Quidditch pitch the moment Yachi and him had gotten back to school...not that much dragging was really needed. Though not as interested in flying herself, Yachi loved Quidditch. Her father had been a massive fan and the house was still filled with her father’s old Quidditch gear. Yachi thought there was something almost beautiful about watching Kageyama and Hinata pull amazing spins through the air.

Almost like bird watching, Yachi thought with a smile. Hinata pulled too low to the ground and was close to stumbling, which caused Kageyama to yell at him for being stupid enough to almost injure himself right after healing. Well, particularly aggressive bird watching.

Yachi looked at her watch.

“Hinata, Kageyama,” she called. “We have to go or we’re going to be late for dinner.”

The two landed with sighs.

“Do you think we’ll have time to fly any after dinner,” asked Hinata.

Kageyama shook his head. “No, it will be too dark.” He thought for a second. “What if we cast Lumos and then held the wands in our teeth or something, then we could--”

“No,” Yachi interrupted. “You are not getting injured on the first night back.”

The two deflated.

Honestly, Yachi thought. ...though maybe if we enchanted a number of floating lanterns like they use for the night games.

The three walked to the broom shed to return the school brooms and Quaffle.

“So, how was your Christmas?” asked Hinata. “Oh, I got both of your letters!”

Yachi smiled. “Mine was fine. Mom and I went to the Ministry Christmas party the day of. Other than that, I was able to read ahead in our class reading which was fun!”

Kageyama looked slightly bewildered why anyone would find that fun.

“I stayed at my house with my father,” answered Kageyama. He shrugged. “I got to fly a lot in the field beside my house.”

Hinata shot him an envious look.

“What about you, Hinata?” questioned Yachi. “I’m sure it wasn’t much fun being injured, but did you find anything to do?”

Hinata immediately began to look excited. He looked around quickly, making sure no one was there.

“Actually, yeah,” he told them, motioning for them to lean in. “I don’t think I can describe it, I have to show it to you guys. It’s so cool!”

Hinata hesitated.
“But...I’m actually not sure if we’re even allowed to go see it.” Hinata rubbed the back of his neck. “I um, might have found it when I got lost going to the bathroom.”

Kageyama gave him an unimpressed look.

“How can we go see it if we’re not allowed?” asked Yachi.

“Wellll,” Hinata started. “We...we could always sneak out.”

Both Yachi and Kageyama sent him surprised looks.

“Stupid, we can’t just sneak out after curfew to go to a restricted area,” said Kageyama, glaring. “Do you know how many points we’d lose?”

“Kageyama’s right, Hinata. We’d get in so much trouble if we were caught,” Yachi told him.

“No, no, listen,” Hinata said. “I’ve been sneaking out of the Medical Wing for half the break. I know the pathways where we can get in and out without being caught?”

“Are you insane? You know how much Nekomata guards the Medical Wing. How have you not been caught?” demanded Kageyama.

“I told you. I’m sneaky,” replied Hinata, glaring back.

He turned to look at both of them.

“Look, I wouldn’t ask you to sneak out if I didn’t think it was worth it,” assured Hinata. “You are really, really going to want to see this. Do you trust me?”

Yachi and Kageyama traded a look.

“Fine,” Kageyama muttered. “But, you better be right.”

---

“Isn’t she just the most beautiful, precious thing you’ve ever seen,” gushed Noya, looking at the baby dragon.

These were not exactly the adjectives that Yamaguchi would have chosen.

“Merlin,” breathed Asahi. “I can’t believe you actually have a live dragon hidden in your dorm.

“ We have a live dragon hidden in our dorm,” corrected Noya. “I couldn’t have done it without you guys.”

“Somehow, I don’t think that’s very reassuring,” commented Ennoshita. “So, now that it’s hatched--”

“Now that she’s hatched,” admonished Tanaka.

“I named her Rolling Thunder,” added Noya. “You should have seen her when she hatched. I almost had to Augamenti the entire room.
Ennoshita rolled his eyes. “Now that she’s hatched, exactly how long until we can move her to the Forbidden Forest.”

“Um, we don’t actually have to, to go to the Forbidden Forest, um, do we?” asked Asahi. “I mean it’s, well, forbidden for a reason.”

“A month and a half,” Noya answered Ennoshita. “And, of course, we’ll go to the Forbidden Forest, Asahi. That’s half of the fun.”

Asahi paled.

_Tsuki’s going to kill me if he ever finds out about this_, mused Yamaguchi.

“So,” Yamaguchi started. “Sometime in roughly over a month, we need to figure out a way to smuggle a newly hatched dragon down from one of the highest towers, across the school, and into the **Forbidden Forest**. All without being discovered.”

Tanaka nodded. “I think I know a pretty good Disillusionment charm.”

Ennoshita looked at the mirror in the corner of the room. “Do you think it’s possible to get wrinkles before you’re even a teenager?”

“Oh, come on, guys,” Noya complained. “You haven’t even really looked at her yet. Come closer, she won’t bite--she hasn’t grown teeth yet.”

Yamaguchi sighed but looked closer. He had to admit she was...cute. Tanaka had informed them that she was a Norwegian Ridgeback. She was about the length of Yamaguchi’s forearm with beautiful dark green scales starting from her tiny head and stretching down to her long lizard like tail. Her eyes had not quite adjusted to seeing anything yet and she blinked slowly at Yamaguchi, trying to focus. She yawned, flicking out her long tongue, before curling into a ball by the fire.

“Okay, she’s kind of adorable,” Ennoshita said begrudgingly.

“I knew you’d come around,” Tanaka smiled.

Ennoshita glared. “This is still a terrible idea.”

She yawned again before giving a light growl which barked out fire. A nearby dragon care book caught on fire. Yamaguchi backed up so fast he whacked his leg on a trunk.

“Merlin’s balls, get the bucket.” Noya yelled and Tanaka quickly threw water over the fire.

“Well, that was a close one,” Tanaka said, giving Noya a high five.

“Yeah, replacing those books would have been a pain.” Noya turned to Yamaguchi. “See, guys, we totally know what we’re…”

Noya trailed off and paled significantly. “Um, Tanaka did you remember to set the silencing charm.”

“I thought you did it.” Tanaka looked up and gulped.

Puzzled, Yamaguchi turned around.

Standing in the doorway, Daichi stood like an omen of doom with his arms crossed and glowering.
“You five are in so much trouble.”

---

“Are you sure you know where you’re going?” asked Kageyama again.

“Duh, of course, I know where I’m going. It’s the Gryffindor tower. We just, um, head up,” answered Hinata.

Kageyama gave him a skeptical look that Hinata felt was unwarranted. Yeah, maybe he took the wrong turn when they first left but now he’s totally got it.

The two had left their Common room and were now stumbling along the dark Hogwarts halls.

“We’re going to be late,” whispered Kageyama. “We were supposed to meet Yachi at midnight.”

“We are not going to be late,” whispered back Hinata. “Look it’s right there. See, I told you we could get here without being caught.”

The two spotted Yachi hiding behind a suit of armor by a painting of a rotund woman snoring on a Greek column.

“Why are you hiding,” Hinata asked Yachi.

Yachi looked around the hall making sure no one was there. “I thought I saw one of the prefects, so I hid behind the armor.”

Kageyama glanced around as if waiting for someone to pop up and start yelling. “We should hurry before they come back.”

Hinata nodded and gestured for the other two to follow him. “I found it when I was on the third floor.”

Careful not to make too much noise, the three walked through the halls and down staircases, making sure to watch out for a light that signaled a patrolling teacher or prefect.

“It’s right around this corner,” Hinata told them and turned them onto a long hall.

“This looks like a bunch of old classrooms,” noted Yachi glancing around.

“That’s what I thought, too,” agreed Hinata. “But, look what’s in this one!”

Hinata opened a door on the left side of the hall, revealing an old classroom.

“Ugh, this place smells like mothballs,” complained Kageyama, following Hinata into the room. “I don’t think the House Elves have touched this place in years.”

“Is that--is that an old mirror?” asked Yachi, gesturing to the center of the room.

Hinata nodded frantically. “Yeah, but it’s not a normal mirror. Watch this!”

The other two stood to the side and watched as Hinata moved to stand in front of the large frame.
“Do you see her?” Hinata asked excitedly. “Do you see my sister Natsu?”

Kageyama frowned. “What are you talking about?”

“Don’t be stupid, Kageyama,” Hinata frowned at him. “She’s right there! Standing next to me.”

“Hinata,” said Yachi hesitantly. “All we see is your reflection.”

“Ugh,” said Hinata, pulling on Kageyama. “You must not be looking at it right. Here, stand in front of it.

Kageyama stood where Hinata had been and immediately gasped.

“See, you see her, don’t you!” Hinata exclaimed happily. “Her name is Natsu, she’s my sister.”

Kageyama shook his head. “I don’t see your sister.”

Hinata glared at him. “You obviously see something, you just gasped! Why else would you--”

“I see my mother,” interrupted Kageyama.

He squinted at the mirror. “And my...my father’s there, too. They’re both smiling at me and...and he just ruffled my hair.”

Kageyama reached toward his head as if chasing the phantom touch.

“Hinata, what is this mirror?” asked Yachi nervously.

Hinata shook his head. “I don’t know. I just saw my sister and you guys and the Quidditch team and my friends from the orphanage. We were all laughing and goofing off.” He met Yachi’s eyes. “I kind of thought, um, that maybe it showed the future or something.”

Kageyama shook his head sharply. “It can’t. My mother is dead.”

Hinata turned sharply to Kageyama. “It...it shows dead people?” He paled. “Oh my gosh, Natsu! Do you think she’s okay? I just got a letter from her this morning!”

Yachi grabbed Hinata’s shoulders to calm him down. “Hinata, I’m sure that’s not it. You said you saw me and Kageyama earlier and we’re obviously not dead.”

Hinata let out a breath.

“You’re right. I did see you two over break.” His hand still twitched as if he wanted to write a letter immediately.

He shook his head. “Then, what do you think the mirror does? I mean obviously the things it shows aren’t really happening.”

At that, Kageyama jerked his head away from the mirror.

“I’m done,” he said tersely. “Yachi, why don’t you try it?”

Hesitantly, Yachi walked in front of the mirror.

Looking into it, her brow furrowed and she looked back to the boys before going back to the mirror.
“What do you see,” asked Hinata eagerly.

“I-I just see us three,” answered Yachi, sounding confused. “But, you two have moved. You’re standing beside me rather than to the side of the mirror. We’re...we’re laughing at something.” She squinted. “I think we’re eating in the Great Hall.”

“That’s so weird,” Hinata exclaimed. “Why do you think it shows us all something different?”

“I’m not sure,” Yachi said slowly. “But, I don’t know how I feel about it.”

“What do you mean?” questioned Hinata.

Yachi shook her head, walking away from the mirror. “I don’t know yet. I just...feel like we should be sorta careful with this, you know?”

Hinata scratched his head. “I don’t know. I mean I’ve been looking at it all break and I’m still fine.”

Yachi didn’t seem fully convinced but also didn’t respond. Kageyama walked back in front of the mirror.

“Sooo,” Hinata drew out, looking happily between the two. “Wasn’t I right? Isn’t this mirror super cool?”

“Yeah,” Kageyama said softly without glancing away from the mirror. “Cool.”

Chapter End Notes

As always, hope you enjoyed and thanks for reading! I plan to post next on Friday.
“Daichi!” Asahi squeaked from the other side of the room. “Um, how long have you been here?”

“Oh, you know,” Daichi replied caustically, glaring at Noya and Tanaka. “Just long enough to find out that three of my second years are keeping a dragon in their dorms and that they apparently lured in a first year and a timid third year into their clutches as well.”

“Oh, that long,” sighed Asahi.

“Shut the door,” Ennoshita said, walking behind a murderous looking Daichi and closing the door to the room while renewing the silencing charm.

Yamaguchi thought Ennoshita might be the bravest person he knew.

“So,” Daichi said in a deceptively calm voice. “Who wants to explain this first?”

“We saved her, Daichi!” exclaimed Noya while Tanaka nodded frantically beside him. “Her egg was being sold in the middle of Knockturn Alley.”

Daichi pinched the bridge of his nose. “Ignoring the fact that two twelve year olds were, for some reason, in the middle of bloody Knockturn Alley, exactly how did you two finding an egg go to you two deciding to raise a dragon in a dorm room?”

“Um,” Tanaka started. “Well, what else were we going to do with her?”

“Yeah,” Noya added. “She likes it here. Look at how peaceful she looks!”

Rolling Thunder curled into a tighter ball and resumed her nap.


“Well, not forever,” Tanaka answered. “In a month, we’re moving her to the Forbidden Forest and raising her there.”

Daichi looked at the ceiling as if calling on a higher power.

“Well, not forever,” Tanaka answered. “In a month, we’re moving her to the Forbidden Forest and raising her there.”

Daichi blew past this comment. “And exactly how many people work at the dragon preserve?”

“I think it’s, er, somewhere between thirty and fifty depending on if it’s breeding season,” responded Tanaka.

Daichi nodded. “And what kind of training do dragon trainers have?”
“To get full dragon trainer credentials, you need at least five years of apprenticeship on a
preserve,” answered Tanaka promptly.

Daichi again nodded. “And do you two have that?”

Noya and Tanaka looked at each other sheepishly.

Yamaguchi saw that Ennoshita was watching the conversation almost akin to one watching a
Quidditch match. Asahi still just looked mainly nervous and was looking down, tugging on his
sleeves, rather than meeting anyone’s eyes.

“Weellll,” Noya began. “Maybe not, but we’re only dealing with one dragon. So, I’m sure it will
be easier.”

Daichi looked at them. “What if she gets hurt? The Forbidden Forest is dangerous. How are you
going to make sure she’s safe when you’re at school? Or get her medical care if she does get
hurt?”

Noya paused, thinking.

Yamaguchi had to admit, none of them—except Noya and Tanaka who had vague sounding ideas
involving fire breathing Quidditch—had given any thought at all to what would happen to the
dragon after they managed to sneak her out to the forest.

“And,” Daichi continued softly. “What about her? How do you think she’ll feel being the only
dragon in the country?”

“She’ll have us?” Tanaka responded, but even he didn’t sound fully convinced.

Daichi nodded. “She’ll only have you two, who have school and have to go home on the breaks.”

“But, but, Daichi, look at her,” begged Noya.

Daichi looked over at Rolling Thunder in the corner, he gave a small somewhat softer smile.

“She’s beautiful,” he admitted. “I’m sure she’ll be very very happy once she can play with her own
kind.”

Noya and Tanaka looked pleadingly at Daichi.

Ennoshita gave a sigh. “Come on, guys, you know Daichi’s right.”

Asahi managed to look up and give Noya a sympathetic nod.

“But…” Noya said in one last try.

Daichi interrupted him with a sigh. “You know if you only keep her at Hogwarts. She’ll be trapped
just as if she was raised by poachers.”

That was it, thought Yamaguchi. The final nail in the coffin.

Noya and Tanaka both looked at the dragon before nodding sadly.

“Fine,” Noya told him. “We’ll move her from the castle.”

Yamaguchi felt as if a weight had been lifted off his chest. He felt so ridiculously relieved that
Daichi had found out and that they wouldn’t have to deal with raising a baby dragon.

“After a month and a half, of course,” added Tanaka.

Ah, there. The weight was back again.

“And, of course, we figure out a way to smuggle her out of the castle,” Noya finished.

And the weight had brought friends.

---

Oikawa looked over as Kuroo slid into the seat behind him before their Defense Against the Dark Arts class.

Oikawa sent him a questioning look but Kuroo just smirked.

“Ah, Oikawa,” Hanamaki whispered to him from the table behind him. “Why didn’t you tell us you made a new friend?”

Matsukawa faked wiping a tear from his eye. “They grow up so fast.”

“And a Ravenclaw, too. Way to inspire inner House Unity,” complimented Hanamaki. “I can’t wait to tell Iwaizumi that you brought back a smart one!”

Oikawa gave Kuroo a flat look. “The Worst. I have the worst friends.”

Kuroo’s look was similarly sardonic. “Truly, your burden knows no bounds.”

“Maki, I do believe we are being mocked,” commented Matsukawa.

“Tragic, Matsu. It’s true what they say you never know a good thing until it’s gone,” says Hanamaki.

“And we’re the best things!”

“Absolutely, the ungrateful cretins.”

Their high five rang out just as Professor Sora began class.

“Alright, class, today, I’m reluctant to admit, will be a largely theoretical class with the application part at the end.”

A chorus of sighs rang out as the class realized they weren’t going to spend most of the class practicing spells like normal.

“I know, I know,” called Professor Sora. “But, hey, you never know. Maybe some of you will find yourselves better suited for the more theoretical aspects rather than the practical.”

Oikawa was pretty sure he didn’t imagine Sora’s glance to him after this.

It was going to be a long class, Oikawa thought chagrined.
Kuroo bumped into his arm while reaching for his quill.

Oikawa glanced over and saw that Kuroo was writing something.

*That was less subtle than usual,* Kuroo wrote. *Did you piss him off recently or what?*

As soon as he read the message it disappears. Oikawa furrowed his brow.

*The quill has a setting for Invisi-Ink,* Kuroo wrote.

Oikawa gave a brief nod in the guise of leaning his head on his hand. Kuroo snuck him a second quill under the table.

*Brush the feather and a blue streak will appear when activated,* Kuroo explained.

Subtly, Oikawa activated the quill and wrote back.

*I think I pissed him off. Last week was the last day to drop classes for the second semester. I chose to stay in his Dueling class against his ‘advice’. Just wait for Dueling class, I’m sure it’ll be even worse.*

*Merlin, he’s a bastard,* Kuroo scribbled back. *Is it petty that I almost want him to be endangering the school by now. Just, so there’s a legitimate reason to trash him.*

*Considering I started to investigate him after the first week, you should be fine. How did you get an Invisi-Ink pen set anyway? They’re like 15 galleons for one. And against the school rules*

*Overheard some prissy fifth years bragging about it first week of school. Kuroo wrote. They were planning on sending fake teachers notes to students so they’d do things that would get them in trouble and then not have the teacher’s note to prove why they did it. I transfigured some feathers and relieved them of the quills.* : )

Oikawa frowned. *Why are you not in Slytherin again?*

: ) *You’ll never know.*

: P

*Did you send the letter yet,* asked Kuroo.

*Yeah, I sent it a few days ago. I borrowed a school owl so it will be harder to track. Accounting for the international portkey, earliest it should get back is tomorrow morning.*

Kuroo taped his quill a moment. *You think we’ll actually get anything from it?*

Oikawa shrugged, covering it by turning it into a stretch. *Probably not much, maybe at least how many members were there. Could be a complete dead end, but it’s not like we have many other leads.*

*Here’s to hoping then.*

After that conversation died off, Oikawa briefly looked back up at Sora’s lecture, but he seemed to be teaching almost word for word from the book.

Kuroo bumped his shoulder again.
Oikawa looked down and stared.

He picked up his quill again.

*How are we going to play Tic Tac Toe with disappearing ink?*

Kuroo smirked and wrote back.

Quickly.

---

“Is this good enough?” asked Hinata.

“The mistletoe berries need to be a touch more finely ground. If not they won’t dissolve right,” responded Suga, looking into the mortar Hinata was using to grind. The two were once again tutoring in the Potion’s lab.

“Why would someone even want a potion that makes them forget stuff anyway?” questioned Hinata as he continued his work on the Forgetfulness Potion.

“It can be used somewhat during medical trauma,” Suga told him. “But mainly it’s used on one’s enemies. It’s one of the main potions checked for before wizarding trials.”

“That’s terrible,” said Hinata, wrinkling his nose.

“Definitely unethical,” agreed Suga. “But, this is a basic potion so a few well placed Remembrance Charms are normally enough to undo the effects...the real problem is Memory Charms.”

“What’s a Memory Charm?” asked Hinata, showing Suga the ground berries for approval.

Suga nodded. “A Memory Charm is used to erase sections of memory that the spell caster wants to be forgotten. It’s regarded as a Dark charm and is banned by almost all Wizarding governments.”

Suga paused. “A lot of good wizards and witches are housed in Saint Mungo’s because of that very charm.”

He looked up at Hinata. “Not that I think we need to be worrying about that too much. You won’t even learn more about it until fifth year I think.”

Hinata shook his head. “Why would anyone use magic like that?” He picked up his stirrer. “Five times counterclockwise, right?”


The potion turned a light blue color and Suga leaned over to briefly inspect it.

“Careful not to breathe in the fumes too deeply,” Suga warned. “Even the fumes can make you lose a few seconds.”

Hinata nodded and stepped back.

“A perfect potion!” Suga told him.
“Yes!” Hinata fist pumped. “Professor Irihata told us we needed to know it by tomorrow's quiz. I gotta go tell Kageyama!”

Hinata eagerly started packing up his stuff, going faster than he probably should have given the more sensitive potions ingredients.

“Do you want me to walk you back up?” Suga asked, wincing as he saw the potion case jostled slightly.

“Nah,” Hinata waved him off, slinging the bag over his shoulder. “Me and Kageyama were going to go out to the Quidditch pitch anyway. Yachi’s got this idea about lanterns.”

Hinata threw Suga his usual exuberant smile and wave before heading for the door. “Thanks, Suga! See you next Thursday!”

“Have a nice night,” Suga smiled as Hinata rushed out the door and to the pitch.

Suga shook his head. He didn’t think he’d ever seen anyone as obsessed with Quidditch as Hinata...well, and maybe Kageyama from what he’s heard.

Packing up his own stuff, Suga locked up the Potion’s classroom and made the short walk to the Slytherin common rooms.

“Vulpes” recited Suga and the entrance ways slid back allowing Suga inside.

The Slytherin common room was a rather dark place, though Suga always thought it held its own charms. It somewhat resemble an underwater cave, contrasting with the elegant oak furniture. Beautiful stained glass windows lined the walls looking out into the Great Lake, where mermaids swam by looking in on the students. Delicate green lights hung from the ceiling and at night, the ornate fireplaces were lit, adding a warm glow to the chilled chambers.

Beautiful as it was, Suga tended to avoid it except in late nights and early mornings. While the room was rather desirable, the company of the older students was less so. Multiple generations of Suga’s family had been high ranking members of the Giant. And since his father, mother, and grandfather had avoided Azkaban in spite of this, the Sugawara family was considered a political savvy if reclusive family. Privately, Suga wondered how his ambitious classmates would feel if they knew the truth of the matter.

Quietly, Suga made it into his room. Glancing around, he noticed that only he and Oikawa had returned for the night. Oikawa sat on his bed with the recall book open in front of him.

“Where’s Matsukawa and Hanamaki?” asked Suga curiously.

“Something about setting up a prank in the Astronomy tower,” absently responded Oikawa. “I doubt they’ll back to curfew--possibly later.”

Suga nodded, taking off his cloak and unpacking his bag. “Find anything new?”

Oikawa shook his head. “Nothing yet.”

Suga glanced at Oikawa and wondered if he should start this conversation. Eventually, he decided it would have to come up sometime and Suga would prefer if he had control of the conversation when it did.

“You don’t like me very much, do you?” asked Suga.
Oikawa looked up with a startled expression before sighing. He closed his book.

“I like you fine enough. I just don’t trust you.”

Well, that was somewhat better than Suga had expected. At least, he wasn’t denying it.

“I haven’t told the teachers about the Investigators’ Club, have I?” reminded Suga.

Oikawa shrugged. “You already admitted you have your own motives for that, so don’t think that counts as a point solely in your favor.”

Suga withheld a rueful smile, acknowledged this. Maybe, he’d try a guilt appeal.

“I still haven’t given you any reason not to trust me,” Suga told him.

“Except the eavesdropping behind a curtain thing.” Oikawa reminded pointedly.

“I’m still a Slytherin, Oikawa, what did you expect for not checking the room?”

Oikawa quirked his lip up in what might’ve been a small smile.

Suga was tempted to roll his eyes. “So, yes, besides the eavesdropping thing, why don’t you trust me? All, I’ve done is try to help you.”

Instead of looking abashed as Suga expected, Oikawa narrowed his eyes. “You’re not going to make me feel guilty.”

This time, Suga did give in to a rueful smile. “Can’t blame me for trying.”

Oikawa sighed and looked down at his book. “You’re not stupid, Sugawara. You know why I don’t trust you.”

Suga frowned, holding his jaw steady so as not to grind his teeth. It wasn’t like this wasn’t what he expected.

“You know it’s unfair to judge me based on my family’s reputation.” Suga said in a carefully soft voice.

“You’re right it’s not fair,” Oikawa agreed immediately, not looking up from the book.

“That’s new”, Suga thought withholding a note of surprise. Normally, if he actually called people out on their unfair judgements, they seemed rather taken aback. Rarely, did they ever admit to it. And always, if they did admit to it, with a note of shame and an apology.

“However,” Oikawa continued, drawing back Suga’s attention. “It’s still a factor and neither you nor I are naive enough to pretend otherwise.”

Suga gave in to temptation and gave a mild glare. “I’m not my family, Oikawa.”

Oikawa met his eyes, finally looking back up from his book.

“Honestly,” Oikawa began in a rather casual voice, “I don’t really believe you are. If I did, blackmail or not, there’s no way you’d be on the Sora investigation.” He shrugged. “I already admitted that I liked you alright as a person.”

“But,” Suga prompted.
“But...” Oikawa continued slowly. “Suga, you were here for my first year, too. It’s not like this would be the first time someone in my House gained my trust to stab me in the back.”

That might be fair, Suga begrudgingly admitted. He did remember their first year and he had been here, even if the worse stuff he only knew about after the fact.

“So, what,” questioned Suga curiously, minor frustration slipping through. “You’ll never trust me. We’ll always be at a distance and there's nothing we can do about it.”

Oikawa thought for a second. “There’s probably something, I just don’t know what it is yet and I don’t think you do either.” He shrugged. “Give it time, most likely...I think both of us are a bit too young for Unbreakable Bonds and Irihata tends to keep the Verisitium locked up.”

Suga gave a surprised laugh and Oikawa quirked a small smile back.

Still with a slight smile, Suga gave him an even look.

“You know you could have always taken the easier route and just lied and said you trusted me.”

Oikawa snorted. “As if you’d believe me... Besides, maybe a more trusting person would believe you already. A nicer person might have lied. But, if you believed I was either trusting or nice, you wouldn’t have asked me in the first place.”

---

The next morning, Yamaguchi spread jam on his toast and wondered how he would possibly go about getting a live dragon out of Hogwarts and not get caught by the professors. Weren’t first years supposed to be worried about...about….actually Yamaguchi was pretty sure Hogwarts students didn’t worry about much of anything until final exams.

“Are you worried about anything?” Yamaguchi asked Tsukishima.

Wait, no that was a stupid question. Who asked that? That was definitely suspicious.

“Not particularly,” replied Tsukishima, furrowing his brow. “Why are you?”

“Oh, ack. No, of course I’m not,” spluttered Yamaguchi. “Just, you know, regular first year stuff like, um...tests?”

Nailed it, thought Yamaguchi sarcastically. That was definitely not suspicious at all.

Tsukishima stared at him before clearing his throat.

“You know…” he started before trailing off. He took a breath. “You know if someone, if something I mean is bothering you, you can tell me about it.”

“What would you think is bothering me?” asked Yamaguchi in a slightly strained voice. No, there was no way, no possible way that Tsukishima could have guessed about the dragon.

“Just...” Tsukishima trailed off again.

He doesn’t know, Yamaguchi reassured himself. He can’t possibly know.
Tsukishima shook his head. “Whatever, forget it. Just you can talk to me if you want to talk to me.”

Yamaguchi thought he heard Tsukishima mutter “Stupid Akiteru” under his breath but wasn’t quite sure.

“Thanks, Tsuki,” Yamaguchi told him brightly. “Don’t worry, I know I can always count on you. You can count on me, too, okay?”

Tsukishima nodded somewhat absently and went back to eating his eggs.

*Forget the professors, Yamaguchi thought morosely. It will be a miracle if Tsuki doesn’t find out.*

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Hinata quickly stuffed one last bite of muffin into his mouth while packing up his stuff.

“Hinata, wait, I need to talk to you for a second,” Yachi whispered to him, grabbing his arm.

“Mhut mt?,” asked Hinata before swallowing down the muffin. “What is it?”

“Not here,” Yachi told them and then motioned Kageyama and him out of the Great Hall and to a tiny alcove off the corridor.

“What’s wrong?” asked Kageyama, careful to keep his voice low.

“Um,” Yachi bit her lip and looked nervously at Hinata. “I-I don’t think we should go back to see that mirror.”

“What! Why?” questioned Hinata, forgetting to keep his voice down. “Because I know me and Kageyama have Quidditch practice until late--”

“No,” Yachi interrupted. “I don’t think we should ever go back?”

“Why do you think that?” Kageyama asked, cutting off whatever Hinata wanted to say.

“I-I think it might be dangerous,” Yachi told them.

“It shows us awesome things,” Hinata said, confused. “How can it be a dangerous?”

Yachi bit her lip again. “I just thought...isn't it weird how it seemed to know what Kageyama’s parents look like? And Hinata, your sister, too--she’s not even in the wizarding world. So, I thought it might be reading our minds.”

“Magic can read minds?” questioned Hinata before looking wide eyed. “Wait, can everyone here hear what I’ve been thinking? That’s so cool!”

Kageyama sent him an are-you-crazy look while Yachi shook her head. “I looked into magical mind reading and found a branch of magic for mind reading. It’s generally considered one of the Dark Arts. But...” she looked between both of the boys. “I did find a book about *objects* that can read your mind and *all of them* were cursed objects...Hinata, I’m sorry, but I, I really don’t think that we should go back to that mirror.”
“But, Yachi,” Hinata argued. “If the object’s so dangerous, why would it be in a school?”

Kageyama looked to be considering that point.

“Maybe...maybe, that’s why it’s in an abandoned classroom,” countered Yachi. “To keep it away from students.”

“But, it’s not like they keep the classroom locked or anything,” Hinata pointed out. “If it was really dangerous to us, there’s no way Headmaster Ukai would let us in there.”

“Hinata,” Yachi said with a hint of desperation. “I really, really don’t think it’s safe to go back there.”

A long moment passed where Yachi looked pleadingly as Hinata mirrored the expression right back.

Finally, Hinata sighed. “Alright, we can...we can stop going back there if you’re really worried. Just, just, one more time, okay? We can go back tomorrow night and say goodbye and then I’ll never go back to it again. I promise.”

Kageyama nodded, accepting this agreement.

Yachi still looked as if she wanted to say something more.

“Come on, Yachi,” Hinata cajoled. “I went there all through break and nothing bad happened. Just one more time isn’t going to hurt.”

Yachi continued to look hesitant before finally nodding.

“Okay, one more time.”

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“Come on, Trashykawa, we need to get to class,” called out Iwaizumi after breakfast.

“Rude, Iwa-chan, you’re trying to starve me,” retorted Oikawa, but stood to pack up his stuff.

Iwaizumi rolled his eyes but didn’t comment.

As they stood, an owl swooped into the Great Hall.

Iwaizumi squinted. “Isn’t it a bit late for an owl post?”

Oikawa followed his gaze. “Hey, that’s the school owl that I--”

The owl stopped in front of Oikawa and stuck out a leg. Her feathers were rumpled and it almost seemed like the owl was out of breath.

Iwaizumi let out an impressed whistle. “Wow, when you said the letter could be in today at the earliest, I figured you were being optimistic. She must’ve sped.”

Oikawa nodded and petted the owl, giving her a few neck scratches. He gently untied the letter from her leg.
He scanned through it, eyes growing wide.

“What is it?” asked Iwaizumi.

Oikawa swallowed. “We need to call another research meeting. Tonight.”

Chapter End Notes

As always, thanks for reading and hope you enjoyed. Next chapter is on Monday.
“So, good news. I talked to my sister,” Tanaka told the group, who was once again spending a night gathered in the second year boys’ dorm room.

“Tanaka’s sister is awesome,” enthused Noya. “How cool is to work in a dragon preserve!”

“What did she say,” asked Asahi, edging away from Rolling Thunder, who had taken a recent interest in nibbling on Asahi’s socked foot.

“She said,” Tanaka paused for dramatic effect, “that she can pick up the dragon and take her back to the preserve.”

“That’s great!” said Yamaguchi ecstatically. Finally, he wouldn’t have to worry about having to deal with a secret dragon anymore.

“...In about a month,” Tanaka finished. “That’s the, um, bad news.”

Ennoshita rolled his eyes.

“Alright,” Daichi announced, all eyes going to him. “We just need to continue to keep the dragon secret for a month. I’m sure with all six of us, we should be able to manage. Did she say anything else, Tanaka?”

“Um,” Tanaka said, rubbing the back of his neck. “She might have also said to bring Rolling Thunder up to the Astronomy tower so, um, her and her friends could fly it out by broomstick without setting off the castle wards.”

Everyone looked immediately alarmed.

“Don’t worry, bro,” Tanaka said, looking at Noya. “I already made sure that she wouldn’t be the actual one flying Rolling Thunder.” He looked at the group. “She’s a terrible flyer.”

Noya nodded, looking relieved.

Everyone, minus Noya, looked immediately alarmed.

“We, we have to smuggle her on to one of the highest tower in Hogwarts?” demanded Yamaguchi.

“Merlin, that’s the entire way across campus,” added Asahi.

“And we’ll have to do it after curfew if we want to have even a chance of not getting caught,” put in Ennoshita.

Asahi anxiously pulled at his long sleeves.

“Okay,” Daichi said in a reassuring voice. “It will still be fine. We have an entire month to plan. We can still do this, we just need to start planning now.”

Yamaguchi doesn’t know if he’s ever felt quite so relieved that Daichi found out about the dragon. There was something comforting about the older boy’s presence.
“Ennoshita, you’re friends with some of the older students. Do you think you can find out when the prefects normally run their patrols?” asked Daichi.

“Sure,” replied Ennoshita. “Shouldn’t be too hard. I think the Hufflepuff and Gryffindor prefects have a study group.”

“Noya, Tanaka, can you work on finding ways we can keep Rolling Thunder hidden,” questioned Daichi, looking at the resident trouble makers.

Noya frowned, thinking. “Dragon’s skin has a greater immunity against a lot of spells, but we can try to think of something.”

Tanaka nodded next to him.

“Just see what you can do,” Daichi told them. “Asahi and I have been here the longest so we can work on finding the quickest path to the tower.”

Asahi smiled, looking a bit less nervous now that he had something to do.

“Yamaguchi,” Daichi said, looking at him. “Would you be willing to be our lookout for that night? That way you can warn us and if you do get caught, you’ll get in less trouble since you won’t have the dragon and you’re a first year.” Daichi sent a glare to Noya and Tanaka. “Since these idiots pulled you into it.”

A lookout, Yamaguchi mused. Yes, I think I can do that.

He gave Daichi a nod.

“Great,” Daichi said. He looked at the dragon, who had now eaten through Asahi’s sock and was nibbling gently on his big toe. “Now, who’s willing to watch Rolling Thunder during the Hufflepuff game?”

Yamaguchi sighed before volunteering. He’d have to come up with a really good excuse to tell Tsuki why he wasn’t coming to the game.

---

“So, what’s with the urgent meeting?” Kuroo asked. “Did you get a letter back? That was quick.”

The group gathered around their usual study table at the library.

Oikawa nodded, but waited until Suga was finished putting up a Muffliato Charm around the table.

“It came in this morning. They sent it back immediately,” Oikawa told them, pulling the letter out of his bag. “Here, read it. I told the guy that I was a journalist looking into Sora’s expeditions”

The group, minus Oikawa, leaned down over the letter. It looked to have been scrawled urgently across the paper.

To Mr. Saito,

You recently sent a letter questioning my brother about an excavation that happened near our town. Do not look into this case further if you value your life.
Even as I write this, I will not include my name for fear it gets back to the man you wrote about. The only reason I write this now is that I feel it is my duty to warn you.

About a decade ago, a man came to our town. He never told us his name, but he brought five men with him. They were working in the rain forest roughly twenty miles out from the town, where there is a legend that an ancient magical city used to exist.

All of the other people in the town know that the area is filled with traps and warned the group not to go down there. The man ignored the warnings and reassured us that he and his men were well trained.

After two of the men he brought died during their work, the rest of the group started to make more contact with the locals to try to find out more about the site. This is how my brother met the crew he mentioned in the article.

A few weeks after the men starting talking to us, the lead man found out about it and came down to the town. He was yelling at them in the middle of the street so most of us overheard. He told them that they were not allowed to have any contact with us and that we “distracted” them from their mission. The men argued back and told him that they had learned valuable information that might help them later. Unfortunately, their leader said that the next time that they came back to the town that they would be replaced for the expedition. None of us ever saw the men again and presumed they had died in one of the traps.

About a year after that, my brother decided to do some studying abroad and went to England to work on his masters in Potions. He wrote to me that he had recognized the lead man in a news article and that the man had not only survived but also found treasure within the ruins. I presume that this is also when he gave the statement to the paper that you referred to me.

A week or so after he wrote to me, I got an owl from your local wizarding hospital that told me my brother had been in a terrible potions accident. It still hurts me to write about, but I feel you must know. He lost all of his memories in the accident and still remains in a barely functional state while I watch over him.

Though I have no proof, I know it was this man Sora’s fault. Even if you believe me crazy, please, please, heed my warning. That man is evil. He did this to my brother and I fear that if you keep investigating the same fate will befall you.

Be Careful.

R.

The group glanced around at each other after they read the letter.

“Well,” drawled Kuroo. “That was certainly ominous.”

“Just a bit,” agreed Suga, sitting back down. He looked to the group. “So, are we going to listen to the warning and end the investigation?”

Everyone looked around at the group, trying to gauge the mood.

Oikawa drew in a breath. “I’m not going to make anyone else continue, but...I still plan on it. If something’s going on, I want to know about it.”
Iwaizumi sighed. “Someone's gotta make sure this idiot survives, so I’m in.”

“Why would we stop now that we found something,” asked Bokuto rhetorically.

“Doesn’t a little danger make it more fun,” smirked Kuroo.

Suga smiled. “Then we’re agreed. The Investigators’ Club lives on.”

“WOOT!” shouted Bokuto while Oikawa rolled his eyes but hid a small smile.

“So, what’s our next move,” asked Kuroo. “We know he’s a sneaky asshole, who’s apparently more dangerous than imagined. But, it’s not like the letter gave us much else.”

“It gave us something,” Oikawa countered. “Sora doesn’t want his crew talking to locals. That means we’re probably safe contacting locals around his excavation sites without them telling Sora. We might be able to find more people like Oliveira who knew something.”

“Or who suffered the same fate,” Suga remarked grimly.

“You think he’s trying to take out people who know?” asked Iwaizumi.

Suga shook his head. “I don’t know. But if he is and we find proof…we might be able to have an actual case against him.”

“So, we what? Contact local villages around the excavation sites and try to drum up some witnesses,” questioned Kuroo.

“That would work,” agreed Oikawa. “We might find more people who know something or people who are suspicious like Oliveira's sibling. We could go through the old articles and find towns referred to in them. Then, gather a list of people to contact.”

“That still runs a large risk of getting found out by Sora,” Iwaizumi pointed out.

Oikawa shook his head. “Not if we don’t use his name.” He gestured to the letter. “Oliveira's sibling said he never used his name. If we just ask about the excavation there, it probably won’t get back to him.”

“It’s the best plan we’ve got,” commented Kuroo.

Everyone else in the group gave vague gestures of agreement.

“Ugh, I can’t believe we still have to go to class with that guy,” said Bokuto, scrunching up his nose.

“That’s a good point,” said Suga.

“You think we should skip class?” asked Bokuto. “I’m pretty sure he’d notice.”

“No,” Suga shook his head. “We need to make sure we don’t give anything away during class. He can’t be suspicious of us at all.”

“Well, he already hates me so no problem there,” commented Oikawa cheerfully.

“Bokuto and I will make sure we don’t interact any during Defense,” agreed Iwaizumi.

“I’ll ignore him like always,” Kuroo said. He thought a second. “Actually, I might have a better
idea. I think he already likes me alright because my dad’s in the Ministry. Maybe, I’ll try to talk to him a bit more.”

Suga opened his mouth, but Kuroo cut him off. “Don’t worry, I’ll be subtle. I’ll start with a few eye rolls at Oikawa during class and see if he approaches me again.” He bumped Oikawa’s shoulder lightly.

Suga reluctantly nodded.

“Hey,” asked Bokuto. “Which of you guys are in Dueling with him? That must suck to have two classes with him.

“Me, Oikawa, and Kuroo,” answered Iwaizumi. “And, yeah, it does.”

“I’m glad I decided to take Healing instead,” added Suga. “I can always try Dueling next year.”

“I’m in Divination,” said Bokuto proudly.

“Ew, why?” asked Oikawa while Kuroo shook his head sadly. “I hear that class is terrible unless you already know you have the sight.”

“Who says I don’t?” asked Bokuto, wiggling his eyebrows.

“Everyone, bro. Everyone says you don’t,” Kuroo told him.

“Maybe my sight’s just a late bloomer,” replied Bokuto unhampered.

Suga opened his mouth but then wisely decided not to comment.

“And hey, I still choose an elective that’s not taught by probably a dangerous maniac, so maybe I am a bit psychic,” concluded Bokuto.

Oikawa found that he didn’t actually have a counter for that.

---

“Hey, Kageyama,” Hinata asked him hesitantly. It was near midnight and the two were the only ones still awake and present within the Hufflepuff common room.

“Hmm,” Kageyama responded, trying to stay awake.

Hinata waited long enough that Kageyama finally looked up to see the shorter boy struggling with his words.

“If you have something to say, Dummy, then just say it,” Kageyama told him.

“Just, um,” Hinata stopped again and Kageyama glared at him. “Thanks for agreeing with me on seeing the mirror one last time.”

As by now Kageyama was a near expert in the variety of Hinata expressions, Kageyama was almost sure that was not what Hinata was originally going to say.
He shrugged. “I figured if it didn’t hurt you any during break, then one more time won’t do any damage.”

Hinata nodded and fell silent again.

Kageyama went back to his light dozing.

“Um, Kageyama,” Hinata said again after a long moment. “Can I...can I ask you a question that, um, you totally don’t have to answer if you don’t want to.”

“What?” Kageyama asked, annoyed.

“I just, uh, wondered what happened to your mom,” asked Hinata quickly before he lost his courage. “Just, you said you saw her in the mirror and you said she was dead, so I just wondered what happened.”

Looking up at Kageyama’s face, Hinata swiftly added. “But, you totally don’t have to say anything if you don’t want to. I’m sure it’s like a really personal question so I can--”

“She was killed by the Ghosts,” Kageyama said softly.

“...she was killed by what?” asked Hinata. “Ghosts? Like the Fat Friar?”

Kageyama glared at him. “No, idiot, not a ghost, the Ghosts.”

Hinata still looked confused.

Kageyama huffed. “Sorry, I forgot you were muggleborn. Ghosts are what the Giant’s followers were called. It’s an acronym for something, but I don’t remember the full name. My mother was killed in the Battle of Spinner’s End. It was the final battle after the Fall of the Giant.”

“Oh,” Hinata said softly. “She must have been really brave then.”

Kageyama looked down. “Yeah, must’ve.”

Largely in need to do something, he looked down at his watch. “Come on, Dummy, if we don’t hurry, we’re going to be late meeting up with Yachi. Again.”

Hinata scrambled up and to the entrance.

“Check the peephole to see if anyone’s coming,” Hinata told Kageyama.

The Hufflepuff common rooms was the only common room that allowed members of other Houses in, as long as they were accompanied by a Hufflepuff student. To check what non-Hufflepuff wanted to gain entrance, a peephole looked out into the entrance way marked by the Hufflepuff barrels.

“We’re clear,” Kageyama told him, before easing open the doorway and being very careful not to make any noise.

The two boys slipped quietly out of the dorm and into the dark halls. Silence fell as they made their way to the Gryffindor tower.

Yachi was once again nervously waiting for them in the hall.

“Hinata, are you sure you want to do this?” Yachi whispered to him.
Hinata nodded. “Just one more time, I promise.”

Yachi nodded and gave a slight sigh as she followed the boys down the hall.

Carefully, the three navigated through the castle to the mirror.

Hinata quietly and gently eased open the classroom door, careful not to make much noise. The two hurried in while Hinata closed the door behind them.

“What the--Hinata, are you sure you got the right room?” Kageyama asked, looking around the class.

“Yeah, why?” Hinata asked, turning from the door. “WAIT! Where’s the mirror?!”

The classroom was empty except for the dusty old desks.

“Dummy, you probably just led us to the wrong class,” Kageyama glared. “Do you even know if we’re on the right hall?”

“Shut up,” Hinata glared back. “I’m sure this is the right room. It’s the third one on the left.”

“Well, clearly it’s not since the mirror isn’t here,” Kageyama argued.

“I’m sure that it’s-”

“Guys,” Yachi interrupted. “Look, there’s still a mark in the dust where the mirror used to be. Someone must have moved it.”

Hinata went over to look. “Why would someone move an old mirror.”

Kageyama rolled his eyes at him. “It was obviously not just some old mirror. Someone probably hid it here or something, thinking no one would find it and now moved it cause they needed it.”

“But, how are we going to find it again?” asked Hinata.

“I don’t think we should,” answered Yachi. She gave Hinata a sympathetic look. “Look, I know you really wanted to see the mirror one more time...but, maybe this is for the best. They could have moved it because it was dangerous or maybe someone’s going to use it for some dark, evil purpose or maybe it’s--”

Kageyama cut her off. “The point is we don’t know where it is now and we have no way of finding it.”.

Hinata deflated. “Is there really no way we can find it?”

Yachi thought for a second before shaking her head. “Nothing, that I can think of. I really am sorry, Hinata. I know how much you loved that mirror.”

Hinata sighed and worked to manage a slightly watered down smile. “I guess it’s okay, I mean--”

He broke off as the three heard footsteps outside the room.

“Quick, hide,” whispered Kageyama.

The three split up and hid behind the desks in the room.
Glancing through the space between desks, Kageyama saw a light shine from under the door followed by footsteps.

The steps stopped in front of the door.

Kageyama held his breath and desperately hoped whoever it was would keep walking.

Time seemed to stop as Kageyama watched the light hover just outside the classroom door.

Slowly, so slowly Kageyama could hear his heartbeat quicken, the footsteps moved on. The light faded from under the door.

Kageyama slowly released his breath.

A few minutes passed in silence.

“Are-are they gone?” whispered Yachi from somewhere to Kageyama’s left.

“I think so,” Kageyama answered.

He saw Hinata slowly emerge back into the open middle of the classroom.

Kageyama unfolded himself from his hiding place to join him and saw Yachi do the same.

“We should get out of here,” Hinata told them, once they had all gotten free.

Yachi quickly nodded.

Hinata went to the door and very, very slowly crept it open. He looked through the crack.

“We’re clear,” he told them.

The three quickly slid out and started in the opposite direction than where they heard the footsteps retreat.

“I don’t know how to get back from this side,” Hinata whispered to them.

“I’m, I’m sure we’ll find a way,” Yachi whispered back. “We just need to keep quiet.”

The three followed swiftly down another hall, but found that it only split off leading into two separate halls.

“Right?” asked Hinata.

Kageyama nodded, though he didn’t know either where exactly they were.

The new corridor had to be in the middle of the castle. No windows lined the walls and instead the only light came from flickering candles floating above. The hall was filled with large tapestries, covering the entirety of the stone walls from end to end.

At the very end of the hall, it opened up into a circular room with a staircase on one side.

“I think those stairs lead to the Astronomy tower,” Yachi told them. “But, um, I don’t recognize that tapestry, so maybe not.”

“This tapestry,” asked Hinata, touching the one opposite from the staircase.
“Hey, it kinda looks like--whoah!” Hinata fell forward when the wall behind the tapestry unexpectedly provided no resistance.

“Hey,” Hinata said, righting himself and pulling on the side of the tapestry. “I think there’s another hall behind this tapestry!”

Kageyama came beside him and looked behind the fabric. He couldn’t see much besides the opening of an entirely dark entrance.

“You’re right,” agreed Yachi, looking over Hinata’s shoulder. “I wonder where it leads?”

Suddenly, the group once again heard footsteps coming down a nearby hall.

Kageyama looked up to see the bright white light of a wand lighting charm coming from around a corner.

“Get behind the tapestry,” Hinata ordered.

The three of them quickly slid behind the fabric, plunging themselves into complete darkness. Kageyama tried to back up further from the fabric and unexpectedly hit a sharp edge.

“Ow,”

“Shh,” Hinata whispered to him.

“There’s a wall here, I cut my hand,” Kageyama whispered back, trying to feel the damage. His palm felt slightly wet, making him think there was probably blood.

“Sorry, Kageyama, but later,” Yachi told him, keeping her voice as soft as possible.

For the second time in a night, the three hid in absolute silence while they strained their ears listening for footsteps.

Kageyama wrapped his hand in the bottom of his shirt.

Light footsteps could be heard just on the other side of the tapestry. Kageyama could see a fraction of a light just at the very edge of the fabric. The fabric rustled as whoever it was moved past it.

The footsteps stopped a few steps beyond the fabric.

Kageyama fought not to move a single centimeter. He felt what he thought was Hinata’s arm brush into his.

At least a minute passed.

After what felt like an eternity, Kageyama heard a rustle from the other side of the tapestry and the footsteps started again, this time moving up the staircase.

As the footsteps slowly faded, Kageyama heard Yachi let out a breath.

“I think, I think we’re safe for now,” Yachi whispered. “But, we should probably stay here for another few minutes just to be safe.”

“Yes,” Hinata agreed from somewhere on Kageyama’s side.

“Kageyama, can I see your hand?” Yachi asked.
“Huh, oh, yeah,” Kageyama said, unwrapping his hand from his shirt.

“Hinata, can I have some light?”

“Oh, right,” said Hinata and Kageyama heard rustling to his side.

“Lumos,” Hinata said in a quiet but firm voice.

The tip of his wand lit up and for the first time, Kageyama could actually see where he was standing. It looked like a fairly small square room, barely big enough for four full grown adults to squeeze into. About a meter from the tapestry was the stone wall where Kageyama had cut his hand.

“Oh, that’s a nasty cut,” Yachi winced. “You might want to go see Nekomata tomorrow so he can actually heal it.”

Kageyama looked down and saw a straight slice running down his hand from the bottom of his pointer finger to his palm. He also noticed that he had been right and the cut had begun to bleed, though not badly enough that it needed anything immediately. He fought back the urge to groan, the bottom part of his shirt was probably ruined even with Scourgify.

“What did you cut it on,” Hinata asked, inspecting the wall with his lit wand.

“I don’t know,” Kageyama said, squinting down next to Hinata.

“I think I backed into the wall right here,” he continued, pointing to a section of the wall with his bloody hand. As soon as he touched the wall, golden calligraphy bloomed over the wall like ink spilled into water.

The group backed up in surprise, watching words form.

“Oh, that’s so cool,” Hinata breathed. “It’s like a secret message.”

Kageyama looked at the writing, reflecting in the light of Hinata’s spell.

If thou haven bravery withouten wisdom, thou ist folhardy

If thou haven wisdom withouten care, thou ist arrogant

If thou haven care withouten cunning, thou willen been bound

If thou haven cunning withouten bravery, thou willen failen

If thou haven hope of passing this Chambre, thou moste haven alle

Prike thy thumb, Name thy gale, Pass oure tasks

Oure tresor willen been thine

Butten heden oure warning:
Under the inscription, the Hogwarts crest shone in the same bright gold as the lettering above.

“I don’t think it’s in English,” Hinata commented.

Kageyama nodded.

“No, it’s still in English,” Yachi told them, staring at the words. “It’s just in an older form of English. Some of the books in my family’s library are like this.”

“Oh, it’s like a secret code,” Hinata said eagerly. “What’s it say?”

“Um,” Yachi scanned through the words. “It’s mostly in Middle English, so most of our language has directly evolved from it. It says something like ‘If you have bravery without wisdom, you are foolhardy. If you have wisdom without care, you are arrogant. If you have care without cunning, you will be bound?’ I think they probably mean something like held back, more than literally restrained. ‘If you have cunning without bravery, you will fail.’ That’s all for the first part.”

“What about the rest,” asked Kageyama.

“It says...I think prike is the old form of prick or pike, um, it’s probably prick given the context. ‘Prick your thumb, Name your gaels?’ I don’t know what gaels are, but I can look it up. The last part is ‘Pass our tasks’. Then, it’s just a warning so ‘But heed our warning: Only you who have proven all, shall have any’”

“Woah,” said Hinata. “I wonder who wrote it.”

Yachi shook her head. “I don’t know, but based on the language it’s probably really old.”

“What does it mean by treasure,” Kageyama asked. “All that’s here is the wall.”

Yachi tapped her chin. “Maybe they mean the advice. I think it’s referring to the Houses. Gryffindor is bravery, Ravenclaw is wisdom, Hufflepuff is care, and Slytherin is cunning.”

“So, they’re saying that you should try to be in all the Houses,” asked Hinata, confused.

“Or at least try to be like all the Houses,” Yachi answered. “I think there trying to say you should take things from all of the Houses.”

Kageyama kept feeling his eyes be drawn to the wall. There was just something about it, something he couldn’t quite figure out.

“I think we should keep figuring out the words,” Kageyama said, suddenly.

Yachi nodded. “Yeah, we should write them down and bring them back with us.”

Kageyama felt vaguely frustrated. “Why don’t we just try to figure it out now.”

Hinata nodded, happily looking at the puzzle.

Yachi shook her head. “I think we’re going to have to come back. It’s already really late and you two have Quidditch practice in the morning.”
“Oh, yeah,” Hinata said guiltily.

“Also,” Yachi glanced around. “Whoever came by earlier has to come back sometime. They went up to a tower, so eventually they’re going to want to come down.”

Kageyama saw Hinata’s eyes widen.

“Ohhh, you’re so smart, Yachi,” Hinata complimented, before grabbing Kageyama’s arm. “Come on, Kageyama, we need to hurry, we can come back later.”

Kageyama reluctantly allowed himself to be pulled from the wall.

Yachi quickly scrawled down the message on her arm. “I’ll write it down once I get back and look it up in the library.”

Kageyama nodded and the three listened for any noise behind the tapestry. There didn’t seem to be anyone on the other side.

Before Hinata extinguished the light, Kageyama threw one last glance back at the wall and saw the message slowly creep back into the stone.

Kageyama furrowed his brow. They would come back soon.

Chapter End Notes

Thank you for getting through my muddled attempts at Middle English as that is definitely not my field. Also, thanks everyone for all the super nice comments I've gotten. They're always a joy to read.

Next chapter should be posted as usual on Friday. Not this week but next week, I'll be out of town for a bit and have very little free time. Because of this, for the next two weeks, I'm sadly swapping to only posting once a week starting next Monday. After those weeks, I plan to go back to my normal two posts a week.

As always, hope you enjoyed and thanks for reading!

Last, in other news, I now have a tumblr where I mainly so far just post other anime stuff with scattered Harry Potter. Feel free to bother me at it.
https://greycappedjester.tumblr.com/
Chapter Notes

Who’s ready for some Quidditch!

Suga was once again spending an evening with Hinata in the Potions classroom. Although, rather than the usual brewing session, Suga was going about quizzing Hinata about the various materials, potions, and spells that Professor Irihata was expecting them all to know by the second semester first year midterm—or, as it was known by the students, “the bane of their existence”.

“What type of the family does asphodel come from,” Suga questioned.

“Violet?” guessed Hinata.

“Close,” Suga told him. “It is a flower. Asphodel comes from the lily family.”

Hinata nodded and motioned for the next question.

“Fluxweed is an ingredient which is most notably used in…”

“Polyjuice potion,” answered Hinata.

“Correct, which does what exactly?”

“Um,” Hinata thought for a second. “Change appearance?”

“Also, correct,” Suga told him with a smile. “The potion derives its name from the Greek word ‘poly’ meaning many. What else can you tell me about it?”

“It’s illegal?” asked Hinata.

“Correct,” Suga answered again, beaming. “Outlawed, except with Ministry approval, following the last Wizarding War. It’s the newest addition to Gregory’s Index of Incredibly Illegal Elixirs. Which you don’t need to know the full list until fifth year from what I hear.”

Hinata gave a sigh of relief.

“Main four ingredients of Boil Cure?”

Hinata started counting down on his fingers. “Porcupine quills, horned slugs, snake fangs, and dried...mistletoe?”

“Dried nettles,” corrected Suga. “Mistletoe would react negatively with the snake fangs and create boils rather than stopping them.”

Hinata groaned. “Isn’t that the potion that Irihata really likes to have us brew for the exam.”

“It is,” agreed Suga in a comforting manner. “Which is why it’s excellent that you already have the three other main ingredients memorized.”
Hinata gave a small smile in response. “At least, I’m doing better in this class than Defense.”

Suga hesitated for a second. “How is Defense going by the way?”

Hinata shrugged. “It’s fine. I really like the lessons, the stuff is even better than Transfiguration,” Hinata stopped looking vaguely guilty. “Er, don’t tell Professor Takeda I said that.”

“I won’t,” Suga replied, amused.

“But, yeah, the stuff’s really cool and Professor Sora seems really awesome in class, but I’m still not doing great on the essays.” Hinata wrinkled his nose. “Professor Sora says I need to include more on theory like Kageyama and Yachi.”

Hinata looked up to see that Suga appeared to be contemplating something.

“Suga?”

“Hmm.” Suga broke off from whatever he was thinking about. “Oh, sorry, I was, um, thinking about one of my other classes... Theory’s always a bit tricky for some first years. I suspect that Kageyama and Yachi have a leg up from growing up in a magical household, I’m sure they’ll be glad to help. Also, I know I’m more Potions, but if you ever need help with any of the other classes, you can always come to me.”

Hinata smiled. “Thanks, Suga! Next week, could you help me with this essay Professor Sora gave us on the history of the Knockback Jinx?”

“Of course,” Suga agreed. “Other than Defense and Potions, how are you liking Hogwarts by the way. I know first year can be tricky.”

Hinata shook his head. “No way, magic is awesome! There’s so many cool things here, like enchanted mirrors, and hidden rooms, and QUIDDITCH!!!”

Suga watched Hinata’s eyes glazed over as he thought back to his favored topic.

“Well, I’m glad you’re finding some of the secret passageways,” Suga told him, aware that Hinata’s attention span was probably already lost in Quidditch. “I’ve always heard that there was one that led all the way to Hogsmeade, but I’ve never been able to find it.” Suga picked up his notes and started skimming through them to make sure they’d covered everything for the midterm.

Hinata nodded absently. “Yeah, me and Kageyama and Yachi found this one place behind a tapestry, but it was just an empty room with some writing.”

Suga made a note to go back over Boil Cure next week. “Hmm, well some of the secret passageways are less interesting than others. You’re being careful, right.”

“Uh huh,” agreed Hinata, thinking about the upcoming game. “Hey, you’re going to be there, right?”

“Where?” asked Suga, skimming through the notes on Forgetfulness Potion.

“The game,” answered Hinata, looking at his tutor anxiously.

“Oh,” said Suga, looking up. “Wouldn’t miss it. You’re playing Gryffindor, right?”

“Yep,” Hinata nodded. “They’re 1-1 just like us. That means that if we beat them and Ravenclaw loses to Slytherin, than we can have a rematch with Ravenclaw for the Cup!”
Suga smiled. “I think having you and Kageyama on the team has definitely done some good for Hufflepuff, especially with only one upper year. It’ll be amazing to see what you all do in the next few years.

“Yeah,” Hinata said dreamily, mind spreading out into the next six years of Quidditch games!

Suga fondly rolled his eyes and nudged Hinata off of the stool and to the hall. “Come on, you’re going to need sleep if you still want the chance for the Cup.”

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Iwaizumi carefully watched his best friend struggle through their latest Herbology assignment.

Oikawa was normally not exactly what you would call “gifted” at the study of magical plant life, normally counting on his theoretically perfect essays to make up for his lackluster practical results. However, today, the Slytherin’s work was passing from mildly pathetic to somewhat abysmal. Professor Shimada had already come over to Oikawa’s station twice to keep him from accidental poisoning himself by releasing toxic spores from the plant they were cultivating.

Currently, Oikawa was scowling down at his project, moving in a slow and precise manner that spoke to intense concentration.

Watching closely, Iwaizumi noticed the slight tremor in Oikawa’s hand that resulted from exhaustion along with the faint shimmer under his eyes from a rushed Disillusionment charm. Iwaizumi recognized these symptoms with an all too eerily familiarity.

He fought back a frown. For all of Oikawa’s intelligence, he sure was an idiot sometimes.

Iwaizumi Hajime thought himself both intermittently blessed and cursed to have known Oikawa for literally as long as he could remember. Throughout Iwaizumi’s childhood, their houses had sat across the street from each other and as babies, Iwaizumi’s mother would often watch both of the boys during the day. With Iwaizumi being an only child and Oikawa only having one much older sister, the two became fast playmates.

When they were both around three, Oikawa’s parents finally filled for a long coming divorce with Oikawa’s dad disappearing from the picture soon after. With the long work hours of Oikawa’s mother, the Iwaizumi family all but adopted Oikawa as one of their own.

Iwaizumi’s parents were always very careful not to perform any magic around the boys, careful to only get their wands when it was only Iwaizumi present. All of this turned out to be for naught when Iwaizumi was around four.

As Iwaizumi’s mother loved to remind them, the boys had been playing with action figures in the backyard when Oikawa’s figure’s extendable wings had broken off. The brunette had begun to cry and held out the broken toy to his best friend. Iwaizumi’s mother had witnessed the scene and went to grab her wand to make a stealthy Reparo when she saw Iwaizumi reach up and pat his friend’s cheek.

“It’s okay,” Iwaizumi had told the still blubbering Oikawa. “I can fix it.”

Iwaizumi had held up the broken off wings to the action figure and the two watched as the two pieces melded back together as if they had never been broken at all.

Iwaizumi had handed back the toy to an amazed Oikawa, who had quickly jumped on his friend, hugging him and shouting out thank yous. Unfortunately, this action had the unexpected
consequence of sending Iwaizumi falling backwards and skinning his arm.

Oikawa’s thank yous quickly turned to apologies while Iwaizumi mustered up all the strength in his four year old body not to cry.

Iwaizumi’s mother had just gotten to the boys when Oikawa proclaimed. “Here, I can fix it, too.”

Oikawa had held Iwaizumi’s injured arm and, to Iwaizumi’s mother’s amazement, the arm had quickly scabbed over and healed itself without leaving a trace.

After that, Iwaizumi’s parents didn’t worry as much about using magic around Oikawa. Though, they had given him multiple strict warnings to never ever mention magic around his mother or sister.

Iwaizumi and Oikawa had grown up dreaming about going to Hogwarts. Oikawa had happily devoured every age appropriate book about magic that Iwaizumi’s parents had ever lent him while Iwaizumi and him had excitedly talked about what Quidditch positions they were going to play--it went without saying that they’d be in the same House.

When their letters both came, Oikawa’s with an added escort to explain the situation to his mother, Iwaizumi’s parents escorted them both on their first journey to Diagon Alley.

And then the Sorting happened.

Iwaizumi’s sorting into Gryffindor hadn’t come as any real surprise, privately the two boys had already guessed the outcome and had reaffirmed that they would, of course, still be friends even if Oikawa was in Hufflepuff or Ravenclaw.

No one had expected Oikawa to be sorted into Slytherin--not Iwaizumi nor his parents, not the staff, definitely not the Slytherin house, not even Oikawa himself. But there he sat, the first known Muggleborn Slytherin in at least a century.

First year was...difficult. Part of the struggle Iwaizumi still had to guess at by virtue of being in a different House. He knew that Oikawa was bullied a lot by the older Slytherin students. He knew that it had gotten even worse once his talent in magic became evident. He also knew that something big had happened roughly halfway through the year that had resulted in Iwaizumi eventually finding Oikawa late at night and crying on the top of the Astronomy tower. He had sat with him the rest of the night while Oikawa had sobbed into his robe and refused over and over again to tell Iwaizumi what happened.

The following Christmas break, Oikawa had been inordinately silent while Iwaizumi had gently tried to coax him into revealing what happened, or at least trying to get him back to his normal mood of cheerful obstinate. Iwaizumi supposed it worked somewhat. By the time they returned to Hogwarts, Oikawa was slowly recovering his spirit. He also made friends--and by virtue of association, Iwaizumi made friends--with his roommates Hanamaki and Matsukawa sometime during the second half of the year.

Two years later, the mood that Oikawa was currently in barred unsettling similarities to his attitude of late first year, where he had worked himself almost to a breaking point to achieve not only top marks in the class but near perfect scores in every subject. After first year and a brief minor resurgence after their fallout with Kageyama, Oikawa had calmed down slightly and seemed to settle for just being top of his class rather than maintaining almost perfection.

With the current case, Iwaizumi at least knew the why of it. Over break, Oikawa kept terrible
sleeping hours going back and forth between researching Sora and working on his shield charm, an area of Dueling that Oikawa still struggled with. Iwaizumi was well aware that Oikawa’s bad sleeping habits had continued on to the school year, but he had held a--seemingly, in vain--hope that maybe Oikawa would try to get at least a few more hours when juggling both school and the research.

He wondered how much Oikawa would be mad if he bribed Matsukawa and Hanamaki to slip a mild Sleeping Draught in his dinner.

Looking at Oikawa prick his finger once again on the plant’s thorns, Iwaizumi decided he would have to take the risk for the idiot’s own good.

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“So, why exactly can you not go to the Quidditch game again,” Tsukishima asked, glaring down at the smaller boy.

“Um,” Yamaguchi started, looking nervous. “I just have a lot of, ah, homework. You know with the midterms.”

“We did our homework together, remember ;” said Tsukishima, narrowing his eyes.

“Yeah, but I mean I could always use more studying,” responded Yamaguchi. “You know, just in case.”

“And this studying has to be done right now, on the middle of a Saturday, during one of the biggest Quidditch games of the year?” questioned Tsukishima skeptically.

“I’m just not that interested in the game,” Yamaguchi answered lamely.

Tsukishima opened his mouth but then cut himself off. “...Fine. Have fun studying.”

Yamaguchi nodded looking relieved before giving Tsukishima an awkward wave and running back upstairs.

Tsukishima glared at the Gryffindor tower as if it was personally responsible, which in a way it was.

He supposed he could have questioned Yamaguchi more about why he suddenly wasn’t interested in coming to what amounted to the Quidditch Cup semifinals, but he had just remembered that some of the Gryffindor Quidditch players were the very people Tsukishima suspected were bullying Yamaguchi.

Tsukishima supposed it would make things a bit harder to cheer for the people trying to ruin your life.

Tsukishima gave a vicious smirk. He wondered if it was bad to hope for a few mild Quidditch injuries--nothing major, just enough to put a certain few Gryffindor players in the medical wing for a night or two.
“Alright, team, this is it,” Bokuto said to the Hufflepuffs assembled around the changing room. Hinata could feel the tension in the air and see it reflected in the team’s faces.

“Gryffindor has a reputation for being the most consistently put together Quidditch team in all of Hogwarts,” Bokuto continued with a serious air. “This year’s line up is no exception. They have a fairly young team like us. Their captain Sota Yusho is a sixth year, he plays Beater along with their new second year, Ryunosuke Tanaka. Their Chasers are the fifth year twins Niko and Akari Hayaidesu along with third year Yui Michimiya, all of them have a reputation for relying on speed. Their Keeper is Sawamura Daichi--solid player, doesn’t try many fancy plays but good at being efficient in movements.”

Bokuto paused and scanned the room to meet everyone’s eyes. “But, the one we really need to watch out for is their second year Seeker, Yu Nishinoya. He was on the team last year so he has experience. He’s fast, good at turns, and I swear can see the Snitch halfway across the bloody pitch!”

Mad Dog growled in agreement.

“He also tends to catch the Snitch quickly,” Bokuto told the team. “His record is thirty minutes into last year’s game with Ravenclaw. Mad Dog’s going to be on Nishinoya Watch for the game.”

Mad Dog gave an affirming nod.

“Chasers, your job is to score as many points as you can and as quickly as you can. Don’t worry about how many points Gryffindor has, just focus on speed. Your goal is to score enough that even if Noya does catch the Snitch, we can still pull it out in points.”

Hinata, Koki, and Kageyama all signaled their agreement.

“Beaters, help the Chasers when you can, but you’re main job is defense of the Hufflepuff goals. We gotta make sure that not only are we scoring, but that they’re not.”

Futakuchi gave a thumbs up while Aone gave a small nod at his side.

“Chasers, you’re going to be on your own as far as blocking goes, so get in and out of there as fast as you can.” Bokuto took a deep breath. “Look, guys, I know that Gryffindor’s got a solid team and are the defending Quidditch Champions for last year, but this year’s a new year and we have just as many wins as they do. We’re going to win this game. And if Ravenclaw loses against Slytherin and has to play today’s winner for the cup, then we’re going to win that game, too. We’ve got the best Quidditch team that Hufflepuff has seen in years and today’s the day we’re going to prove it. So, huddle up.”

The team all gathered in a circle while Bokuto led the cheer.

“Who’s going to win?” Bokuto called.

“HUFFLEPUFF!”

“Then, let’s get out there.” Bokuto told them and led the team onto the Quidditch pitch.
On the other side of the team, Gryffindor captain Yusho was leading out their red and gold clad opponents.

When Bokuto and Yusho got to the center, they respectfully shook hands before Professor Oiwake blew the whistle to call the players to the sky.

The assorted players assumed their starting positions with Bokuto going to the goal and Aone and Futakuchi staying a few meters ahead of it. Koki, Hinata, and Kageyama stayed near center-pitch for the initial throw of the Quaffle. The three had already discussed their roles during the initial throw.

Professor Oiwake blew the whistle to start the game, throwing the Quaffle into the air while releasing the other balls.

Koki, Kageyama, and Hinata all headed for the Quaffle with Hinata successfully getting it while the other two blocked in the Gryffindor Chasers.

Hinata darted and dived to the goal rings, narrowly dodging a Bludger from the Gryffindor captain. He took aim for the left goal and noted Kageyama flying on his right just outside the scoring area.

Gryffindor Keeper Daichi headed quickly to the left goal while Hinata held back the Quaffle to throw. At the less second, Hinata instead threw it back to Kageyama, who entered the scoring area as Hinata exited and scored on the right goal. Hufflepuff got the first goal of the game.

Daichi gave a small frown but retrieved the Quaffle and threw it back into play to one of the Hayaidesu twins.

The Chaser raced to the other side of the pitch, closely pursued by Koki and Kageyama. When she got near the goal, she was slowed by dodging a Bludger sent by Futakuchi and finally losing hold of the Quaffle after getting a hit to the arm by Aone's Bludger.

Koki caught the Quaffle from under her and directed it to Kageyama, who flew down the field.

At midfield, Hinata flew at an angle to pass him and Kageyama gave a short throw to hand off the Quaffle to him.

Kageyama served as a block to Hinata’s side while Koki served to block him from behind. Without pausing or giving any indication on which goal he was aiming for, Hinata swerved to the far left side of the goal while throwing the Quaffle to the far right hoop. Daichi reversed his path to try to save the Quaffle but his fingers fell a few centimeter short, allowing Hufflepuff their second score.

From the corner of his eye, Hinata saw the Gryffindor captain fly up to the other Beater and whisper something in Tanaka’s ear. Hinata felt himself tense up in a reminder of the Slytherin game and looked up to see Kageyama glaring at the two.

When Daichi threw the Quaffle back into play--this time to the other twin--Tanaka flew up to act as a guard to Hinata.

The other twin did a better job of dodging the Hufflepuff Beaters, but ultimately had her aim thrown off allowing Bokuto to easily intercept the Quaffle and throw it back to Koki.

Koki went to the left of the pitch, drawing the attention of the other Gryffindor Beater, before passing the Quaffle over to Kageyama.

Hinata raced back to the center pitch, closely pursued by Tanaka.
After a brief hesitation Kageyama shot Hinata a brief look down before throwing the Quaffle. Hinata understood and immediately went into a dive pulling up moments before Tanaka and reaching for the Quaffle.

From his side, he saw Tanaka reach from behind him.

Hinata flinched.

The Quaffle sailed passed his fingertips and was intercepted by Michimiya. The youngest Gryffindor Chaser soared to the Hufflepuff goals and managed Gryffindor’s first score of the game.

Hinata frowned, looking down. That was stupid. *He* was being stupid. He let the other team score!

“Hey, man, are you okay?” Tanaka asked from Hinata side. The boy was still stationed in a position to block Hinata.

Hinata managed a wane smile and a nod.

“I saw your guys’ match against Slytherin,” the Beater told him. “I promise I’m not going to try to knock you off your broom or something. Game’s not worth that.”

Hinata gave him a brighter smile. “Thanks, I was just, ah, being stupid.”

Tanaka waved him off. “No problem, man, the Slytherin team’s a bunch of assholes. Glad to see you beat ‘em.”

The two boys directed their attention back to the game as the Quaffle started to go to their side of the field.

Kageyama had control of the Quaffle and had just made it to center-field. Hinata looked over to see Koki getting into position on his right.

Hinata flew up in the middle of the Chasers circling around Kageyama, hoping for an interception. Tanaka followed him from behind.

The moment the Chasers were distracted by the addition of two more flyers, Kageyama threw the Quaffle to Koki and the boy scored while Daichi was still expecting a throw from Hinata’s side.

While Daichi went down to retrieve the Quaffle, Yusho motioned for Tanaka to come over by him. Kageyama flew up to Hinata.

“You okay?” asked Kageyama briefly.

Hinata nodded.

Kageyama’s eyes gave a quick dart to Hinata’s shoulder, where he had flinched earlier.

Hinata shook his head before giving a firm nod.

The side of Kageyama’s mouth quirked momentarily upward in what Hinata was now able to recognize as the boy’s version of an answering smile.

Daichi tossed the ball back to Michimiya and play resumed. Kageyama gave Hinata a quick questioning look and Hinata nodded. It was time to set up the decoy moves.
Michimiya was blocked by Aone and had to throw the ball back to one of the Chaser twins, who was intercepted by Futakuchi before she could receive it. Koki got hold of the Quaffle and sent it to Kageyama. Both Tanaka and the Gryffindor captain hovered between Hinata and Koki, this time with Yusho covering Hinata.

In a brief second that Yusho took to look back at Kageyama, Hinata was off, pulling to the side in a barrel roll before making a sharp turn out of it just as Kageyama threw the Quaffle. Hinata caught it and headed toward the goal, dodging between the Gryffindor Chasers.

Hinata threw the Quaffle quickly and Daichi darted to the hoop, catching it just before it went in.

Daichi threw it back to one of the twins, but Koki swerved up to catch it and throw it back to the goal before Daichi could reposition. Hufflepuff was up by thirty points.

Daichi threw the Quaffle again and this time the twin was able to catch it and head toward Bokuto’s goals. Futakuchi and Aone both tried to throw her off course but she managed a throw that was just caught by Bokuto with the tips of his fingers.

Bokuto got a solid hand on the Quaffle before throwing it up to Kageyama.

Hinata was able to shake off the sixth year Beater and caught the Quaffle again. This time managing a goal a hair’s breadth before Daichi’s fingers.

Michimiya received the Quaffle this time and made it halfway across the pitch before Koki was able to intercept it when she tried to pass it to one of the twins.

Instead of doing the normal set up back to Kageyama, currently being guarded by Tanaka and two of the other Chasers, Koki threw it back to Hinata. While significantly less used to receiving throws from Koki, Hinata was just able to catch it and score another goal.

Right after he scored, he heard the announcer give a shout.

“THE SEEKERS HAVE SPOTTED THE SNITCH!”

Hinata looked up to see both Mad Dog and a red streak blur that he assumed was Nishinoya quickly racing a number of meters above the goal.

The two Seekers seemed to be neck and neck, but as Hinata watched the red blur pulled almost imperceptibly ahead.

The Gryffindor Seeker suddenly headed in a sharp dive.

“IT LOOKS LIKE THE SNITCH HAS CHANGED PATHS, GRYFFINDOR’S ON THE HUNT. IT LOOKS LIKE--OH, AND HUFFLEPUFF’S RESIDENT MAD DOG PULLS OFF AN INSANE ANGLE SHOT TO CATCH UP”

Both Seekers had to pull up and re-angle to avoid colliding with each other as they pulled back beside each other. Once rearranged, the two seemed to hesitate for a moment.

“UH OH, IT LOOKS LIKE THE SEEKERS LOST SIGHT OF THE SNITCH DURING THE DIVE. THE GAME CONTINUES, FOLKS!”

The rest of the players, who had momentarily paused to watch, got back to action. Daichi threw the Quaffle to Michimiya again. The girl made it a few more meters before she was surprised by a spectacularly aimed Bludger from Futakuchi across the pitch.
Hinata caught the Quaffle from under her and threw it to Kageyama. Before the Gryffindor Chasers could rearrange, the Quaffle went to Koki, who managed a quick and narrow goal.

The Quaffle was thrown back to one of the twins this time and the three Chasers moved down the field, alternating who had control of the Quaffle. The Chasers were able to maneuver around Aone and Futakuchi and changed control of the Quaffle at the last second to score a goal on Bokuto.

_Crap_, Hinata thought. They were going to have to go faster if they wanted to get enough points before the Snitch was caught.

Bokuto threw the Quaffle back to Kageyama, who barely touched it for a second before redirecting it to Hinata, who neatly dodged Tanaka’s block.

Hinata raced down the field and quickly scored another goal, hitting the Quaffle hard with the front of his broomstick so it could gain momentum.

The Quaffle was thrown back to one of the twins, but Koki was able to pull off another last minute interception to score another goal.

It seemed like both teams were working at a breakneck pace to try to score or prevent the most goals.

Michimiya received control of the Quaffle and traded it to a twin, who sped down the field and neatly dodged a Bludger by Aone. She sent it to her sister again at the last second to try to score another goal against Bokuto. Bokuto was ready for the tactic this time and handily caught the ball and redirected it to Kageyama.

Hinata pulled into a dive and dodged his blocker along with Michimiya, who had apparently decided to join Hinata’s guard.

Kageyama made to throw it at Hinata, but changed it to Koki quicker than the Beaters could keep up. Both Hinata and Koki raced down the pitch at a neck to neck speed. When in range of the goal, Koki made to throw it to Hinata, before giving a lighting throw at the right hoop. Hufflepuff was up by eighty.

Daichi threw the Quaffle back to a twin, who was then blocked in by Koki. She made a pass to her sister, who in turn tried to pass it to Michimiya further down the field. Kageyama zoomed in between them and redirected it to Hinata for another score.

Even Hinata could tell that the Gryffindor Chasers were getting slightly irritated.

The next time one of the twins caught the Quaffle, she barreled down the field, pulling into a dive to swoop under Futakuchi and Aone before throwing into the hoop before she had even finished pulling back up. Gryffindor scored.

Bokuto retrieved the Quaffle and threw it to Koki. Koki passed to Hinata in midfield, who in turn redirected it to Kageyama before the Beaters could catch up to him. Kageyama quickly scored to regain a goal for Hufflepuff.

Koki was able to manage another interception the next time the Quaffle went into play and Kageyama got the Quaffle. Kageyama pulled another fake throw to Hinata before taking the goal.

Michimiya received the Quaffle next and drove down the field before trying to pull off another drive like her teammate. Aone caught her this time and angled a Bludger towards her while she was still pulling up. Bokuto caught the Quaffle and through it to Kageyama.
Both Tanaka and Yusho had taken to blocking in Hinata, but Koki was currently being blocked in by the Chasers. Both blocks were in the center of the field, cutting off Kageyama from a clear break to the goals.

Kageyama shot Hinata a look and Hinata tensed up his shoulders in anticipation.

Hinata angled his broom down as if he was going to do a sharp dive, the two Beaters angled into the dive as well. A second into the dive, he pulled sharply to the side, flipping in a roll to that had him spinning on his sides to the center of the field. The trick in the play was always being able to find your center of gravity when pulling out of the barrel roll.

When Hinata was ready, he pulled up sharply and caught the Quaffle before he had even full realigned himself. Both Beaters were still pulling out of their dives, leaving Hinata free to race down to the goal and pull off another hit with his broom handle to get the Quaffle in the hoop.

“THAT WAS INSANE!” yelled the announcer. “HUFFLEPUFF’S FIRST YEAR CHASER JUST PULLED OFF A BARREL ROLL TO DELIVER A PERFECT FINBOROUGH FLICK. HUFFLEPUFF AHEAD BY A HUNDRED AND TEN. GRYFFINDOR BETTER BE LOOKING FOR THAT SNITCH.”

Kageyama pulled up beside Hinata and Hinata shot him a fierce grin.

Daichi threw the Quaffle to one of the twins, who was careful to avoid Koki. Kageyama got in her path and she had to redirect to throw to her sister. Hinata heard her let out a muffled curse.

The other twin made it to the other side of the field before being hit on both sides by Bludgers from Aone and Futakuchi.

The Quaffle slid out of her hands and she slid down her broom holding on with her knees while bending upside down to make an amazing re-catch of the Quaffle.

The weight of the Quaffle made her struggle to right herself and she had to resort to making an awkward throw to Michimiya, where the Quaffle was intercepted by Koki.

Koki threw to Kageyama, who raced down the field followed by Hinata and both of the Gryffindor Beaters.

Kageyama threw back to Hinata when the other Gryffindor Chaser blocked his way. Hinata went right before the scoring area before throwing it back to Kageyama who sped through and scored another goal.

With only one Chaser back on his side of the pitch, Daichi was forced to throw to her only to see her quickly surrounded.

Koki again made a sharp interception before throwing to Hinata for another goal.

By now, both Michimiya and the other twin, who had righted herself on the broom, were back on Daichi side.

Daichi threw to Michimiya, who pulled into a dive and sped to the other side of the pitch with barely a foot between her and the ground. This allowed her to get passed Koki, Kageyama, and Hinata but left her at a disadvantage when coming up on the other side to face Aone and Futakuchi.

She threw to the hoops at an awkward angle, allowing Bokuto to catch it an throw back to Koki.
One of the twins had apparently decided to take a page out of Koki’s book and intercepted Bokuto’s pass before he could catch it, throwing it back to the goals.

Going so fast Hinata could blink and miss it, Bokuto dove for it from the other side of the hoops and just barely received it, awkwardly stretched out from his broom and only keeping on by a single hand.

Bokuto threw it to Kageyama, who passed it to Hinata right after he dodged his blockers in midfield.

Hinata made to throw it at the hoops, before passing the Quaffle to Koki at the last second. Hufflepuff pulled ahead by a hundred and forty points.

Daichi threw the Quaffle back at Michimiya, who quickly passed it to one of the twins. The Gryffindor Chasers had apparently decided to pass it quickly between the three of them, forming a tight circle to prevent interception. The frustration was clearly showing on one of the twins’ faces.

Michimiya had to quickly dodge under one of Aone’s Bludgers while Futakuchi sent the second Bludger to the second Chaser in line.

The Quaffle fell slightly and Kageyama picked it up.

Without a glance, he threw it to Hinata who pulled off a rush at the far right side of Daichi’s hoop. Hinata barely was able to pull back on his broom to avoid hitting into the hoop itself.

The three Chasers, still in a tight circle, all came to Daichi’s side of the pitch together.

Kageyama shot Hinata a look and Hinata nodded. He shot his broom over past Koki, making the following Beaters break up their path and allowing Hinata to dodge their block.

When Daichi threw the Quaffle back into play, Hinata swerved over in front of the Gryffindor Chasers and momentarily blocked their view. Kageyama was able to intercept and hit the Quaffle in before Daichi could adjust.

Hinata drew in a breath. Hufflepuff did it! They were ahead a hundred and sixty.

The frustrated twin dove up around the goal and intercepted Daichi’s throw in barely a second. She hurtled down the field, pulled off an almost ninety degree angle to dodge a Bludger, and scored on the goal a second before Bokuto could get there.

Hufflepuff hurried over to Bokuto’s side of the field. Bokuto threw it back to Hinata, who barely had it for a second before throwing to Koki.

“IT LOOKS LIKE THE SEEKERS HAVE ONCE AGAIN FOUND THE SNITCH!”

Hinata looked up to see two yellow and red colored figures darting across the sky.

Koki threw it to Kageyama quickly. Hinata raced back to Daichi’s side of the goal.

Both Beaters tried to box him in, but Hinata’s leaned down and allowed his relatively smaller size to do the work and shoot him to the goal. Once by the goal, he flicked his hand up and caught Kageyama’s Quaffle without looking. He threw it into the hoop before Daichi could get to it.

One more goal, Hinata thought.

“BOTH SEEKERS ARE NARROWING IN ON THE SNITCH! IT LOOKS LIKE IT’S GOING
TO BE A NAIL BITER, GUYS!"

Daichi quickly threw the Quaffle to Michimiya who raced on towards Bokuto’s goal.

“BOTH SEEKERS ARE PULLING INTO A DIVE. MERLIN, HOW HIGH UP ARE THEY?!”

Aone and Futakuchi hit her with Bludgers on both sides and Kageyama received the Quaffle.

Hinata rushed to Daichi’s side of the pitch while Kageyama raced to the center of the field. Tanaka and Yusho blocked him in, forcing him to make a blind throw to Hinata.

“GRYFFINDOR SEEKER NISHINOYA BEGINS TO PULL AHEAD!”

Hinata wasn’t going to make it. The angle was off on the Quaffle. It was heading toward the stands.

Hinata flew faster than he’d ever gone in his life.

He got in front of the stand barely three seconds before the Quaffle.

The angle’s wrong. He was too high by about half a meter.

A stupid idea formed in his head. Hinata tried it before he could think twice.

“HUFFLEPUFF’S CHASER...DISMOUNTS HIS BROOM IN THE MIDDLE OF THE AIR?!”

Like the Gryffindor Chaser earlier, Hinata slung off his broom. He dropped off of it entirely and swung like a pendulum below it, only holding on with a hand. With the other hand he spread it out as far as he could go and caught the Quaffle.

“AMAZING, THE HUFFLEPUFF CHASER HAS MANAGED A SPECTACULAR CATCH OF THE QUAFFLE. BUT, IT LOOKS LIKE IT'S GOING TO COME TO LATE.”

Once he felt the Quaffle in his hand, Hinata kicked back with one of his free falling leg. He felt the posts of the stands behind him and pushed off of it, using the momentum of it to power a throw to make a miracle shot towards the hoops.

“HE THREW IT, HE ACTUALLY THREW THE QUAFFLE...OH, MERLIN, AND THE GRYFFINDOR SEEKER CLOSES IN ON THE SNITCH.”

The Quaffle darted through the air to the goals.

Daichi dove from the far side of the hoops.

The Quaffle went through, hitting itself on the side of the hoop.

The whistle blew, signaling the Snitch’s capture.

“OH, MERLIN, OH, MERLIN. FOLKS, I DO BELIEVE THAT HUFFLEPUFF JUST PULLED AHEAD BY A HUNDRED AND SIXTY RIGHT AS GRYFFINDOR SEEKER NISHINOYA CATCHES THE SNITCH! WHAT A GAME!...I'M GETTING WORD NOW THAT THE PROFESSORS ARE VIEWING THE FINAL PLAYS THROUGH THE PENSIEVE. HOLD ON TO YOUR WANDS, GUYS!”

Kageyama flew up to Hinata, who was still unsuccessfully trying to swing back onto his broom. Kageyama held out a hand and pulled Hinata up the extra bit to get himself re-seated.
Once Hinata was back on his broom, he sent Kageyama a grateful smile.

Kageyama just shook his head at him. “I don’t know if you’re insane...No, scratch that I know you’re insane. I just don’t know if you might be a genius, too.”

“Kageyama, I really don’t think you’re the one to be judging geniuses,” Hinata told him cheerfully.

Kageyama rolled his eyes, but Hinata saw him give that uptick lip quirk so he figured it was fine.

“THE PENSEIVES HAVE JUST BEEN REVIEWED. HUFFLEPUFF WINS BY A TEN POINT MARGIN!”

Hinata and Kageyama looked at each other wide eyed before Hinata all but slung off his broom a second time, in an effort to grab Kageyama.

“Kageyama?! Kageyama! Is this real? Did he really just say we won!” Hinata asked him, grabbing at his shoulders.

Kageyama held him steady so he wouldn’t fall off of his broom. He watched the announcer’s box wordlessly.

“For the first time in twenty years, Hufflepuff pulls out of their slump and is eligible for the Hogwarts Quidditch Cup Finals!”

Hinata let out a yelp directly next to Kageyama’s ear. Kageyama shoved him off and raced on his own broom back down to the field. Hinata followed quickly after.

When they got there, the entire team was assembled. Literal tears ran down Bokuto’s face and even Futakuchi looked a bit misty eyes.

Bokuto slapped Hinata’s back.

“GREAT JOB, GUYS! GREAT JOB, EVERYONE!” Bokuto looked up with a note of wonder. “We’re actually eligible for the Quidditch Cup Finals.”

In the stands, the Hufflepuff side was going crazy with a few more adventurous students shooting off yellow and black sparks from their wands. Their Head of House, Professor Takeda, was running on the field to congratulate the team. Behind him, Hinata meet the eyes of Professor Oiwake, who gave him a stoic nod.

Hinata turned and shot another grin to Kageyama. They did it!

The Hufflepuff team won the Quidditch Cup Semifinals.

Chapter End Notes

As always, hope you enjoyed and thanks for reading! Next chapter will be on Monday.
“Do you mind partnering up for this project,” Suga asked Daichi during Charms class. “I mean we already work together in Herbology.”

“Of sure,” Daichi sputtered. “I mean, of course. Sure, that would be fine.”

Suga smiled at him and sat down in the seat next to him. Daichi moved his stuff over to give Suga more room, almost knocking over his own ink well.

“Alright, class,” Professor Ukai told them. “Now that you’ve all found partners, we’re going to be working on the Cheering Charms. The incantation is fairly easy, but be careful about moderation,” He glared at Matsukawa and Hanamaki in the back of the room. “Oi, that means the two of you, stay focused!” The two pranksters shot the professor innocent expressions to which Professor Ukai dutifully rolled his eyes. He looked back to address the rest of the class. “I’ll write the incantation on the board. Remember, overdoing it can result in hysterical laughter so try to moderate.”

Professor Ukai flicked his wand and the incantation appeared on the board.

Suga looked back at Daichi. “Would you like to go first? Or should I?”

“You can,” Daichi told him with a smile.

Suga nodded and pulled out his wand.

It was an elegant wand, Daichi noted absently. Simple in nature and made of a light wood treated with a stain that brought out the texture in the grain. It fit him.

“*Gaudium Statim,*” Suga intoned.

Daichi felt a very mild raise in mood, but couldn’t quite tell if it was from the spell or just his partner.

“How do you feel?” asked Suga, looking at him intently.

“Um,” Daichi answered. “I think I feel it a little bit.”

Suga nodded and quirked his lip in a small smile. “I think I was trying too hard not to overdo it.”

Daichi nodded and glanced around the room to see how the rest of the class was doing. Professor Ukai was already telling off Matsukawa and Hanamaki, while the two both were caught in unending hysterical laughter. Next to them, Asahi had partnered with Daisho from Slytherin and the large Gryffindor was still looking more panicked than cheered. On the far side of the room, he noticed his dormmate Iwaizumi was smiling a good bit wider than normal as his partner Oikawa looked to be telling him a joke.

Suga had followed his gaze, also looking around the room. He looked back at Daichi.

“Are you ready to give it a try?”

Daichi nodded and pulled out his wand.
He focused his power, trying hard not to pull in too much or too little.

He took a breath. “Gaudium Statim”

Immediately, a wide grin spread across Suga’s face and he let out a light happy sounding laugh.

Daichi smiled back on reflex. “How do you feel?”

Suga’s smile quirked up on the left. “Definitely cheered.”

Daichi nodded and the two sat for a second just smiling at each other.

“Ready to try again,” Suga eventually asked, picking up his own wand.

“Yeah,” Daichi agreed, still feeling light-hearted.

“I’ll try to get the power level right this time,” Suga told him.

“Gaudium Statim”

A loud laugh immediately burst out of Daichi’s mouth. He felt simultaneously like he had just made a perfect catch in Quidditch and was eating his favorite meal. Another laugh broke out and Daichi turned to give Suga a wide grin.

Suga had a small frown on his face. “I think that I might have overdone it a bit.”

Daichi smiled happily at him and let out another bark of laughter. What was he talking about? He was fine.

Professor Ukai came over and squinted at Daichi. “Oi, good job overall, Sugawara. Just a light touch of intermittent laughter. Should clear up by the end of class.” He gave Daichi another assessing look. “You’ll be okay, won’t you, Sawamura?”

Daichi gave another laugh and shot Professor Ukai a happy nod.

Ukai held his gaze another second before shrugging and checking back on the rest of the class.

Wow, Daichi thought in a daze, gazing back at a worried looking Suga. This is the best class ever! Suga is the best ever! I haven’t even worried about Noya or Tanaka or the bloody dragon.

Daichi sat smiling in his chair and quietly hoped that this class would never end.

---

Noya looked at the dragon with the kind of care-filled fondness that one normally reserved for young family members.

“Who’s the best and most ferocious dragon ever?” Noya cooed. “You are.”

Rolling Thunder looked up at the noise before hiccuping out a small flame.

“Ah,” Noya looked at her. “Are you still full from the sausage I brought you this morning?”
Rolling Thunder curled up in a ball and laid her head down on her tail.

Noya gave her a look of pure adoration.

The baby dragon closed her eyes and began to doze, letting out the occasional puff of smoke through her nostrils.

Noya was spending his free period doing his new favorite activity--babysitting Rolling Thunder. Almost as far back as he could remember, Noya had always loved magical creatures. When he was a baby, his favorite uncle had gotten him an enchanted mobile for his crib where flying dragons and racing hippogriffs danced over his head. His parents were eventually forced to uninstall it as baby Noya had kept trying to grab at the creatures instead of taking naps.

At home, his room was filled with detailed diagrams of different creatures and books crammed with fantastic beasts. Noya had always felt an odd kinship with the strange and unusual creatures that roamed the magical word--a kinship that, under careful examination, wasn’t that unusual at all.

When Noya had spotted the dragon egg in Knockturn Alley, he immediately had felt a mixture of anger and longing. Anger at the poacher, who had most likely stolen the egg from a distraught mother dragon and most likely planned to restrain the creature that was never supposed to be caged in the first place. The longing was for the dragon itself, to have the chance to be among such a majestic and beautiful creature and to call the creature a companion.

When chance in the form of the poacher’s scuffle with the shopkeeper gave him the opportunity, it had seemed more like fate. This idea of fate made any obstacles that came after seem insurmountable with only enough effort and ingenuity. Noya hadn’t expected anyone but Tanaka and possibly Ennoshita to find out about the egg. He definitely hadn’t expected to accidentally ensnare a frightened first year or Asahi, who Noya knew was endearingly timid despite his large size. Last, as Daichi had pointed out, Noya definitely never intend to be the one trapping the dragon instead of the poacher.

When Daichi had questioned Noya and Tanaka on how the dragon would feel growing up as the only one of its kind, Noya had felt an immediate rush of denial. The dragon wouldn’t be alone, it would have Noya. But, then, the shame had crept in. Somewhere in his mind, maybe rather his heart, Noya knew a few human wizards wouldn’t be the same as an entire flock of fellow dragons. Noya wouldn’t-- couldn’t, his mind insisted--be the one cruel enough to force Rolling Thunder into that reality.

He and Tanaka had talked late into the night, far past the time that Ennoshita had eventually passed out. The two had finally come to an agreement and together drafted a letter to Tanaka’s sister.

Noya looked longingly at Rolling Thunder. She would enjoy the dragon preserve.

But until then, there was nothing that said that Noya couldn’t spoil her in the meantime.

Noya smiled. Until he eventually had to give Rolling Thunder up, Noya was going to spend every free second he had with her.

---

In his afternoon class, Professor Sora opened it with an immediate call for the third year Defense class to partner up.

Kuroo strolled up to Oikawa and tapped him on the shoulders.
“Partners?” the messy haired Ravenclaw grinned.

Oikawa rolled his eyes but nodded.

“Today, we’re practicing the Seize and Pull Charm-- *Carpe Retractum*,” Sora told them. “Who can tell me how this is different from the more advanced Summoning Charm.”

Nakashima from Slytherin raised his hand. “The Seize and Pull Charm is used to pull in objects in your immediate vicinity while the Summoning Charm is used to summon objects from far away.”

“Excellent, five points to Slytherin,” Sora told him.

A Ravenclaw girl named Shimizu also raised her hand. “The Summoning Charm also has no light associated with the spell while the Seize and Pull Charm casts an orange light to whip around the object.”

“Also, true,” Sora agreed. “Now, the kitchen elves were kind enough to lend me these apples for today’s lesson.”

He individually levitated a separate apple to each of the pairs. Kuroo reached up and caught the apple for his and Oikawa’s exercise.

“Your task today is to take turns holding the apple and summoning it from your partner.”

Kuroo looked at the apple in his hands before walking over to Oikawa.

“Here, you take it,” he ordered, walking the apple over to Oikawa. “I want to try the Charm first.”

Once Kuroo got close enough, he leaned over to whisper in Oikawa’s ear.

“I need you to fail at this spell when you try, okay?”

Oikawa gave a faint nod in the guise of flipping his bangs out of his face.

Kuroo smirked and gave a brief squeeze to Oikawa’s right wrist as he handed off the apple.

Kuroo walked back to his side and both he and Oikawa got into position.

“*Carpe Retractum,*” Kuroo called and two orange lights shot out of his wand.

Kuroo directed them to the apple in Oikawa’s outstretched hand, but the beams missed and tangled around Oikawa’s wrist pulling forward.

Oikawa had been mildly expecting it, so was able to keep his balance while giving a convincing show of tripping.

“Ow,” he said, rubbing his wrist lightly to sell the effect. “You missed the apple.”

Kuroo shrugged nonchalantly and gave a smirk. “Next time, hold it in the right spot.”

Oikawa kept up a glare and tossed the apple over to Kuroo. Internally, he thought how best to make sure his spell wouldn’t work. He had a vague idea of what Kuroo was trying to do.

Kuroo caught it handily and held it out for Oikawa to try.

Oikawa took a breath. “*Carpe Retractum.*”
Twin orange beams unwound from Oikawa’s wand and darted towards the apple in Kuroo’s hands, but Oikawa yanked back his magic at the last second making the streams fizzle out uselessly half a meter or so before Kuroo’s hands.

Professor Sora walked by just in time to shake his head sadly at Oikawa’s efforts. Oikawa fought back grinding his teeth. You let the spell fail, he reminded himself.

Kuroo scoffed on the other side of the room and gave a noticeable eye roll. “At least, I can make it to the apple.”

He lazily arced the apple back to Oikawa, who snatched it out of the air.

Oikawa held out the apple.

“Is this close enough?” he asked sarcastically.

Kuroo smirked and nodded.

“Carpe Retractum”

This time the dual beams wrapped snugly around the apple and yanked it forward so hard that it tried to pull Oikawa’s hand with it before he could let go.

“Excellent job, Kuroo,” Professor Sora called out from the other side of the classroom. “Wonderful job making a strong connective force. Five points to Ravenclaw.”

Kuroo smiled back at Professor Sora while Oikawa made a good show of seeming annoyed at his partner.

The class continued with Kuroo making a series of successfully strong charms while Oikawa’s kept not quite meeting the mark. By the end, Oikawa appeared frustrated with himself while Kuroo smirked from the other side of the room.

“Great job, everyone,” Sora told the class. “I can tell that you all really tried your hardest. Keep up the good work and you are dismissed for the day.”

“Kuroo,” Professor Sora called while the messy haired boy was packing up his stuff. “Would you mind staying back a bit?”

Kuroo nodded in affirmation while Oikawa and the rest of the class trailed out of the room.

Oikawa found a small curtain covered alcove a bit outside of the classroom and waited for Kuroo. Suga snuck in after him, careful to not let anyone see.

“You think it worked,” the light haired boy whispered.

“I don’t think he’s suspicious,” Oikawa answered in affirmative, carefully looking in the crack between the curtains.

The two waited a few minutes before Oikawa spotted Kuroo, walking alone, and gestured him into the alcove.

“What did Sora want,” asked Oikawa, once the other boy was fully in the nook.

Kuroo smirked, this time without the meaner edge it had in class. “He told me I was shaping up to be a powerful wizard and asked me to demonstrate the charm for Dueling.”
Oikawa gave a vicious smile while Suga let out a relieved sigh.

“Good,” Suga told him. “Then, that’ll be at least one of us that he won’t suspect.”

“Plus, he thinks I’m too powerless to be a threat,” added Oikawa.

Kuroo held up the apple from class. “Speaking of which, you want to meet up so you can actually practice the charm?”

Kuroo spun the apple and opened his mouth to take a bite.

“Carpe Retractum”

Two narrow orange strands spun out from Oikawa’s wand and made a careful controlled grab at the apple, pulling it back to Oikawa.

Oikawa smirked and held out the apple to a grinning Kuroo. “I think I’ll be fine.”

---

“Akaashi, can you read over by Divination assignment,” Bokuto asked the younger as the two studied in the library.

Akaashi sighed. “Bokuto, why did you even take that class?”

“I told you, to develop my second sight,” Bokuto answered.

“You don’t have a second sight.”

“Yet”

Akaashi rolled his eyes and glanced down at the assignment.

“Bokuto, you have Hufflepuff playing Ravenclaw for this year’s Quidditch Cup.”

Bokuto nodded emphatically. “Because we should play them.”

“But, Ravenclaw already beat Slytherin,” Akaashi responded. “They automatically won the Cup, the season’s over.”

Bokuto gave a loud over dramatic sigh. “But, we still should play them, Akaashi. It’s not fair, especially after our win against Gryffindor.”

Bokuto laid his head on the table with a look of prolonged grief, a common look for him since the Slytherin-Ravenclaw game last Sunday.

Akaashi wisely chose not to comment and erased the prediction with a flick of his wand, writing something else instead. He went through the page checking for other grammar issues or spelling.

“Akaashi,” Bokuto suddenly said.

“Hmm,” responded Akaashi absently.
“Why do you not like Professor Sora?”

Akaashi looked up from his corrections.

“You told me at the start of the school year,” Bokuto reminded him. “I asked you if you thought his classes would be any good and you told me no and that you didn’t think you like him. What made you not like him?”

Akaashi thought for a second. “I suppose he just seemed slightly arrogant. The type who likes to do everything by himself. It didn’t seem like the right fit for teaching.” Akaashi shrugged. “I guess it doesn’t really matter. Everyone says great things about his class.”

Bokuto shook his head. “No, Akaashi, I think you’re right.” Bokuto leaned back and frowned. “He really does seem like the type who likes to do things by himself.”

Akaashi made a small motion of agreement before going back to the paper. “Why do you ask?”

“Ak,” Bokuto scrambled. “No reason. Noooooo reason at all. I just really care about your opinion, Akaashi.”

Akaashi gave a small smile, before marking another correction on the assignment.

---

Sitting in the second year boys’ dorm, Daichi rubbed his head as he fought off the mild hangover headache from the Cheering Charm that morning.

“Alright, guys,” he said, rallying himself. “What have you found out so far?”

“I found out that the prefects all stop their patrols around midnight,” Ennoshita informed the group.

“That’s awesome,” Tanaka told him. “When do the professors take over.”

“Technically midnight,” Ennoshita replied. “But, they all have to report back to the professor on duty first. So, we have a short opening when no one’s patrolling about midnight.”

Daichi nodded, wincing when his head throbbed from the movement. “Great, we can try to sneak the dragon out then. Noya, Tanaka, find any ways to hide Rolling Thunder?”

Noya hit at Tanaka’s shoulder and the bald boy went to grab something from behind his bed.

“Ta-Dah!” he announced.

“A basket,” Ennoshita said flatly.

Noya nodded. “A basket and…”

Tanaka pulled out a piece of fabric from behind his back.

“A blanket?” asked Asahi confused.
Tanaka went back to sit beside Noya. “Noya and I were thinking we can put Notice Me Not Charms on both the basket and the blanket and cover Rolling Thunder Up.”

“That way, we won’t have to deal with the immunity in her scales, but she’ll still be covered up,” Noya added.

“Plus, she normally sleeps around that time, so we shouldn’t have a problem on that front,” Tanaka concluded.

The two troublemakers grinned happily at the mildly stunned group.

“That’s actually kind of brilliant,” Yamaguchi admitted.

Daichi smiled at the two, careful not to nod his head this time. “Good job, you two. Asahi and I looked for the fastest route from here to the Astronomy Tower and we found two. One’s slightly longer…”

“Then let’s go with the other one,” Noya said excitedly.

“But, the other one means we have to cut across one of the lawns between sections,” Daichi finished.

“Where we’d be out in the open,” Asahi confirmed.

The group looked at each other, deciding.

“What if—What if I go first through the long way,” Yamaguchi put in. “That way I could already be on the other side and give you a signal when the coast is clear.”

Daichi paused, thinking. “Hmmm, that might work. How’s your Lumos spell.”

Yamaguchi shrugged. It sometimes flickered out when he tried to hold it for too long and got distracted, but it should be fine for short bursts.

“It’s good enough.” he answered.

“Good, then you can use that to signal us when the time is right,” Daichi told him. The older boy met his eyes with a firm no nonsense look, though still keeping with Daichi’s ever present comforting air. “Tell me truthfully, okay. Are you alright going ahead by yourself?”

Yamaguchi nodded. He could do that if it meant helping the others.

Daichi gave him a smile and grabbed Yamaguchi’s shoulder in a supportive gesture. “Asahi and I can show you the path tomorrow afternoon, now that I don’t have Quidditch.”

Suitably distracted by the Q-word, Tanaka let out a loud groan and fell back morosely looking at the ceiling. “I can’t believe the season is over already.”

“But, what a way to go,” Noya sighed dreamily. “Daichi, are you absolutely sure we can’t adopt first years from other Houses–just the small orange one who did that amazing throw.”

“Oh, and the other frowny Chaser,” Tanaka added.

Daichi rolled his eyes. “If it was possible to trade in first years, you two would have been gone a year ago.”
Noya leaned over to whisper conspiratorially to Yamaguchi. “He’s lying, he loves us.”

“I’m going to get grey hairs before I graduate,” Daichi protested, but Yamaguchi noticed he didn’t actually disagree.

“Then the old man-ness you have inside will finally match the outside,” Noya put in cheerfully while Daichi glared at him.

Yamaguchi let out a surprised laugh, which got Daichi turning his glare on him before Tanaka made another comment that distracted him.

The conversation devolved into Daichi bickering with Tanaka and Noya. To the side, Ennoshita offered his trademark dry commentary of the argument while on the other side, Asahi continued with his mild, mostly ineffective peacekeeping.

Yamaguchi ended up laughing more than he had in a month.

Chapter End Notes

But, wait there's more...I decided to post two chapters today since I will be out of town soon and not have a chance to post like normal
The What's and the Why's

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

The Investigators’ Club, name now even mournfully accepted by Oikawa, met again late on a Friday night.

The first event of the night being Bokuto laying his head morosely on the table while Kuroo smirked at him.

“Still upset about the game,” Suga asked sympathetically.

“So close,” Bokuto moaned.

“But not close enough,” Kuroo shook his head in a mimicry of sympathy.

Bokuto stuck his tongue out at him.

“Think about it like this, Bo,” Kuroo said, taking his seat next to him. “Think about how hyped up we’ll both be for next year’s match. Eagles vs. Badgers: The Redemption Match.”

Bokuto seemed to consider this for a second before giving a fierce smile.

*That was quick*, Oikawa noted amused.

“Hey, Hey, Game of the Century,” Bokuto said excitedly. “By then, our Chasers will have more than a year under their belts, so you ‘Claws better watch out!”

Kuroo smiled back in anticipation. “We’ll be ready.”

“But, first going back to the *current* year,” Oikawa interjected, bringing the conversation back to the investigation. “Anyone hear back about Sora.”

Kuroo’s face settled in a more serious expression as he nodded. “Yeah, I got two letters back from a couple of locals mentioned in the *Prophet* for an excavation in Termessos. The first one said she didn’t see anything and that she only ever heard about the excavation after it had happened. Her quote was more about ancient folklore around the site anyway. The second one,” he pulled out a letter from his bag. “I got a brief note back from his cousin instead. Apparently, the witness is undergoing long term medical treatment for severe spell damage. The cousin didn’t give me details and didn’t mention Sora or anything, but from the details, the ‘accident’ seems really close to Oliveira’s.”

Suga bit his lip. “The two locals I sent to for the Angamuco exhibition, both didn’t send me anything back. It might be nothing, but…” He trailed off.

“Same for mine,” Bokuto added.

“And mine,” commented Oikawa, “It’s looking more and more likely that Oliveira was not Sora’s only victim by far.

A considering silence fell over the group.

After it passed, Oikawa awkwardly cleared his throat, before looking at Iwaizumi with a more
hopeful expression. “But Iwa-chan actually found something else.”

Iwaizumi nodded, drawing the attention of the group. “I just got it back last night. It’s kind of similar to Kuroo’s. The first person didn’t get back to me at all and the second witness was apparently a friend.” Iwaizumi swallowed. “He went missing a couple of years ago, but his brother sent me a picture of both of them with a group of people he said were the excavation team.”

“Seriously,” Kuroo asked leaning over as Iwaizumi pulled something out of his bag.

“If we have an actual picture of the team, we might be able to find out who they are,” Suga added excitedly.

Iwaizumi showed them the picture. “The two on the left are the witnesses.”

The picture showed a group of seven, all in their mid-twenties, smiling and waving from the picture. The five on the right were covered in light dirt and looked lightly ruffled, as if they had just stepped out of the rain forest behind them.

“I recognize him,” Kuroo said, pointing to one in the middle. “That guy was at a Ministry function last summer for finding something or other...I think it was like ancient potion recipes by the Dead Sea.”

“Do you remember his name,” asked Oikawa anxiously.

“It was…crap,” Kuroo pulled out his recall book. “Pull articles featuring ‘Potion Recipes’, ‘Dead Sea’, and ‘found’”

Words bloomed on the open page.

“There,” Kuroo pointed. “Yuuto Ushinawa”

The man in the picture was thin looking with light brown hair and glasses, smiling awkwardly as he accepted an award.

“He doesn’t exactly look like part of a secret dangerous gang of treasure hunters,” Iwaizumi commented.

Oikawa leaned back in his chair. “So...if he’s one of the people helping Sora, why is he also working on his own expeditions?”

“And how does he have the time,” added Suga.

Kuroo furrowed his brow. “When I saw him at the Ministry function, he didn’t look like much. My Legilimency definitely didn’t peg him as a threat.”

“Maybe, he worked on one of the expeditions and then left,” Iwaizumi suggested.

The group sat silently, sorting through the information.

Bokuto sat in his seat, biting his lip and deciding whether or not to share his theory.

“Hey, um, guys,” Bokuto finally said, drawing in their attention. “What if, what if Sora actually is working alone?”

Kuroo gave a weird look. “What do you mean, Bo? We threw out that theory after Oliveira mentioned the team. Iwaizumi just showed us that we no have photographic evidence that Sora
“Yeah, but…” Bokuto started. “I mean what if we’re looking at this the wrong way?”

“In what way,” Suga asked, frowning.

Bokuto took a breath. “Well, I mean I was talking to Akaashi the other day--I didn’t like mention the investigation or anything--but I asked him why he didn’t like him...and he said that he didn’t think Sora was the type to work with others...and I mean he’s right, isn’t he? We’ve had him as a teacher all year and he never sits with the other faculty at meals or talks to anyone he doesn’t have to. I mean, he really, really doesn’t seem like they type to have a super close team. He seems more like he’d want to just use the people he needs and then leave them when he’s done.”

“But, what about the picture and the statement,” Oikawa argued.

Bokuto bit his lip. “I mean what if he changes teams every time and then just finds a way to make sure they don’t talk? That’s why the Ushinawa guy can go off and do his own things without Sora...because he’s not working with him anymore.”

“But, why would they not--” Suga began before Oikawa suddenly jumped up and slammed his hand on the table.

“Bokuto, you’re a genius,” he said, pointing down. “The letters.”

“Oh,” said Kuroo, before his face twisted in a grimace. “That’s--”

“Terrible,” agreed Suga, in realization.

Iwaizumi glared. “If the Slytherins in the room wouldn’t mind catching the rest of us up.”

“Yeah,” Bokuto agree, looking confused. “Um, thanks, but why exactly am I genius.”

“He’s erasing their memories,” Suga answered as Oikawa nodded.

“Just like the witnesses from the letters,” Oikawa agreed.

“But, why is the damage less severe,” Kuroo asked.

Oikawa frowned, thinking.

“Because, he knows where to focus on,” Oikawa said in realization. “Think about it. Memory Charms need specifics to work properly. With the teams, he could just erase the memories of the excavation and put in something mild instead. And, I bet you anything, that he forces them to make an Unbreakable Vow before they sign on to guarantee they won’t tell anyone where they’re going before the expedition.” Oikawa frowned, thinking. “He’s famous, I bet people are begging for the chance to work with him….But, with the witnesses, he can’t guarantee who they told or who they saw, so….”

“He makes sure they can never talk at all,” Iwaizumi said in grim recognition. “Makes sure that the trail ends cold.”

Oikawa waved a hand in agreement.

The table looked at each other, all with expressions varying in between repulsion, disgust, and fear.

Suga eventually asked the question they were all thinking.
“So, what do we do now?”

“We tell the other professors,” Iwaizumi said immediately.

Kuroo shook his head. “With what evidence, all we have is conjectures and guesses.”

“So?” Iwaizumi challenged. “We’re students. If we tell them why we’re suspicious, they can give it to someone else to investigate further.”

“If it gets that far,” commented Suga with a pinched expression. “Based on this, we know that Sora is proficient in Memory Charms. If we tell the teachers without proof, all he needs to do is find us outside of class and…”

Oikawa shook his head frustrated. “We need solid proof if we actually want him to be investigated. If not he’ll just wipe the trail and start over…and that trail might include us.”

“Ugh, why is he even at Hogwarts,” Bokuto groaned.

Suga frowned, looking toward Bokuto. “That’s a good question.” He directed his attention back at the group. “Sora’s a world traveling archaeologist. We know he’s dangerous and has most likely been Obliviating witnesses for decades. But, what is he looking for at Hogwarts?”

---

“This is a terrible idea,” Yachi whispered to the two boys.

Hinata didn’t actually disagree with her, but he was too excited to see the wall again.

The three first years had once again found themselves out of their dormitories in the middle of the night.

“Come on, Yachi. It’s a secret message, that’s too cool not to go back,” Hinata whispered as the three crept silently down the halls.

“We have to go back,” Kageyama agreed.

Yachi still looked worried but subsided.

The three quietly made their way through the dark and back to the hall of tapestries.

“Which one was it,” asked Hinata.

“The one opposite the stairs,” Kageyama responded immediately.

Kageyama led the way to the tapestry almost at the complete back of the hall. He reached out to pull it aside.

“Wait,” Yachi said, grabbing his hand.

Kageyama frowned at her.
“Look at the tapestry,” Yachi pointed. She looked toward Hinata. “Hinata, could you cast a *Lumos* so we can see it better?”

Hinata nodded and complied. Light spilled onto the tapestry.

“It’s the House guardians, look.” Yachi told them, gesturing to the fabric.

Looking closely, Hinata saw that the tapestry was of a large field with a half built castle in the far back. A lion laid peacefully in the middle of the field as an eagle perched on a tree branch above him while a snake twisted itself around the limb. In between the three animals, a badger stood, looking eagerly between the other three. As Hinata watched, the lion stretched its mouth into a soundless roar.

“That’s awesome,” Hinata told Yachi.

Yachi nodded, looking intently at the tapestry. “I wonder just how old this tapestry is. I’m pretty sure that’s the Hogwarts castle in the back.”

Kageyama gestured them ahead. “Come on, we’re going to get caught if we stay out here too long.”

The three hurried into the hidden room with Hinata’s light illuminating a blank wall.

“Aw, where did the message go,” Hinata asked, frowning.

Kageyama went to the wall, touching where the message had been and urgently trying to make it reappear.

“It’s probably the message,” Yachi told them while the two boys looked at her confused. “Remember, the message told us ‘prike thy thumb’, last time Kageyama cut his hand.”

“Er, the wall wants us to bleed on it” Hinata asked, uncertainty.

Yachi nodded, frowning. “Blood’s used in a lot of really old spells. During the seventeenth century, most blood magic was ruled Dark Magic according to the Ministry so it fell out of practice.”

Kageyama drew out a quill from his pocket and immediately poked his thumb on the tip.

Yachi again reached out her hand to stop him. “Wait, didn’t you just hear me say that the Ministry declared it Dark Magic. You don’t know what it will do to you!”

Kageyama shook off her hand. “I got my blood on it last time and nothing happened. I’m sure it will be fine.”

Yachi looked anxiously between Kageyama’s hand and the wall, but didn’t stop him.

Kageyama reached out to the wall and touched his thumb to it, leaving a bloody smear in his wake. As soon as the blood touched the wall, the words appeared again as if seeping out from the stone.

*If thou haven bravery withouten wisdom, thou ist folhardy*

*If thou haven wisdom withouten care, thou ist arrogant*

*If thou haven care withouten cunning, thou willen been bound*

*If thou haven cunning withouten bravery, thou willen failen*
If thou havest hope of passing this Chambre, thou moste have alle

Prike thy thumb, Name thy gale, Pass oure tasks

Oure tresor willen been thine

Butten heden oure warning:

Only thou who hast proven alle, shal hast ani

“I looked up ‘gale’ in the library,” Yachi told them. “I’m pretty sure it means ‘name your goals’”

Hinata looked up at the wall. “Prick your thumb, name your goals, and pass our tasks Cool, so Kageyama pricked his thumb. Now, we just need to name the goals and pass some kind of tasks and then, what will happen?”

Yachi shook her head. “I’m not sure.”

“I want to pass your tasks,” Kageyama told the wall.

Nothing happened

“Um, that’s really nice, Kageyama,” Hinata said, looking at him strangely. “But why are you talking to a wall?”

“Dummy,” Kageyama said, turning to glare at Hinata. “I’m naming my goal.”

“Oh,” Hinata said before eagerly turning to the wall. “I want to try, too. I, um, want to figure out the message.”

The wall remained unchanged.

“I want to know what the tasks are,” tried Yachi.

The three took turns, trying to figure out what kind of goals they should have.

“I want to pass the Chamber,” Kageyama guessed, glaring when it didn’t work.

“I...want to figure out the message before we get caught by the professors” Yachi said, looking nervously at her watch.

“I want to guess it before Kageyama,” Hinata said happily, shooting a grin at Kageyama’s scowl.

For all of their guesses, nothing made the message or the room change. After about an hour of guessing, Hinata sighed.

“This isn’t working” he said, frowning at the wall and trying to think of any other options.

“We need to keep trying,” Kageyama told him.

“Well, duh,” Hinata shot back, smiling. “Like we’d give up on a secret message!”
“I don’t think we can tonight,” Yachi said, checking the time. “It’s getting really late. We need to
get back to our rooms.”

Kageyama shook his head. “No, we’re really close. I can feel it. We just need to keep trying.”

Yachi bit her lip nervously at the prospect of confrontation.

“Kageyama,” she began softly. “We can come back another night. It’s not worth getting caught
over.”

“If you want to go so much, you can leave,” Kageyama turned and snapped at her. “Me and Hinata
are going to stay here and figure out the message.”

Yachi opened her mouth to respond but her lip wobbled and she immediately closed up, biting her
lip.

Hinata came over beside her and put an arm around her. “Kageyama, come on. You’re being mean
to Yachi. We can come back tomorrow.”

“No,” Kageyama said, glaring at the ginger. “We need to stay until we figure this out.”

“Why,” Hinata asked in frustration. “We can just come back again later.”

“Because” Kageyama started, continuing to scowl. He stopped suddenly and frowned.
“Because...because we have to.”

Frowning, Yachi narrowed her eyes and stepped forward, looking closely at Kageyama. “Why do
we have to, Kageyama. Why do we have to stay here and figure out the message?”

“Because...because,” Kageyama cut off again and looked confused. He shook his head and
scowled. “We just do, okay?”

Yachi gasped suddenly, looking between the wall and Kageyama.

“Yachi, what’s wrong,” asked Hinata anxiously.

“Did you figure out the message,” demanded Kageyama.

Yachi shook her head. “The blood. Kageyama used his blood both times to make the message
appear.”

She shot another brief glance at Kageyama before turning back to focus on Hinata. “I think
Kageyama’s under some kind of Compulsion Charm.”

“WHAT,” both Kageyama and Hinata nearly shouted.

“Shh,” Yachi told them, frantically gesturing beyond the fabric to the dark hall. “I think there’s
some kind of Compulsion Charm embedded in the wall. When Kageyama put his hand on it, the
Compulsion Charm stuck to him. That’s why he’s convinced we need to stay at the wall!”

Kageyama frowned silently, looking down at himself as if trying to see where the charm might
have stuck.

“Whoah,” Hinata said amazed. “Compulsion Charms can do that?”

Yachi nodded. “Though I’ve never heard of an inactivated one lasting this long. Whoever must of
put it on the wall must have been really, really powerful if it’s still in effect hundreds of years later.”

“What do we do,” Kageyama asked, looking at his hand that still had a small bandage from the last time they’d come to the wall.

Yachi grabbed the hand. “Kageyama, did you ever get this looked at?”

Kageyama shook his head. “It didn’t seem important enough and we were both focusing on the Quidditch game. After that, I just forgot?”

Yachi carefully unwound the bandage and winced. Around the cut was a dark black looking stain.

“Ew,” Hinata said, looking at the hand. “Kageyama, it looks like your hands about to fall off.”

Kageyama looked panickedly down at the cut but Yachi shook her head firmly.

“The black parts not in the flesh, it’s magic,” Yachi told him. “I think this is where the Compulsion Charm got onto you.”

“Can we get it off,” Kageyama asked.

Yachi nodded. “It must not be a pretty subtle spell or we would have noticed it before now. I think I can undo it myself but I’ll have to stop by the library first.”

Kageyama looked relieved.

“Do you think you’ll be okay until then,” asked Hinata worriedly.

Taking a long enough pause that Hinata began to contemplate forcefully pulling him away, Kageyama looked at the wall. Finally, with an obvious amount of effort, he turned firmly away, nodding. “Yeah, let’s just go quick or..I don’t know if I’ll be able to.”

Yachi worried her lip. “I agree, we need to get away from this wall right now.”

Hinata grabbed onto one of Kageyama’s arms while Yachi got the other and, working to be extra careful, the two gently guided Kageyama away room the wall and back to the Hufflepuff common room.

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At the Slytherin table, Oikawa and Iwaizumi sat across from Matsukawa and Hanamaki, eating breakfast.

Oikawa let out a loud yawn.

“Tired,” asked Hanamaki, propping his head up on one arm.

“I would be if I stayed up half the night reading my Defense textbook,” Matsukawa commented, earning a glare from Oikawa, who was in turn being glared at by Iwaizumi.

“Idiot,” Iwaizumi muttered, giving Oikawa a light shove.
“I’m still trying to figure out what’s wrong with my Shielding Charm,” Oikawa defended.

“Could be the lack of sleep,” Hanamaki suggested lightly.

Oikawa rolled his eyes, before he turned abruptly to the Great Hall entrance. He hit Iwaizumi’s arm and the two got up.

“We need to go...talk to someone from our Dueling class,” Oikawa told them briefly, before both he and Iwaizumi grabbed their stuff and headed out the door--suspiciously, a few minutes after another silver haired Slytherin third year.

Matsukawa sighed at the now emptied table. “I swear, Maki, for anyone who actually knows Oikawa, as soon as he’s not working on it, he’s about as subtle as a brick.”

Hanamaki nodded. “He had to get into Slytherin based on cunning and ambition.”

Matsukawa shot a glance around to make sure no one was in ear shot. “You think they’re actually getting anywhere with their Sora investigation.”

Hanamaki shrugged. “Guy’s shadier than a dementor, there’s gotta be something. Plus by my count, they’ve got Tetsuro Kuroo from Ravenclaw, Kotaro Bokuto from Hufflepuff, plus our dear own Suga. Between all of them, I’m sure they’ve found something or other. I just wish I knew what it was.”

Matsukawa nodded absently before smirking at Hanamaki. “My dear Maki, are we being replaced?”

Hanamaki snorted. “Please, as if they could replace us.”

Matsukawa smiled. “Between Shady Sora and the freaking dragon those Gryffindors are hiding, it’s turning out to be an interesting year.”

“Plus,” Hanamaki commented. “I saw three of the ickle firsties sneaking around the castle last night when I snuck out for food.”

“Aww,” Matsukawa mock cooed. “A new generation of troublemakers. I hope they’re up to no good.”

“Brings a tear to my eye,” Hanamaki said, pantomiming the act.

“Think, we should help Iwaizumi and Oikawa,” asked Matsukawa.

Hanamaki shrugged. “Why ruin a good thing? Besides I’m pretty sure Oikawa’s head might actually explode if he found out that two more people knew.”

“Honestly,” Matsukawa said, rolling his eyes. “We share a dorm. How could we not find out?”

Hanamaki nodded. “Oikawa’s too stressed.” He smirked. “Know how we can help him out.”

Matsukawa smirked back. “Pranking Sora for a week so he’s too busy to bug Oikawa in class.”

Hanamaki smacked him on the back. “Matsu, my friend, you’ve read my mind.”
Ravenclaw third year Kiyoko Shimizu sometimes really loved her volunteer job. She hid a smile as she watched a petite blonde first year struggle through a pile of books that looked almost as tall as hers. The girl shook her head in a quick bob as she looked through page after page, a forgotten quill stuck between one ear and her wand behind the other.

“Excuse me,” Shimizu approached the girl. “Would you like any help? I’m the student library assistant for today so I should be able to try and help you if you need anything.”

The girl looked up at Shimizu and Shimizu saw her eyes suddenly widen. The quill fell out of her hair and she struggled to catch it. “Um, um, no, I think I’ll be fine. I’m sure you’re very, um, important and, um, have a lot of stuff to work on so, I’ll just…” She gestured rather helplessly at the pile of books in front of her.

“It’s really no problem,” Shimizu told the girl, glancing at the titles of the books on the table. “It’d really love to help if you need it.”

The girl bit her lip, obviously torn.

“Well,” the girl started, apparently deciding to take up the offer. “I’m kind of looking for any books on Compulsion Charms.”

It was Shimizu’s turn to be surprised. “Compulsion Charms are a bit advanced and, because their association with Dark magic, most of the books we have on casting them are in the Restricted Section.”

The girl frantically shook her head. “Oh, no, no, I’m definitely not looking on how to cast them. I’m looking for how to get rid of them, like spell prevention.”

Shimizu smiled, relieved she wouldn’t have to politely inquire why a first year was looking to cast Compulsion Charms.

“In that case, it will be in the medical texts and spell removal section,” Shimizu told her, pointing down a long hall. “I can show you if you’d like?”

The first year gave a small blush and nodded. “Thank you, that would be really helpful.”

“It’s what I’m here for,” Shimizu reassured her. “Oh, I almost forgot to introduce myself--I’m Kiyoko Shimizu, third year Ravenclaw.”

“Wow, that’s such a pretty name,” the girl complimented her. “I’m Hitoka Yachi, I’m in Gryffindor.”

“It’s nice to meet you,” Shimizu told the girl--Yachi. “What made you interested in spell removal.”

“Um,” Yachi started. “I’m just, um, trying to read ahead. I’m really interested in taking the Healing elective for third year.”

Shimizu nodded. “I’m in that class right now. Professor Nekomata is a great teacher. Although,” she said, looking down at Yachi, “we’re not covering spell reversal until fourth year so you shouldn’t be too worried about that.”

Yachi looked down. “Um, I just really like reading ahead.”

Shimizu smiled. She could certainly understand that.
“Then, that’s amazing you’re already starting as a first year,” Shimizu commented.

Yachi blushed again. “T-thank you.”

“They’re the medical section,” Shimizu said, pointing to a section of rows. “Spell removal should be on the second row near the middle.”

“Thank you for helping me,” Yachi repeated.

“You’re welcome. Really, I always find it refreshing to see people researching in here for fun rather than just for homework assignments,” Shimizu told her honestly. “Anytime you need help, just come to me.”

Yachi smiled. “It was nice meeting you.”

“You as well,” Shimizu responded.

Yes, being able to help students find the perfect books they were looking for always gave Shimizu a sense of accomplishment—especially when they were polite first years who enjoyed reading ahead. Sometimes—almost always, really—Shimizu really loved her volunteer job.

Chapter End Notes

Hope everyone enjoyed the double chapter post. Since I will be out of town the next couple of weeks, my next post will not be until a week from Wednesday, but I'll still be able to respond to comments. Thank you everyone for the nice comments and Kudos. As always, I hope you enjoyed and thank you for reading. Also, I should be posting the final chapter count (right now, I'm expecting it at 27 chapters) within the next few chapters. I want to finish writing it on my end before I post the official final chapter count on AO3.

Next Chapter: Daring Escapes
Sitting for Saturday lunch with his fellow Slytherin first years, Tsukishima halfheartedly stabbed at his roast beef. His dormmates Kuguri and Onaga sat across from him while Lev was slumped onto the bench, unfortunately for Tsukishima, right next to him. Tsukishima felt his eye twitch.

“Guys, I don’t know why Kenma thought that Yaku would be an easy potion’s tutor. He’s so hard,” Lev whined, looking through his Potion’s book yet again.

“Honestly for someone so short,” he stopped suddenly and looked nervously around him. Not seeing a furious third year descend from the sky, he let out a breath and continued. “He’s like super, super intimidating. Last time, he glared at me for like five solid minutes because I hadn’t memorized the basic ingredients he’d assigned.” He let out a moan. “If Professor Irihata doesn’t kill me before the exam, Yaku will for sure.”

Tsukishima found that he really couldn’t care less about Lev’s Potion struggles and really, for the life of him, couldn’t figure out why Lev would think otherwise. Across the table, Kuguri looked similarly bored and disinterested while Onaga seemed to be wondering if Lev’s complaints absolutely required a response.

Lev let out another louder groan, shooting a furtive glance at his dormmates.

Tsukishima didn’t even bother hiding his eye roll.

“I’m sure you’ll be fine if you’ve studied that much,” Onaga put in awkwardly.

“Noooo,” Lev moaned. “Yaku is definitely going to kill me, or worse he’s going to glare me to death.” His head fell on the table and he let out a final whimper.

Nope, that was it. This was Tsukishima’s limit. The tall Slytherin quickly grabbed his bag and headed for the exit.

“Wait, where are you going,” Lev called.

“Library.” Tsukishima answered shortly.

Walking quickly to avoid further conversation, Tsukishima left the Great Hall. His frustrated frame of mind could only take him a few halls out of view before he stopped suddenly in realization.

Great, Tsukishima thought irritated. I didn’t even finish lunch. Now, what am I going to do with the rest of the day.

The library was closed for the next hour for lunch and, even if it was open, there was just something unappealing to Tsukishima to sit alone in a library on a sunny afternoon. Yamaguchi was, of course, busy with another vague excuse so he wouldn’t be able to ask him to do anything. Tsukishima fought back a scowl.

Voices sounded from down the hall, interrupting his annoyed meanderings. Tsukishima sighed before ducking into one of the nooks in the hall, hoping whoever was coming wouldn’t see him and drag him into any conversation or worse asked why he was standing randomly in the middle of
an empty hall.

“Daichi, Asahi!” a voice called urgently. Tsukishima heard another set of footsteps running down the hall to catch up to the others. Tsukishima narrowed his eyes. That voice sounded familiar.

“Hey, Noya,” a soft voice answered. “You want to come down to the lake with us? The Giant Squid’s out today.”

“Wait, what? Really?! Yeah, that sounds awesome! I’ll go grab—wait, no, there was something I needed to tell you.” The voice paused and started speaking in a quieter voice. Tsukishima strained to listen. “Tanaka’s sister said she had to come a day early. We’ve got to go through with the plan tonight.”

“Tonight?!” The previous voice squeaked.

“Yeah, I already talked to Ennoshita and Tanaka and they’re good to go,” the other voice answered.

“Are we sure Yamaguchi is going to be there,” a new voice asked. Tsukishima narrowed his eyes. Yamaguchi would be there for what?

“I haven’t asked him yet. But, yeah, we should be able to convince him.” The first voice answered.

“Good, then the rest of us will meet in the common room at midnight and head for the tower. Yamaguchi can go early to be a lookout,” the voice responded in a firm tone.

“Cool, are you or Asahi going to have any trouble with your dorm mates?”

“We shouldn’t,” the softer voice answered. “Kamasaki always goes to bed early. And Iwaizumi is pretty much only in the dorm when he needs to sleep.”

“Great, then we’ll just need to figure out how to get Yamaguchi out,” the other voice said. “I’ll go talk to him when I grab Tanaka. I can’t believe the squid’s actually out this early! This is going to be awesome! He might not have even finished his molting.”

Tsukishima heard the sound of footsteps running back down the hall.

“He’s not going to try to jump in the lake again, is he,” the softer voice asked.

“It’s Noya,” the other voice responded with soft exasperation. “Of course, he is.”

Two pairs of footsteps continued down the hall, passing Tsukishima’s hiding spot without noticing him.

After he was fairly sure that the hallway had cleared, Tsukishima slipped out from his hiding place. A smirk crossed his face. He had a plan forming that was going to make the Gryffindors regret ever trying to mess with Yamaguchi. Tsukishima felt intensely grateful that he had decided to storm out in the middle of lunch.

He scowled suddenly. Ugh, now, he was feeling grateful to Lev.

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Bokuto bounded down the stairs into the Hufflepuff common room. The room was lit with the soft warm glow of the afternoon sun, bringing out the golden amber tones in the dark chestnut furniture.

The common room was empty except for two first years lying listlessly on one of the large comfy couches that sat across from the unlit fireplace.

“What are you two still doing inside,” Bokuto asked, his booming voice doing nothing for the melancholy that hung over the pair.

“We’re meeting Yachi later,” Kageyama told him, tilting his head only the requisite amount to meet Bokuto’s eyes. “But, until then…”

“Quidditch is over,” said Hinata in a soft sorrowful tone that one would usually reserve for despaired proclamations over the meaninglessness of life. “And Professor Oiwake closed the field for the day. We don’t know what to do.”

Understanding the situation, Bokuto took a moment of silence to commemorate the end of another Quidditch season. After the moment of solemn respect had passed, he looked back down at the two first years. “You can always go down to the lake like everybody else. No use staying inside.”

Hinata perked up a little at something to do. Kageyama also sat up with a little more energy.

“We can always go back to the…” Kageyama shook his head, cutting off whatever he was going to say.

“No, no, we shouldn’t do that.” he said, seemingly more to himself than the other two. “Yeah, the lake sounds good. We’ll ask Yachi if she wants to meet out there.”

Hinata shot Kageyama a smile.

“Awesome,” Bokuto told them happily. “I’m going down there with Akaashi in a bit. I’ll see you down there later.”

“Have fun, Captain,” Hinata shouted after him as he headed for the door.

Bokuto turned down the corridor and bounded down the hall with the kind of careless excited energy that defined his very nature.

Though he would never mention it to anyone else, Bokuto was looking forward to having an actual relaxing day, where he might not have to worry about crazy evil professors driving people insane. He shot another slightly glance back at the common room door, where inside the two first years laid. He wondered what it would be like to have a relaxing school year like them. Ah well, at least, Bokuto was never bored!

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“Don’t worry, Kageyama, I’m sure Yachi will have figured out a way to get rid of the compulsion,” Hinata turned to him once Bokuto had left.

Kageyama gave a noncommittal grunt before letting out a frustrated sigh. “I think it might be
getting worse. It’s constant now. Like a...bug in my brain or something. I just keep thinking about bringing you guys back there.”

He ran his hand through his hair in a quick jerky movement.

Hinata sent him a commiserating look. “Come on, let’s go meet Yachi. She’s probably done with her research now.”

Kageyama gave a quick nod and stood up, going for the door. Moving helped distract him some from that little niggling voice in the back of his head.

“Maybe going outside would help,” Hinata chartered happily from beside him. Kageyama shrugged noncommittally, wondering if anything could really hurt right now. It felt like his head as going to spontaneously combust if he crammed one more thought into it.

The two headed for Gryffindor tower where Yachi was indeed tapping her foot with nervous kind of energy.

She rushed over to them the moment they came into view.

“I think I figured it out,” she told them excitedly. “Or, well, I think I found a few options that might work. But, we need to find somewhere where no one will notice.”

Hinata thought for a second while Kageyama shifted restlessly beside them.

“We could go to back to the abandoned classroom,” Hinata suggested.

Yachi shook her head. “I thought of that already. Too much chance of getting caught. We need somewhere where we’ll notice if someone is coming.”

Kageyama shrugged. “The Astronomy tower?”

Yachi bit her lip. “I don’t know, Kageyama, that’s awfully close to the hidden room.”

Kageyama frowned, he felt like he should have thought of that first. He had the odd feeling that he had actually thought of that and that’s why he subconsciously chose it. He frowned. He hated not being in control of his thoughts.

“What if we went to the tower on the other side of the castle--the Runes tower. No one should be up there today and if anyone comes up, we’ll hear them open the hatch,” Hinata explained.

Yachi bit her lip before nodding in agreement. “I think that might work.”

The three headed left for the highest tower in Hogwarts. Hogwarts had seven towers on campus: the Ravenclaw, Gryffindor, Astronomy, Otwlery, the Headmaster’s Office, Divination, and Ancient Runes. Despite being the highest tower, the Runes tower was also the narrowest tower meaning it was normally the last choice for students interested in stargazing. The way up was through a narrow staircase that winded up into a hall with a single room chamber, the Ancient Runes classroom. Most students stopped there, but if you continued following the staircase it led to a latch that opened onto a flat circular platform covered by the pointy roof of the tower. It had a great view of the Quidditch field, which was why Bokuto had taken Hinata and Kageyama up there during their first week of practice.

Though it was only wide enough to fit maybe ten people sitting comfortably, Kageyama had a secret love of the tower, that he suspected Hinata shared. With the wind whipping through his hair,
it felt almost like flying.

The three made their way up the winding staircase and to the latch. Yachi reached for it but Hinata stopped her.

“Wait, let me, when Bokuto took me and Kageyama, there were a lot of bats up there,” Hinata told her.

Yachi widened her eyes and nodded. Hinata gave a few solid whacks at the latch and the three heard the flutter of rings and high pitched calls. They waited for a second before Hinata heaved open the latch.

The three climbed up and looked around. Kageyama saw that only a few bats had decided to stay and were ignoring them, dozing in the final hour or so before night set in.

The three sat in the center of the room, wind whipping through their hair.

“It’s amazing up here,” Yachi said, taking a final look around before sitting. You can see the entire campus.”

Hinata nodded happily. “Isn’t this place awesome!”

“What did you find,” Kageyama interrupted, looking toward Yachi. Even on the tower, he felt restless.

Yachi nodded, getting to business. “Right, so I went to the library and found a few books in the medical section. I know three basic reversal charms for compulsions but, um, I’m not sure which of them will work.”

“Why don’t we try them all,” Hinata asked, echoing Kageyama’s thoughts.

Yachi bit her lip. “That’s what I thought, but...one of them’s the most effective but if it’s not the right one, it’ll make the compulsion worse.”

Kageyama really didn’t want the compulsion to get worse, but....he also really really wanted it gone.

“If that one’s the most effective, then try it first,” Kageyama told her.

“Are you sure,” Yachi asked nervously, pulling out a page of notes from her bag.

Kageyama gave her a firm nod.

Yachi took a deep breath and reached for Kageyama’s hand. He gave it to her.

When Yachi unwrapped the bandage, the three saw that the black color had spread from along the cut and was now covering Kageyama’s entire palm.

Yachi held out her wand. “Cogentibus Abiciant Transuerso”

The black mark started pulsing strangely before it paused. Suddenly, it started growing exponentially reaching up to cover Kageyama’s fingers.

Kageyama jolted and grabbed both Yachi and Hinata.

“Come on,” he told them harshly. “We need to figure out the message now.”
Kageyama felt like his brain was going to burst. He wasn’t even quite sure what was going on outside of his head, the only thing he could think of was them at the wall. The message rang out over and over again in his head, gonging like a church bell.

“Petrificus Totalus”

Kageyama felt his body freeze suddenly, but his mind still desperately thought about the wall. A brief fleeting thought in the back of his head wondered if he was going insane, but it was quickly drowned out by the repeating message.

“Yachi, quick, try the next one!”

“I’m working on it, but the wand motions are tricky.”

“Hurry!”

“Summ Animo !”

Kageyama’s mind stopped. All thoughts seemed to immediately halt, leaving Kageyama mindlessly staring out from the tower.

“Unfreeze him, Hinata. We need to see if it worked.”

“Right.” Kageyama heard Hinata mutter the counter curse and he felt his body suddenly relax.

He turned his head, looking away from the latch, and saw that he still had a death grip on each of Hinata and Yachi’s arms. Hinata had pulled out his wand with the other hand and was watching him warily, waiting to cast the spell again. Yachi similarly had her wand out, holding both it and her crumpled notes in one hand.

With a conscious effort, he let go of both of their hands.

“Sorry,” he muttered.

Yachi waved him off and rubbed her wrist. “How do you feel?”

Kageyama thought for a second, running an internal evaluation of his thought process. “Better...I think?”

“Do you want to go back to the wall,” Hinata piped in.

Kageyama immediately felt a revulsion sweep over him and violently shook his head. “No. Never.”

Hinata looked at Yachi with a smile. “It worked!”

Yachi smiled back relieved. “Good, I didn’t know how we were going to stop you if the third one failed.”

Kageyama slowly let out a breath and let the relief wash over him. He didn’t think he had consciously realized exactly how much the compulsion was pressing on him and warping his thoughts until it was gone.

“Of course,” Yachi said, wincing slightly. “We probably will need to go back to the wall one more time.”

Kageyama felt a cold animalistic terror wash over him.

“To make sure the compulsion is really gone,” Yachi answered logically, though she didn’t look to thrilled with the thought either. “We won’t know until we put it to the final test.”

“Ugh, we don’t have to go tonight, do we,” Hinata complained.

Yachi thought for a second before shaking her head. “No, we can definitely wait.”

Sitting back down, Kageyama supposed that was slightly better. He still really didn’t want to go back to the stupid wall, but he guessed he could handle it one more time as long as it was quick to make bloody sure the compulsion was gone.

Yachi sat back beside him and Hinata joined him on the other side. He looked out to see the sun setting over the mountains, reflecting off the lake.

Yachi hummed. “You know it really is beautiful up here.”

Kageyama gave a slight nod and the three, plus a few lingering bats, sat on the tower and watched the sun set over Hogwarts.

---

It was almost midnight and Yamaguchi sat nervously in the dark, looking out from the Astronomy tower. It was a new moon so barely any light shown from the sky and only small floating lanterns lit the large field that bridged the Astronomy tower from the other main part of the castle.

Yamaguchi checked his watch again. Ten minutes to midnight, the prefects were probably heading back to report to the professor on duty right now. Sneaking over from the Gryffindor tower to the Astronomy’s was one of the most nerve wracking experiences of Yamaguchi’s life—only tied with pretty much every other moment since the dragon egg entered his life.

He took a breath. He could do this. He could help his friends and help Rolling Thunder be carried to a dragon preserve she’d enjoy. The only thing he had to do was watch the connecting field and give the rest of the waiting group a signal when it was clear.

As if reading his thoughts, He saw the telltale white light of a *Lumos* charm from the other side of the field. If Yamaguchi hadn’t been expecting it, the small singular white burst could’ve been mistaken for another one of the lanterns or a reflection.

This was it. Yamaguchi looked carefully out over the field, making sure there was no waiting professors or prefects.

“*Lumos*” he whispered, lighting his wand in two quick bursts—the signal that all was clear to go.

Watching over the field, he saw the other five sprint across the field and into the Astronomy stairwell, a basket slung over the shortest figure’s arm.
Yamaguchi sagged in relief. They made it. Now, they only needed to get up the unguarded stairwell and meet Yamaguchi at the top of the tower and they’d be able to wait for Tanaka’s sister.

Yamaguchi sat heavily down on the stone rooftop and looked up into the stars.

“So, Yamaguchi,” a familiar voice rang out, causing Yamaguchi to jump. He looked panickedly behind him and saw Tsukishima casually leaning by the entrance to the tower. “You finally ready to tell me what you’ve been up to?”

“Tsuki!” Yamaguchi squeaked. “What are you doing up here?”

“Stargazing,” Tsukishima answered sarcastically, stalking to his friend. “What do you think? I overheard your ‘friends’ talking about whatever plan they cooked up and followed you up here.”

He grabbed Yamaguchi’s arm and pulled him up, somewhat harshly. “I think the better question, Yamaguchi, is exactly what are you thinking?”

“I…” Yamaguchi started and petered off unsure of what to say.

“I don’t know how they bullied you into this,” Tsukishima began.

“Bullied?!?” Yamaguchi interrupted, surprised but Tsukishima's words rolled right over his.

“But whatever plan they got you involved in is only going to get you in trouble.” Tsukishima finished, pulling Yamaguchi to the door.

“Tsuki, wait, it’s not what you think. They’re my friends,” Yamaguchi said, frantic to make the taller boy understand.

Tsukishima shook his head angrily. “I’m sure they made you think that, Tadashi. But friends don’t just use people as lookouts to get them in trouble. Don’t worry though, they’ll get what’s coming to them.”

Yamaguchi stopped short, consequently stopping Tsukishima who was still trying to drag him.

“Wait, Tsukishima. What are you talking about?” Yamaguchi asked, a note of true fear creeping into his voice. “What did you do?”

Tsukishima scoffed. “I made sure they’re not going to bother you anymore. I sent a note to the professors telling them some students were planning to sneak out to the Astronomy tower tonight. That’s why we need to go, right now.”

Tsukishima tried to pull him again, but Yamaguchi yanked his arm again.

He shook his head slowly. This was bad. This was so bad. “No, oh no, Oh, Tsuki, you have no idea what you’ve done.”

Tsukishima gave another uff. “Yes, I’m sure that whatever prank they were planning is very important, but--”

“It’s not a prank,” Yamaguchi told him, shaking his head. “Oh my gosh, you really have no idea what’s going on here.”

Tsukishima narrowed his eyes.
“Fine,” he said with a prickly kind of slowness. “Then I’m sure you can tell me all about it, after we get down from this tower so we don’t get caught with them.”

Yamaguchi shook his head with a determined edge. “I’m not leaving. They need me here. I’m part of this.”

“Part of what,” Tsukishima yelled, finally reaching his limit. “Part of lying to me for most of a year, part of looking on the verge of a panic attack most of the time, part of making crap excuses, part of suddenly becoming friends with a House that you told me terrified you. Tell me, Yamaguchi, exactly what are you part of!”

“Part of them,” Yamaguchi yelled back. “I’m their friend and they need me. If anyone understood, I thought it would be you.”

“Well, I don’t,” Tsukishima shouted back, just as the door to the tower burst open.

The other five Gryffindors rushed onto the tower, Noya carrying the basket in the back.

“Hey, Yamaguchi, is Saeko here yet,” Noya asked, before looking up at the scene. “Um, Yamaguchi, this wasn’t exactly an invite the friends kind of thing.”

Yamaguchi hurried over to them.

“Saeko needs to be here like now,” Yamaguchi told them urgently. “The professors found out”


Yamaguchi waved him off. “Tsuki told them. He thought you guys were bullying me and helping me set up a prank, so he was trying to save me.”

“Bullying?” Asahi squeaked confused. “Why did he think you were being bullied, are you okay?”

“I’m fine,” Yamaguchi reassured him. “It was just a misunderstanding.” He shot a look at Tsukishima, who still stood glaring at the side. “Tanaka, where is your sister? We don’t have much time!”

“Right there!” Tanaka called, leaning over the side of the roof and pointing to three back dots in the sky.

The three dots got closer until Yamaguchi could finally make out three people riding broomsticks, quickly closing in on the tower.

“What’s--what’s going on,” Tsukishima asked hesitantly, the anger slowly making way for honest confusion.

Yamaguchi shook his head. “I’ll tell you later.”

The three broomstick riders landed on the roof.

“Bro,” A blonde woman who looked eerily like Tanaka hopped off her broom and grabbed Tanaka in a fierce looking hug that was closer to a head lock. “You didn’t have to get me a late Christmas gift. The fire proof gloves were enough.”

“Saeko,” Noya called happily, and the woman let her brother go to bound over to Noya.

“Is this the little beauty,” she said, pointing to the basket. Noya nodded.
“We don’t have much time,” Daichi told her. “The professors are on their way. You need to get out of here.”

Saeko peeked back the blanket and Yamaguchi saw Rolling Thunder dozing soundly beneath.

He heard Tsukishima take a surprised breath to his side. “Is that--is that a dragon?”

Yamaguchi met his eyes and gave him a brief nod. “Noya and Tanaka rescued it. We’re trying to send it to a preserve.”

Noya was saying a short, and unless Yamaguchi was mistaken, tearful goodbye to Rolling Thunder before one of Saeko’s companions gently took the basket from them.

“Bye, Sis,” Tanaka called out as Noya waved frantically.

“Thank you,” Ennoshita told her sincerely.

“Any time,” she winked, dismounting from the roof. “Just try not to get caught next time.”

Tanaka gave a fond eye roll as the three riders flew off from the roof, plus one dragon filled basket. Yamaguchi watched anxiously as the three once again became specks in the distance.

Tsukishima cleared his throat from beside him. “I-I am willing to admit that I might not have known everything that was going on here.”

Yamaguchi opened his mouth to respond, but was interrupted by a door slamming open and a furious Professor Ukai walking onto the roof.

He glared at the assembled group. “All of you, my office. Right Now!”

Not daring to say a word, the group followed the irate teacher down from the tower and across the castle to his office. Once there, the seven filed in while Professor Ukai glowered at them from the other side of the desk.

“So,” he began slowly. “Exactly, which one of you wants to tell me what you seven were thinking sneaking up to the Astronomy tower at midnight?”

“Ummmm,” Noya and Tanaka started in sync, but Daichi discreetly kicked them before they could say anything.

“Um,” Yamaguchi started, shooting a nervous glance at Tsukishima. An idea formed.

“It was a prank,” Yamaguchi answered in a slightly sheepish voice.

“A prank,” His Head of House repeated with a heavy amount of skepticism.

Ennoshita nodded to Yamaguchi’s side. “More like a dare, we wanted to see if we could sneak up to the Astronomy tower without getting caught.” He gave a slightly chagrined look. “Obviously, we failed.”

“Huh-uh,” Professor Ukai said, still sounding unconvinced. Idly, he scratched his chin. “So, the seven of you decided to sneak out in the middle of the night to see if you could get to the Astronomy tower? The seven of you? Six Gryffindors and...a first year Slytherin?”

His gaze swept passed all of them, who stood silently.
He reached into his desk and pulled out a piece of paper.

“I’m sure that also explains this note I got tipping me off about your little ‘dare’.”

The six Gryffindors looked at each other, silently gauging if anyone knew how they were going to talk their way out of this.

“I sent the letter,” Tsukishima said suddenly.

Yamaguchi looked panickedly at his friend. Tsukishima wasn’t going to tell was he? He knew he was mad at him, but he had to know Yamaguchi had a reason, right?

Tsukishima returned his look with a blank expression.

Yamaguchi dropped his gaze and felt his heart sink.

Tsukishima cleared his throat. “I was hoping to get the other Gryffindors in trouble, but didn’t expect to get caught, too.”

*So, this was how it ends*, Yamaguchi thought desperately without any way to stop Tsukishima.

Tsukishima took a deep breath. “I’m the one that dared them they couldn’t sneak out onto the tower.”

*Wait, what?* Yamaguchi looked up again, glancing again at Tsukishima’s expression.

The same careful blank mask was still in place, not giving away the tall boy’s thoughts.

“You dared them to sneak out and then reported them,” Professor Ukai asked for confirmation.

Tsukishima nodded.

“And they, what, just my Gryffindors just accepted a dare from a first year member of their biggest opponent?”

Tsukishima shrugged. “Well, they are Gryffindors, sir.”

Professor Ukai held Tsukishima’s gaze for a second before sighing. “Oi, you know this means you all have detention, right?”

The seven of them nodded, trying to hide their relief at not getting caught.

Professor Ukai must have sensed something because he glared at them. “In the Forbidden Forest.”

“The Forbidden Forest,” Asahi asked in a high pitched voice.

Professor Ukai sent him a dark look that had the third year instantly snapping his mouth shut.

“Yes, in the Forbidden Forest. Next Saturday.”

He looked at Tsukishima. “Hopefully, this will teach you not to give stupid dares and waste teachers’ time.”

“Yes, sir,” Tsukishima agreed, lowering his gaze and looking the right amount of respectful.

“And hopefully, this will teach the rest of you,” he continued, looking at the Gryffindors, “not to accept stupid dares, especially the third years who should know better by now.”
Asahi and Daichi both nodded seriously, looking abashed.

“Now,” Professor Ukai said, leaning back and rubbing a hand to his face. “I’m going to walk all of you back to your dorms. If I hear even a peep from any of you, all of you will have double detention.”

Professor Ukai walked around them and led them out the room.

“Oh, I almost forgot ten House point lose for each of you.”

“Sir,” Tanaka argued. “Please, that’s sixty points. The House is going to kill us.”

Professor Ukai glared at him until Tanaka fell silent with an audible gulp.

The group of Gryffindors and Slytherin followed Professor Ukai as he led them down to the Slytherin dungeons. Yamaguchi desperately tried to catch Tsukishima’s eye but the blonde was consciously avoiding him.

Before Tsukishima disappeared in the Slytherin entrance, Yamaguchi opened his mouth to say...something but quickly closed it under Professor Ukai’s watchful eye.

With his thoughts scattered and conflicting, Yamaguchi followed his Head of the House as he walked them back to the Gryffindor dorms. Tsukishima still lied for them. That had to be a good sign….Right?

Chapter End Notes

I'm back! Thank you for all the kind comments I got on the last chapters. Seeing comments always makes my day and gives me so much support to keep writing, so thank you to everyone. Next chapter will be posted next Monday (only one that week, after that I should be back to my normal schedule). As always, thanks for reading and hope you enjoyed!

Next Chapter: Old and New Friends
“Shouyou?” Hinata heard as he sat staring out the window to the Quidditch Pitch. The sun was still barely in the sky as Professor Oiwake was still out working to maintain the field following the Quidditch season.

“What? Huh?” Hinata said, looking away from the window.

Kenma stood opposite him, giving a concerned expression.

“Hey,” Hinata greeted happily. “What are you doing here? Are you looking to see when the field will open, too?”

Kenma shook his head immediately. “No. I had assumed that with the field closed, his would be a quiet place to read.” He tilted his head. “Are you okay, Shouyou? I called your name a few times before you answered.”

Hinata frowned slightly. He had the uncomfortable realization that he’d been thinking about the secret room again.

A worrying thought struck him.

“Hey, Kenma, what do you know about compulsions?”

If anything, the Ravenclaw boy looked more worried now.

“Not a lot,” he answered cautiously. “I know they generally get stronger the longer a person is under one. There’s also generally a mark that appears on one’s body, usually where the charm took effect. That’s the most obvious sign. People, under compulsions, generally have trouble sleeping or doing other tasks for a long period of time without thinking about the compulsion. Why do you want to know, Shouyou? You don’t do think you’re under a compulsion, do you?”

Hinata ran the symptoms through his head. He hadn’t seen any mark on his body and he definitely didn’t have trouble sleeping. Really, he’d only been thinking about the message since this morning. And that was more because he couldn’t quite figure out why, but something was bugging him about it.

Kenma still looked worried at Hinata’s lack of response.

“Oh, sorry,” Hinata said, sheepishly. “Nah, I don’t think I’m under a compulsion.”

“Do you have anything on your mind,” Kenma pressed.

“Hmmm, not really,” Hinata answered, swinging his legs aimlessly. “Why do you?”

Kenma shook his head, still looking vaguely confused.

“Good,” Hinata replied. “Oh, hey, I was reading this Quidditch book the other day and I gotta tell you about this new play I found…”

Hinata continued on, discussing various Quidditch moves--all with accompanying sound effects--
and not noticing the puzzled look on his Ravenclaw friend’s face.

---

Yamaguchi had already spent the better part of his Sunday trying to spot Tsukishima. His first plan was to catch him at breakfast and try to talk to him. But from a brief, and mildly terrifying talk with Tsukishima’s dormmate Kuguri, he had learned that Tsukishima had apparently forgone breakfast to stay in his room.

Yamaguchi wasn’t stupid. He knew Tsukishima was avoiding him.

And the worse part was, he didn’t blame him. He had lied to his friend for the better part of a year, ditched him for plans, and now gotten him in detention with a point loss. Yamaguchi understood completely why Tsukishima was mad at him. He just...wanted to talk to him still. To apologize, to give him a full explanation, to...to make sure they were still friends.

He looked down at the table, blinking rapidly to forestall tears. He really hoped they were still friends.

Yamaguchi had decided that if breakfast didn’t work, then Tsukishima would at least come down for lunch. Therefore, he was going to sit and wait in the Great Hall until he did. The rest of his Gryffindor friends had already come to check on him sporadically with Ennoshita, Asahi, and Daichi eating breakfast with him and Noya and Tanaka coming down for brunch.

Currently, Yamaguchi was sitting in the weird time frame where it was too late for breakfast and too early for lunch. The Great Hall was basically empty except a few students working on their homework.

A movement by the entrance drew his attention. He looked up and saw Tsukishima making a beeline for some left over food at the end of the Slytherin table.

He stood up and ran, trying to catch up to the taller Slytherin.

Tsukishima obviously spotted him because he growled and abandoned the food in favor of a few bread rolls.

“Tsuki, wait,” Yamaguchi called, maneuvering around the tables to catch up.

“No,” Tsukishima called back, already walking back to the exit.

“Come on, please! I just want to talk,” Yamaguchi pleaded, still a few meters away.

Tsukishima looked back, a pinched expression on his face.

He met Yamaguchi’s eyes and Yamaguchi paused in his struggle forward.

“Not now, Tadashi,” he told him firmly.

Yamaguchi bit his lip. Tsukishima only used his first name when it was really serious.

“When,” Yamaguchi asked, pressing his luck.
Tsukishima sighed, thinking. “After dinner. I’ll talk to you after dinner.”

Yamaguchi nodded. That was at least a definite time frame. “...Okay.”

Tsukishima gave a brief nod and continued his fast pace, disappearing down the hall.

Yamaguchi went back to the table and sat morosely. That conversation definitely could have gone better.. He grabbed a muffin off the table, more to fiddle with than to eat.

At least, Tsukishima still agreed to talk to him.

---

“Hurry up, Bo, I want to grab lunch before the Quidditch pitch reopens,” Kuroo said, waiting outside of the Hufflepuff common room entrance for Bokuto.

Bokuto yawned, following his friend.

“How did you just wake up,” Kuroo asked in amazement. “It’s nearly noon.”

“Me, Sasaya, and Washio got in an intense game of Exploding Snaps last night in the dorms,” Bokuto told him, stretching his arm across his chest. “We couldn’t just stop.”

“How late were you up?”

Bokuto paused, thinking. “I don’t know, I remember watching the sunrise but I’m pretty sure I passed out after that.”

Kuroo shook his head but didn’t comment.

“How crowded do you think the pitch will be,” Bokuto asked as the two headed for the Great Hall.

“I don’t know. Professor Oiwake said that he’d open it back up around one so if we’re the first one’s there, it shouldn’t be too bad.”

“Awesome,” Bokuto enthused before frowning. “Ugh, I forgot I still need to finish my Divination essay.”

“How is that class,” Kuroo asked with half skepticism and half open curiosity.

“Great!” Bokuto replied. “Professor Onikobe gave me an E on my last assignment

“Seriously,” said Kuroo. “Um, how? I mean that’s great!”

Bokuto nodded happily. “Yep, his exact words were ‘well, this doesn’t seem entirely like troll spit, so maybe there’s still hope’”
“Huh, maybe you do have an inner eye,” Kuroo said, still with a rather large note of disbelief. “Come on, then, tell me my future, oh great prophet.”

Bokuto stuck out his tongue before making an exaggerated gesture, templeing one hand on the center of his forehead and stretching out his other hand as if reaching for the great beyond.

“I see,” he started off in a low, strained sounding voice.

“Don’t hurt yourself,” Kuroo rolled his eyes.

Bokuto ignored him. “I see a...butterfly.”

“A butterfly? That’s what you’re going with?”

Bokuto shushed him, but Kuroo noticed him hiding a smile. The two had both stopped at a corner to listen to Bokuto’s “prediction”.

“Yeah,” he said, closing his eyes. “A butterfly...and....um, a wolf...yeah, a wolf. That sounds sufficiently predictiony like.”

“Shouldn’t you know what’s ‘predictiony like’ if it’s your prediction,” Kuroo asked flatly. “Come on, then, what exactly am I doing with the butterfly and the wolf?” Kuroo encouraged.

“Oh, you know, just chillin’” Bokuto added lightly.

Kuroo gave a bark of a laugh. “Of course, makes perfect sense. Just hanging out with wild animals as you do.”

“Fine, fine,” Bokuto said, now full out grinning. “You’re talking to them.”

“Oh, they can talk now.”

Bokuto stuck his tongue out again, aiming with his eyes closed for the vague direction of Kuroo. “Yeah, they can talk now. It’s a prediction. Everything talks. So now, you gotta choose between them.”

“I think I’ll go with the--,” Kuroo cut off as he noticed something down the hall.

“Bro, stop,” he whispered.

“No, wait,” Bokuto said, smiling. “I’m almost to the good stuff. You gotta chose--”

“Bo, no, I’m serious, shut up,” Kuroo said, pulling his friend against the wall.

Bokuto opened his eyes in surprise. “What--” Kuroo slapped a hand over his mouth and pointed.

Bokuto followed his gaze. Professor Sora was turning another corner on the intersection they were about to turn on to. The professor looked annoyed and was walking fast down the hall, frowning. The two stayed silent as they watched him turn on another hall, opposite the way to the Great Hall.

“Where do you think he’s going,” whispered Bokuto once Sora had gotten far enough away

Kuroo shook his head. “I don’t know, but it’s not his office or the Great Hall. You know what that means?”

“Um, he’s skipping lunch,” Bokuto asked.
Kuroo smirked. “It means no one’s in his office.”

Bokuto widened his eyes. “You think we should?”

Kuroo shrugged. “Might be our only chance.”

The two quickly and quietly slipped down the hall that Sora had just come from and in the direction of the Defense section of the castle, where Sora’s personal office and suite were located.

“Do you know which door is Sora’s office,” asked Bokuto as the two got down the hall.

Kuroo nodded. “Sora told me I was free to stop by after like the third class I ‘accidentally’ hexed Oikawa. It’s right down that hall.”

A bit down from the Defense classroom was a short hall, darker and lit by a few candles.

“Unless you’re a Head of House, they always put your office and personal rooms by the class you’re teaching,” explained Kuroo, pointing at the door at the end of the hall. “That’s why Professor Oiwake gets to live right by the Quidditch pitch.”

Kuroo bent over to point his wand at the door knob.

“Alohomora”

He twisted the door knob. It didn’t budge.

“Dang,” Bokuto whispered. “Of course, he has some fancy anti-lock charm. You know any others.”

Kuroo nodded, but kept fiddling with the knob. “Wait, a second, I think…”

Kuroo let go of the knob and gave the door a solid push. It swung in.

Bokuto gaped. “How did you open it without a spell.”

Kuroo sent him a toothy grin. “All the locking and security charms in the world, aren’t going to help if you don’t shut the door all the way.”

Bokuto stared. “You’ve got to be kidding me.”

Kuroo shrugged, walking in and easing the door shut behind Bokuto. “He must have been in some hurry.”

The office was...kind of a mess, honestly. Papers and books were scattered all across the desk with some piles stacked on the floor. Thick heavy curtains hung over the windows, blocking out any sun to the room. The only light came from a wrought iron chandelier, that hung from the ceiling and cast blocks of shadow across the space.

Kuroo walked to the desk and touched the reading candle sitting on top of it.

“The wax is still warm, he must have been reading something when he left.”

“What was he reading,” Bokuto asked, walking over to the bookshelves and scanning the titles.

“Looks like a bunch of history books on Hogwarts,” Kuroo said, flipping through the nearest stack. “Merlin, some of these have to be centuries old...Ugh,” he said, picking up a musty looking
journal. “I’m pretty sure this is made from some kind of skin.”

Bokuto scrunched up his face in disgust before pointing to the bookshelf. “Some of the books over here are seriously dark, come look.”

Kuroo came up beside him and let out a low whistle. “I recognize these from my father’s office at the Ministry. Some of these are banned books..”

“Enough to get Sora in trouble?”

Kuroo shook his head. “Not much more than a light slap on the list, he is a Defense teacher after all.” Kuroo frowned, a dark light playing behind his eyes. “Definitely a lot of books on mind magic though.”

Bokuto frowned and turned back to see a book on a small reading table. “Hey, Kuroo, this one has a note sticking out of it.”

Kuroo turned and glanced over his shoulder at the note. “It’s... just a list of parts of the castle?”

“Yeah,” Bokuto said confused. “Why would he need this? Look some parts have a check mark by them…. there’s a question mark by the first floor Potions lab. Isn’t that where that hall collapsed?”

Kuroo raided an eyebrow. He pulled out a quill and some folded paper from his pocket. “I’m gonna copy it down.”

He just touched the quill to paper when the two heard the door knob rattle.

Bokuto met Kuroo eyes with a panicked expression.

Silently and frantically, Kuroo gestured at the curtains by the window. Hearing Sora intone the unlocking spells outside, the two rushed to the side and slipped behind the curtains.

Just after the curtains settled over them, Kuroo heard the door open.

“Goblin cursed pranksters,” Kuroo heard Sora mutter darkly, followed by heavy steps across the room. “We’ll see how they like their next Defense lesson. Ought to teach them the Unforgivables, if the old coot of a Headmaster would let me, that would show them the type of wizards not to mess with, them and the mudbloods.”

Sora broke off into more unintelligible muttering, apparently sitting at his desk.

Bokuto looked over and met Kuroo’s eyes before shooting a pointed glance at his watch.

Kuroo shook his head, careful not to make much movement. He didn’t know when Sora would leave.

Carefully tilting his head so as not to make the fabric rustle, Kuroo tried to see in between the curtains.

Sora looked to be sitting at his desk, angrily flipping through one one of the many books. He paused one a page and lifted the book up to read closer. Kuroo squinted, trying to make out the cover.

Before he could read it, Sora threw the book back on the desk.

“And, of course, more vague mentions, but no one knows where it bloody well is!”
Sora scrubbed a hand over his face and grabbed a nearby quill. He pushed off from his desk and got up to walk to the other side of his office.

He passed by the curtain, so close his shoulder brushed. Kuroo tensed in anticipation.

Sora continued walking and grabbed the list that Bokuto had pointed out earlier. He frowned and looked back down at the book.

*Shit,* Kuroo thought frantically, they forgot to put it back in the book. He definitely noticed

Sora frowned down at the book for another second before slowly going back to his desk. Kuroo watched as Sora scanned the room, apparently trying to spot anything else out of place.

Kuroo felt his heart thump painfully until Sora eventually stopped and looked back down at the sheet. He picked up the quill again and moved it to write on the list.

As soon as he moved to write, The feather of the quill transfigured into a small horn and blew out ink onto Sora’s face.

Sora stood up, the parts of his face visible through the black ink were a dark angry red.

“THOSE BLOODY PRANKSTERS!”

Sora stomped to the door, swinging it open. He charged out of it, slamming it shut with a loud bang.

Bokuto and Kuroo waited a few seconds before looking at each other. Cautiously, they came out from behind the curtains.

“Do you think he’s gone,” Bokuto asked.

“...I think so,” answered Kuroo. The two gently eased to the door, slowly pulling it open and checking for Sora. When they didn’t see him, they quickly and quietly eased out and into the now deserted hallway. The two continued walking, trying hard not to look suspicious.

“Oh my gosh,” said Bokuto, holding his chest, once they had gotten far enough away that they felt they could talk. “I thought my heart was going to explode.”

Kuroo nodded wholeheartedly. “We’re going to owe Maki and Matsu the *biggest* and most secretive thank you ever.”
Yamaguchi shot another glance at the Slytherin table, where Tsukishima continued to eat what had to be the slowest dinner in the entire history of dining.

“You know staring him down is probably not going to make him eat any faster,” Ennoshita commented to his side.

Yamaguchi grimaced but acknowledged his point, turning from his near constant monitoring of the Slytherin table and back to his half eaten Cornish beef.

“Besides, we’ll be checking for him, too,” Noya reassured him from across the table. “We’ll tell you the moment he gets up.”

“Yes, all of us starring. That’ll be sure to help,” Ennoshita added sarcastically.

Tanaka ignored Ennoshita. “It’s the least we can do since we’re the ones who got you involved in this.”

“Plus, it was really cool of your friend not to rat us out,” Noya frowned. “Well, you know, rat us out again.”

Yamaguchi nodded glumly.

“I’m sure it will be alright, Yamaguchi,” Asahi told him in a blatant attempt at comforting. “Once you talk to him and tell him your side, I’m sure he’ll understand.”

Yamaguchi shrugged. “Tsukishima’s never really been mad at me before. And he’s definitely never avoided me.”

“Don’t stress out too much until you know what’s going to happen,” Daichi reassured him. “All you’ll do is worry yourself twice.”

Yamaguchi sighed, but nodded.

“ALERT! ALERT! The Slytherin is on the move,” Noya called out, slamming his hand on the table.

Yamaguchi darted his head up in time to see Tsukishima stand up from the Slytherin table. His friend met his gaze and, after a moment, inclined his head towards the exit. Yamaguchi nodded, grabbing his stuff.

“Don’t worry, Yamaguchi,” Noya called after him. “We’re here for you when you get back. We’ll even sneak you some Butterbeer if you need!”

“Not that we’re not sure it’ll go well,” Asahi corrected.

Yamaguchi nodded absentmindedly, already halfway to the door. Trying to calm the rush of his heartbeat, he slipped out.

Tsukishima waited for him just outside.

The two friends stared at each other.

“Come on,” Tsukishima eventually said in a brisk somewhat cold voice. “There’s some benches down the hall where we can talk.”

Yamaguchi nodded and Tsukishima led the way down another hall and to, as he had said, two sets
of benches that were arranged in a small alcove off of the main halls.

Yamaguchi gingerly took the bench opposite from the one Tsukishima dropped his stuff into. They were the only two around.

An awkward silence fell.

Tsukishima stared at Yamaguchi while the Gryffindor boy fidgeted under the tension.

Finally, Tsukishima gave an irritated huff. “Fine. I suppose you’re waiting for me to go first.”

“Um, no,” Yamaguchi said, trying to keep from annoying Tsukishima further. “I’ll go first.”

“Well, apparently not,” Tsukishima drawled. “So, I might as well start with the apology you’re clearly after. I’m sorry for--”

“No, no, it’s fine really I can--wait, what?” Yamaguchi cut off confused. “Why are you sorry?”

Tsukishima glared. “Really, I know you’re annoyed, but you don’t have to be condescending.” His glare became more pointed as Yamaguchi tried to interrupt again. Yamaguchi subsided and Tsukishima took a deep breath. “I’m sorry that I misunderstood the situation and that my mistakes got you and your...friends in detention.”

Yamaguchi gaped.

Tsukishima added a scowl to his glare. “Are you happy now? You got what you hunted me down for.”

“What, no,” Yamaguchi’s hands flew into motion, waving Tsukishima off. “I wanted to apologize to you. That’s why I’ve been trying to talk to you all day.”

It was Tsukishima’s turn to look puzzled. “Apologize for what?”

“For you know...” Yamaguchi made a vague hand gestured that proved useless when, judging by Tsukishima’s expression, he emphatically did not know. “For being such a bad friend all year. For lying to you, and ditching you, and getting you in detention.”

Tsukishima snorted. “Please, I’m the one who notified the professors. I got myself into detention.” He looked at Yamaguchi skeptically. “You really thought you were the one who needed to apologize?”

Yamaguchi nodded firmly, doing his best not to wither under Tsukishima’s inspecting gaze.

“But...it was me,” Tsukishima finally said, this time with honest confusion in his voice. “I was the one who assumed you were being bullied without asking you, I got you into detention, I almost messed up your entire plan.”

“But, I’m the one who lied,” Yamaguchi protested. “You were--you were just trying to look out for me.”

“But, you didn’t need me, too,” Tsukishima argued back, a touch of the familiar annoyance entering back. “You didn’t need me. You were fine.”

“But, you couldn’t have known that. I would never blame you for just trying to make sure I was okay,” concluded Yamaguchi, more used to Tsukishima’s annoyance. “You were just being my friend...my best friend.”
The two both stopped and looked at each other, each assessing and reassessing their own feelings on the subject.

Eventually, Tsukishima cleared his throat awkwardly. “Ugh, we sound like one of those self-help Hufflepuff books that Akiteru always loves. How about...how about we both made some minor mistakes and we just...forget about them and go back to how things were...no lying, no calling the the professors on each other?”

Yamaguchi felt a bright smile spread on his face. “Yeah, that sounds...really, really great, Tsuki.” he thought for a second. “Actually, you know what? How would you like to meet some of my new friends? They’re still waiting for me at the Gryffindor table.”

Tsukishima let out a sigh, that Yamaguchi thought was maybe only a tenth genuine. “I suppose I can manage.”

“I mean maybe you can’t,” Yamaguchi joked. “They are super scary Gryffindor bullies, known for beating up first years, after all.”

“Yamaguchi?”

“Yeah, Tsuki.”

“Shut up.”

“Sorry, Tsuki.”

The two reconnected friends walked back to the Great Hall and over to the Gryffindor table.

“Hey,” Noya’s voice boomed out, the first one to see them. “Seems like everything worked out!”

“Just like I knew it would,” Tanaka nodded sagely, dodging a roll thrown by Ennoshita.

Asahi gave a slight shy wave to Tsuki, who looked again momentarily confused, as if expecting something different from the resident gentle giant.

“It’s nice to meet you,” Daichi politely greeted him, drawing his attention. “Sorry, you got dragged into this.”

“What are you talking about,” asked Tanaka, pulling Tsukishima into a seat next to him.

“Yeah,” Noya said, slapping Tsukishima on the back. “Did you see how he talked to Oiwake? Tsuki’s one of us now!”

“Don’t call me that,” Tsuki glared, before processing the rest of the statement. “Wait, what are you--No, I’m not! I’m not even in your House.”

Tanaka shrugged, unconcerned. “We’ll make an exception.”

“Plus, you already eat practically all your meals with Yamaguchi anyway,” Noya added. “Now, you won’t have to swap between tables.”

“I called the professors on you,” Tsukishima stressed, looking half bewildered and half frustrated. “We all have detention now.”

Noya waved him aside. “Meh, Daichi and Ennoshita each tell on us at least twice a semester. It’s really not as special as you think.”
“Plus, you’re actually serving detention with us, so honestly you’re still ahead,” Tanaka agreed.

“But, I don’t want to be a part of your group,” Tsukishima argued.

Ennoshita shot him a commiserating look. “Yeah, neither did I.”

“I was terrified most of the time,” agreed Asahi, smiling.

“Sorry, Tsukishima,” said Daichi, fighting back an amused smile at Tsukishima’s exasperation. “It really doesn’t look like they’re giving you much of a choice. Welcome to the group.”

“One of us, one of us,” Tanaka started chanting to the side, joined by Noya.

“Stop that,” Tsukishima said, glaring. “But, I…”

“We’ll get to hang out so much more, Tsuki,” Yamaguchi enthused from his side.

Tsukishima shot him a look that heavily implied he saw clearly what Yamaguchi was trying to do. Yamaguchi shrugged, smiling.

“…Fine,” Tsukishima agreed, still looking at Yamaguchi. “I’ll be part of your little group.”

“WOOOT,” Noya cheered, throwing up his arms. “That’s awesome. Just imagine what all sorts of cool creatures we can find in the Forbidden Forest.”

“Merlin,” Asahi breathed, thinking about their upcoming detention.

“Wait, no, I changed my mind,” Tsukishima said, but was ignored.

Yamaguchi let out a surprised laugh and then another. Soon, he was bent over the table laughing desperately into his hands while Asahi tried to hand him some water and Daichi ordered Noya and Tanaka that under absolutely no circumstance were they allowed to bring anything back from the Forbidden Forest. Yamaguchi looked up and let out another giggle as he saw Tsukishima roll his eyes.

For the first time this entire school year, Yamaguchi had a feeling that everything was going to be just fine.

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“I promise, Kageyama. We just need to go here one more time and then, we’re never coming back again,” Yachi reassured him as the three yet again crept through the darkened Hogwarts Halls. “We just need to check that the compulsion is really off.”

Kageyama let out a fortifying sigh and nodded. Just one more time.

The three walked down the hall, hanging a left that would bring them to the hall of tapestries.

Kageyama shot a look at Hinata, who was walking silently beside him.
“What’s wrong with you,” Kageyama demanded, careful to keep his voice low.

Hinata looked up confused before an annoyed look crossed his face. He opened his mouth.

“No, not like that,” Kageyama cut him off frustrated. “You’ve been really quiet. What’s wrong?”

“Oh,” Hinata replied, expression clearing. “It’s nothing, just something’s bothering me about the wall and I can’t place it.”

Kageyama felt a shot of panic. “You’re not compelled, are you?”

Hinata shook his head quickly.”No, I’m pretty sure I’m not. I don’t feel like I really, really need to go back to the wall or anything like you did and I didn’t cut myself or anything. Something about it’s just bothering me about it, you know?”

Kageyama frowned and shook his head. Since the compulsion was lifted, Kageyama was doing everything in his power not to think about the wall.

“Guys, shh,” Yachi whispered. “I think I hear something.”

The three stopped right at the corner to the start of the tapestry hall. Yachi glanced around the corner.

“Someone’s there,” she told them, fear in her whispered voice. Kageyama frantically looked around for somewhere to hide while Hinata bent down to look around the corner.

Kageyama saw Hinata’s eyes widen.

“Guys, he found the hidden room!” he whispered.

“What!” Yachi whispered back.

“What!” Yachi whispered back.

Kageyama bent down next to Hinata and looked with him.

Sure enough, Kageyama saw a cloaked figure duck in behind the tapestry. The tapestry smoothed out behind him, covering what Kageyama knew was the hidden entrance.

“We need to get out of here, now,” Yachi ordered, keeping her voice low.

Kageyama was in complete agreement and three inched away from the corner before nearly running back to the Hufflepuff common room.

“Quick, get in,” Hinata told them, whispering the password for the entrance. “Yachi, we can take you back to the Gryffindor tower later.”

The trio quickly slid behind the barrels and into the Hufflepuff common room.

“Do you think they saw us,” Yachi asked panickedly, pacing the normally cheerful common room.

Hinata shook his head. “No, they definitely would’ve stopped us if they did.”

“I can’t believe that someone else found the room,” Yachi replied. In a sudden movement, she cut off her pacing and turned to Hinata and Kageyama. “Oh no, oh no no no no…”

“What is it,” Kageyama asked, walking over and trying to reassure Yachi.
“They won’t know about the compulsion,” Yachi told him, her voice growing higher in alarm. “They’re walking into a trap.”

Kageyama took a step back in surprise. He hadn’t--he hadn’t even thought of that.

“We have to warn them,” Hinata’s voice broke in, the smaller boy coming to stand beside him.

Yachi bit her lip. “But, how, we don’t know who it is?”

“We’ll have to go back,” Hinata told her, trepidation sinking into his tone. “To wait for them to show up.”

Both turned to face Kageyama, worry showing through clearly.

Kageyama sighed and closed his eyes, not willing to deal with their faces. He really, really didn’t want to go back to that wall. He especially didn’t want to have to go back to it to stake it out and watch for another person.

“Kageyama,” Hinata broke through in a surprisingly soft voice for the ginger. “You don’t have to go back if you don’t want to. Me and Yachi can handle it.”

Kageyama opened his eyes and met his two friends’ faces. In a moment of clarity, Kageyama realized it had been a really long time since he had called anyone a “friend”. He looked at Hinata’s painfully earnest face and Yachi’s scared but determined expression.

“I’ll do it,” Kageyama told them with a firm note. “If it means we can help someone else, then we’ll all go back together. For as long as it takes.”

Yachi nodded in relief and Hinata gave him a fierce smile. Kageyama felt a weird light buoyant feeling somewhere in his chest.

Kageyama rubbed at it absently. They were going to find whoever it was that had discovered the hidden room and they were going to help them. No matter what.

Chapter End Notes

As always, thanks for reading and hope you enjoyed! Next chapter will be posted Friday. Hope you all have a great week!

Next Chapter: The Forbidden Forest
“You two did what?!” Oikawa near screeched, fortunately under the cover of the Muffliato Charm.

“Snuck into Sora’s office,” Kuroo replied with a casual tone that Suga felt was undeserved.

“Are you insane,” Oikawa asked, panic edged in his tone. “You snuck into someone’s office that were investigating for mind breaking memory charms and attempted murder?!”

“And we almost got caught, too,” Bokuto emphasized with a proud smile.

“Merlin’s balls,” Iwaizumi swore.

“But,” Kuroo interrupted, silencing whatever Bokuto was about to say. “The important thing is that we didn’t get caught...and we might’ve found something useful.”

“What was it,” questioned Suga, before Oikawa could further question their sanity.

“A lot of history books, for one,” answered Bokuto.

“I guess that’s not surprising. He is a magiarchaeologist. He does study history,” Iwaizumi put in.

“...and a lot of dark books on memory alteration,” Bokuto finished darkly.

The table quieted at that.

Suga coughed uncomfortable. “Well, I guess that is further proof on our theory. Might be helpful if we can ever get more solid evidence.”

Kuroo nodded. “That’s what we thought, too. But, the really weird thing was this list.”

“A list,” prompted Oikawa, leaning forward.

“Yeah, it had all these different places in the school on it,” Kuroo explained. “Bokuto found it.”

“Plus, it had these check marks by some of the places, and…” Bokuto paused for dramatic effect. “A question mark by the first floor spare potion lab.”

“Where the corridor fell in,” Suga noted grimly.

Oikawa let out a harsh sigh and rubbed a hand through his hair, frustrated. “Why can’t we catch this bastard? It’s like we have all these clues that won’t mean anything to anyone else and we can’t quite figure out what they mean together.”

Iwaizumi gave him a slightly rough pat on the back. “Relax, we already have more now than we did a month ago. He’s bound to slip up eventually and give us something.”

“Yeah, but when,” Oikawa responded. “After he finds whatever he’s looking for at Hogwarts and leaves, after he destroys another person’s mind, when?”

Silence fell over table as they all faced the realization that they might never have enough evidence.
to truly catch Sora.

Oikawa’s frustrated expression cleared slightly as he saw the effect on the table. He looked momentarily abashed, frowning more to himself.

“Sorry,” he said gruffly. “Just...tired, I guess.” He looked up and around at the table, a more determined expression coming over his face. “Iwaizumi’s right. We’re already on his tail...and he doesn’t even know it yet. We’ve probably found out more about what he’s up to than probably anyone else has ever come close. All, we really need to do is find out what he’s really doing here first and catch him in the act.”

Kuroo nodded, mirroring the determined expression. “Besides there’s five of us and only one of him.”

“Sora doesn’t stand a chance,” Bokuto agreed.

“What we really need is a way to communicate better,” Iwaizumi added.

Suga paused, thinking. Something about that was sticking in his head.

“The Protean Charm,” Suga said in realization.

“What we really need is a way to communicate better,” Iwaizumi added.

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“The Protean Charm,” Suga said in realization.

“Of course,” Oikawa agreed, looking at Suga with barely recognizable glimpse of admiration in his eyes.

“The what,” Bokuto asked, confused.

“You can do it,” Kuroo questioned, lifting his eyebrows in amazement.

Suga bit his lip and nodded. “I think so...my family knows it because...well, less savory purposes, and my father taught it to me a few years ago.”

No one commented about the why’s, to which Suga was grateful even if he did notice a look of comprehension flash on Kuroo’s face.

“Hey, would anyone mind explaining exactly what the Protean Charm is ,” Iwaizumi broke in, sounding annoyed.

“The Protean Charm,” Oikawa began, sounding a bit like he was teaching a lecture. “Is a charm that allows instantaneous communication across long distance by changing key features of linked objects.” He shot a look at Iwaizumi. “Kind of like a magic version of a text, only the castle wards won’t interfere with it.”

Iwaizumi nodded in understanding. “So, what will we use it on.”

“The Giant’s Ghosts used a version of it on their Dark Marks,” commented Kuroo. “But I don’t really think we have time for magical tattoos.”

“What about coins,” Bokuto suggested. “We can just change the numbers on them to whatever the message is.”

Suga looked contemplative. “That might work. Also, as a bonus, it won’t be suspicious if someone finds them. Does anyone have any Galleons, I think I only have a couple in my bag?”

Suga dug around in his bag before pulling out two shilling pieces of goblin-made currency.
Kuroo nodded and pulled out another two and Iwaizumi donated the last one.

Suga pulled out his wand and tried to remember all the different parts of the charm.

“Wait,” Oikawa interrupted and pointed his own wand down at the coins. “Diffindo.”

A green light swung out from Oikawa’s wand, cutting across the coin faces where they lay on the table. He reached out and held one up to the light. Across the coin’s face, a slash marked through, cutting slightly into the metal.

“Now, we won’t get them confused with actual Galleons,” he explained before gesturing to Suga to continue.

Suga took a deep breath and readied his wand.

“Simul Speci Pecunia Pro Sententia ‘Inquisitio Manipulus’”

A dark purple light broke out across the coins. The faces of them seemed to ripple quickly before settling down to their original shape.

Suga let go of a breath, steadying himself on the table to keep from falling.

“You alright,” Iwaizumi asked, reaching out and gripping a shoulder to keep him from swaying.

“I’m fine,” he said, offering a weak comforting smile. “Just a tad bit of magical exhaustion.”

Suga gently lowered himself back into his chair and nodded when Bokuto gestured to the coins, asking if they were safe to touch.

Bokuto held one up. “They don’t look much different.”

Suga shook his head. “And they won’t unless one of us changes them with the phrase I added to the Charm.”

Suga picked up another one from the table. “Inquisitio Manipulus”

A much more subdued version of the dark purple broke shone from just the coin that Suga held.

Bokuto yelped, dropping the coin back on the table in surprise. “It’s hot.”

Cautiously, the Hufflepuff teen poked the coin again and gingerly picked it up. He squinted at it. “Hey, the numbers are changing to letters.”

Suga looked down at the coin and saw the message he had thought of reflected in the coin. “The Investigation Squad” lined the side of the coin where the numbers had once been.

Oikawa did his by now expected eye roll at the message. “So, how exactly does it work?”

“Just say the code phrase and think about the message you want, your coin will glow and the other connected coins will heat up to alert the others,” Suga explained. “The lettering around the side will change until the owner can read it.”

“Awesome,” Bokuto said, cradling the coin in his hand. “Yeah, it’s already back to normal now!”

Each of the table members picked up a coin off the table.
“This really is amazing,” Oikawa murmured, squinting at his coin. “Now, we can communicate even when we're not in the same room.”

“What did I tell you,” Bokuto grinned. “Sora doesn’t stand a chance!”

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“So, what exactly is our plan going to be,” Kageyama asked as the three worked on their homework in the Great Hall. Most everyone else had gone back to their common rooms or were seeing friends before visiting hours ended.

“I mean we can’t exactly go back to the wall every night to see if they come back,” continued Kageyama.

“No, not every night,” Yachi agreed. “Maybe...maybe, every other night so we can still catch up on sleep...and we can alternate what hour we go in so we have a better chance of catching them.”

“Do you think maybe we’ll be able to tell who it is during school,” questioned Hinata, absently flipping through their Defense book. “I mean they would like be acting super weird or something?”

Yachi bit her lip. “I doubt it. We didn’t notice Kageyama until we were actually at the wall. Whatever compulsion the wall has on it is really, really subtle.”

“What if they don’t go back at night,” Kageyama asked. “I mean it is technically against the rules.”

“Oh, what if we check during school, too,” Hinata suggested excitedly.

“That’s a good idea,” agreed Yachi.

“We can check tomorrow after my potions tutoring,” commented Hinata, already looking forward to sneaking around and helping whoever it was under the compulsion. “That’s right before curfew so we might catch them leaving.”

Yachi nodded and Kageyama gave a shrug beside her.

“Whatever we do,” Yachi told them, the familiar hint of worry slipping in. “We need to do it quick. The compulsion’s only going to get worse with time.” She sighed. “That poor person.”

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“Alright, troublemakers,” Professor Takinoue called, addressing the gathered Gryffindors and one Slytherin by his small cottage next to the forest. “Luck for you, Professor Shimada has decided to accompany us for this detention to look at leaves or something.”
“Gather moon beam roots,” corrected Professor Shimada, rolling his eyes. “They only bloom once a year and you have to get them exactly seven days before the full moon.”

“Exactly,” Professor Takinoue continued as if he had said the exact same thing. “So, we’re going to divide you into groups. The two first years,” he gestured to Tsukishima and Yamaguchi. “Are going to come with me to talk to the centaurs. Something’s been bothering them lately and we need to make sure it’s nothing in the forest.”

Yamaguchi perked up slightly. He had never seen centaurs before.

“You two,” he gestured to Daichi and Tanaka, “are going to go with Professor Shimada to pick up his sky flower things.”

Professor Shimada rolled his eyes, but gestured for Daichi and Tanka to come by him.

“Which leaves you three,” Professor Takinoue continued, looking at Noya, Asahi, and Ennoshita. “You guys get especially lucky.”

“We don’t have to go in the forest,” Asahi asked hopefully.

Professor Takinoue laughed. “No, no, you all are definitely still going in the forest.” Asahi drooped while Noya looked excited. “You just get the best chaperone of all time.”

He let out a whistle and a massive black dog bounded out of the cottage and to the group.

“Is that a grim?!” asked Ennoshita with wide eyes.

“Don’t be silly,” Professor Takinoue said, bending down and rubbing the giant canine behind the ears. “This here’s Blackie, the sweetest dog in the world.”

“It’s bigger than Noya,” Tsukishima commented dryly, earning a light glare from the mentioned boy before he became completely distracted when the dog came over and licked his cheek.

“You guys are going to go with Blackie here and check into the unicorn cave a bit north of here. They’ve been acting skittish lately and I won’t to make sure they didn’t start migrating too early.”

“So cool,” Noya replied, seemingly forgetting this was supposed to be a punishment.

“Wait, we’re going alone,” asked Asahi alarmed.

Professor Takinoue gave Blackie another scratch behind the year. “They’re unicorns. They can’t hurt a fly. Besides Blackie here will protect you if things ever get too bad. She’s got an extra sense for danger.”

“Like a grim,” commented Ennoshita, narrowing his eyes.

“Well, that’s enough time spent talking,” Professor Takinoue announced, moving the conversation along. “You two with me. We’ll meet back here in two hours.”

Yamaguchi and Tsukishima trudged after the Care of Magical Creature professor as he set an efficient pace to the forest.

“It’s kind of cool that we get to meet centaurs,” Yamaguchi whispered, once Professor Takinoue was far enough ahead not to overhear.

Tsukishima shrugged.
“Do you think it’s true that they all have divination ability,” Yamaguchi prompted, used to his friend’s reticence.

“I haven’t found compelling evidence that anyone has divination ability, much less a whole species,” Tsukishima commented back.

“You still didn’t say you weren’t excited,” Yamaguchi shot back, watching as Tsukishima huffed but didn’t actively disagree.

“Come on, you two. We’re going to be late,” Professor Takinoue called from ahead of them. Tsukishima and Yamaguchi cut off their conversation to hurry ahead.

“So, how did you get the centaurs to agree to meet with you,” Tsukishima asked the professor, once they had caught up.

“Wasn’t easy, I’ll tell you that,” Professor Takinoue responded. “They’re an aloof bunch...or should I say an a-hoof bunch.”

Yamaguchi let out a surprised laugh and saw Tsukishima struggling with a groan.

“But, really,” Professor Takinoue shrugged. “I’m not sure why they agreed to meet. I’ve been nice as you please to them for years and I still struggle to get a greeting on good night. Most wizards get less than that. Something must really be bugging them if they agreed to this.”

Professor Takinoue led them about, what Yamaguchi estimated was, half of a mile into the forest. Yamaguchi jumped, accidentally bumping into Tsukishima, as he heard what sounded like another creature brush past them in the forest.

“I’m sure it’s just a rabbit,” Tsukishima muttered gruffly, but Yamaguchi heard the reassurance behind it.

Finally, the forest opened up into a clearing and Professor Takinoue motioned for them to stop. Yamaguchi looked around but didn’t see any sign of anyone other than themselves. The professor looked down at their watch.

“Typical, never met a centaur who didn’t love a bit of drama. Probably fashionably late,” he muttered.

As soon as he spoke, Yamaguchi heard the gallop of hooves and three centaurs broke into the clearing opposite them. Yamaguchi tried not to stare. All three had a regal air to them with long hair threaded into braids down their backs. The one in the middle rode slightly ahead of them and seemed to be their leader. Her hair wove down in a dirty blonde braid, the exact color of the fur in her lower half. Across her bag was a quiver and bow. When Yamaguchi dared a look at her face, it looked like it could’ve been carved out of stone. Yamaguchi was surprised that her face looked surprisingly human except for the shining yellow eyes, that reflected almost cat like under the moonlight. The two male centaurs behind her looked to be brothers, both with similarly woven black hair threaded with what looked like feathers.

“Chief Bergljot,” Professor Takinoue greeted, tilting his head in a show of respect. “You do us a great honor by agreeing to this meeting. Accompanying me are two of our wizard children, both students of Hogwards.”

The female centaur--who Yamaguchi assumed was the chief--stepped forward, stopping to tower over all of the wizards.
“It was a meeting that many of my herd still feels unwise, Keeper of Keys,” she said, looking at Professor Takinoue. “It is why Asmund and Bjarke both stand at my side. Asmund spoke in favor of this meeting, Bjarke against. It is the way of my people that both have presence at this meeting.”

“Um, right,” Professor Takinoue replied awkwardly. “So...what did you want to talk about?”

“Come with us, Keeper of the Keys, you and the wizard whelps,” With that, Chief Bergljot and the other two centaurs turned and led the group back into the forest.

Hurriedly, Professor Takinoue made a gesture to Tsukishima and Yamaguchi to follow. When he had turned, Tsukishima shot back a look that heavily questioned the professor’s sanity.

Nevertheless, the two first years followed the centaur trio deeper into the moonlit woods.

The centaurs had waited for them just outside the clearing and Professor Takinoue rushed forward to catch up to Chief Bergljot. This left, Tsukishima and Yamaguchi sandwiched in between the two male centaurs.

“So, um, it’s a lovely night for a stroll,” Yamaguchi said lamely, trying to start a conversation so he couldn’t hear all the deep dark monsters that were probably waiting right outside their *Lumos*.

The centaur looked down at him. “It is fitting that you are here tonight, Sword Carrier. Fate must shine down upon this meeting.”

On Tsukishima’s side, the other centaur let out a snort that was half human and half horse.

“Is that me? Um, sword carrier,” asked Yamaguchi. “I promise I’m not carrying a sword, just my, um, wand.”

The centaur beside him carried on as if he had not heard him. “It is fitting that *both* the Sword Carrier and his Shield have come with the Keeper of the Keys. If my tribe’s divinations are right, this night will have impact for us all.”

“Silence, Asmund,” snapped the other centaur. “It is not our place to interfere with fate. Let the wizards whelps find their own way.”

“Brother,” the centaur beside Yamaguchi sighed. “Have you not read the planets tonight. Or meeting is not interference it is destiny.”

“You desire too much, Brother. Centaurs are not players of destiny. Our role is of observers,” the other centaur argued back.

“Forgive my brother Bjarke,” Asmund leaned over to tell Yamaguchi. “He is too set in the old ways that he misinterprets lack of action for having lack of consequence.”

“Oh, it’s fine,” answered Yamaguchi unsure and awkwardly scooted back over to Tsukishima.

“We are here,” Chief Bergljot called, gesturing to another clearing.

Yamaguchi saw Professor Takinoue stop suddenly and gasp. Yamaguchi felt a dark uneasy feeling settle in his stomach.

Yamaguchi and Tsukishima pushed their way forward and Yamaguchi felt his stomach roll.

Across the field laid dozens and dozens of dead and decaying animals. Yamaguchi spotted what he thought might have been a dead fawn laying still next to a sparrow.
“This is…,” Professor Tsukishima started unsteadily. “Merlin, this is evidence of dark magic...and angry dark magic at that.”

Yamaguchi turned away, looking at Tsukishima who also looked faintly green.

“Well, Tsuki,” Yamaguchi started nervously. “Do you think this was just a rabbit, too?”

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“It should be just over this way,” motioned Professor Shimada.

Daichi grabbed Tanaka’s arms, stopping the boy right before he stepped in a hole, and followed after the Herbology professor.

“Why are you trying to get moon beam roots if they only grow once a year, Professor,” Daichi asked. “Won’t they just die in the morning.”

“Excellent question,” Professor Shimada answered, bending over to examine some growth under a tree. “You’re right that they only bloom one day. But if you harvest them right, you can keep them stored all year. Me and Professor Irihata alternate between who goes out and collects them. They’re a potent ingredient in NEWT level potions.”

He sighed. “No, this isn’t the type of flower either. We might have to split up.” He looked at the two boys. “Would you two mind searching a bit over there? Don’t go too far in the dark, stay in earshot.”

“Sure thing,” Tanaka said immediately, obviously already thinking about searching the Forbidden Forest alone.

Daichi came from behind him and placed a hand on his shoulder. “Don’t worry, Professor, I’ll look out for Tanaka, too.”

“Thank you,” Professor Shimada said, looking relieved. “I’ll just be a bit over here. Call me if you need anything. Remember the picture I showed you earlier.”

The two boys nodded and split off from Shimada, going off to the right to check the bottoms of the trees.

Daichi sighed and leaned closer. Professor Shimada swore that this was the right night for the flower to bloom but so far they’d been searching almost a full hour with nothing to show for it. The flower was supposed to be pure white with a blue vine. Also, according to Professor Shimada, he was absolutely sure he had found them last time somewhere around here and they’d know them by how they’d always turn to the moon.
Daichi’s feet hurt and he was really tired of maintaining a constant *Lumos*. Fighting back a sigh, he looked over to see Tanaka sitting under a tree and rubbing his foot. Daichi glared at him before turning back—faster he found the flower, faster this detention would be over.

Bending over he checked behind another tree trunk. In the corner of his eye, he saw a flash of something. Daichi turned to the try to find the source. There! A bit further down from them, Daichi saw an almost imperceptible small bit of white.

Thank his perception training as a Keeper, Daichi walked over to it. “Tanaka, I think I found something.”

“Really?! I’ll be right over!”

Daichi bent down and sure enough a bright white flower was turning up, twisting to try to catch the moonlight shining between the branches. Daichi held up his wand. *Blue Vines.*

“If found it!” he shouted behind him to Tanaka.

“Be right--ooof!”

Daichi glanced behind him and saw that Tanaka had placed his foot right in another hole.

He rolled his eyes. “You okay?”

“Yeah, yeah, just gotta get it unstuck,” The younger boy answered.

Daichi turned back to his find. “Well, hurry up so we can finish getting these flowers.”

Suddenly Daichi felt a rush of air from behind him.

“Um, Daichi, I think I might’ve found something, too. But, it’s sure not a flower.”

Daichi looked back at Tanaka to see what the other boy was talking about.

“Oh.” Daichi breathed.

Behind Tanaka, now stood a dark opening, held open by what looked like a secret door that had blended into the wood floor.

“I think I--I think I triggered something when I got my foot caught,” Tanaka told him.

Daichi stepped closer, holding up his lit wand to it. Below was a dark tunnel that, even with his light, Daichi could only see a few meters inside.

“We should, um, definitely call Professor Shimada,” Daichi told Tanaka, who nodded. Daichi looked back to see that the younger boy had an expression that Daichi could best describe as spooked.

“Why don’t you go and find him,” Daichi recommended gently. “I’ll stay here in case it closes again.”

Tanaka nodded, still with wide eyes, and turned to run back where they came.

Daichi listened to the sound of his footsteps until all that was left was the dark sounds of the forest. He looked around and noticed that the only light was coming from his wand and the pale moonlight that managed between the branches.
“Well, this isn’t creepy at all,” Daichi muttered sarcastically.

Something flickered again to the side of Daichi’s vision. He jerked his head back to dark tunnel.

That was strange. It almost looked like something was moving in the darkness.

Mustering up almost every fiber of his Gryffindor courage, Daichi leaned in to look closer.

Movement reflected again in the small bit of light, but Daichi couldn’t quite make it out.

“This is so stupid,” Daichi chastised himself before taking a deep breath and placing one foot inside the tunnel.

Suddenly, something came hurtling out of the darkness straight at Daichi’s face.

“EEEEEE”

Daichi screamed and fell back, landing hard on the dirt.

From the opening, a bat flew over Daichi’s head and into the trees.

“Oh,” Daichi said, still clutching his racing heart. “It was just a bat...just a large, creepy looking bat.”

Slowly, the third year Gryffindor got up and pointed his wand back at the opening.

“DAICHI!”

Daichi jumped again and just managed not to fall back.

He turned and saw Tanaka racing up to him, followed by Professor Shimada.

“Merlin,” Professor Shimada swore, looking at the opening. “It looks like you two found one of the secret passageways into Hogwarts.”

“That tunnel leads to Hogwarts,” Tanaka asked, fear still hinted in his voice. “But, it’s so dark and…”

“Creepy,” Daichi agreed.

“Well, it is the middle of the night,” Shimada assured them. “It’s probably better in the day. I’ll have to make a note of this and tell Takinoue.”

Daichi nodded, still not entirely comfortable with the tunnel, and backed away.

“And, I happened to find some of the moon flower back over on my side,” Professor Shimada said, happily. “So, let’s head there and finish your detention out, alright?”

Daichi and Tanaka looked at each other relieved and followed the teacher back to the forest and away from the eerie tunnel.

Daichi couldn’t help himself and threw one look back. He wondered exactly where the tunnel led and, more importantly, exactly who had used it in the centuries Hogwarts had existed before.
“Come on, Asahi, it’s unicorns. *Unicorns*. How scary could they be?” Noya reassured the taller boy.

“Pretty scary when they’re in the middle of the Forbidden Forest,” answered Asahi with the slow steady trace of panic that Noya had noticed in his voice since they’d entered the forest.

“I’m sure that anything out here is more scared of you than you are of them,” placated Ennoshita. Asahi grumbled under his breath but didn’t dignify that with a response.

Blackie barked at them and motioned with her head that they should turn.

“I swear that dog’s too smart to be just a dog,” Ennoshita said, narrowing his eyes.

“You’re not still on the grim thing, are you, Ennoshita,” Noya asked plaintively.


Noya tread along happily after the totally-a-dog-and-definitely-not-an-omen-of-death. Even with Ennoshita’s grumbling and Asahi’s blatant terror, Noya thought that this was still turning out to be the best detention ever. Not only was he getting to explore the Forbidden Forest at night, but he was also getting to see actual unicorns. Noya hummed. So much better than cleaning the trophy cases.

“Guys, up here,” Noya called back. “I think Blackie finally led us to the cave we’re supposed to be looking for. Come on up! It’s beautiful!”

Through the trees, Noya looked out into the gentle forest waterfall flowing into a small pond that reflected silver in the light of the partial moon. To the side of the waterfall, Blackie had stopped at what looked like the opening to a cave tucked in behind the flow of the current.

“It’s gorgeous,” Ennoshita breathed, coming to stand by Noya.

Asahi stood silently beside him, a rare look of wonder momentarily erasing his fear. Noya smiled at him. Asahi should try to look like that more often.

Noya jumped down onto a rock and continued on by the pond, catching up to Blackie. When he got next to her, he gave her another head scratch.

“Who’s a good girl,” Noya cooed. He eagerly looked in front of her and into the cave. His breath caught somewhere in his chest.

Looking straight at him was a one of the most beautiful sights that Noya had ever seen. A regal looking unicorn stood tall at the mouth of the cave, almost blocking it from view. But, as Noya watched, he gave a gentle huff at Noya and stood back letting Noya see in the cave. Behind the larger unicorn, laid another unicorn--this one a pure white--gently petting the head of a small unicorn foal.

“Guys, I think I found out why the unicorns were nervous,” Noya answered, feeling his heart lighten and a smile spread over his face from the proximity to the pure creatures. Softly, carefully, Noya stepped forward to the larger unicorn that Noya suspected was the father.

The unicorn met his eyes and didn’t back away and Noya felt like a weight lifted off his shoulders.
This close, Noya started to feel tears gather in his eyes--happy tears, relieved tears, the type of tears made by someone who’s made it through something they didn’t know they could survive. Even aware of the effects that Noya knew the unicorns had, he still had the odd sensation of absolute euphoria feeling his veins.

Gently, he lifted his hand and saw the unicorn lean down to allow him to touch.

“Beautiful,” Asahi said from somewhere behind him. Noya turned back at him, smiling, and saw that a gentle stream of tears were rolling down Asahi’s face. Ennoshita stood behind him, cautiously taking in the scene.

“You can come closer,” Noya told them, gesturing.

Asahi shook his head, taking a step back while the fear filled his face again. “No, thank you, I’ll--I’ll be fine here.”

Ennoshita gently crept forward, coming slowly to stand beside Noya and the unicorn.

Like Noya had done before him, Ennoshita slowly lifted a hand and allowed the unicorn to sift next to him, grazing Ennoshita hand.

Ennoshita let out a shaky exhale before breaking into a happy surprised laugh. “This really is the best detention ever.

Noya smiled back, joining him with his own laughter. From behind them, Noya turned and saw Asahi smiling, too--all carried away by the effect of the unicorns.

Suddenly, Noya felt like his head had been plunged into cold water...or maybe the opposite, as if he had been underwater and was forced to resurface.

“What was that,” Ennoshita asked uncertainty and Noya turned back to see both of their hands had stilled from where they were petting the unicorn.

Behind them, Blackie growled facing the forest.

The unicorn whinnied and backed up, going back to blocking the entrance to the cave.

“Noya, Ennoshita,” Asahi called nervously. “I think Blackie is trying to warn us about something.”

Noya felt a cold panic creep into his blood, filling his lungs, clogging his throat. A kind of terror he could only remember feeling once before.

“I think--I think we should get out of here,” Ennoshita told them, darting his eyes around at the forest. “Now.”

Noya nodded and the two hurried back to Asahi, standing by the pond. Blackie followed them, continuing to growl at the trees.

A movement caught at the edge of Noya’s vision and he heard Asahi gasp.

“Guys,” he said, voice shaking. “I think there’s someone in the forest. Someone else.”

“We need to get out of here,” Ennoshita told them, trying for a decisive tone that he might have managed if not for the edges or terror slipping thorough.

The three boys ran back to the edge of the pond, pushing and scraping back up the sides.
Blackie growled at something behind them and turned back to bark at them urgently, hurrying them forward.

The three broke out in a run, tearing through the trees and barely managing not to trip.

Noya felt like he might be a bit crazy, but he could swear he heard something keeping pace behind them. Noya sped up. Whatever it was, he didn’t want it to catch them.

Noya stumbled forward and into a large clearing. Ennoshita stopped behind him, followed by Asahi.

“I’m, I’m not sure where we are,” admitted Ennoshita, turning quickly to look all around them.

“Me either,” Noya said, facing back to the forest and backing up slowly.

Asahi shook his head.

Slowly, Blackie emerged from the forest with his tail facing the boys. He growled at the edge of the trees, a warning growl for whatever hid there.

Noya felt Asahi and Ennoshita gather behind him, readying their wands.

Blackie’s growling got louder. Noya thought he saw some of the tree branches move. He held his breath, bringing his wand in front of him.

Without warning, a figure emerged from the other side of the clearing. The three boys turned to look.

“A centaur,” gasped Asahi.

Noya’s eyes widened and he turned back to the trees Blackie was still guarding. Whatever was moving there had suddenly stopped.

From the other side of the clearing, the centaur got closer.

“Wizard whelps, you should not be in this part of the woods,” the centaur said, looking down at them. “My name is Asmund, your teacher has sent me to gather you.”

The centaur looked back at the line of trees where the boys had come from.

“There are things in the forest that you are not yet ready to face,” he looked back down at the boys. “Even for one such as you.”

Noya looked away from the centaur’s intensity before Asmund turned and made a gesture with his neck for them to follow.

Noya slowly let out a breath and the three boys followed him, constantly checking behind them to make sure that nothing followed.

Blackie still hung close to their sides, reluctant to let them out of her sight.

Within less time than Noya expected, the three emerged back beside Professor Takinoue’s cottage.

Noya noted that they were the last group back.

“Dude,” Tanaka said, running up to him with wide eyes. “You’re never going to guess what we
Noya looked back at the forest, still feeling an ominous dark edge.

“Yeah,” Noya said, turning back to his best friend. “You’re not going to believe what we found either.”

Chapter End Notes

Sorry about being a day late, real life stuff came up (nothing that bad or anything). Here is the next chapter and the start of what I think of as the four finale chapters. As you can see, this story now has the final chapter count up so the end is nigh! As always, thanks for reading and hope you enjoyed! Thank you everyone for your support throughout this story, it really means the world to me.

Next Chapter is Monday (for real this time). Next Chapter: Not Quite A Victim
Kenma sat in the common room, looking out from one of the large window seats. From up in the Ravenclaw tower, he watched as a storm moved in--dark clouds slowly moved across the sky like a large predator stalking prey.

He looked back down at his book, at the same page he had been trying to read for the better part of thirty minutes.

“Alright, what’s up,” a voice announced and Kenma felt the window seat shift as another weight was added.

“What makes you think somethings wrong,” Kenma asked, not bothering to look up at his best friend.

“You mean other than you sighing at the window like you’re a Victorian heroine,” Kuroo joked.

Kenma rolled his eyes, continuing to look at the same page.

“Your hair’s changing,” Kuroo explained. “The black and yellow shifts slightly when you’ve got something on your mind.”

That made Kenma look up. He glanced to the window and frowned slightly at the reflection, noting that the yellow in his hair was slowly inching up a maybe a centimeter at a time before coming back down. With a passing thought, he settled it.

“It’s fine now,” Kenma commented blandly.

“Yeah, it’s fine, you’re not. Hair’s the symptom, not the cause,” Kuroo said, rolling his eyes. “What’s got you all discombobulated. Is it Lev again? I’m sure Yaku can add more to his workload if you want. Probably would thank me for asking.”

“Don’t, Lev’s already looking rather frantic around the edges,” Kenma told him absently. He pressed his lips together, thinking. Finally, he decided that there was no possible way Kuroo was going to leave him alone until he told him.

“It’s not anything really,” Kenma said, turning his face up to look at Kuroo. “Just a conversation I had with Shouyou the other day.”

“And, what’s exactly up with Hufflepuff’s resident ball of sunshine and adrenaline,” Kuroo prompted.

“It was just...an odd conversation,” Kenma told him, fighting a frown. “I’m not sure what to think of it.”

“Well, I hate to break it to you, Kenma,” Kuroo said, amused. “But you do know that Hinata *is* in fact an odd person.”

Kenma shook his head. “Odder than normal. He asked me how to know if you’re under a compulsion charm.”
“He’s under a compulsion charm,” asked Kuroo, surprise and alarm coloring his tone.

Kenma let the frown show on his face this time. “That’s the thing. When I told him the signs, he seemed fairly sure he wasn’t.”

“So, he was what? Just curious,” asked Kuroo confused. “Seems like a weird thing to be curious about.”

Kenma gave a slight shrug, turning back to the window. “That’s why it’s bothering me.”

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Daichi glanced around at his normal group of trouble making Gryffindors--plus one Slytherin--who were currently sitting around the lunch table in an uncharacteristic silence. Honestly, Daichi would have enjoyed the silence if it didn’t have the tense air. As it was, it was setting his teeth on edge.

It was so quiet he could hear Asahi’s fork scrape against the plate as he pushed around his peas.

He gritted his teeth and took a steadying breath.

“Alright, fine, I’ll start. Last night’s detention was…”

“Bloody creepy,” Tanaka broke in.

“Terrifying,” Asahi agreed.

“..Weird,” Daichi finished. “But, at least, we all seem to be in agreement.”

“What do you think’s happening,” Yamaguchi asked, instinctively turning to Daichi for the answers.

Daichi let go of the breath. “I’m not sure, Yamaguchi. But, whatever it is I’m sure the professors are handling it.”

“Do you think someone’s like living in the forest,” Noya asked excitedly. Of all of them, he and Tsukishima seemed to be handling last night the best. Though in the face of Noya’s enthusiasm, Daichi wasn’t exactly sure this was a good sign.

“If there is, he’s gotta be super powerful,” Tanaka agreed. “If not, he’d definitely have been eaten by now.”

“No one’s living in the forest,” Daichi reassured tiredly. “We just happened to have a bunch of weird stuff happen in the same night. The dead animals could’ve been the acromantulas or maybe...something less magical like problems in the water.”

“All in one spot,” Tsukishima put in skeptically.

Daichi shrugged. “Makes more sense than dark magic. As for me and Tanaka, we just happened to find one of the old passageways out of Hogwarts. Nothing weird or mysterious about that, the castle has tons of them. Just coincidence we found it the same night.”

“What about the person chasing us,” Asahi asked nervously.

“Are we sure it was a person,” Daichi asked logically. “It could have just been one of the other
creatures that spooked Blackie.”

“I swear I saw a person,” muttered Asahi softly.

“Maybe it was a werewolf,” Ennoshita suggested dryly, causing Yamaguchi to let out a small yelp and Asahi to look over with wide eyes.

Daichi glared at Ennoshita. “It was not a werewolf. Stop trying to scare the first years.”

Ennoshita frowned. “I wasn’t--”

“Besides, it wasn’t even a full moon,” commented Tsukishima, rolling his eyes. Yamaguchi nodded beside him, looking relieved.

“The point is,” Daichi emphasized, cutting off further speculation, “that whatever it is, the teachers will handle it and we,” he looked specifically at Noya and Tanaka, “will not be getting further involved. I’m serious, if it is something bad,” he glanced at Yamaguchi and Asahi, “which I don’t think it is, the teachers are going to be the ones equipped to handle it.”

Noya opened his mouth, but Tanaka cut him off with a hand to his shoulder.

“No arguments from me,” Tanaka said. “Last night was spooky.”

The entire table looked around at each other, silently agreeing.

Noya relented.

“I guess we can let the teachers handle it,” Noya reluctantly agreed. “Just to keep them in practice.”

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Hinata and Suga sat quietly in the library, bent over Hinata’s latest Defense essay.

“This is really good,” Suga told him, vanishing a quick spelling error. “You did a lot of research into this one, didn’t you?”

Hinata nodded brightly. “I looked at the book that you told me about last time and it helped a lot with the theory.”

Suga nodded, skimming through the next paragraph. “It was published by a half-blood so it does a better job with explaining the concepts that most wizarding children grew up around. I remember Oikawa reading it during first year.”

Suga looked to see Hinata’s eyes widen in recognition at the mention of the Slytherin muggleborn.

“I take it you know Oikawa,” Suga asked, wondering when the two would’ve run into each other.
Hinata nodded, shrugging. “Yeah, he visited me in the medical wing after the Slytherin came. He’s really...um...”

Suga laughed as Hinata struggled with a proper descriptor. “He is that.”

“He was Kageyama’s friend,” Hinata finally finished. “I don’t think they’ve talked any since Hogwarts though.”

Suga hummed, filling that away rather than commenting.

“Back to the paper,” Suga said, redirecting. “Your theory section is strong. Are you having any trouble with actually applying the spell? I know this one can be tricky.”

Hinata shook his head immediately. “Nah, I was able to get it first time in class. It was easy.”

Not for the first time, Suga found himself wondering exactly how powerful Hinata was. Sure, he didn’t exactly have the same discipline for studying like Oikawa, but Suga wouldn’t be surprised at all if the two muggleborn students were close in power.

“Sounds great,” Suga smiled. “How did your Potion’s quiz go?”

“Awesome,” Hinata near shouted, causing several in the library to turn and glare. The boy winced and looked apologetic, before turning to his bag.

He pulled out a paper and shoved it excitedly into Suga’s face. “Look I got my first O. Professor Irihata even wrote ‘Fantastic Improvement’”

Hinata beamed at Suga.

“Congratulations,” Suga returned sincerely, looking down at the quiz. Still a bit sloppy with the quill, but Suga noticed that Hinata hadn’t gotten a single answer wrong. “This is really amazing. Good job, Hinata!”

“Thanks!” Hinata blushed, looking slightly bashful. “I couldn’t have done it without you. Thanks for tutoring me!”

“It’s my pleasure,” Suga smiled. He glanced down at his watch. “And, this is probably as good of a note as any to end on.”

Hinata looked urgently at his own watch before frantically grabbing his stuff to put away. “Oh, man, I’m supposed to meet Kageyama and Yachi in like five minutes.”

“You’re meeting them this late,” Suga asked, surprised. “Trying to get in some more studying before finals?”

Hinata shook his head while making sure his ink well was shut tightly. “No, not that. It’s...um, something else we’re working on.”

“Well, I’m sure whatever it is you can still get there in time,” Suga reassured, watching Hinata rush. “We’re pretty close to both the Gryffindor and Hufflepuff common rooms.”

Hinata slung his bag over his shoulder. “Oh, we’re not meeting in the common rooms. We’re meeting over by the Astronomy Tower. I really gotta go. Bye, Suga!”

Suga waved back, confused. What did Hinata need in the Astronomy Tower? That wasn’t even offered as an elective until fourth year. And lessons were always on weekends.
At a slower pace than Hinata, Suga packed up his own bag. He looked down at the table and noticed a book still laying by Hinata’s chair.

He picked it up and sighed to himself, noticing it was Hinata’s Defense book.

“Darn, he’s definitely going to need this for tomorrow's quiz,” Suga muttered to himself absently.

He paused. He did know where Hinata was going. He wondered if it would be weird to follow him and return the book.

Suga quirked his lip. Still probably preferable to letting Hinata fail his quiz. He slipped the book into his bag and went off in the same direction as Hinata had headed, quickening his step to try to catch up.

The halls were oddly deserted this close to curfew, Suga noted. As he continued onward to the less trafficked parts of the castle, the lights became gradually more spaced off--adding to the eerie feeling that all schools had come nighttime. Again, Suga wondered what Hinata could possibly want here this late at night.

Suga turned another corner and spotted Hinata’s bright orange hair at the end of the long hallway. The Slytherin third year opened his mouth to call out before, a few meters ahead of him, a dark figure slip out into the hallway from another further down. The cloaked figure glided silently down the hall, pausing to glance around the corner Hinata had just turned.

Well, that’s certainly suspicious, Suga thought, narrowing his eyes. The figure seemed too tall to be one of the younger students. A dark thought ran through Suga’s mind about older students bullying a tiny muggleborn first year.

Suga frowned. Not if he could help it.

“Occulus Mea,” Suga whispered, quietly pulling out his wand. An invisible film rippled in front of Suga’s face, magnifying his vision. Suga pulled back to watch the cloaked figure from behind the corner.

Glancing through the film, Suga saw that the figure had a dark hood thrown over his head, obscuring his face.

Come on, Suga urged silently, Turn around and let me see who you are.

Suga held his breath and waited, watching from behind his corner as the hooded figure watched Hinata from his.

Finally, Suga saw the figure shift getting ready to move. Suga studied his wand. If the figure turned just a little bit…

The cloaked figure threw a glance back, checking behind him.

Got you, Suga had a moment to think before recognizing the face.

Suga dropped his wand, vaguely aware of it clattering on the floor.

The cloaked figure turned the corner, following after Hinata.

Suga frantically bent down and picked up his wand, trying to process what he’d just saw.

Sora, his mind answered numbly. Sora’s the one following Hinata.
This is bad. This was very, very bad. What could he do? He couldn’t face Sora on his own and if he left, there was a chance he would miss everything and Hinata would be left unprotected.

Suga heard a clink as his robes shifted. He grabbed at his pocket, feeling a touch of cool metal.

Suga looked up, realization forming. Carefully, he drew out the galleon he had just enchanted the other day.

Quickly, he pointed his wand.

“Inquisitio Manipulus”


He let out a breath. Looks like they were going to have a meeting sooner rather than later.

---

“Sorry, I’m late...got distracted...in tutoring,” Hinata panted to a waiting Kageyama and Yachi.

“It’s fine,” Yachi reassured.

Kageyama was frowning at the tapestry, seemingly uncaring about the redhead’s tardiness. “How are we going to go about this anyway? If whoever it is sees us, it’s not like they’re going to want to chat.”

“We can hide,” Yachi suggested, gesturing to the stairway.

“For how long,” questioned Kageyama, looking tense and restless.

Hinata came up to him and punched him on the shoulder. “Think you’ll be able to handle an hour.”

Kageyama glared, instinctively rising to the challenge. “Of course, I can! But it’s not like we know when or if he’ll be here tonight.”

“That’s why we’re alternating,” Yachi reminded, ushering them towards the Astronomy stairway before they could start another argument.

“Maybe we’ll get really lucky,” Hinata said excitedly. “And they’ll be here tonight!”

Kageyama opened his mouth to argue back.

“Oh, I don’t know if ‘lucky’ is the right word,” a low voice interrupted.

The three jumped in unison, turning to see a figure wearing a dark hood obscuring his face. Slowly, the figure smirked at them and pulled the hood back.

“Professor?!” Yachi yelped, startled. “We were just, um…”

“Oh, no, no, there’s no need to explain,” Professor Sora placated with a confident easy smile.
“Trust me I understand perfectly.”

Hinata didn’t know why but, in that moment, the Defense teacher suddenly reminded him of a nature documentary on eels that he had once watched in school. He remembered how they would lurk unseen and wait until their prey got close enough on their own before striking faster than the prey could realize.

Hinata felt a shiver go up his spine.

“You--you do,” asked Yachi, voice wavering and unsure.

Sora’s smile widened. “I sure do. Here I know what I’ll do. You guys let me guess and then you can tell me if I’m right...like our quizzes in class, alright?

The trio nodded cautiously.

“Great,” Sora tapped his chin in an exaggerated mockery of thinking. “Guess number one: you guys found something really, really special behind that tapestry, didn’t you?”

“How did you--,” Kageyama piped in.

“Oh no,” Sora said, shaking his head disappointingly. “That’s not how the game is played. Just nod or shake your heads, okay. Now, was my guess right?”

Slowly, the three nodded.

“Excellent,” Sora’s smile was back. Though Hinata couldn’t help feel that something was off about it. “Guess two: you three didn’t want anyone else to know about it, so you decided to keep it secret. Am I right again?”

Not daring to speak, the three nodded.

“Excellent,” Sora’s smile was back. Though Hinata couldn’t help feel that something was off about it. “Guess two: you three didn’t want anyone else to know about it, so you decided to keep it secret. Am I right again?”

The trio exchanged glances and Hinata noted that the other two also looked about as uneasy as he felt. They nodded.

“Perfect,” Sora answered. “Now, guess three. You guys really didn’t expect anyone else to find out about your little excursions, did you?”

The three shook their heads.

“So...no, blabbering to friends? Teammates?”

Again, the trio shook their heads in the negative.

“Excellent, excellent,” Sora told them, stepping closer. He leaned in as if about to confide a secret. “Now, this next guess is very important so make sure you’re being honest.”

Beside him, Hinata heard Kageyama swallow.

Professor Sora met their eyes slowly, one person by one. “Next guess: No one else knows you’re down here, do they?”

Rather than nodding, Hinata took in a shallow breath. He looked over to the other two and noticed
fat tears slowly rolling down Yachi’s face. Kageyama hadn’t moved an inch.

Sora took their silence for the answer it was and his grin widened. “You now, I take it back; maybe ‘lucky’ is the word for tonight.” He stepped forward, causing the three to step back until their backs touched the tapestry. “After all, it’s certainly lucky that three first years just happened to find the chamber I’ve been looking for. And it’s definitely lucky that for some reason, the chamber responds to them even though it’s not for me. And, well, you three being so smart, so secretive, and not telling anyone else what’s going on or where you were going before coming all alone to an abandoned part of the building after curfew, well….that’s certainly lucky … You know,” he said, straightening. “Maybe it’s just that it’s very, very l ucky for me and not very lucky for you at all.”

“Please,” Yachi started.

“Final question,” Sora interrupted. “Which of you ingenuous first years knows what this is?” He held up two dark glass squares in his hand.

“They’re two way mirrors,” Yachi answered immediately, confusion coloring the fear.

Sora nodded absently. “Figures the only real pureblood would know the answer rather than some traitor half-blood or a filthy mudblood.” He met Yachi’s eyes. “Even if she has the most pitiful excuse for magic I’ve ever seen.”

“Hey,” Hinata stepped forward, jumping to Yachi’s defense.

“But, you are correct,” Sora continued in a loud voice, running over whatever Hinata was going to see. “For those of you undeserving, the mirrors allow people to communicate even from incredible distances.” He thrust a mirror into Hinata’s hands. “I’m giving one of them to you.” He held up the other one. “While this one stays with me.”

“W-why?” Yachi stuttered.

Sora rolled his eyes. “I thought it should be fairly obvious--to communicate. You’re going to take that one there and call me when you figure out how to open up the chamber.”

“But we don’t know how,” Kageyama yelled back, rolling his hands into fists.

Sora frowned, a plastic picture of empathetic understanding. “Why, here I thought you were the smart one, incentivisation, of course. It’s not much of an incentive if you can just get up and leave anytime, now, is it?”

Yachi’s eyes widened with panic.

Sora leaned down right in front of Yachi’s face and for a split second, Hinata was reminded of the Defense teacher that had taught them all year. “Why, here I thought you were the smart one, incentivisation, of course. It’s not much of an incentive if you can just get up and leave anytime, now, is it?”

Yachi’s eyes widened with panic.

Sora held up his wand, pointing it to the three of them. “Now, why don’t you three just get behind the curtain like good students.”

The three stood there, too frozen to move.

Sora gave that same not quite right smile. “Now, I’m not going to ask again.”
The three immediately stepped back, pushing back the curtain and submerging themselves in the darkness behind.

“Everyone’s far enough back, aren’t they?” Hinata heard Sora call.

“Yes, what are you going to do?” Kageyama yelled back, stepping forward.

“Fun fact about the Astronomy tower, it’s the furthest tower away from any of the living quarters….so, I don’t expect anyone will here this.”

There was a second pause before “Bombarda Maxima”.

A low rumble was all the warning Hinata got before the stone ceiling--barely a meter ahead of Hinata--collapsed, raining down a torrent of rock and stone.

Yachi screamed beside him.

“AHH,” Kageyama called out in pain.

The rumble of falling rock cut off after a minute. Hinata frantically patted down his robe in search of his wand.

“Lumos,” Hinata called desperately, and light sprung from the tip of his wand.

Hinata looked at where the tapestry had once hung.

All that remained was a pile of jagged rubble, cutting off the opening and their only way out.

Chapter End Notes

;) And here you have the second of the finale chapters. Thank you everyone for your support and hope you enjoyed reading! Next chapter will be on Friday.

Next Chapter: Teachers and Students
“Suga, what’s the emergency?” asked Iwaizumi after Suga grabbed him before he could turn the next corner. Oikawa, who had come down with Iwaizumi, followed his cue and waited by the wall.

Oikawa watched as Suga made a frantic gesture at both of them to keep quiet. Narrowing his eyes in curiosity, Oikawa nodded and gave an inquisitive tilt of his head. Suga made another short gesture conveying a request to wait.

A second later, Kuroo followed by Bokuto came bounding down the hall. Suga slapped a hand over Bokuto’s mouth before he could speak.

With his other hand, Suga pulled out his wand.

“Literarum Lumos,” Suga enchanted in a barely audible whisper.

The tip of his wand glowed a pale blue green.

Suga moved his wand, leaving a glowing trail in its wake. Quickly, Suga traced out words in the glow.

Saw Sora following Hinata, first year. He was wearing a cloak and obviously didn’t want to be noticed. I think Hinata’s in danger.

Oikawa’s eyes widened. What did Sora want with a first year muggleborn?

“What does Sora want with Hinata?!” Bokuto whispered frantically, only just keeping his voice down.

Suga shook his head firmly and made another motion to keep quiet.

I don’t know, Suga wrote. He paused a second before Oikawa saw realization flash in his eyes. Hinata was talking in tutoring. I think he might have found whatever Sora’s after.

Oikawa noticed Iwaizumi had pulled out some parchment and quill. We need to do something.

Suga nodded. I was just waiting for you. Hinata said he was going to the Astronomy Tower so I think we’ll find them there. We need to hur-

Suddenly, Suga’s hand jerked sharply as a large boom sounded from down the hall. The walls around them gave a small tremor.

Suga’s eyes widened with panic and the five quickly turned down the hall, racing towards the Astronomy Tower--thoughts of being quiet forgotten.

Turning another corner, Oikawa and the others barreled down a hall to the small foyer by the Astronomy Tower staircase.

Greeting the five was the scene of a hall collapse with hooded Sora standing and pointing a wand at the wreckage.
Oikawa drew his wand, skidding to a stop, with the others following him.

Sora turned at the noise and a short flash of shock crossed his face before he let out a bark of laugh.

“Well, this is a surprise,” Sora drawled slowly, turning towards them. He held up his hands, his wand held loosely. “If you will just give me a second to *Bombarda Maxima.*”

Oikawa didn’t think. “*Protego*”

Bright silver shot out of his wand, more akin to lightning than mist, forming a shield a split second before the spell hit the center. Oikawa felt the force of the spell hit back his arm and, even in the center of the spell, he struggled hard to stay upright. Around him, he noticed the other four get knocked back hard, but hopefully not deadly, by the echoes of the force that managed to get past the barrier. The ceiling and walls behind and around him cracked and broke off at the force of the spell. A few small stone about the size of an outspread hand broke off, one hitting Iwaizumi’s head with a sickening crack.

“Iwa-chan!” Oikawa cried, turning to his friend while still struggling to maintain the shield. Iwaizumi laid still and quiet, blood slowly forming around his temple. Oikawa just made out the slight movement of the chest before the wave of force finally broke and he heard a wild laugh from Sora.

“Now, look at that,” Sora laughed again, sounding more crazed than amused. “The useless little mudblood finally managed a shield spell.” He tilted his head. “Had to be a strong one to if you’re not all dead.” He let out another wild giggle.

He brought his wand up to his face, still a small twitching back to Oikawa. “Well, what are we going to do now.”

Oikawa kept his wand facing Sora, not daring to turn around.

“One little mudblood all alone,” Sora taunted. “You’re friends don’t look to even be conscious, much less able to help.” The smile grew. “And I think we both know your shield spell can’t hold on much more.” The wand twitched back to Oikawa. “Let’s see how long until it breaks.”

*Incendio Tria,* Sora shouted, excitement coloring his tone as blue flame rushed at Oikawa.

*Protego,* Oikawa repeated, silently begging the shield to hold.

Silver mist flooded out, less strong than the first time but still managing to cover Oikawa and the other four laying on the ground. The fire hit the mist causing the shield to buckle but still hold. Oikawa felt beads of sweat drip down his face, either from the fire or the concentration.

“Not very long at all, is it?” Sora said with a mock frown. “Here I’ll give you a few seconds to try again.”

Oikawa let out a shallow breath. With all the concentration he had in his body he willed his magic to the surface.

“One.”

*This is it,* he thought grimly. *Get it right or die.* He firmly shoved all the times he *hadn’t* gotten it right to the back of his mind.

“Two.”
Please, he thought desperately at his magic. He thought instead of the people lying motionless behind him. If not for me, at least let me protect my friends.

“Three. Mortem Exhauriat.”

Dark purple light shrouded in a white mist shot toward Oikawa.

Oikawa let out a breath and yelled, putting all the power he felt in his body behind the one word. “PROTEGO!”

The shield burst out with the force of a wave in a storm, almost completely solidifying in a semi-translucent solid shield covering Oikawa and the rest from wall to wall. White light illuminated the room.

Oikawa only felt a weak pulse as the curse hit the shield--like a bug on a windshield. More and more light flowed from the wand and Oikawa could still barely feel any drain to his magic. In this one moment, he felt like if he needed to, he could keep up the shield for hours.

Consciously, Oikawa allowed the shield to drop and looked back at Sora. The professor was no longer laughing and instead wore an expression closer to shock.

Seeing Oikawa looking back at him, his eyes narrowed. “Not so weak after all, are we?”

Sora backed up a step, giving Oikawa a moment of startled hope before he realized he was just maneuvering for more room.

“Unfortunately, you forget,” Sora continued, “that there was a reason I was chosen to lead the Dueling elective and it’s not because I don’t know how to work around a bloody shield.”

Stall, the planning part of Oikawa’s mind told him. You can’t last long and someone has to come eventually. Stall!

“You’re not going to get away with this,” Oikawa yelled back. “There’s no way people aren’t going to find out you attacked students.”

Sora let out another laugh. “Oh, I’ve done much worse than attacking students and I’ve been getting way with that for years. You have truly no idea of what I’m capable.”

He doesn’t know we found out he’s obliterating people, Oikawa realized.

“Like what,” Oikawa yelled back, allowing a trace of genuine fear in his voice. Keep him talking.

Sora laughed again. “Oh, more than a mudblood like you could ever dream of.” He tilted his head. “Say, why don’t I offer you a deal?”

Oikawa noticed movement in the corner of his eye.

“What kind of deal?” He shouted.

“Well,” Sora drawled. “Not all of you have to die here,” Oikawa tensed. “A few sure--casualties of the cave in. But, a couple? Maybe a couple still survive with just a bit of memory damage.” Sora smiled. “Go down nice and easy and you can be one of them...who knows I might even let you pick the other one.”

Sora tried for an honest, sincere expression as if offering Oikawa a great and magnanimous deal.
Oikawa glared at him, letting out a harsh laugh to dispel the bile in the back of his throat. “As if you’d ever let a ‘mudblood’ like me live,” he finally bit out.

Sora smiled back with too many teeth to be genuine. “True enough. Besides, five deaths are easier to cover up than three and two botched recoveries. *Veno Impetus!*”

Bright green liquid shot toward Oikawa, flowing off of the hastily cast shield. The floor sizzled and bubbled where it landed.

Something flickered in the side of Oikawa’s vision.

“*Immobulus,*” Oikawa shouted back as soon as the shield dropped.

Blinding blue light flew across the space before being easily deflected by a wave of Sora’s wand. “Have to try better than tha-”

“*Expelliarmus,*” Oikawa broke in before he could finish.

Sora batted the other one away with no more reaction than an annoyed glare. “Elementary spells are not--”

“*Depulso,*”

Red light lit the area, flying directly at Sora’s face.

“Fine,” Sora bit out, a quickly drawn shield a hand width away from his face. He pointed his wand down at some surrounding rubble. “*Partum Pugione.*”

The rubble shook and reformed into sharp looking stone daggers. “*Depulso*”

The daggers flew directly at Oikawa, who was only just able to throw up a shield in time.

“*Reducto,*” Oikawa yelled frantically, pointing at the floor in front of Sora. The stone exploded upward with a satisfying crack, fist size rocks flying at Sora’s head.

Sora swore and muttered a spell, causing a brick wall to fly up blocking the rubble. The wall dissolved back down after a second.

“*Cor Ruptum,*” Sora yelled, the moment Oikawa came into view. Purple sparks shot towards him.

“*Protego,*” Oikawa managed, pulling up a shield s bare second before the beam hit his chest.

He looked up to see Sora glaring straight at him.

“Not every spell can be caught in a shield,” Sora bit out.

Oikawa only had a fraction of a moment to suck in a breath before--

“*Crucio.*”

Dark red light flew toward Oikawa faster than he could blink. He moved on instinct throwing himself to the ground. Oikawa felt the heat and the magic pulse of the spell a centimeter above his head.

He didn’t pause. “*Augamenti.*”
An icy blue stream shot to Sora, hitting him directly in the face.

Sora spluttered, shocked by the cold water dripping down his face.

“Water?!” he yelled at Oikawa. “What are you trying to--”

There was a sharp crack and he cut off, crumpled to the floor with a loud thud.

Bokuto stood behind him, breathing hard and holding a large slightly bloody piece of stone.

“Distracting you, I think.”

Sora twitched on the ground, trying to get up.

“Incarcerous,” Oikawa heard Kuroo call from behind him.

Rope flew out at Sora, wrapping around his body. He pulled up his wand to--

“Carpe Retractum”

Orange light spun around the wand pulling it firmly back. Oikawa grabbed it from the light, holding it tightly in his spare hand. He looked up at Sora.

Sora knelt in front of the rubble, bound tightly and with blood slowly dripping from his temple. He glared at them darkly before opening his mouth.

“Inmobulus !”

Sora fell backwards, frozen.

Oikawa looked back at Kuroo, who still had his wand raised. The Ravenclaw boy was breathing heavily and propping himself up using the wall while favoring one leg. He met Oikawa’s eyes and shrugged in a stiff painful looking gesture. “Can’t be too careful.”

“Guys!”

They both turned towards Suga’s voice, Oikawa finally able to take in the scene behind him. Dirt colored the Slytherin boy’s normal silver hair, and he was carefully kneeling over--

The breath left Oikawa’s body.

He quickly turned and fell to his knees on his friend’s other side. Iwaizumi was lying unconscious in the rubble, a pool of blood slowly spreading out from his hand. It...it didn’t look good. In fact, it looked really, really bad.

Oikawa reached out a hand.

“Don’t touch the head,” Suga warned him sharply. “He could have damage to the neck. You could jar it.”

Oikawa felt suddenly very cold. He didn’t know what to--what he could--what--

“Is he--is he okay?” Oikawa heard a voice ask and belatedly realized it was him.

In front of him, Suga bit his lip. “I’m not sure. The amount of blood indicates a serious head injury but...head wounds also bleed more than usual so, it might be better than it seems.”
“What can we do?” Iwaizumi’s face looked pale and was starting to get a slightly greyish tint. That--that wasn’t a good sign, was it? He couldn’t--he couldn’t be--he wasn’t--

Oikawa vaguely felt someone grab his right shoulder before Kuroo told them that Bokuto had gone to find a professor.

“There might be a spell I could try,” Suga put in hesitantly.

“Then, why haven’t you done it,” Oikawa asked, the numbness taking out any accusatory note.

“Healing magic’s tricky. It could make it better, but if it’s in any way messed up it’ll make it worse.” Suga paused a moment. “If I do it, it will stop the bleeding and will stabilize against further damage. But if not…”

Oikawa didn’t need to hear the he might not make it through worse.

“How long has he been bleeding,” Kuroo asked.

“Probably the entire fight,” Suga answered. “I was disoriented for the first bit...but judging by the blood, thirty minutes?”

“Shit,” Kuroo swore. “That’s too long. He might not have enough time to wait for the teachers.”

“Suga, do you think you can do the spell.” Oikawa asked suddenly.

Oikawa could feel both sets of eyes turn to him in surprise.

“I…” Suga started before taking a breath. “Yes, I think I can do it.”

“Then, do the spell.” He stated firmly.

“Oikawa,” Kuroo began hesitantly. “Are you sure?...he might be able to hold out for the teachers.”

“I’m sure,” Oikawa answered with certainty. “It’s what Hajime would chose.” He looked up and met Suga’s eyes. This close, he imagined he could actually see the fear echoed in the warm brown. “I trust you.”

Seemingly unconsciously, Suga let out a breath and nodded. “Okay, but I’m going to need some room.”

Oikawa nodded and carefully got up to take a few steps back. Kuroo followed and went back to stand by the still frozen Sora, pointing his wand down at the bound teacher just in case.

As Suga pulled out his wand and began a litany of spells that Oikawa had never heard before, Oikawa watched seemingly passively while he thought of broken action figures, skinned knees, and gruff reassurances. He let out a shaky, staggered breath.

A pale green fog flowed gracefully from Suga’s wand, encasing Iwaizumi head and neck until Oikawa could no longer see through it. A slow silent eternity passed only broken by the almost melodic sound of Suga’s spells. In the quiet, Oikawa could hear his heart beat--loud, quick, and panicked. He became vaguely aware that tears were falling down his face and he wondered how long he had been crying.

Finally, the fog cleared and Suga looked up.

Oikawa felt his breath catch in his throat.
“It’s done,” the silver haired boy called out. “I think--I think it worked. The bleeding stopped at least and he should be stabilized.”

Oikawa didn’t need anymore than that to return to his spot, sitting on Iwaizumi’s other side. He grabbed at his limp hand.

“Thank you,” he breathed out faintly, still looking down at Iwaizumi.

“Anything I could do.” Suga answered softly.

Oikawa thought that Iwaizumi’s face was slowly regaining some color.

He heard Kuroo let out a relieved breath from his place over by Sora. A moment passed in silence.

In the corner of his eye, Oikawa saw Suga suddenly jerk his head up.

“Wait,” the silver hair boy said, panic eeking back into his voice. “What happened to Hinata?”

---

On the other side of a cave in and unaware of the unfolding events, Hinata, Yachi, and Kageyama frantically yelled into a fragment of a mirror.

“Please,” Yachi begged. “We really don’t know what the words mean.”

“We didn’t even know the chamber could be opened,” Kageyama yelled.

“You’re like the worst teacher ever,” Hinata tried ineffectively.

The mirror stayed dark, just like it had ever since Sora had slipped his piece of the mirror into his pocket shortly after they got stuck here.

“Guys, I really don’t think he can hear us,” Hinata finally admitted, slipping the mirror into his own pocket. The light from his wand casts shadows on his friends faces, making them look gaunt and hopeless.

“What are we going to do,” asked Yachi, obviously fighting to keep her panic back.

Kageyama sat heavily, eyeing his leg where it had gotten cut in the initial rockfall. “I hate this stupid chamber.”

“He can’t leave us here forever,” Hinata commented hesitantly, unused to being the logical one. “Someone’s going to notice we’re gone and put it together with the whole cave in thing.”

“But, they don’t know where we are in the damage,” Yachi pointed out. “Only Sora knows. It could take them days to find us...and we don’t have any food or water.”

“We’re stuck,” Kageyama concluded grimly, tugging at the frayed piece of tapestry that was half stuck under the rubble. “In this stupid chamber with this stupid wall and this stupid tapestry.”

Yachi slid down on the smooth side of the wall, where the message shown. She bit down on her lip but a weak sniffle still escaped.

Hinata rubbed the back of his head, crouching down to sit next to Kageyama. He slid his fingers
idly along the remaining bits of tapestry as he stared at the message.

“Whoever wrote that message had to hate people,” Kageyama commented darkly. “Who puts up a compulsion charm and makes people bleed on wall.”

“I told you blood magic was more common in the days of old magic,” Yachi responded absently, responding to the question more out of habit than real thought. “That’s why a lot of the old Merlin stories feature it.”

“Well, it’s no bloody wonder the Ministry ruled it as dark if this is what it’s use for,” Kageyama muttered.

Hinata looked down at the tapestry and noticed small versions of the animals were moving gracefully along the edges: first the raven, then the badger, then the snake, and last the lion.

Hinata jerked his head up silently. “Yachi, what was that thing you said when we first found the message?”

“Um,” Yachi answered confused. “Oh my gosh, it’s a hidden message?”

Hinata shook his head. “No, when you were translating, you talked about what the whole first part meant.”

“Oh, I said I thought that the words might mean the four Houses,” Yachi said in realization. “That’s not that surprising though, Hinata. It is in Hogwarts after all.”

“No, Yachi, I think that is important. Really, really important” Hinata argued, standing suddenly. “When was blood magic the most popular?”

Yachi tilted her head and Kageyama sent him a look that asked if he’d gone crazy.

“Um, from the eight to the eleventh century, mostly,” Yachi answered.

“And when was Hogwarts founded,” Hinata pressed.


“Then, this writing could be from that same time, right?” Hinata continued.

“Roughly,” Yachi answered. “But, Hinata--”

“Then, this chamber could’ve been around since the founding of Hogwarts,” Hinata concluded.

Yachi and Kageyama were still looking at him in confusion.

“Maybe?” Yachi finally answered.

“Think about it,” Hinata continued. “The tapestry had the four House symbols on it. The wording of the message and the blood magic would be popular then, too. And, the message refers to the traits. I don’t think it’s just the Houses. I think this chamber was created by the founders!”

Yachi’s eyes widened. “The Founders’ Treasure!”

“What,” Kageyama and Hinata asked both at the same time.

“It’s in Hogwarts: A History,” Yachi explained, jumping up to stand beside Hinata. “It’s one of the
old legends of the school. When Hogwarts was first started, the four founders created a hidden chamber where they stored each of their greatest treasures with asks were set to hide the treasure from anyone unworthy.” She let out a breath, remembering. “That’s when the animosity with Slytherin’s founder broke out. The legend says that right when they were supposed to finish, he broke away from the other three and made his own chamber, the Chamber of Secrets.”

“You think the Founder’s Treasure is what Sora is after,” Hinata asked excitedly.

Yachi nodded. “It makes perfect sense. He probably found it out from the tapestry and thought we knew how to get in.”

Hinata felt really excited for approximately a second before realization took over and he suddenly deflated.

“But...we don’t,” Hinata concluded lamely. “So, we’re still stuck here.”

Yachi bit her lip. “I don’t understand. The inscriptions says to prick your thumb and name you goals. We’ve tried every goal we could think of and Kageyama used his blood again to get the message. Why won’t it open?”

“Goal,” Kageyama corrected suddenly. “It says goal not goals.”

Yachi nodded, waving a hand at the correction “Right, name your goal.”

Hinata tilted his head and looked at Kageyama. “Do you think that’s important.”

Kageyama nodded slowly, getting to his feet. “Well, I mean the founders all had really different methods but they all had the same goal, right?”

“What do you mean,” Yachi asked confused.

Kageyama stood in front of the wall, staring at the words. “I mean they started a school. They were all teachers….so, if they wanted us to have a goal…”

He trailed off, continuing to look at the wall. Hinata and Yachi came to stand by either of his sides.

“Then,” Kageyama started again, lit fully by Hinata’s spell, “our goal should be..I mean the one they’d want us to have…it should be…”Teach Us”

The words had barely left his mouth before the floor started to rumble again.

“Get down,” called Yachi. “I think Sora started another cave in.”

“No,” Hinata yelled. “Look, it’s coming from the other wall!”

They watched as a straight crack formed, severing the message into. As soon as the line reached the floor, the walls folded inwards like doors. The stone doors opened, revealing a dark musty smelling pathway that ,even with Hinata’s Lumos, they could only see about a meter inside.

As the dust settled, Hinata looked around at Kageyama and Yachi’s surprised faces.

“Well,” he finally said. “I think we found our way out.”

Chapter End Notes
Here it is, the final showdown and the answer to a few questions. Next chapter is...I guess long is the best descriptor. It will be roughly twice the length of my normal chapter size and definitely involves more of me creatively interpreting Harry Potter cannon than other chapters do. It will be posted on Monday. As always, hope you enjoyed and thank you for reading! I will always appreciate the wonderful support I've gotten for this story.

Next Chapter: The Founders' Tasks
“You want us to find a way through there,” Yachi asked nervously.

Hinata shrugged. “I don’t think we really have another choice.”

“We don’t even know if there is another path through there,” argued Kageyama.

“We know there’s not one here though,” Hinata countered. “Got any better ideas?”

Kageyama turned back to look at the rubble behind them before reluctantly grimacing. “He’s right, Yachi. We don’t have another way.”

Yachi bit her lip. “What if whatever’s in there is more dangerous than Sora though.”

“Then, we’ll face it together,” Hinata said, gently. “Come on, Yachi, it’s the only way.”

Yachi let out a barely audible breath before pressing her lips firm and nodding. “Okay.”

Hinata shot her an encouraging smile while Kageyama gave her a steadying grasp on her shoulder. In unison, the three turned backed to the dark hallway. Feeling the hairs on the back of his neck stand up, Hinata completely understood Yachi’s reluctance to go through the tomb like caverns.

“Together?” Yachi suggested.


So together, the three took their first steps past the tapestry chamber and into a dark hallway that looked to have gone untouched since the days of the founders. Which, Hinata supposed, it probably had.

A few steps inside, Hinata felt a strong gust of air on his back and turned quickly to see the doors shut behind them. Yachi yelped beside him, her hands flying to her mouth.

“Um,” Hinata said, looking behind them at the blank wall that didn’t show even a small sign of opening again. “I guess it wants us to keep going forwards.”

As soon as he spoke, torches lining each side of the hall suddenly burst into flame, lighting the path ahead of them.

“P-probably a safe bet,” Yachi commented softly.

The three walked cautiously ahead. Hinata had the eeriest feeling they were being watched and pulled out the mirror from his pocket. It remained quiet and black as before.

They hadn’t walked far before they entered a small chamber, only distinguishable from the hall by it’s wider oval like shape. Well, distinguishable by that and the giant flames that marked each of the two halls that diverged from it. On the left hall, flames lit up a bright green color, seemingly sprouting from the floor. To the left it was much the same, the only difference being purple flames instead. In the center of the room stood a statue of what looked like an young and beautiful woman with a wide hood obscuring her face. In front of her stood a stone podium at roughly waist height.
with a tablet perched on top.

Curious, Hinata approached the tablet ignoring the hissed warning from Yachi and the muttered ‘Idiot’ from Kageyama. He looked down, bending over the podium.

“Guys, it’s got writing on it,” he called back at the other two. “I think this is one of the tasks that the wall was talking about.”

“What does it say,” Yachi asked, approaching his side while still looking apprehensive. Kageyama moved to his right.

“It’s upside down,” Hinata frowned. He walked over to stand beside the statue of a woman. “I think it says..oh, Yachi, you’re going to have to translate again.”

Yachi came up, turning her neck uncomfortably to read the words. ‘It says ‘If thou haven bravery withouten wisdom, thou ist folhardy. Thou moste chosen the right paeth and walken togedere with bravery.’ Honestly, Hinata, this one’s not that different than our English. It just says ‘If you have bravery without wisdom, you are foolhardy. You must chose the right path and walk together with bravery.’”

“But, which door is the right on,” Hinata asked, looking at Kageyama across from him.

“I mean it’s that one. Right?” Kageyama asked pointing to the door on his right.

“Oh, duh,” Hinata exclaimed. “Kageyama, I don’t think I’ve ever told you but you’re a genius!”

Kageyama glared.

“Oh, guys, you don’t think that’s a little too...easy,” Yachi asked, looking at the door.

“Maybe that’s why it’s the good choice,” Kageyama argued. “Like a trick question!”

Hinata nodded eagerly, walking to the purple flamed door. “Besides, it’s not like they gave us much else to go on.”

Yachi still looked hesitant and was looking back at the tablet. “You don’t think we should, um, talk about it maybe a bit more.”

“Come on, guys,” Hinata called them. He was so close to the flames now that he could feel the heat on his face. “It says we had to do it together.”

Kageyama huffed, looking a bit less sure of his answer now that he was confronted with the fire, but came to stand next to Hinata. Yachi followed more cautiously.

Hinata grabbed there hands. “On three, okay?”

“Um,” Yachi said again.

“One.” Hinata started, looking at Kageyama with a challenge in his eye.

“Two.” Kageyama answered, glaring back.

“Thr--”

“WAIT!”
The two boys looked in the direction of Yachi’s scream.

“It was too simple,” Yachi panted. “It was way, way too simple. It’s the statue!”

“What,” Hinata asked confused.

“The words,” Yachi said, pulling them back. “The words are facing the statue!”

Kageyama followed her pull, looking perplexed. “So what?”

“Well,” Yachi answered, still out of breath. “I think Kageyama was right about the clue being literal. It’s just not our right. It’s the statue’s right! It’s the green flame. That’s what it means about wisdom! It wouldn’t mean anything to walk through the fire if it just tells us, too. That’s just bravery. We need wisdom, too.”

“Oh,” Hinata asked, somewhat sheepish for almost pulling them through real flames. “So, um, green?”

Yachi nodded, looking fearfully at the green flames.

“Um, try again,” Kageyama suggested.

Yachi let out a breath before nodding.

The three re-positioned themselves, this time in front of the green flame.

“Why don’t you count this time, Yachi,” Hinata suggested nervously.

The blonde Gryffindor gave a firm nod and grabbed both of her friends hands. “R-ready?”

“Yeah,” Hinata reassured her.

“Not like there’s anything better,” Kageyama answered.

“One…” Yachi started. Hinata tried not to think much about what they were about to do. “Two.” He could feel Yachi’s hand shake in his. It was probably going to be fine, right? “Three.”

The trio stepped into the green flames.

Hinata closed his eyes and felt….cold….wait, cold? Hinata opened his eyes and could see the green flame around him but couldn’t feel any heat. Hinata cautiously reached out his hands and saw the flames wrap around it like a cool mist on a foggy day.

“I think...Yachi, I think we chose the right door,” Hinata said, still feeling Yachi’s hand in his.

“K-keep walking, then,” Yachi said, the sheer panic still present in her voice.

Hinata took another step forward and the three emerged from the fire. He let out a breath, looking down at his remarkable un-singed clothing.

“We’re fine! We’re really fine!” He shouted, patting himself down just to check. He turned to his friends. “Yachi, you’re amazing!”

Yachi blushed. “I’m just glad I figured it out in time.”

“Yeah, us, too,” Kageyama said, glaring at Hinata.
Hinata stuck out his tongue. “You were the one who said right!”

“That didn’t mean we had to immediately walk through fire!” Kageyama argued back.

“Guys!” Yachi yelled, cutting them off in a way that had almost become practice. “Look around!”

Hinata did, easily subsiding with his fight with Kageyama. In front of them laid…what looked like it used to be a garden. Dead bushes laid brown over old grass with skeletal trees above them. The entire scene was eerie, like everything had died at once.

“I-I guess we need to walk through,” Yachi asked, the apprehension creeping back in.

“Better than the fire,” Kageyama shrugged, leading the way.

Slowly, he lowered a foot onto the dead grass—watching for the effect. The tip of his shoe touched until gradually his entire foot was lowered. Nothing happened.

“I think the ground’s safe,” he muttered back to the others.

The other two followed cautiously into the dead garden, the grass crunched softly under their feet.

Hinata looked around, trying to spot any kind of life. Bugs, birds, even the wind seemed nonexistent here—like walking through a world of grey and brown. Hinata fought back a shiver, focusing instead on walking forward and the breathing of his friends.

After a few minutes walking, Hinata paused. Something sounded like…it was moving. Something other than them.

“Hey, do you hear that?” Hinata said, looking to the other two.

“What,” Yachi asked, tilting her head.

“It sounds like…water,” said Kageyama, pausing near Hinata.

Hinata listened closely trying to figure out the source. “I think it’s behind those bushes.”

Following the sound, Hinata walked over to the right and tucked his arms carefully through the tall section of dead rose bushes. He held up his arms to protect his face from the dry branches and thorns scratched his arms and legs as he pushed his way through.

“Guys, there’s a stream over here,” Hinata called behind him. “I think I found the next task. There’s even one of those statue things!”

A moment later, Kageyama and Yachi were pushing themselves through the bushes to stand on either side of Hinata—Kageyama swearing lightly as his shirt was pulled by branches.

As he had said, in front of them was a small fast moving stream with stones lifted a bit above the water. In front of the stream was a statue much like the first task. The difference between the statues was startling, however. This statue showed a woman wearing loose opener clothing, like one would do gardening with. Her hair was thrown back as if caught by the wind while her face was wide and open with a bright smile stretching on her face. She stood barefoot before the stream, a podium like the first one in front of her.

Kageyama groaned stepping forward and looking at the podium. “Huh, at least the words are facing us this time…but, yeah, Yachi, you’re definitely going to have to translate this.
Yachi came around to the side. “Oh….oh, that’s really weird. Those aren’t English letters.”

Hinata peered over her shoulder. “What are they, then.”

“It’s um, Greek,” Yachi answered curiously. “Well, no, wait, hold on, the bottom parts have an older form of English, but it just says what we already knew. Translated it’s just ‘If you have wisdom without care, you are arrogant.’”

Kageyama wandered away from the tablet to look by the river.

“What about the Greek part?” Hinata asked excitedly. “What’s it say?”

“Well, it, um, doesn’t really say anything,” Yachi told him, frowning. “It’s just some letters. Look, the first one’s the sign for Epsilon, then it’s Sigma, Kappa, Alpha, Delta, and Beta.”

Yachi’s eyes widened and she looked down at the stones. “Wait, I think I understand. Look, the stones have the same markings!”

Hinata squinted down at the signs, noticing the same weird squiggles as the ones on the tablet. “Oh!” Hinata said in realization. “That’s so cool! So, we just follow the order that’s on the tablet and cross the stream.”

Yachi bit her lip. “No, I feel like that’s too easy again.”

“Kageyama, come over here and help Yachi,” Hinata called to the taller boy who was bending down and looking at something by the stream.

“One second,” Kageyama called back, staying crouched down.

Hinata opened his mouth to ask what he was doing before Yachi exclaimed, “Oh! I think I’ve got it!”

“What is it?” Hinata asked eagerly.

“They’re out of order,” Yachi responded, looking down. “In Greek, it goes Alpha, Beta, Delta, Epsilon, Kappa, Sigma. I think it’s telling us we have to chose those letters but step on them in the correct order!”

“OHHHHH, Yachi, you’re so smart!” Hinata yelled, eyes shining. “Kageyama, come on! What’s taking you so long? Yachi figured out the puzzle!”

“This flower,” Kageyama responded annoyed. “This flower is still alive.”

“It’s dying though,” Kageyama said, looking back down at the flower and furrowing his brow.

That’s why we need to leave.”

“I’m going to water it,” Kageyama said decisively, bending down by the stream.

“Come on, Kageyama,” Hinata whined. “Didn’t you hear Yachi, it’s going to die anyway.”

“That doesn’t mean it has to die now, though,” Kageyama said defensively. “It just...it just looks sad, okay? If we can water it before we leave, then I am.”

Hinata and Yachi looked at each other before shrugging, deciding it wouldn’t hurt to let him try.

Cupping his hands, Kageyama bent down and filled up his hands with water. Yachi held her breath as if waiting for the river to jump up and attack him. She slowly relaxed as nothing happened.

Careful to not let much water drip back, Kageyama slowly walked the extra step back to the flower and gently let the water fall onto the leaves.

As soon as the water touched the ground, the ground started to shake.

“Kageyama,” Hinata shouted through the earthquake. “What did you do?!?”

“Nothing!” The taller boy yelled back, falling onto his back beside the flower.

“The water!” Yachi yelled, crouching on the ground. “Look at the water!”

Hinata looked up and sure enough water in the stream was slowly lowering as if being drained. Slowly, the water level shrunk and the ground gradually stopped shaking until all that was left was a half a meter of solid wet dirt where the stream used to be.

Hinata opened his mouth to ask--

“The garden,” Kageyama yelled, pointing behind him.

Hinata looked back to the dead garden and saw...that it didn’t look so dead anymore. The rose bushes were fully green and sprouting bright red roses. Behind that, the trees were in full bloom with large flowers or fruits hanging off of them. Hinata looked down confused and saw that even the grass under them had returned to a fresh green color.

“Kindness,” Yachi said in realization. “The task wasn’t about wisdom. It was about kindness. Kageyama watered the flower and it drained the stream.”

“Huh,” Kageyama asked confused.

“You solved the task,” Yachi reassured him.

“Really?!” Hinata shouted. “That’s awesome! Good job, Kageyama!”

Kageyama still looked rather baffled but pointed awkwardly to the former stream, now a dirt canal.

“So, we should probably like…” he waved his hand to signal walking across.

Yachi nodded with a smile and the three went to the former stream’s edge and hopped down into the muddy bottom.

“Oh,” Yachi said bending down to look at the stones that were now sticking out roughly a meter tall. “Look at this, Hinata, all of the stones with symbols on them have fractures where the river was running. If we stepped on any of them, we’d have been swept into the stream.”
“So, the symbols were just there for no reason,” Hinata asked, confused.

“Like a trick question on an exam,” Yachi agreed.

The three continued through the basin, stepping out again on the other side to see--

“Oh, no...oh definitely, definitely NO,” Yachi gasped, shaking her head and all but stepping back down into the mud.

In front of them was a sheer cliff face with three slim stone beams, about the width of a single shoe, sticking on from their side and stretching into the dark. Beside the beams stood a stone statue of a man elegantly holding his wand out over the side. Like the first woman, he wore a cloak--though off of his face and with elegant embroidery down the side. His angular face looked calm and unfazed in the face of a sheer cliff drop, but his stone eyes strangely seemed to glint in the flicker of the candlelight--giving him an almost vulpine appearance, In his other hand, he held a stone tablet carefully angled out towards the group.

Yachi slowly and carefully staying as far away from the cliff as possible, approached the tablet.

“’If you have care without cunning, you will be bound,’” She called back, translating. “This must be the Slytherin task.”

“What does falling off a cliff have to do with Slytherin,” Kageyama asked incredulously.

Yachi bit her lip in her usual expression of nervous contemplation. “I think--I think we’re supposed to walk across it together.” She pointed. “See, the beams are about an arms width apart so if we plan it right, we can hold each other up while we walk to keep from falling.”

“What if it’s another trick,” asked Hinata, looking around for another flower or...well, anything else really.

Yachi paused, thinking. “I don’t think it is. Think about it solving a puzzle wouldn’t have anything to do with care--it’s just wisdom. That’s why we would have failed...but, this...this task would mean we’d have to both help each other and plan it through.”

“Care and cunning,” Kageyama agreed, nodding. “I get it.”

Hinata thought another minute before shrugging, giving into Yachi’s logic. It’s not like he had any better plans. “So, how do we do this. Whoever has the best balance in the middle to center the others?”

“That’s probably you,” Kageyama muttered begrudgingly to Hinata before Yachi shook her head.

“No, that won’t work,” she said, tilting her head and looking toward the stone walkways. “It has to be the heaviest or the strongest in the middle. If not, they won’t be able to balance the others without tipping over.”

“So, me,” Kageyama asked, glancing at the other two who were both shorter than him by at least twenty centimeters.

Hinata frowned,muttering under his breath about “unnatural giants” and “waiting for growth spurts”. Oblivious to her blow to his stature, Yachi was looking nervously over the cliff face.

“Guys,” she said, looking pale. “I--I really don’t think I can do this. The stream was, well, it was just a stream...and I, I just didn’t think about the fire, but this...I really can’t, you two can balance
Hinata came up beside her, careful peering at the precipice himself. “I know you can do it, Yachi! You’re awesome, you just walked through fire literally! What’s a little a height going to do?”

“I don’t think it can be much higher than the Quidditch pitch,” Kageyama reasoned, standing perilously close to the edge without a hint of self-consciousness.

“But, we have brooms in Quidditch!” Yachi argued back, her breath coming quicker.

“Yachi, you have to do it,” Hinata reassured her, putting an arm around her to stop the shaking. “We need three of us or we’ll overbalance. Whatever happens Kageyama and I will catch you. I promise.”

Yachi glanced nervously between Hinata and Kageyama, her lip wobbling before she could stop it.

“There’s should be only one more task after this,” Hinata told her brightly. “There was only one more line of the riddle.”

“I--I can’t, though,” Yachi blurted, turning a bright red. “Really, I’m just going to mess you both up and we’re all going to fall because of me.”

Kageyama took a deep breath before coming to stand in front of Yachi. He met the smaller Gryffindor’s eyes. “Yachi, we have to go. If not, we don’t have a way out. No one’s going to know to help us except Sora.”

“Not that he would,” muttered Hinata under his breath, briefly checking the still dark mirror.

Yachi kept eye contact with Kageyama before letting loose one loud sniffle that she quickly scrubbed away with her sleeve. “Promise, promise, you’ll catch me?”

“Promise,” Kageyama and Hinata said at once.

She set her lip and nodded. “O-Okay, I’m r-ready. I can-I can do this.”

Hinata gave her a big grin while Kageyama did his version of a slightly less severe scowl, both boys gently pulling her forward.

“Yachi, you take Kageyama’s left. I’ll take the right. Okay?” Hinata said, lining himself up with the beam.

“R-right,” Yachi said, carefully facing forward and not allowing herself to glance down.

Kageyama set himself in the middle and reached out for both of their hands. Hinata clasped back firmly, feeling matching Quidditch calluses on Kageyama’s palm.

“Together,” Kageyama asked.


“T-two,” Yachi answered in a determined tenor.

“Three,” Kageyama breathed out slowly.

The three took their first step forward.
Hinata’s foot landed soundly on the stone platform...before his arm was pulled forward causing him to nearly imbalance.

“Kageyama!” Hinata yelled, just regaining his footing. On the other side, Yachi looked to be facing similar difficulties.

“What!” the taller boy yelled back.

“Your footsteps,” Yachi broke in before Hinata could respond. “Your legs are longer than ours. You need to take shorter strides!”

“Oh,” Kageyama said, furrowing his brow. “Sorry, I guess. I didn’t think about that.”

“It’s fine, it’s fine,” Yachi reassured, breathing heavily. “Here, just step on my count.”

Hinata and Kageyama both nodded.

“Okay, step,” Yachi commanded.

Hinata stepped forward, feeling Kageyama measure for a shorter length and step forward in unison. All three managed to step without dis-balancing.

“Step,” Yachi called again.

Together, the trio took another stride forward.

“Step.”

Hinata’s foot landed awkwardly, but he managed to correct it before he accidentally pulled on Kageyama.

“Step.”

Kageyama was about a centimeter off in his stride, but both Yachi and Hinata were able to correct.

“Step.”

Another successful step followed by another and another as Yachi called out the orders. Soon, the three had managed somewhat of a rhythm and were slowly but surely making distance. Hinata kept straining his eyes to see past the darkness ahead of them, but still nothing appeared.

“Ste-whoaah,” Hinata felt a tug on his arm as Kageyama leaned to Yachi’s side, managing to keep her from falling off the platform. Hinata tried to stay steady and not pull Kageyama too far to his side.

Yachi re-found her footing and the three paused a second, letting her catch her breath and slow back her heart beat

“Okay,” she finally said, taking a deep breath. “Let’s try again...Step.”

The three stepped forward in unison. This time without incident.

“Good, Step.”

The three walked onward, every dozen or so steps preventing minor imbalances from the others.
Hinata began to think that they actually had a good chance of making it all the way.

Kageyama slipped on the next stone, bringing them all forward. Hinata crouched down immediately, steadying his center of balance. On the other side, Yachi wasn’t so lucky and lost grip of Kageyama’s hand. She windmilled her arms, loosing balance on the beam.

“YACHI!” Hinata yelled, dropping Kageyama’s hand as the taller boy darted forward trying to grab her arm.

His arm reached out. Yachi’s foot fully slipped off the beam, sending her back out of Kageyama’s reach. Kageyama stepped forward to catch her, forgetting his own footing. Hinata watched as both slipped, falling almost in slow motion off of the beams and down to--

“Wingardium Leviosa,” Hinata yelled, sharply pulling his wand out.

There was a heart stopping second where nothing happened and they kept falling before suddenly...the two both stopped mid-fall...and then, slowly they kept going up--floating off of the beams and into the air above. Hinata looked down on his wand, trying to rein in the magic he felt.

“Hinata!” Yachi cried, a second away from hyperventilating. “G-good thinking. B-but you need to put us back down onto the path!”

“I’m not doing this,” Hinata yelled back, frantically. His own feet started to float slowly, pulling him off the path. “I mean I was at first, but I’m definitely not now!”

He waved his wand wildly as if to demonstrate.

“What’s happening?!” Kageyama shouted as the three all hung suspended in air, going further and further away from the path.

“I don’t know!” Yachi answered, just as confused. “I think Hinata’s spell triggered something!”

“I thought we couldn’t use magic on this task!” Kageyama responded, bewildered.

“You guys were falling!” Hinata defended loudly. “I did it without thinking!”

The three continued floating up until Hinata saw a light floating in the darkness, steadily getting bigger.

“Guys! I think I see a ledge! We’re floating to it!” Hinata yelled, pointing.

Kageyama and Yachi both followed his line of sight. The ledge got closer and closer before the three finally became level with it. Whatever magic was holding them up, slowly dropped them down and Hinata saw that ahead of them was another torch lit pathway.

“We must have passed the task,” Kageyama shrugged.

“But, but, that doesn’t make sense unless..” Yachi frowned, thinking. “Oh, it’s like the stream!”

“There wasn’t any flower, Yachi. I looked.” Hinata told her, confused.

“No, I mean it was a trick,” Yachi answered, words getting faster and faster as she explained. “We were supposed to use magic. We just didn’t think about it because the other tasks didn’t have anything to do with magic. It was Slytherin’s task. He was all about--”

“Using anything for your advantage,” Kageyama concluded flatly. Hinata glanced over and saw
that Kageyama was looking at the ground with a pensive expression on his face.

Yachi nodded. “We weren’t supposed to do it the hardest way, we were supposed to do it the smartest way.”

“Huh,” Hinata said, tilting his head. “I guess it was lucky I wasn’t thinking then.”

That seemed to pull Kageyama out of his mood enough to at least roll his eyes. “Come on, let’s finish whatever the final task is and find a way out.”

Hinata nodded emphatically and followed Kageyama as the boy led the other three down yet another dark torch lit hall.

As the continued onward, the hallway grew wider and wider. Hinata noticed that the air seemed damp and thick almost like that time that the orphanage took them to one of the university’s indoor pool. A dull roar filled Hinata’s ears right before they turned the corner and--

Yachi sighed beside Hinata, too exhausted to even muster up her normal yelp. “I swear I wasn’t afraid of heights before we started all this.”

In front of them was...well, a waterfall. The hallway broke in an even straight line with flowing bright blue water flowing down from beneath it. Hinata stepped closer and saw that roughly one large step in front of where the hallway cut off, the water suddenly plummeted down what looked to be at least ten stories before hitting off large stone rocks at the bottom and finally flowing into what Hinata assumed was a lake. Thirty or so meters in front of the waterfall was a jagged stone wall that led all the way down until stopping a few meters before the lake, creating a kind of chute with stone on one side and the waterfall on the other.

Like the other tasks, a statue sat at the center of the waterfall, stone legs and feet dangling off the edge. Of all the statues, this statue was hardest to place in age. The other three looked to be about mid-thirties, all with a kind of inner maturity though they lacked many lines on their faces. This statue grinned widely and, like the garden statue, was barefoot and wore casual clothes with his sleeves and pants legs rolled up. He had a number of lines on his face with laugh lines around his eyes and forehead creases in stress. His tunic was slung low on his chest, almost hiding the stone dagger that hung off his hip. His hair looked messy, piled on top of his head like windblown straw. Next to him, as if he had just sat it down to look out over the waterfall, was a tablet.

As usual, Yachi went over to it to translate. She groaned. “It says ‘If you have cunning without bravery, you will fail. Trust and take the final leap.’ I’m pretty sure it wants us to jump off the waterfall.”

“Can we just use magic instead,” Kageyama asked, hesitantly. Both he and Yachi turned to Hinata, who shrugged pulling out his wand.

“Wingardium Leviosa,” he waved his wand in the correct movements. Nothing happened. Hinata couldn’t even feel any magic.

Yachi shook her head. “It’s the Gryffindor task. They wouldn’t make it that easy. I bet there's a magic block around this entire section.”

“So, we jump,” Hinata asked, cautiously.

“We jump,” Yachi said, tiredly. “At this point, at least I can’t believe they’d let us just fall to our deaths after completing everything else.”
“Um,” Kageyama broke in. “I, um, I can’t...swim.”

“What?!” Both Hinata and Yachi yelled together.

Kageyama glared. “We didn’t have any pace to swim in my neighborhood. I never learned.”

“Oh, well, we can...um,” Yachi started.

“We’ll hold you up,” Hinata reassured.

“No,” Yachi said, suddenly. “That won’t work. He could pull us down, too. That’s why you have to be careful when saving drowning people.”

“Can we not say that word right now,” Kageyama huffed, a thin line of panic entering into the general frustration.

“Maybe, we can freeze you,” Hinata suggested. “That way you won’t thrash around.”

Yachi shook her head again. “He’ll be dead--um, sorry, really heavy--weight if we do that. We might not be able to carry him. He could sink.”

“We’re not freezing me and throwing me into the water,” Kageyama said darkly.

“Well, we’re not leaving you. So, we have to think of something,” Hinata told him.

“What about,” Yachi suggested. “No, that won’t work. Do any of you know the Bubblehead Charm?”

Hinata and Kageyama both shook their heads.

“I didn’t think so,” Yachi sighed. “Well, we could--”

“Just jump,” another voice said, suddenly.

All three of them turned startled to their side and saw--

It turns out Yachi had one more scream left in her.

Once the scream cut petered out, the three starred shocked still as the statue ironically wasn’t still.

The statue winced, lowering his hands from where he covered his ears. “I guess I should probably have expected that.”

“Um,” Hinata managed.

“Yeah, yeah, talking statue,” The statue said, boosting himself off of the waterfall ledge to stand in the hallway. His clothes moved naturally around him as if they were made from cloth instead of stone. “You go to Hogwarts, this can’t be the weirdest thing you’ve seen.”

The three stared at him blankly.

“So, um, good job making it through the first three tasks,” he said awkwardly. “First people to walk this chamber in over a thousand years. That’s pretty impressive.”

They continued to stare.

“It would be even more impressive if you wouldn’t mind saying something--really, anything at this
point,” the statue hinted.

“Who are you,” Hinata finally blurted.

The statue smiled, looking please. “Glad you asked. Godric Gryffindor, in the flesh. Or well, in the stone, rather.”


“That’s me,” the statue preened. “Well, alright, I’m his statue. And may, I just say that I am beyond thrilled that it was one of my lions that found this place first. I am going to hold this over Rowena for the next century.”

“There’s more of you,” Kageyama asked.

Godric’s statue nodded. “Yeah, she was the one at the first task. The woman with the hood--always the flare for dramatics. They asked me what I wanted to be commemorated in for thousands of years and I say something sensible like a tunic not a bloody ritual garment.”

“All of the statues can move,” Hinata yelled, his voice echoing off the chamber walls.

Godric nodded. “Yeah, we’re normally, er, not really supposed to but I heard you struggling and...well, I couldn’t really resist,” He tilted his head ruefully. “That’s probably why they saved me for last.”

“Why didn’t the others talk to us,” Kageyama asked.

“Like I said we’re not really supposed to,” Godric told them. “Gotta let you figure out the clues for yourselves. Else it defeats the purpose, you know?”

“The clues!” Yachi said, remembering. “The clues are all in Middle English. Why are you speaking in Modern English?”

Godric beamed, rubbing his hands together. “And a smart one, too. Rowena’s going to be so mad.” He turned back to the trio. “Well, I’m far from the only statue of Godric Gryffindor. It’s like the paintings, we just move consciousness rather than physical bodies. We’ve been observing the Wizarding World for ages by now, we pick up the lingo. It’s how I knew you were one of mine.”

“Then, you can let people know we’re down here,” Kageyama exclaimed. “They can save us.”

“Wellll, not really,” Godric said in a casual, relaxed drawl. “Statues aren’t like paintings. There’s two enchantments. The first is like the paintings and gives consciousness. The second is the one, like I have, that allows us to move and talk. There’s only one other statue of me that can move and talk.”

“Where’s the other one,” Yachi asked, frowning. “Also, I’ve never seen another statue talk before.”

Godric looked excited by the question. “It’s one of the lost magical arts! Rowena has around like a dozen books on it, but most everyone forgot the how to’s over five hundred years ago.” He paused, holding up a finger and Hinata wondered if “Rowena” was not the only statue with a dramatic flair. “But, you can all rediscover it. Gain glory and flame. Become heroes of the Wizarding World if you complete the final task and find THE TREASURE!!”

He finished with a loud bellow that echoed off the walls.
“GAH!,” Hinata was practically jumping with excitement. “How do we find the treasure, Mr. Gryffindor.”

“Just Godric’s fine,” the statue said, flapping a hand. His and Hinata’s excitement seemed to be feeding one another. “Okay, so here’s what you’ve gotta do. When you jump off the waterfall. Then, there’s going to be this invisible magic barrier that Salazar set up. It’ll catch you before you hit the bottom, so don’t worry about swimming. Then, you’ll slide through the waterfall and….TREASURE!”

Hinata eyes shone and he almost jumped off the ledge right then and there.

Kageyama looked skeptically at the water. “Doesn’t it defeat the purpose if you tell us we’re all going to be fine.”

Grodric shrugged. “You’ve already walked through fire, nearly fallen to your deaths, and been through Helga’s weird death garden. I think you’re brave enough.”

“So, we just jump,” Yachi asked, regaining some of her nerves.

Hinata and Godric nodded eagerly.

“Kageyama,” Yachi asked.

Kageyama let out a breath before nodding.

“Together,” she asked, quirking a lip.

“Always,” Hinata answered, reaching out and grabbing their hands. “One...Two...Three!”

The trio jumped off a waterfall.

What followed was what Hinata was not ashamed to admit was the second most terrifying moment of his life, only followed by falling off his broom in the Slytherin game. All three of them screamed until their throats were numb before finally landing on the soft barrier that Godric told them about.

As soon as they landed, their momentum rolled them down the slight incline and the hit the waterfall hard. Hinata laughed as the water hit his face for a brief second, before all three emerged on the other side and into a beautiful glowing foyer.

The three slid off the end of the barrier, gliding onto sparkling white marble floors. Hinata looked up to see a tall golden chamber, complete with a sparkling silver chandelier hanging from the ceiling and lighting the entire room.

“Welcome, wise students,” A melodic voice intoned and the three looked up from the ground to see a statue of a woman gliding towards them with a magnificent hood thrown back from her face. She was beautiful--her face holding a silent elegance and her curly hair delicately pinned back from her face, flowing down her face.

“I am the statue, the living memory you could say, of the one you call Rowena Ravenclaw,” she continued, angling her head so that the light shown off her stone face. “Do not be afraid--”

Hinata noticed a statue of Godric, identical to the one at the top of the waterfall, snickering to the side.
“For I,” Rowena continued before looking down at the three. “Oh, you don’t seem afraid, do you?”

Godric let out a loud laughter from behind her.

Rowena’s eyes widened and she whirled around. “You told them! Didn’t you, Godric!”

The Godric statue was now doubled over as Rowena advance ominously towards him.

To the other side, the dainty figure of a statue that Hinata recognized from the garden let out a loud sigh. “Oh, dear. This is exactly why we put their tasks furthest away from each other.”

The last statue, the man with the elegant robe from the cliff task, smiled faintly next to her.

“Waits over a thousand years and can’t wait another bloody five minutes,” the Rowena statue yelled, looming over Godric.

“Rowena,” Godric cajoled. “He couldn't swim. They weren’t going to jump if they knew one of them wouldn’t make it.”

That was apparently not enough for Rowena, who immediately broke into her next argument.

“Sally,” Hinata heard the dainty statue say softly to the other. “Do remind Rowena that we have guests, would you?”

The robed man nodded.

“Rowena,” he called, interrupting Godric’s latest defense. “If you could wait in your verbal dismantlement of Godric, our guest would probably like to see the treasure.”

“Oh....right,” Rowena broke off from yelling at Godric to turn back to the trio, who were slowly getting back on their feet and dripping lightly on the floor.

“Sorry about that.” She cleared her throat and began back in the same magnanimous voice, gliding back towards them. “You have found the legendary treasure of the Founders. As mine was the first task you completed, it is my duty and honor to present you with my gift first.”

She strode to an opening to the side of the chamber and gestured for them to follow. “As you know that bravery,” she paused to glare at Godric, “is nothing without wisdom. I leave to you the original manuscripts of my personal library.” She stepped aside and Hinata looked past her to see a room filled with rows and rows of bound books. “The room was enchanted long ago to keep whatever it holds perfectly preserved. Though the woman of which my statue is modeled left copies of all she had learned, it is to my knowledge that many of these copies have been lost over the ages. It is her fervent wish and mine as her memory, that this knowledge be returned to the world in the hands of those most worthy.”

She bowed her head lightly to them as the three stumbled through their thanks.

“Hinata,” Yachi whispered to him excitedly. “Those books are as old as the Founding of Hogwarts! There’s stuff in there that was lost millennials ago.”

Hinata nodded, unsure what to say, before the dainty statue he noticed earlier stepped forward with a smile.

“My dear badgers,” She began happily. “And of course a loyal lion. As you have probably guessed by now, I am the statue of Helga Hufflepuff.”
Hinata and Kageyama looked at each other with wide eyes before turning back to the beaming statue of their House founder.

“I can’t tell you how pleased I am that two of my own found our treasure,” she continued, clapping her hands together once. “For those who know that wisdom must go hand in hand with caring, I give you my advice. Always keep your eyes open to new faces and new voices and never leave a gathering as a stranger.” Her face shone warmly down there. “I am afraid I cannot give you my greatest treasure as it was all the people I’ve known in my life. What I can do is convey my wishes that you find this treasure for yourself and gift you with my second greatest treasure--my cleverest creation.”

She stepped aside, revealing a podium behind her where a folded piece of fabric sat. “I modeled this cloak after the legendary one of the Peverell family. Though it may not have that cloak’s fabled origins, it should serve you just the same.” She picked up the cloak carefully and handed it to Hinata. As soon as the cloak touched his hand, Hinata jumped.

“My hand disappeared,” he yelped.

“It’s an Invisibility Cloak,” Yachi realized, lifting a piece of it from Hinata’s arms and turning it in her hand. Wherever the fabric touched, Yachi’s hand disappeared under it. “Amazing! It’s a perfect illusion, not even a shimmer.”

Helga smiled proudly. “Charms was my best subject after all. I even added a folding charms so you can fold it down as many times as you want and stick it in your pocket.”

Hinata turned it over in his hands, doing just that until it was about the size of his palm. It still kept its slim parchment thin thickness.

Helga stepped aside, allowing the robed statue to step forward. Hinata quickly slipped the Invisibility Cloak into his pocket and turned to the new statue.

“I am the statue of the Great Salazar Slytherin,” he began with a soft almost somber tone. “For those, who have passed my task--even though it was mainly by accident.”

“Brother,” Helga chided gently at his side.

“Brother?” Yachi asked. “You two are siblings.”

Helga nodded, smiling. “Sally’s my younger half-brother, we’ve been together since we were children. I take it records have lost this?”

Salazar nodded absently, moving on in his speech. “It is my misfortune to inform you, however, that though you have completed the task, I have nothing I can give you.”

The statue stopped with an air of mournful finality. Helga stepped forward, grabbing his shoulder. “My brother’s statue was created before he split from the rest of us,” she explained sadly.

“I escaped my creator’s madness but unfortunately, he did not entrust me with his treasure,” Salazar confirmed.

“What madness,” Kageyama asked with a frown.

Salazar winced and Helga once again answered for her brother. “It’s a curse on the Slytherin line. The eldest of every seventh generation is cursed to eventually succumb to madness. My brother fell to the curse shortly after we finished building this chamber. It’s always been my belief that he took
his treasure and hid it away in a secret part of the castle.”

“The Chamber of Secrets,” Yachi breathed. “That’s where the rumor is from.”

Salazar nodded. “I just hope my descendants are one day free from the family curse.”

“You still have descendants,” Yachi asked, confused. “I thought all the Slytherins had died out years ago.”

“Both Helga and Salazar still have living descendants,” Rowena corrected. “Unfortunately, all of mine and Godric’s died out generations ago.”

Helga grinned down at them. “I believe you’re actually friends with mine! A bust of mine saw you talking in the common room once.”

Godric cleared his throat rather loudly, drawing the attention back to him. “If I may continue with my treasure now.”

“Go on, go on,” Rowena responded, annoyed. “We know your tendency towards...impatience.”

Godric smiled brightly, ignoring Rowena. “To those brave enough to take a final leap of bravery—”

“When you told them it would be fine,” muttered Rowena.

“I gift to you,” Godric paused dramatically, before drawing something from behind his back. “The Shield of Godric Gryffindor--blessed with enchantments from all but the one foulest of spells.”

He heaved it into Kageyama’s arms.

“Whoa, that can protect against anything,” Hinata asked with amazement.

Godric nodded proudly. “All but the Killing Curse, it’s even impervious to the Torture Curse.”

Rowena’s eyes glinted with reluctant admiration. “It is a rather impressive creation.”

Godric looked smugly at her and she opened her mouth to retort.

“Congratulations to you, our champions,” Helga said, stopping the two before they could get started. “You have found the treasures of a lost millennium. Go forth with our blessing and share these gifts with the world.”

“Though why it took a millennium was probably Rowena’s fault,” continued Godric, not to be deterred from a good argument. “Whoever thought Blood Magic was a good idea?”

“So, what you’d rather me just fling the message on the wall,” Rowena responded back caustically. “Why not just send out invitations?”

“Actually,” Kageyama broke in, scowling. “Who’s idea was the bloody compulsion? Thing nearly drove me insane.”

The founders paused, startled.

“What compulsion?” Rowena frowned.

Kageyama glared. “The one that was--”
The ground started to rumble around them, shaking the chandelier.

“II, I thought we were done with the tasks,” asked Hinata, voice vibrating with the movement.

“The Message Wall,” Rowena yelled over the noise. “Someone’s trying to force their way through the first wall!”

That has to be at least a mile away,” Yachi yelled back. “Why is it causing an earthquake here.”

“It’s a security measure,” Helga answered, bracing herself on the wall. “The Hogwarts’ wards are sensitive. If you try to force them down, they don’t react well. Someone needs to stop them! If they keep going, they’re going to bring down the entire chamber on their heads.”

“How do we get out?” Hinata asked, trying to make himself heard over the noise.

“This way,” Godric called, pointing to a door opposite from Rowena’s library. “We’re inside part of the mountain by the Great Lake. Go through here and you should come out by the castle.”

He threw the door open, revealing a tunnel that looked like it was burrowed into the ground.

“It’s warded so you can’t see it from the other side,” Salazar explained. “Only someone who’s been through the tasks will be able to see it. You three need to hurry!”

Yachi, Kageyama, and Hinata stumbled their way to the tunnel, moving as quickly as they could on the shaking ground.

Right before they entered the tunnel, the ground gave another shake and a large rock broke down from the tunnel and hit the ground with a large thud.

“That’s--that’s not supposed to happen,” Godric told them.

“We didn’t ward the interior of the tunnel,” Rowena realized. “We weren’t worried about people struggling to get out, we thought they’d be breaking in.”

“Can you hold it open for us,” Kageyama demanded.

Helga shook her head, looking worried. “We’re just statues. We can’t do magic.”

Hinata caught a glance at Yachi’s teary eyed face. An idea popped into his head.

“You two go,” he told them. “I’ll hold open the tunnel. Like when that bathroom collapsed on Yachi.”

“But, how will you get out,” Yachi asked, eyes darting to Hinata.

Hinata shook his head. “Don’t worry about it. I’ll be safe here. You guys need to stop them from breaking down the wall. Come back for me after.”

“Hinata’s that’s a lot of magic,” Kageyama argued with him, worry passing over his face.

Hinata focused, feeling the magic roll through him. “It’ll be fine. I got it. Just go!”

“We’ll watch over him,” Rowena assured them.

Yachi shot one last long glance at Hinata before nodding. “Come on, Kageyama. He’s right. We have to stop them before they get hurt!”
Kageyama hesitated before letting himself get pulled.

Hinata pulled out his wand. “Wingardium Leviosa.”

The pull of the spell pulled out, stretching until it touched the walls of the tunnel. Hinata could immediately sense with the magic the way the rocks pressed against it, trying to fill the tunnel.

“GO!” he shouted.

Yachi and Kageyama ran through the tunnel.

Sweet beaded and rolled down Hinata’s face.

“You’ve got it,” Helga told him gently. “Just a few minutes.”

“How powerful is he,” Godric whispered somewhere behind him.

Hinata could feel the strain going completely down his arm, until it felt like the magic was almost trying to eat him from the inside out.

“They’re almost there,” Helga reassured him.

Hinata eased his eyes open from where he realized he’d closed them.

Kageyama and Yachi were still a few several meters away from the light.

Darkness started to edge into Hinata’s vision. Pain shot through his chest.

He vaguely heard Godric yelling out encouragements that echoed strangely in his ears.

“Helga, he needs to stop,” Rowena said softly.

“A little more,” Helga continued.

Hinata was starting to lose feeling in his legs. His knees hit the floor as he kept his arm out.

“Helga!”

“For your friends, Hinata,” Helga told him.

Hinata thought of Yachi and Kageyama stuck in a tunnel.

“You’ve got it, Hinata.”

He started to feel the press of the tunnel like it was pressing on his rib cage.

“They’re out, Hinata! Drop the spell!”

Hinata dropped it, vaguely aware that his arm and shoulder hit the floor hard followed by the rest of his body. Darkness was filling his vision quickly.

“Let go, Hinata,” a kind voice said. “We’ll watch after you until your friends get back.”

Hinata thought that sounded...really okay.

He closed his eyes against the darkness.
Here it is, the final of the finale chapters! Now, all that's left is wrapping the story up (along with a few more surprises). I honestly cannot tell you how much it means to me that people are still reading and commenting on this story. So, again sincerely, thank you for reading and hope you enjoyed!

This chapter, I fully admit, is a bit weird. It's the one where I've made up the most about Harry Potter cannon. Because of that, I am really unsure about this chapter and would really love feedback to hear what you all think.

Next Chapter (only 2 left!) will be posted on Friday and is titled "Signs".
Hinata slowly became aware of a warm light. His eyelids flickered once, twice, before finally he opened his eyes to see--

He groaned. *Kenma was going to kill him.*

A low chuckle sounded from somewhere to his left. He turned his head to see Headmaster Ukai sitting comfortably in the visiting chair beside his hospital bed.

“I’d assume that’s the correct response for most who end up here,” Headmaster Ukai commented lightly. “Nice to see you awake again. Nekomata said you’d be up soon.”

“Um, how long have I been asleep,” asked Hinata, moving himself into a sitting position to lean back against the headboard. At least, he didn’t *feel* that injured this time.

“Counting the night that they brought you in. You’ve been out for two nights,” Ukai told him. “Extreme magical exhaustion.” The Headmaster lifted an eyebrow. “It’s generally inadvisable to try to hold up over a kilometer worth of stone for roughly ten minutes, by the way...In case, you were planning a second attempt.”

“I think I’ll be good,” Hinata grimaced, reaching for the water beside his bed. His eyes widened. “Wait! Are Kageyama and Yachi, okay?”

The Headmaster nodded, holding up a hand to forestall his panic. “They’re fine. Gave us a bit of a shock running up behind us, yelling for us to stop, when we thought we’d been mounting a rescue attempt for you three.”

“Professor Sora!” Hinata shouted, remembering. “He was the one who brought the wall down! He trapped us so that we’d find the treasure for him!”

Headmaster Ukai took on a grim, solemn air--anger flashing briefly in his eyes. “You’ll find that Professor Sora was dealt with by a few of our more...suspicious students. It seems they’ve been investigating him for close to the entire year. He’s been arrested and sent to Azkaban to await trial for attempted murder along with some other truly heinous crimes he’s apparently been committing for decades.” The Headmaster looked back down at Hinata, swapping back to his lighter tone. “Between Sora’s arrest and you three discovering a legendary treasure, it’s all *The Daily Prophet* can talk about. You’re a bit famous right now, I’m afraid.”

Hinata frowned, not quite sure how he felt about that.

“So, um, Yachi and Kageyama told you about the treasure,” he asked, jumping to a topic he was more comfortable with.

The Headmaster nodded. “Unfortunately, because of the barriers you three are still the only ones able to enter the room until we clear off enough rubble to get to the wall on the other side. However, Ms. Yachi and Mr. Kageyama have both been quite helpful in bringing the treasure to us. They’re the ones who carried you out from the chamber.”

“What’ll happen with everything,” Hinata asked curiously.
“That’s actually one of the reasons I came to talk to you,” the Headmaster told him. “I’m not quite sure you three realize how great of a service you’ve done for Hogwarts in recovering artifacts lost over a millennium ago. As decreed by the Founders, the treasure now of course legally belongs to you three.”

Hinata’s eyes grew wide, astounded by the sheer amount of wealth he’d somehow inherited. “But I...um,...and, ah….I’m only eleven, though!”

The Headmaster looked distinctly amused again. “That was roughly Mr. Kageyama’s exact reaction as well. The Board of Trustees at Hogwarts is quite eager to buy back both Ravenclaw’s library collection and The Shield of Gryffindor to return it back with the sword in the Headmaster’s office. If you three are willing, Mrs. Yachi--the mother of your friend--has volunteered to take up the negotiations. If I remember her well enough from hr time at school, I’m sure she’ll make quite veritable fortunes for each of you in the trade.”

Hinata nodded absently. “Yeah, that, um, works better for me. Besides, Ravenclaw said she wanted her library to be returned to the world anyway.”

The Headmaster tilted his head. “Both of your friends did mention that there were moving statues of the Founders. But, I have to admit I wondered if it might have been an exaggeration from the stress. If so, you three have been blessed with a wonderful opportunity.” He hummed lightly. “In my opinion, one even greater than the treasure.”

Hinata silently realized he agreed, thinking back to the warm reassurances of Helga and of Godric’s easygoing laugh.

“I’ve already asked Ms. Yachi and Mr. Kageyama, but I’m afraid they were rather preoccupied at the time,” the Headmaster started, pulling Hinata from his memories. “How exactly did you manage to find the lost chamber?”

Hinata eyes widened before he launched enthusiastically into his tale about cloaked figures and blood magic and compulsion spells--complete with Hinata’s version of sound effects and sweeping gestures.

“A compulsion,” the Headmaster interrupted. “After this long?”

Hinata nodded. “Yeah, Kageyama cut his hand on the wall and got blood on it and that’s how we first saw the message.”

The Headmaster nodded, thinking. “And how did you think to look behind the tapestry in the first place.”

“Oh, it was when we were hiding because,” Hinata shut his mouth abruptly before mentioning being out after curfew. “We were, um, trying to find something else?”

Headmaster Ukai gave him an assessing look before he let out a low hummph.


Hinata stared. “You, ah, know about the mirror, um, sir?”

A smirk passed over the Headmaster’s face. “Who do you think left it for you to find?”

Hinata gaped at the Headmaster, who snorted.
“Surely, you didn’t think that old codger Nekomata hadn’t gone to bed without leaving any wards to tell him if students were sneaking out of the Hospital Wing,” the Headmaster asked. “When I saw you sneak out the night I had watch duty, it was too good of an opportunity to pass up.”

“But, why?” Hinata blurted.

The Headmaster looked at him curiously. “You don’t know what that mirror is. Do you, Mr. Hinata?”

Hinata shook his head.

“The Mirror of Erised will show a man his greatest desire,” the Headmaster started. “The enchantments behind it have toed the line between cursed object and what’s referred to as a blessed object for years but it’s not the mirror you should be wary of--it’s what it shows. People have been known to waste their lives away in front of that mirror.” He paused. “I’ve always thought it tells a lot about a person to see what they do after they found it.”

Hinata fought a chill as he thought of the nights h’d spent just sitting in front of the mirror.  

“If it’s so dangerous then why did you want me to see it,” Hinata asked.

The Headmaster looked down at Hinata. “Do you remember what I told you last semester? It’s not the power that makes a wizard great, it’s what they do with it. I know that I don’t look it, but I have been alive for just over a hundred years and headmaster for half of those.” He turned to look past Hinata, out the window behind him. A reflective, almost somber, passing through his eyes. “I’ve seen a number of student pass through these halls... Powerful students... And if there’s one thing they’ve taught me it’s that it’s not only Hogwarts’s job to test your magic. It’s Hogwarts’s job to test your hearts.” He tilted his head at Hinata, considering. “When you were confronted with your desires, your response was to share them with others. That reveals more to me about you that any class test of magic actually could.”

Hinata swallowed, keeping silent.

“You are a powerful wizard, Mr. Hinata,” Headmaster Ukai remarked. “And you will grow to be even more powerful. But, more importantly, you have a good heart.” The Headmaster met his eyes with that same intense look that always made it impossible to look away. “Don’t let the world change that.”

Hinata nodded, somewhat awkwardly.

“So, what happened to the mirror,” he finally asked after a long moment of silence.

“It’s stored away,” The Headmaster commented briefly. “Even those with good hearts can get sucked into the mirror’s power.”

Hinata frowned, feeling more than slightly disappointed.

The rings on his privacy curtain rattled and the curtain was pulled away from his bed revealing an annoyed looking Professor Nekomata.

The mediwizard sent a halfhearted glare at the headmaster. “Way not to tell me my patient’s awake, you old coot!”

The Headmaster met the glare with a friendly challenge. “I thought you knew everything about your Hospital Wing.”
“I do,” the mediwizard responded immediately. “It’s how I knew you’d want to talk to him. However, if you two are done with whatever you’re manipulating him about, he does have other visitors who’ve been waiting.”

The Headmaster nodded easily, getting up at the prompting.

“Heal up, Mr. Hinata,” The Headmaster told him in farewell. “Hogwarts is expecting you and it would be a shame to miss the End of the Year Feast.”

The Headmaster passed Professor Nekomata, who looked back at Hinata.

“Ready for more visitors, son,” he asked in a voice that showed he was still considering sending them away on basic principle.

“Yes,” Hinata responded quickly, before Professor Nekomata could decide he needed to rest more.

Nekomata narrowed his eyes before nodding, throwing back the curtain further and nodding to two figures in the corner.

Hinata had barely looked up to see who it was before he was hit hard in the chest by a flying ball of messy blonde hair.

“You’re awake,” Yachi yelled, throwing her arms around his neck. “I’m so glad you’re okay!”

Kageyama stood beside her looking just as relieved though much less likely to hug him.

“I am, too!” Hinata answered happily. “I’m glad you two got out in time.”

Kageyama nodded. “It took them a bit to convince them to stop. But, we managed pretty well after we told them that you needed help on the other side.”

Yachi nodded. “Oh, everyone in the school hasn’t left us alone since. We made it on the front page of the paper!”

Hinata’s eyes widened, wondering just exactly how “famous” they were as the Headmaster had described it.

“That’s...um, really cool,” Hinata eventually managed and from the half excited half resigned looks on his friends faces he could see they agreed.

“I’m sure the reporters are going to want an interview with you after you recover,” Kageyama told him with a grimace. Hinata frowned.

“Of course, it’s not just us,” Yachi added before looking back down at Hinata. “Oh, right, you haven’t even heard about the duel!”

“What duel,” Hinata asked.

“A third years dueled Sora,” Yachi told him with wide eyes. “And won!”

“It was Oikawa,” Kageyama broke in and Hinata’s eyes widened in recognition at the muggleborn Sytherin’s name.

“Right,” Yachi continued, nodding. “It was him with Sugawara Koushi from Slytherin and Bokuto” Yachi held up her fingers to count off the names while Hinata scrunched his face in confusion at his tutors name along with the Quidditch captain. He hadn’t even known that they
knew each other. “That scary Ravenclaw Quidditch player, Kuroo Tetsuro and Iwaizumi Hajime from my House. They’re how the other professors knew we were down there. Apparently, they saw it when it happened and then went to get help after they confronted him.” Yachi paused a second before remembering something else. “Oh, and apparently they found all this evidence that Sora had been wiping people’s memories for years that they gave over to the teachers. With that plus him being found by the cave in, they were able to get him arrested and so now he’s in Azkaban--oh, that’s like this really scary wizard prison.”

Hinata stared at the wealth of information.

“Um, are they okay?” he finally settled with.

Yachi and Kageyama looked at each other before Kageyama finally nodded and pointed to another privacy curtain at the back of the Hospital Wing.

“We don’t know yet,” Kageyama said. “Iwaizumi still hasn’t woken up.”

---

Suga sat quietly as he watched Oikawa watching Iwaizumi.

It had been two nights since the confrontation with Sora and, other than bathroom breaks and a shower that Kuroo had strong armed him into, Oikawa had not left Iwaizumi’s bedside since. And, if Suga was being honest, it was starting to show. The black circles under Oikawa’s eyes were prominent, his clothes more wrinkled, and his conversation more absent minded. The other members of the Investigators’ Club had been taking shifts in the hospital to watch both Iwaizumi and Oikawa.

Physically, Nekomata had reassured them that Iwaizumi was fine--though with the added caveat that if Suga’s spells had come a few minutes later, Iwaizumi would have bled out. Now, the only thing that was worrying is that he hadn't woken up yet so that Nekomata could check his mental state for any brain damage. As Nekomata had told Oikawa multiple times, it wasn’t a bad sign that he hadn’t woken up yet just that his brain was taking his time to heal.

Still, it was also estimated that he should have woken up a day ago.

“Oikawa,” Suga prompted, noticing the other boy had been quiet for awhile. He’d been zoning out a lot this afternoon.

“Hmm,” Oikawa responded, flickering his eyes up but still mainly watching for any signs of movement from Iwaizumi.

“What are you thinking about,” Suga asked, curiously.

Oikawa sighed somewhat ruefully. “Nothing that I shouldn’t have already known.”

Suga scrunched his brow and carefully filled that away for later. “You want me to go grab some lunch?”

Oikawa shrugged lightly. “Yeah, I guess. I’m not really that hungry. Nekomata gave me some breakfast awhile ago.”
Oikawa had begged, cajoled, and then outright refused to leave to get the mediwizard to allow him to stay. Suga suspected that Nekomata finally had given in out of lack of energy rather than Oikawa actually persuading him. Whatever worked, Suga guessed.

Iwaizumi’s hand twitched slightly on the blanket, causing both boys to zero in and hold their breath. A minute passed and nothing changed.

Oikawa glared, though the familiar note of concern was still present. “Iwa-chan’s certainly taking his sweet time, isn’t he?”

“Probably just trying to skip exams,” Suga joked, causing Oikawa to let out one of the first laughs Suga had heard in days.

The smile faded gradually from Oikawa’s face before he looked seriously at Suga. “I guess I better say this before Iwa-chan wakes up and punches me in the arm for being all mushy.”

Suga looked up and waited.

“Earlier this year when you asked me if I trusted you,” Oikawa said, exhaustion creeping into his tone for the tiniest bit.

Suga nodded cautiously.

“Well,” Oikawa hesitated, clearing his throat. “Iwa-chan...he, um, he means more to me than I think I’ve ever meant to myself. So...ah, I mean I wouldn’t have asked you to do the spells if, ah...”

Suga nodded, understanding without making Oikawa finish.

Oikawa gave a small smile in gratitude. “Besides, it will be nice to have another friend in Slytherin.”

Suga opened his mouth to respond before--

Iwaizumi let out a loud groan.

“IWA-CHAN!” Oikawa yelled, leaping out of his chair and grabbing his friend’s shoulders.

Slowly, Iwaizumi eyes squinted open before sorting themselves into a mild glare.

“Stupidkawa, stop yelling! My head already feels like I got hit by a Bludger!”

“IWA-CHAN!” Oikawa screamed again, throwing his arms around his friend and burying his head in his shoulder. Suga smiled from behind him.

“Ugh, why am I in the Hospital Wing,” Iwaizumi asked, voice still gruff from sleep. His eyes widened suddenly and he moved to get up but Oikawa’s hug still held him down. “Wait, we were going after Sora. What happened?”

“You got knocked out by a piece of debris,” Suga told him softly. “It looked pretty bad for awhile.”

“You almost died,” Oikawa said, voice muffled by Iwaizumi’s shoulder. “Suga saved your life.”

He finally lifted his head off Iwaizumi’s shoulder to glare at him. “You’re never allowed to do that again.”
Iwaizumi patted his friend’s hand absently, still looking like he was trying to process everything. “Yeah, I don’t really plan on it. So, ah, what happened after?”

“That’s a question that can be saved until after the physical exam,” Professor Nekomata interrupted, pulling back the curtain and striding into the room. “You two--out! Judging by the conversation, he’s fine enough. But, I still need room to do a thorough exam.”

He none too graciously shoved the two Slytherins out of the curtain and pulled it shut sharply behind them. Oikawa and Suga looked at each other, finding themselves in a mostly empty Hospital Wing. Slowly, a smile shone across Oikawa’s face and he threw himself at Suga.

“He’s okay,” Oikawa whispered fiercely. “Iwa-chan’s going to be okay.”

Suga patted his back, smiling.

In the corner of his eye, he noticed movement from the other side of the room and leaned back to whisper back to Oikawa. “Looks, like someone else is awake, too.”

Oikawa slowly lifted his head, realization filling his face. “The Shrimp!”

He turned to Hinata’s bed, pulling Suga’s hand. “Let’s go see him. I still need to congratulate him on the chaos.”

Suga went willingly with Oikawa, pulling his bag onto his shoulder from where it sat outside the curtain. When they were a few steps from Hinata’s curtain, the curtain pulled back slightly and a boy in Hufflepuff colors stepped out.

He looked up and startled at the sight of the two of them.

Suga noticed that Oikawa had stopped, too, and was starring at the boy.

A series of emotions passed over the boy’s face, faster than Suga could read. Finally, the boy seemed to settle on guarded.

“Iwaizumi,” the boy asked gruffly.

“It looks like he’ll be fine,” Oikawa answered shortly.

The boy nodded before starring at them awkwardly like he was trying to figure out what to say next. He opened his mouth.

“Kageyama,” a short blonde girl exited the curtain. “Come on. Hinata asked us if we could grab him some treacle tart from the Great Hall.”

The girl’s brow furrowed as she noticed the other two boys. “Are you here to see Hinata?”

Suga nodded, trying for a reassuring smile as Oikawa and the other boy continued their strange starring match.

The girl nodded, shooting another glance at the boy. “We were just going to go tell some of his friends in the Great Hall that he’s awake.”

Lightly, she pulled on the boy’s arm. “Come on, Kageyama. If we don’t hurry they’ll put away the treacle tarts.”

The boy, Kageyama seemed to break from whatever spell as he looked down at the girl. He shot
another look behind him to the closed curtain. “Right, let’s go.”

The girl shot him another confused glance but followed him as he led the way out of the Hospital Wing.

Suga frowned at Oikawa. “What was that--”

“Shrimpy!” Oikawa shouted, throwing back the privacy curtain. “I knew you’d be entertaining, but I didn’t know you’d be this entertaining.”

Hinata blinked once in surprise before recognizing the visitors.

He grinned widely before glaring at Oikawa. “Stop calling me that!”

“Or what,” challenged Oikawa, smiling.

“Or I’ll, um, think of a nickname for you,” Hinata said before looking down, frowning. “Something really good…that makes you seem pompous….like a King…yeah, King… but, er, even more so….like a really big King…A Grand King! Yeah, stop calling me Shrimpy or I’ll start calling you the Grand King.”

“My, that would be just terrible,” Oikawa said in a tone that implied it was anything but. “I suppose I can manage Hinata instead.”

Hinata looked pleased at his “win”.

Suga cleared his throat beside them, pulling out something from his bag.

He handed the defense book to Hinata. “You left this last tutoring session...though, I tend to think your quiz is cancelled rather indefinitely.”

Hinata smiled. “Thanks, Suga.” He looked between the two. “Oh my gosh, I heard you guys dueled Sora! And it was AMAZING! AND YOU WON! And then you like got him arrested and thrown in jail forever!”

Oikawa nodded, looking satisfied with this summation.

“Not quite yet,” Suga corrected gently. “He still has a trial for sometime this summer.”

“Not that he has a chance now,” Oikawa added and Suga nodded in agreement.

“But, you really fought him and won,” Hinata asked, looking at Oikawa.

“Yep,” Oikawa answered lightly. “And you really found the lost Founder’s Treasure. That will certainly annoy a few prissy purebloods.”

Hinata rolled his eyes. “I didn’t do it because of that.”

Oikawa shrugged. “Intentions matter less than results.”

Hinata opened his mouth to argue back and Suga idly thought that the two certainly had a strange relationship.

“Are you feeling alright,” Suga interrupted before Oikawa could shoot another argument back.

Hinata nodded. “Yeah, just a bit tired. Nekomata said I should be back in my dorms by tonight.”
“Watch out for interviewers,” Suga told him seriously. “There not allowed in to Hogwarts. But, I’m pretty sure we’re all getting flocked with owls every morning. It’s a good thing there’s no deliveries in the Hospital Wing.”

Suga watched Hinata grimaced and open his mouth to respond before the Hospital doors swung open.

---

Hinata looked up as Bokuto and Kenma’s friend, Kuroo, walked into the Hospital Wing.

“Hey, Hey, Hey,” Bokuto boomed, looking at Hinata. “You’re up!”

Hinata smiled happily, nodding.

“Quit ending up in the hospital,” Bokuto told him seriously. “We need you for quidditch next year.”

“And because we don’t want you injured,” Akaashi added quickly, walking into the room at a much more sedate pace than the others.

“Yeah, of course,” Bokuto agreed easily.

Kuroo rolled his eyes besides him. “Come on, Badger Brains, if Oikawa and Suga are over here then that means Iwaizumi’s awake.”

Hinata watched Bokuto’s eyes widen at the news before looking at Suga and Oikawa for confirmation.

“Just woke up a few minutes ago,” Suga answered. “Nekomata’s checking up on him now.”

“And I just finished,” Nekomata said, walking over. “Full recovery with no permanent damage. Just needs a bit more rest. I’ll let you talk to him for an hour but then all of you are getting out and letting him sleep.”

He added the last bit while looking at Oikawa, who reluctantly nodded.

“Hey, we’ll be right back, Hinata,” Bokuto told him with a hint of regret. “It’s just because Iwaizumi’s got the limited visiting hours.”

Hinata nodded easily, waving them off and watched Suga, Oikawa, Bokuto, and Kuroo follow Nekomata back behind Iwaizumi’s curtain.

Hinata looked up to the door and wondered when Kageyama and Yachi would be back.

“Oh,” Hinata jumped. “Sorry, Akaashi, I thought you had gone with the others.”

Akaashi looked at him blankly, not a hint of emotion crossing his face.

“Um, Akaashi,” Hinata asked nervously.

Still with the same cold emotionless expression, Akaashi moved stiffly to sit in the visitor seat beside him.
“I guess you’re staying with me?” Hinata asked.

Still no answer.

Hinata fidgeted slightly, leaning over to check on him.

He was just about to say something when Akaashi opened his mouth and spoke...only it wasn’t the voice Hinata was used to.

“The duel must come to an end,” a low guttural voice said with Akaashi’s mouth. “Victim and victor, their paths intertwined. Love becomes hatred, so hatred must become love. Three signs mark the way. The lion will fall to mark a year. A raven will cry to mark seven months. A silver snake burns to mark seven days. Three signs mark the way. Love becomes hatred, so hatred must become love. Victim and victor, their paths intertwined. The duel must come to an end.”

Once he had said the last word, Akaashi abruptly started coughing—bending over with the impact.

“Akaashi,” Hinata said cautiously, hitting the boy’s back lightly until he finally stopped sounding like he was hacking up a lung. “Are you okay? What are you talking about?”

Akaashi looked up at him confused, before sudden recognition and panic crept on his face.

“Wait, was that—was that a prophecy?!” Hinata near yelled, remembering Bokuto studying out loud after Quidditch practice.

Akaashi’s eyes darted to the side, checking to make sure no one else was around.

“Yes,” he finally said in a soft voice. “I believe so, at least.”

“Oh my gosh, are you psychic,” Hinata asked, lowering his voice to a harsh whisper to match Akaashi’s pitch. “Do you do those all the time?”

Akaashi shook his head sharply, still looking flustered. “No, that’s only the second one I’ve ever done. Normally, I just see them.”

“You can see the future!” Hinata almost yelled, before Akaashi frantically hushed him.

“Not the exact future,” Akaashi corrected quickly. “There’s normally a lot of different paths. Only prophecies are fated.”

“Wow,” Hinata enthused. “That’s so cool. We’ve go to tell Bokuto, he’ll—”

“NO!” Akaashi suddenly shouted. He looked quickly around again, making sure no one overheard. “Hinata, you can’t tell anyone about this. Especially not Bokuto.”

“You mean he doesn’t already know,” Hinata asked, confused.

Akaashi shook his head emphatically. “No one does.”

“But, why?” Hinata asked again, tilting his head.

“It doesn’t matter,” Akaashi told him firmly. “We don’t have much time before Bokuto comes back. Hinata, please. Please promise me you won’t tell anyone.”

Akaashi deflated, relief flashing across his features.

“Thank you,” he said sincerely. “I-I need to go before Bokuto realizes I didn’t follow him.”

He quickly, and still more jittery than Hinata had ever seen from the passive boy, lifted himself off the chair and headed to the door.

He threw one last glance behind him before reaching for the handle.

“Oh, by the way, I really am glad you’re okay, Hinata,” the Ravenclaw boy said warmly. “Those tasks looked really dangerous.”

Hinata nodded, before running back over the words. “Wait, you saw–”

Further questioning was interrupted by Yachi and Kageyama coming through the door, nearly hitting Akaashi as he slipped past them and out the Hospital Wing.

“Hinata, we got you the treacle tarts you wanted,” Yachi said brightly, while Kageyama offered up the mentioned plate.

“You look weird,” Kageyama said, which was his way of asking if Hinata was alright.

“It’s nothing,” Hinata smiled, turning to his friends and trying to forget about the guttural words now echoing in his head.

Chapter End Notes

One more chapter left!!!
I posted this one a day earlier because I am worried I won't have time tomorrow so I hope you enjoy it a day early. This chapter gives the first major hint of the longer arc I have planned for this series. As a side note, I really have loved writing Akaashi throughout this story and if you look back literally every action he's taken in this story has some kind of larger meaning.

As always, thank you SO MUCH for reading and hope you enjoyed! I really cannot express how much everyone's support has meant to me while writing this so just from the bottom of my heart, thank you. Also, thank you for all the wonderful feedback I got last chapter; I'm happy that most people seem to like the liberties I took with Harry Potter cannon.

Next and final chapter will be posted Monday. As a second side note, I've also already started writing for the sequel I have planned though I will be taking a short break in between finishing this one and posting the next one (I will post the title for it though for next chapter). Okay, sorry for the long end note and I am now done.

Next Chapter: Leaving Home and Coming Home
Chapter Notes

Two quick notes before the chapter.

First, because I got the question in comments and realized I never fully explained it, Sora’s mirror wasn’t taken or anything. It just got left in his pocket while he was frozen so no one on that side of the wall found out about it until after Yachi and Kageyama mentioned it after their rescue. Sorry for the confusion with that.

Second, I know that Hogwarts technically doesn’t send out its grades until late in the summer. But to be honest that would stress me out too much as a student, so I had them get their grades at the end of the semester before they leave. That is all. Hope you enjoy!

“Come on, guys! I just got out of the Hospital Wing and I’m faster than you,” Hinata called, waiting for Yachi and Kageyama. Kageyama grumbled under his breath, easily catching up with Hinata and making it a point not to let the redhead get an centimeter ahead of him for the rest of their way to the End of the Year Feast.

“I bet Ravenclaw wins the House Cup this year,” Yachi guessed. “They’re still ahead by their Quidditch wins.”

Kageyama and Hinata both sent her betrayed looks at the mention of Ravenclaw’s Quidditch Cup.

“Oh, sorry. Um, it could be Slytherin, too.” Yachi suggested. “They have the highest test scores so far.”

Hinata and Kageyama didn’t look like that was much better.

Luckily for Yachi’s conversational skills, the three had just arrived at the open doors of the Great Hall and we’re caught up in the cacophony of sounds from the assembled students. In lieu of a goodbye, Yachi gave them both hugs before heading over to the Gryffindor table for the banquet.

Kageyama and Hinata headed over to where the rest of their dormmates waited for them at the Hufflepuff table.

“Hey, Hinata,” Inuoka greeted as they sat down. “Feeling better?”

“Yeah, not even a bit tired,” Hinata nodded. The first few days after he has woken up, Hinata has been prone to falling asleep easily as he recuperated from magical exhaustion.

“I still can’t believe you guys actually found the Founder’s Treasure,” Shibayama shook his head. “I was just happy with my O in Transfiguration.”

Hinata just smiled. Under the table and out of view from his fellow classmates, he slipped his hand into his pocket and felt the cool silk like feeling of Hufflepuff’s Invisibility Cloak.
The three had realized sometime after Hinata got out of the Hospital Wing and retrieved his stuff that the cloak was still there, folded into the pocket where Hinata had left it. Hearing secondhand about the practically historical financial negotiations that were taking place over just Ravenclaw’s books and Gryffindor’s shield, the three had quickly agreed that it might be for the best if they kept the last treasure to themselves. Besides, as Hinata had pointed out to Yachi’s resignation, who knows when they would need to sneak out again.

“Students,” Headmaster Ukai announced, silencing the hall. “It’s my job as Headmaster to welcome you to the year’s End of the Year Feast. Every year, Hogwarts’ elves work hard to make us the very best meal that Hogwarts can offer. Every year, your teachers work diligently to score your grades. And, every year,” his smile took on a sardonic edge, “this is quickly passed over for the matter you’ve all been waiting for—the Hogwarts’ House Cup.”

The students in the Hall instantly sat up straighter and Hinata noticed a few professors leaning closer as well.

“This year,” the Headmaster continued, “was another truly memorable year at Hogwarts. From Ravenclaw’s truly remarkable Quidditch performances to the academic performances by so many of your classmates. And, though we did end up having to bid an early farewell to one of our professors,” a fire lit the Headmaster’s eyes and his tone grew firm, “we can at least attest that it was a well deserved farewell.”

Some of the students shifted around nervously at the mention of former Defense Against the Dark Arts professor, an uncomfortable reminder of the man’s current incarceration in Azkaban.

“As the points currently stand,” the Headmaster began after a moment. “Gryffindor stands at two hundred and fifty points,” Hinata saw the red and gold table glare at a few of their members who rumor had it lost over fifty points in one night, “Hufflepuff has three hundred and twenty, and finally….” The Headmaster paused while the tables waited at the edge of their seats. “Ravenclaw has three hundred and fifty five and Slytherin is in the lead with three hundred and sixty.”

Beside him, Inuoka let out a low whistle. “Merlin, they’re within five points of each other.”

Hinata glanced over at the Slytherin table to see them giving each other pleased smiles and begin to take on a victorious air.

“However,” the Headmaster interrupted, his dry voice once again cutting through the air. “After intense discussion among our faculty... along with some flat out arguing. It has been decided by all sitting here that special points must be awarded in light of recent circumstances.”

Hinata’s head perked up. What did that mean?

“First,” the Headmaster began before more muttering could break out. “To the students who showed determination, bravery, intelligence in confronting an enemy within Hogwarts’ very walls, the following students will each be awarded fifty points. Please stand when called.”

“Tetsuro Kuroo from Ravenclaw,” Hinata saw the tall boy stand up with smirk. “For bravery and intelligence in securing an opponent.”

Hinata thought he saw the boy blush slightly under the weight of the student body’s stare. But, when he blinked, Kuroo was standing as tall and secure as ever.

“Next, Kotaro Bokuto from Hufflepuff.” A few spots down from Hinata, the Hufflepuff Quidditch captain shot out of his seat with a wide smile. “For providing true friendship and quick thinking
Bokuto definitely blushed, scratching the back of his neck awkwardly.

“Hajime Iwaizumi from Gryffindor.” At the Gryffindor table, the third year stood up and crossed his arms with a stoic look set on his face. Hinata remembered that he had just been released from the Hospital this morning. “For bravery both during and after a battle.”

The Gryffindor nodded in recognition and Hinata noticed that several of the younger Gryffindors were looking at him with near stars in their eyes.

“From Slytherin, Koushi Sugawara,” the silver haired boy stood up with a modest smile that looked just short of bashful, “for his impressive use of healing charms in dire circumstances.”

Suga just continued with his small smile, absorbing the stares around him.

“Also from Slytherin, Tooru Oikawa.” Beside Suga, the muggleborn Slytherin stood up with a confident smile that ignored the glares of some of his older Housemates. “For the most well done dueling match Hogwarts has seen in decades.”

Oikawa nodded his head slightly, receiving the praise.

“You five may sit,” The Headmaster told them. He paused for a moment, threading his hands together and cracking his knuckles before speaking again. “Now, for the last group of troublemakers. As some of you may have heard, the lost treasure of the Founders has been found by a trio of very ingenuitive first years.”

Hinata’s head shot up and beside him, Kageyama did the same.

“While, I am sure this is far from the only accolade they will receive on the matter,” the Headmaster noted dryly. “The faculty and board of Hogwarts gives their sincere gratitude in the recovery of the lost artifacts and awards each of the following students fifty points for displaying, what I have been told was, bravery with wisdom, wisdom with care, care with cunning, and cunning with bravery. Thank you to Hitoka Yachi of Gryffindor, Tobio Kageyama of Hufflepuff, and Shouyou Hinata of Hufflepuff.”

Hinata and Kageyama looked at each other and Hinata noted the stunned expression mirrored on the other boy’s face. Around them, Sakunami frantically was re-adding the House points.

“Guys,” Sakunami started, “that makes Hufflepuff--”

“Which means,” the Headmaster interrupted, “that the winner of the House Cup is Hufflepuff House with a ten point victory.”

The Headmaster flicked his wand and yellow and black banners dropped from the ceiling--badgers dancing across them.

He barely had a moment to breathe before his House swarmed around both Kageyama and him, offering congratulations or just loudly screaming at the win.

Hinata felt a grip on his robe right before Bokuto lifted him into the air, boosting him onto the older boy’s shoulders and above the heads of the crowd.

Letting out a wild laugh, Hinata looked over to the faculty table. Headmaster Ukai met his eyes and Hinata could swear he saw a tinge of amusement color the old Headmaster’s face.
Hinata smiled brightly back.

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The day after the End of the Year feast, Oikawa laid back on the shore of the Hogwart’s lake and allowed his eyes to drift closed. A few hours until the train departed and most of the Hogwarts students were busy frantically packing--leaving the warm grass by the lake deserted.

A dozen or so minutes later, Oikawa heard footsteps crunch across the grass and felt the wind shift slightly as someone sat next to him. Oikawa gave a small smile, feeling the warm familiar sensation in his chest but didn’t open his eyes.

“I wondered where you’d gotten off to,” the gruff voice of his best friend commented. “You finished packing already?”

Oikawa hummed lightly in affirmative.

“And you left your stuff unprotected around Matsu and Maki? Are you crazy?”

The smile turned into a smirk. “Suga was still packing and agreed to watch it until the house elves picked it up.”

Silence greeted the answer and Oikawa assumed Iwaizumi had nodded. He blinked his eyes open to see the afternoon sun reflecting off his friends face. Iwaizumi glanced down and saw he had opened his eyes.

He quirked an eyebrow. “I’ll admit I worried you might be moping.”

Oikawa frowned, confused. “About the House Cup? You know I’m always happy to disappoint my House. Did you see some of their older students? I’m pretty sure they almost cried.”

Iwaizumi huffed, the amused look ruining what would have been a glare. “You have such a crappy personality.” Oikawa shrugged, the grass rubbing at his shoulder. “I was talking about the class ranks.”

“Oh,” Oikawa replied, knitting his brow in thought. “Nah, I knew even with them re-grading all of Sora’s assignments; it still wouldn’t be enough to make me top of the class in either of his subjects. I’m still top overall in the year and got O’s in Dueling and Defense so it’s fine.”

Iwaizumi continued staring at him until Oikawa’s smirk popped back up.

“Okay, fine, and the Dueling captain might have begged me to join the team next year after hearing about the duel with Sora.”

Iwaizumi rolled his eyes. “That’s more like you.”

“Congrats on being top in Herbology, by the way,” Oikawa commented, enjoying one of his best friend’s rare blushes.

“Shut up,” he grumbled. “I’m still not sure how that happened. I’m just happy the professors let me take the finals in the Hospital.”

Oikawa sobered at the reminder and sat back up to face Iwaizumi, making sure the Gryffindor met his eyes.
“Don’t do that again,” Oikawa ordered.

The other boy rolled his eyes. “I already told you I’m not really planning on getting hit by falling rubble. But, thanks.”

“You scared me,” Oikawa told him, voice barely audible. “We thought--I thought…”

Iwaizumi clapped his back, awkwardly drawing Oikawa out of the unfinished thought. “Don’t worry, I’m fine.”

Oikawa nodded, accepting the end of that particular conversation but quietly wondering if he gave in too easily.

“Come on,” Iwaizumi said, pulling him up. “We still need to get ready for boarding and Suga’s only one man--he can’t hold back Maki and Matsu forever.”

Oikawa smiled, allowing himself to be pulled to his feet. He heard a sharp whistle to his side and looked over to see Kuroo, Bokuto, and Suga standing on the top of the hill by the castle. Bokuto waved frantically, calling the two over.

“Hey, you guys,” the Hufflepuff shouted. “We gotta hurry if we want to get a compartment together.”

Suga smiled softly as Oikawa got closer. “Your luggage remains safe and secure.”

Oikawa nodded in gratitude as Kuroo rolled his eyes at Bokuto. “Bo, we’ve got two hours until boarding. I think we’ll be fine.”

“Oh, yeah,” Bokuto replied sheepishly. “Sorry, I’m used to having to run to catch the train the minute after I finish packing.”

Kuroo hummed thoughtfully. “Not that I’m complaining, but are you packed early this year.”

Bokuto shrugged. “Akaashi reminded me like five times last night. Good thing, too, or we’d never all be able to find seats together and this is the last time we’ll get to see each other all summer.”

“Not quite,” Suga commented as the five walked back into the castle. “We’ll see each other at Sora’s trial, I’m sure. I heard the minister is trying to expedite the whole thing so it should be sometime in the next couple of months.”

“Why’s he expediting it,” asked Iwaizumi.

“Press,” Kuroo answered succinctly. “No one wants the public reminded for longer than necessary that Hogwarts hired a psychotic maniac. Much better to focus on a lost treasure.”

Iwaizumi nodded, absorbing this.

Beside him, Oikawa suddenly stopped with an expression of bewilderment.

“Um, Oikawa,” Bokuto asked. “Why’d you stop?”

Oikawa looked up and slowly started to chuckle, then going to a full laugh until he was nearly bent over on the ground.

“Hey, Oikawa,” Kuroo commented in a light tone. “You do remember that Iwaizumi’s the one with the head injury, right?” He dodged Iwaizumi proceeding slap to his head.
Oikawa waved a dismissive hand, still laughing. He looked up at them, wiping a few tears from his face. “It’s just… I just realized... Sora’s in Azkaban. Like forever.”

Suga was looking a bit worried. “Uh, yes?”

Oikawa shook his head, starting to compose himself. “No, it’s just. We did, right? We really did it. We caught Sora.”

Oikawa watched as the rest of their eyes grew in realization and some kind of amazement.

A slow smirk spread across Kuroo’s face. “We really did, didn’t we?”

“Told you we would,” Iwaizumi commented gruffly.

Suga smiled, letting out a light laugh. “Not quite how I imagined.”

Oikawa nodded, walking back to the group.

“Of course, we caught him,” Bokuto announced with a grin, slinging an arm around the closest members—Suga and Kuroo. “We’re the Investigators’ Club!”

Oikawa rolled his eyes, smiling back. “Yeah, that we are.”

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“And then, there was the huge waterfall. Like taller than this tower,” Hinata enthused eagerly, spreading his arms. Karasuna nodded along, letting out a low caw that Hinata interpreted as wanting him to continue. “And, so of course, we were going to jump.”

Karasuna let out an impressed sounding note from the back of her throat. The two were sitting in the owlery, the last two before the Hogwarts train departed.

“But then... Kageyama said he couldn’t swim,” Hinata explained. “So, me and Yachi were all like ‘ARGH, What can we do?!’ Cause we’re not going to go without him obviously.”

Karasuna nodded.

“And then, the statue by the waterfall moved. Like stood up and everything!”

Karasuna flapped her wings excitedly and Hinata heard a small cough by the tower entrance. He turned.

Kenma stood by the tower entrance, a small smile crossing his face. “Sorry, I didn’t mean to interrupt your story.”

“Eh,” Hinata asked, looking to Karasuna before the two looked back to the Ravenclaw in unison. “It’s fine. I’ve got all summer to tell her.”

Kenma nodded and a moment of silence fell between the two.

Hinata shuffled his feet awkwardly. “Listen, Kenma, I’m really sorry that I got in so much trouble again. Especially, after I told you that I wasn’t. But, I really didn’t mean to and--”
“Shouyou,” Kenma interrupted.

Hinata looked down, rubbing his neck. “Yeah.”

Hinata suddenly felt arms wrapping around him and pulling him closer into the older boy’s shoulder.

“I’m just glad you’re okay,” Kenma told him softly.

“Oh,” Hinata breathed out, holding out his arms to return the hug. “Thanks.”

Kenma pulled back and nodded, Hinata just barely detecting the underlying discomfort form the normally reticent boy.

“Hey, you remember Karasuna, right,” Hinata asked energetically, grabbing Kenma’s hand before he could retreat back.

Kenma nodded. “She brings all of your sister’s letters.”

Hinata nodded happily. “Yeah, I was just letting her go before we have to get on the train.” Hinata suddenly looked at his watch and groaned. “Oh, man, I hope Yachi and Kageyama got there early enough to save us seats.” He turned back to Kenma. “Hey, you want to sit with us?”

Kenma shook his head as Hinata silently urged Karasuna to fly back. “No, but thank you. I’m sitting with one of my dormmates so we can get started on summer reading.”

Hinata looked at him with a perplexed expression. “Who’d want to start on summer reading this early.”

“Keiji Akaashi and I for one,” Kenma returned dryly, starting with Hinata on the way down from the tower.

Hinata perked up at the mention of Akaashi--the strange conversation from the hospital running through his head.

“Hey, Kenma,” Hinata asked curiously. “What’s Akaashi like as a dormmate?”

“Quiet,” Kenma responded immediately with a note of blissful reverence.

Hinata let out a surprised laugh at the other boy’s expression, following Kenma down the stairs and to the Hogwarts Express.

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“There is no way we’re all going to fit in here,” Tsukishima complained before being unceremoniously shoved by Tanaka into the train compartment.

“We have to,” Noya told him. “It’s the only empty compartment left!”
“Though who’s fault is it that we were late,” Ennoshita asked, raising an eyebrow at Noya and Tanaka.

“It’s mathematically impossible,” Tsukishima tried again, scrunching down into a bench by the window, Yamaguchi sat down closely beside him. “This is a six person compartment and there’s seven of us!”

“Um, maybe we can all just squeeze?” Asahi suggested, sitting down on the opposite side.

“See, Asahi gets it,” Noya said, sitting down beside Asahi--though by the time the rest had filled into the compartment it was more like sitting down half on Asahi and half on a disgruntled looking Ennoshita. Asahi looked like he was beginning to regret his earlier positivity.

Daichi took the last seat on the other side, beside Yamaguchi. “I’m sure we’ll all be able to manage for a few hours.”

“And it’s not like we’re going to try splitting up,” Tanaka said, Noya shaking his head firmly in agreement.

“...Fine,” Tsukishima settled on, recognizing a losing battle. “But someone has to learn expansion charms over the summer.”

“I’ll do it, if we have time when Noya and I are visiting my sister at the dragon preserve this summer!” Tanaka reminded them enthusiastically. Neither of the two had let the group forget since they had gotten the letter from Tanaka’s uncle earlier in the week, followed by permission from Noya’s parents.

“I bet Rolling Thunder’s gotten so big,” Noya sighed dreamily. “Probably the most adorable dragon there, too

As the least familiar with Noya’s “imaginative” dragon descriptors, Tsukishima shot boy a strange look before Yamaguchi stopped him from commenting with a whispered “Trust me, it’s not worth it.”

“I guess we finally figured out what was happening with the forest,” Ennoshita commented, bringing the conversation back before Noya could decide they needed another dragon for next year.

“Yeah,” Yamaguchi said, nodding with wide eyes. “It’s so scary to think we were being taught by a dark wizard all year. According to Professor Takinoue, he’d have to be really dark, too, for his magic to affect all those animals…”

Yamaguchi trailed off, dark thoughts running through his head.

“Hey, can you guys imagine what he would have done if caught us,” Noya asked, raising his eyebrows in an exaggerated motion while he elbowed Asahi and Ennoshita. Asahi looked vaguely nauseous.

“Bro, I bet he was using that tunnel that me and Daichi found to get back and forth between the castle,” Tanaka put in.

Daichi shifted uncomfortably. “I just wonder what he was doing in the forest to start with.”

“He’s obviously crazy,” Tsukishima shrugged. “Probably working on some kind of dark magic outside of Hogwarts wards. Maybe something like--”
“Can we, um, talk about something else,” Asahi asked quickly.

“Is anyone going to the World Cup this summer” Yamaguchi broke, possibly with more enthusiasm for the topic change more than just the new topic. “Tsuki and I already got tickets. He thinks France will win because it's on their home turf; but I think Japan’s got a strong shot.”

For the rest of the train ride, the compartment quickly descended into heated debate on who was the best Quidditch team and which players had a stronger chance against whom. Conversation of evil professors or mysterious forest detentions quickly forgotten.

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“Come on, Hinata, the train’s stopping,” Yachi called to him as both he and Kageyama wrapped up one of their usual debates--this time over the best wizarding candy.

Across from them, Lev and his Potions tutor Yaku were spiritually arguing over when exactly Lev was going to start his Potion’s summer assignment--it was possible that those two argued more than even Hinata and Kageyama. Truthfully, Hinata would wonder why the older boy decided to sit with them except he’d caught his brief warm smile in the middle of some of Lev’s tangents plus the proud look he got when Lev shared his E on the Potion’s final.

“Yaku, do you need help getting your bag,” Lev asked, looking happily down at the Ravenclaw. “You know because you could be too short to reach it.”

An angry red filled the shorter boy’s face and Kageyama and Hinata quickly slipped out behind Yachi before the explosion erupted.

Yachi smiled at them as they eased the door close behind them--a quick yelp from Lev sounding before the door finally shut.

“This was a good year,” Yachi told them happily.

Kageyama, looked down slightly not meeting their eyes, but nodded. “I’m, uh, glad that I...got sorted into Hufflepuff.”

“Well, yeah,” Hinata agreed immediately. “You get to be on the Quidditch team with me.”

Kageyama rolled his eyes, but didn’t actually disagree.

“I just can’t believe sneaking out to go see the mirror meant that we found a hidden treasure,” Hinata exclaimed.

Yachi tilted her head. “I’d almost forgotten this all started because of the mirror.”

Hinata nodded, thinking back to what the Headmaster had said. “You know...you know I think I’m kind of glad they moved it.”
“I thought you loved that mirror,” Kageyama asked.

“Well, yeah, it was awesome,” Hinata agreed, pushing out the train door and stepping down to the platform. “But, it was just a mirror, you know? Just a picture of what we wanted, right?” He grinned looking at the other two. “This is much better.”

Yachi smiled, stepping out on the platform next to him and giving him a tight hug. Kageyama muttered a “whatever” but Hinata thought he saw a slight blush.

The three picked up their stuff from the back and walked out passed the platform, back into the Muggle world.

He turned back to the other two to ask where their parents were meeting when--

“BROTHER!”

A compressed force of energy and orange fluffy hair hit him hard in the chest, his arms instinctively coming around to catch the six year old. His luggage dropped on the floor beside him without a care.

“NATSU!” Hinata yelled back, holding her tight to his chest with her legs coming to wrap around his waist.

“Oh, is this,” He heard Yachi ask from behind him.

“There’s two of you,” Kageyama stated flatly.

Hinata glanced over his shoulder as Natsu waved happily at his two friends. “Guys, meet my sister Natsu. Natsu, these are the ones from my letters. The nice girl with the pretty hair is Yachi and the scowly one is Kageyama--he’s nicer than he looks, I promise.”

Natsu immediately started off on an excited rant from over Hinata’s shoulder, Hinata turning back so she could face them.

Hinata looked around the train station, spotting Ms. Snuck standing stoically a few columns over. As he watched, he saw Kenma somehow still looking down at a book while holding a conversation with Kuroo and navigating his way around the platform. A sharp laugh drew his attention over to Yamaguchi standing off to the side while one of the older Gryffindors looked to be arguing with Tsukishima. From the corner of his eye, silver hair caught his eye and he looked over to see Suga had met his gaze and was waving at him from beside Oikawa and Iwaizumi--with Bokuto helping Akaashi with his bags somewhere behind him. All around Hinata, his classmates, his fellow Hufflepuffs, his Quidditch teammates milled around--laughing with friends while seeing their families for the first time in months.

Hinata tilted his head, lightly brushing it with Natsu’s hair as he heard her regale Yachi and Kageyama with a long exuberant ramble about the car ride here.

Yeah, Hinata thought. This is more than better. This is perfect.
At night, a perfectly normal orphanage on a perfectly normal street was lit only by the street lamps outside and a light coming from one of the windows--where their one perfectly not normal resident had returned from school. On the open window seal, a crow perched listening to an orange haired boy tell his sister a seemingly impossible story with moving statues, a magic garden, and a hidden treasure.

Across the street, hidden somewhere just outside the lamplight, waited something else--someone else--that was also not perfectly normal. The figure watched the lit window--quiet, silent, waiting, watching.

The figure thought that was all that he had done the last ten years. Waited. Watched. Learned. Gathering Knowledge. Gathering Strength.

The figure thought that it was time to stop waiting. That the Wizarding World had enough waiting. Now, the figure thought, it was time to act.

The figure turned away from the street, from the orphanage, from the window, from the boy. The figure turned, caked forest mud falling off his dark cloak from the figure’s previous living arrangements.

It was time for plans to be acted on, the figure decided. Plans a decade in the making. Dark plans, maybe, but the type of plans that the Wizarding World would not forget. Not the world that had grown lazy, complacent, forgetful.

Soon, the Wizarding World would remember. Soon, not a single person would be able to not remember, not even a single small orange haired boy. And this time, they would never forget.

Soon, the Wizarding World would never be allowed to forget the name “The Giant”.

Chapter End Notes

Wow, so okay, this story is finally done. I don't know if I mentioned this before, but this is my first fanfiction I've ever written so thank you so much for all of your support! Seriously, thank you for all the story hits, the kudos, the comments, just everything that the readers of this story have given me throughout writing. I honestly don't know if I could have finished this without all the support I've gotten from ya'll (and especially, not already writing the sequel). I've lost count of how many times I've read each of the comments and every time they make my day. From the bottom of my heart, thank you to everyone!

Also, I am planning a sequel (technically I'm planning several sequels and already have the series overall plot fully planned). I'm taking a tiny break but plan to start posting it in June. So, if you're interested subscribe to the series or just check back
around then and it should be up.

The next story will be titled "Koushi Sugawara and the Heir of Slytherin". I'll post the plot synopsis soon on the series page but here is the first line: "Koushi Sugawara sat at the funeral of a man who most believed was better off dead."

So, as always, thanks for reading and hope you enjoyed!

End Notes

This is my first fanfic posted to AO3, I would love comments. I plan to post every week. I have the first book entirely planned and the next six with sketched out details. Please, drop a comment or a Kudos.

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!