The Scent of Happiness

by Shiyaki

Summary

Harry is stubborn. Even a wall won't stop his curiosity, but he might not be prepared for what's behind it.

Notes

Harry meets someone interesting, while he'd out shopping with Fleur.
Chapter 1

“What are you doing in the hallway, Hidekuni? Shouldn’t you be in there?”

The blond, who had been pacing in front of a closed double-winged door, while continually running his fingers through his unusually messy hair, turned around to face his parents, Molly Weasley and Hermione Granger. He offered all of them a shaky smile and a slight shrug of his shoulders.

“I was, but Harry... is not very happy with me at the moment. He threatened me with castration... among other things.”

“That’s normal, son. A lot of delivering mothers do.“ His father quickly glanced toward the delivery room, even while putting an arm around Hidekuni’s shoulders. He always took great care to never refer to Harry with a term that ape men reserved for the female population, where the brunet may hear, even though they were perfectly appropriate and normal in the Zooman community. He had learned this lesson very quickly! “No need to worry so much.”

“He tried to put his words into action, didn’t he, dear?” Molly asked knowingly. She looked amused and Hidekuni was surprised to see that she wasn’t dapping at her eyes… yet.

“Various pointy and sharp things were involved, yes,” the blond admitted with a slight grimace and stared longingly at the door of the delivery room. He had wanted to stay in there and comfort Harry, but the healer had kicked him out for his own safety.  When he turned back around, everyone, except for Molly, looked horrified.

“Calm down. It’s just accidental magic due to the pain and stress. He doesn’t actually want to harm me.” That’s what Hidekuni liked to think anyway.

“I knocked Arthur out with a bedpan during Bill’s delivery and... well, he preferred to wait outside during every delivery after Charlie’s,” Molly commented amused and smiled at her two youngest sons who had just arrived. They had probably left Weasley’s Wizard Wheezes in a hurry - There was slime and glitter all over them. It was evidence of Molly’s pleasant anticipation, when all she did was cast a *Scourgify* in their general direction.

Gradually more members of Harry’s extended family appeared and almost clogged the corridor. Since the pregnancy had been caused by magic and not Zooman means, the delivery took place in Saint Mungo. It was a godsend. It didn’t matter that they were both heavy weights and unlike Hidekuni, his child wouldn’t have to spend the first weeks of their life in an incubator.

About half an hour later a mediwitch left the delivery room. She didn’t even bat an eyelash when she saw the mass of waiting people. She just stopped long enough to single out Hidekuni and, smiling slightly, beckoned him closer.

“You may go back in now, sir. All other guests have to wait until we have transferred Mr. Potter to a private room, though.”

The blond swallowed thickly and nodded. Taking a deep, shuddery breath, Hidekuni crossed the excited crowd and entered the delivery ward. The ‘sharp and pointy objects’, which had forced him to evacuate the room not an hour ago, were lying innocently on the ground. Hidekuni carefully stepped around them, but otherwise didn’t pay them any mind, because his sole attention was on the dark-haired man on the bed.

The usually unruly mop of hair was plastered to Harry’s head and his face still flushed and clammy.
Harry still managed to offer him a brilliant smile. Hidekuni hesitantly sat down on the edge of the bed and dropped a kiss to the other man’s temple in a gesture of affection, but also stalling. To be honest, the thought of being a parent scared the crap out of him and seeing his newborn child would make it real. More real, even, than the baby bump he had caressed several times a day during the previous months.

The brunet smiled indulgently at him and pecked his lips, but in the next moment Hidekuni held a bundle of cloth and squirming baby in his hands nonetheless.

“Stop worrying and say hello to your baby girl.”

The blond instinctively wrapped his arms and hands securely around his new-born daughter - his worries not forgotten, but pushed to the back of his mind for the moment. He carefully tugged the white blanket to the side and stared in wide-eyed awe at the new life Harry and he had created.

Rose.

His lover had refused to name their children after relatives, but had expressed his wish to continue the Evan’s tradition of naming daughters after flowers. Charmed with the idea, Hidekuni had agreed.

Rose’s eyes were obviously still closed (and would stay that way for a fortnight) and her fur softer than silk. So far, it was hard to tell if Rose had inherited more of Harry’s or Hidekuni’s genes. She was still a sandy-coloured fluff ball with dark, undefined spots. It didn’t matter anyway, because he loved her either way. Her appearance did make him wonder about something, though...

“Does this mean that she’s not magical?”

Harry, who was softly stroking one rounded, tiny ear with a happy, if tired, smile, looked up in surprise. Then the brunet regarded Rose with a thoughtful frown on his forehead, before he finally offered a light shrug.

“You know, I’ve no idea. It’s not like we have much to go on, right? I guess, we’ll just have to wait and see. If it turns out that she’s not, I wouldn’t care. She’ll always be my special, little girl.”

Hidekuni smiled and pressed another kiss to the other man’s temple, then another one on his daughter’s forehead.

A few years ago

“Fleur, can’t we just-“

“Non, ‘arry! I agreed, when you didn’t want to go to a muggle tailor, even though you do it for your robes. I won’t let you exchange your old rags for the cheap, subpar clothing I know you’d buy otherwise,” Fleur disagreed at once and Harry into one of the countless brand clothes shops on Bond Street. The brunet sighed uttered a long-suffering sigh. It was his own fault for mentioning that he needed new clothes in Fleur’s hearing range anyway.

As expected, it didn’t take long for everyone’s gazes to be directed at them, especially those of the male customers and the store clerks. Or, to be more specific, they were gazing at Fleur like brain dead idiots. Muggles seemed to be even more affected by her veela allure than wizards. Fortunately, nobody had been more aggressive than appearing before the blonde and stuttering out gibberish. By now Harry was trying to ignore the reactions to Fleur, but he felt sorry for the woman.

While Fleur was off browsing the variety of goods in the shop, Harry was loitering around next to a
display for the summer collection, bored out of his mind. That is, until he felt like he was being watched and suspiciously scanned the people in the shop for the source. It turned out to be a young man around his age with blond, long-ish hair and a gorgeous smile.

To his horror, Harry felt his face growing hot, especially when the blond approached him with a determined expression after a short moment of hesitation.

“Hi, I’m Hidekuni,” the young man announced. His voice was clear and strong, but his smile had turned a touch shy.

“Harry.” The wizard nervously licked his lips, while trying to subtly rub his sweaty palms against his trousers.

“I hope, I’m not too forward, but… I couldn’t help notice you and…” Harry noticed that his accent was an interesting mix of Cockney and what Harry assumed to be an American dialect. “I’d hoped you’d agree to have coffee with me. That is, if the woman you’re here with isn’t your girlfriend? I’ll leave you alone if that’s the case or if you’re not interested.”

“Ah no,” Harry shook his head fast enough to almost give himself whiplash. “She’s just a friend. Apparently I can’t be trusted to add to my wardrobe on my own,” the brunet said with a wry grin and turned even redder, when the blond very obviously checked him out.

“You look just fine to me. Sooo… how about that coffee? Or maybe something else?” Harry saw him swallow thickly, but otherwise Hidekuni looked surprisingly composed. Knowing how difficult it was to ask someone out, Harry had to silently applaud him.

“I’d like to! Just, I’ll be going back to school on Sunday and will stay there until summer. I go to a boarding school in Scotland and it’s pretty strict about electronics. We can only send letters and stuff. I don’t think that’s fair on you,” Harry explained, refusing to look to the ground. “It’s not an attempt to get rid of you, I promise,” he added earnestly.

“Why don’t we go for that coffee tomorrow and see how that goes?” Hidekuni proposed. “If we click, I wouldn’t be averse to getting to know you through letters until summer. I can be pretty patient, if it’s worth it. Only if you want to, though, of course!”

Harry licked his lips and nodded slowly in agreement. He saw Fleur from the corner of his eyes, but the blonde was patiently waiting further away. He already knew that he’d be subjected to a lot of teasing. Good thing Ginny and he’d had a talk about their previous relationship and were in agreement that they wouldn’t get back together.

The blinding smile was back on the blond’s face and Harry couldn’t do anything but stare at it, while his heart was trying to beat out of his chest. They agreed on a time and place for their date, before they bid each other goodbye.

“Ah ‘arry. I let you out of my sight for two minutes and you turn somebody’s ‘ead,” Fleur teased, when she returned to Harry’s side. “e looked nice. I ‘ope it goes well for you. You should ‘ave someone in your life,” she added and squeezed his shoulder, before dropping a bunch of clothing into his hands with a grin. “Even more reason to look nice. Try these on.”

That evening, when he returned to the Burrow, Fleur wasted no time and told everyone who’d listen about Harry’s date. As expected he was subjected to a lot of teasing that Harry suffered with only a bit of grumbling. He still excused himself after dinner and went upstairs to the room he currently shared with Ron, because Mrs. Weasley refused to let her son sleep in the same bed or even room as
The brunet settled down on his bed and started meditating. In the beginning he’d struggled a lot, but stopping hadn’t been an option. His goal was to achieve his Animagus form in remembrance of his father and godfather. Unfortunately he was allergic to the potion revealing his inner animal, so Harry had to take the longer way of meditation. He’d found his form some time ago, but during his search he’d noticed an oddity that had made him curious.

Ten minutes passed, before he entered the part of his mind belonging to his Animagus form – a small bird of prey called Merlin (and yes, Harry was fully aware of the irony). It flew through the white sky and settled on Harry’s arm. The brunet carefully stroked over its feathers, then directed his attention to the reason why he’d come here. It was a white wall, made of no material Harry could name, but then again it was probably just a construct of his mind. Its diameter wasn’t overwhelming, but the wall was too high to climb and too robust to simply knock down. Harry had worked on creating a hole for some time, but it was a slow work in progress and would probably take a few more months. He’d also tried to research this phenomenon, but all he’d managed to find was an account of a witch talking about a similar wall. She had never found out what lay behind it.

Harry hoped he wouldn’t find another surprised like Voldemort’s Horcrux.

Taking a deep breath, he got to work.
Harry was a bit late, when he stumbled into the café. He’d kind of panicked and in the end his friends had to push him into the fireplace, just so he’d actually go to his date. The whole this was bound to end badly, he was sure. Hidekuni didn’t know anything about his past, his status as a wizard or the magical world in general and Harry wasn’t allowed to tell him. What were they supposed to talk about?

Hidekuni was tucked away at a corner table, staring out of the window. When he noticed Harry, though, one of those breath-taking smiles appeared on his lips and Harry had no other choice but to return it.

“Sorry for being late. I uh-“ What was he supposed to say? That he’d almost chickened out?

“No problem. I haven’t been here long either.” Hidekuni looked him up and down with an appreciating gaze. “Looks like you were successful yesterday. You look very nice.”

“Uhm thanks.” Harry tugged self-consciously on his green shirt, which felt too tight, even though Fleur had insisted that it was exactly his size. “You uh don’t look too bad either. I mean- urgh.” Harry sank into his chair and burrowed his face in his hands. He heard Hidekuni chuckle and thank him, but Harry was mortified anyway. He was so bad at this stuff and they hadn’t even reached the part Harry had dreaded the most. The brunet already wanted to disappear into a hole in the ground or wrap himself into his invisibility cloak. Maybe they’d be attacked by dementors or something like that. That was something he was able to deal with without problem.

“So, you said you’ll go back to school tomorrow. It’s a boarding school, if I understood correctly?” Hidekuni asked after a few moments. Harry slowly lowered his hands, thankful for the change in topic.

“Yes, it’s in the Scottish highlands and it’s the same school my parents went to. I should have already graduated last year, but some things came up, so most of my year mates and I will graduate this year,” Harry explained, hoping Hidekuni wouldn’t ask too many questions about it.

“Boarding school…” The blond hummed contemplatively. “Must be interesting, but it probably would have driven me crazy to be subjected to my school mates around the clock and living in a dorm. I mostly went to school in Japan, but decided I want to go to university here in England.”

“So you’re uhm…” Harry bit his bottom lip. He had wondered why Hidekuni had an obviously Asian name, while he didn’t look Asian at all, but it was probably pretty rude to ask. Maybe the blond had one parent that was Asian and he just didn’t take after them in looks or he’d been adopted.

“You’re wondering why my name’s Hidekuni.” The blond grinned knowingly. “I’m half Brit and half American, but I’ve got two older brothers who’re half Japanese and whose names are Kunimasa and Yonekuni. You can see the connection, right?” Hidekuni shrugged. “My parents did a lot of big work projects while I grew up, so I spent quite a bit of time with my brothers in Japan. I didn’t mind
Harry was surprised that Hidekuni apparently meant what he said. Growing up with his brothers probably meant growing up with said brother’s other parent… which sounded all kinds of awkward. Instead of probing further, Harry directed the conversation to some not so heavy topics, like (heavily edited) escapades with friends, favourite foods and hobbies and what they’d planned for the future. Hidekuni would be studying Culinary Arts Management in London and Harry admitted to an interest in law enforcement, when he was younger, but wasn’t too sure if it was still something he wanted to do.

Two very interesting hours later, they left the coffee shop.

“I had fun and I’d like to stay in contact,” Hidekuni announced with a hopeful smile, though Harry saw the fear of rejection flicker behind the expressive brown eyes again, which hinted at past unrequited crushes.

With a smile of his own, the brunet shoved his hand into the pocket of his jeans and pulled out the piece of paper he’d prepared with the address to a post box. It was used by the parents of muggleborn Hogwarts students if their child didn’t own an owl and didn’t want to use the school owls. He held it out for Hidekuni, who accepted it as if it were some kind of priceless treasure. That reaction was enough incentive for Harry to lean forward and press a kiss to the other man’s lips. It wasn’t more than a peck, really, but it was nice and when Harry tried to retreat, arms wrapped around him and dragged him into an embrace. Hidekuni burrowed his face in Harry’s neck and the brunet swore the blond took a deep breath as if he was trying to commit Harry’s scent to memory. It was a bit embarrassing, but Harry let him and even sank a bit more into the hug.

“I’ll write to you soon. Here’s my address,” Hidekuni said, when he finally released him and gave Harry a piece of paper of his own.

Harry cautiously hoped that it would work out.

Harry barely had time to work on either his animagus form nor on the mysterious wall in his mind during the next few months. His days were filled with school work, Hermione’s steadily increasing (and scary) fretting about their NEWTs and reviewing of his own. He did, however, take some time to stay in contact with Hidekuni. The blond had written him a letter as promised and since then they’d kept up a steady exchange of letters. They talked about their (in Harry’s case, heavily edited) days and things they liked or disliked. Harry honestly couldn’t wait to see Hidekuni again, but graduation was still some ways off.

One day he stumbled upon two Ravenclaws bullying a Hufflepuff second year, even going as far as calling him a mudblood. Harry dealt with the situation at once, even though he wasn’t the head boy or even a prefect. The brunet had known, of course, that the whole prejudice problem wouldn’t stop with Voldemort’s death, but… it still made him so angry.

Half an hour later he took his frustration out on the wall in his mind and this time it collapsed under the assault. Harry was so surprised, he forgot about his bad mood, especially when a leopard squeezed through the newly formed opening and came up to Harry, butting its head against his hip.

“What the bloody hell,” Harry mumbled as he cautiously scratched the feline’s head, which promptly started purring.

Did he have a second animagus form? But why would it be caught behind a wall?
It looked like it was time to bring the matter before Hermione, after all.

“Why didn’t you come to me with this in the beginning, Harry?” Hermione asked with a frown.
She, Harry and Ron were lounging around in her head girl suite and Harry had finally told them about the wall and the animal that had been imprisoned behind it. “That was a dumb thing to do. It could’ve been something dangerous, even if it isn’t a Horcrux.”

Harry shrugged.

“When I noticed it, you were both in Australia to look for your parents, Hermione, and afterwards… well… I didn’t want to worry you. I knew it could be something bad, but finding out what it was… was better than not knowing what else was lurking in my head. I did some research, you know, but there doesn’t seem to be a lot about that wall. I guess it’s because not many people attempt to become animagi in the first place and those who do usually use the potion to reveal their form. The only account I found was from a witch who was trying to become an animagus, before the potion was invented.” Harry gave her the small, old, notebook he’d found in Nocturne Alley. Not that he’d ever admit where he’d purchased it.

While Hermione flipped through it, Ron shook his head.

“Only you, mate. Did you feel anything off since you let the big, bad kitty cat escape?”

“No really. I feel pretty much the same as before. I think it’s a second animagus form or something like that.”

“It might be possible,” Hermione agreed as she closed the notebook. “I’ll look for some more information. Maybe I’ll find a clue about what’s going on with you.”

Harry grimaced.

“You make it sound worse than it probably is and don’t you have reviewing to do?” The brunet was sure that if there was someone who’d new information, it would be Hermione, but he didn’t want to keep her from her studying. His friend was already freaking out about their NEWTs anyway. Though she was bound to pass with flying colours.

“Don’t be stupid, Harry. I’ll always have time to help a friend. You know that,” Hermione waved off and leant forward to squeeze his hand. Ron quickly followed suit in reassuring him and offering his help.

Harry smiled, glad to have such good friends.

The remaining weeks before their NEWTs passed without hide nor hair of more information. They wrote their exams, celebrated the end of their school time and pretty much lazied around during their remaining days in Hogwarts. Ron would be joining George in WWW and Hermione was looking forward to joining the Ministry in a few months’ time. Harry had decided against becoming an Auror and would start his Mastery in Defense Against Dark Arts come October. Sadly he wouldn’t be able to see Hidekuni until September, because the blond was spending his semester holidays in Japan.

Harry spent his last day roaming around Hogwarts, committing all the good and bad things that had happened there to memory. He’d be missing his first home, but it was time to let go and start a new part of his live. A hopefully more normal part, without having to look over his shoulders constantly. The last trip with the Hogwarts express was just as bitter-sweet and ended on a bit of a weird note. While his friends were streaming out of the train to join their families, Luna held him back and...
offered him a necklace made out of hazelnuts and feathers.

“Here Harry. It’s a protection against the imperial whispers until you learn how to deal with them on your own. You shouldn’t take it off until then.” Luna smiled at him and skipped away after Harry had accepted the gift with a bemused expression.

He looked down at the, admittedly, plain ugly jewellery, but in the end put it around his neck anyway (carefully concealing it beneath his clothes as best as he could). If he’d learned something throughout the years, it was that Luna almost always had a point, even if he didn’t understand it at once.
Even though they had offered, Harry didn’t want to move in with the Weasleys. He was looking forward to living on his own for the first time in his life. Grimmauld Place was too gloomy, though, and constantly reminded him of his godfather and war times. Instead he’d found a small but cosy flat owned by a half-blood, who didn’t seem to care that he was Harry Potter - always a plus.

The first few weeks of living alone went well and he started to get used to living in a place that he didn’t have to share with anyone else. Then, one Tuesday morning, when he was trying to buy some groceries in the supermarket close by, things turned odd. People were behaving strange and creepy – flirting outrageously with him, staring at him adoringly or full-out groping him. His neighbour, a thirty-year-old business woman, who’d ignored him since he’d moved in, had even tried to press him against a wall and kiss him. Harry had quickly pushed her away and fled into his flat. He didn’t venture outside until the next morning to check if the world had gone back to normal.

When his landlord, who was living in the same building, greeted him, Harry had high hopes, but once he’d set foot outside, the previous day basically repeated itself. At his wits end, Harry floo-called Hermione and Ron, who were staring at the brunet in disbelief, when he recited his experience of the previous two days.

“Sorry to tell you this, mate, but I don’t have the sudden urge to jump your bones… or, well, not really sorry. I’m pretty darn glad about that,” Ron stated with a grimace and Hermione nodded.

“As crudely as Ron put it, I don’t have a sudden attraction to you either, but I also know that you wouldn’t lie about something like that and seeing as you’ve called us for help, I figure you have no clue why this is happening.” For a moment, Hermione stared contemplatively into her tea cup. “Did anything suspicious happen yesterday or the day before yesterday? Maybe someone cursed you or gave you a potion.”

“I don’t think so? I went outside on Monday and nothing happened then, I didn’t talk with anyone or ate anything someone gave me and then on Tuesday people started acting weird,” Harry recounted, while scratching the back of his neck. Hermione nodded. Her gaze had wandered from the cup in her hands to her best friend’s body, which she was studying clinically. It made Harry a bit uncomfortable, but his friend at least lacked the lusty sheen in her eyes.

“Harry, didn’t Luna give you a necklace on your last day of school? That weird thing with hazelnuts and feathers?” Hermione finally asked.

“Yeah, she said something about it protecting me from imperial whispers until I could deal with them on my own. It’s-” Harry looked down to where the necklace normally rested underneath his sweater or shirt, but it wasn’t there. “I uh… oh! I must’ve taken it off before showering and then forgot to put it back on. Do you really think that’s the reason? But what would it protect me against?”

“Maybe it’s got something to do with your weird wall thing? We never figured out what that was all about,” Ron threw in, preening under Hermione’s approving nod.
“We’re both not affected, so I don’t think it’s a gender or sexual orientation thing,” Hermione contemplated. “Did anyone behave as usual or completely ignored you during the last two days?”

“My landlord did. I’ve met him today and he just greeted me. I can’t say anything concrete about the people outside.”

“He’s a wizard, yes?” Hermione asked, and tapped her lips thoughtfully, when Harry nodded. “Maybe whatever it is only works on muggles. We should conduct an experiment to figure out one way or another, before doing further research… or trying to get anything out of Luna.”

After Harry had found the necklace in his bathroom, they went outside to test out Hermione’s theory. First, the brunet walked the street up and down with the necklace around his neck, while Hermione and Ron followed from a distance. Harry was both astonished and relieved that the people he passed pretty much ignored him as they’d always done.

“That proves that the necklace actually protects you against something. Now we only have to figure out against what exactly.” Hermione extended her arm with the upturned palm of her hand. “Harry, give me the necklace and walk to the street corner again.”

Harry reluctantly followed the order. On one hand he was glad that people were no longer propositioning or harassing him anymore and didn’t want to go back to it, but on the other hand he wanted to find out what was going on.

The brunet took a deep breath and went down the street (though it felt more like his trip into the Forbidden Forest during the Battle of Hogwarts). This time people payed a lot more attention to him, similar to how they reacted to Fleur, now that he thought about it. Harry tried to see if there were any people not being affected by whatever was going on and indeed found a few. One or two ignored him completely, while a few others looked in his direction and either raised a bemused eyebrow or wrinkled their nose in disgust at him. The second group was slightly out of focus as if two images were overplayed.

Halfway back to his starting point, something hit the back of Harry’s leg. Hard. When the brunet turned around, an old lady with a walking stick was standing next to him and glaring disapprovingly. She too, was a bit blurry.

“ Aren’t you ashamed of yourself, young man?” She ranted, hitting his leg again. Harry was too baffled to react, let alone evade the attack on his person. “Walking around like that! Today’s youth is unbelievable. This wouldn’t have happene-“

“Ah, wait!” Harry interrupted, raising his hands appeasingly after checking that he was, indeed, fully clothed. “ I don’t know what- I- Would you please stop hitting me? Thank you! I don’t know what you are talking about and would be very thankful if you explained.” Maybe she knew something and would be able to shed light on his problems?

The woman was staring at him with a squinty-eyed glare and Harry half expected her to assault him with her cane again. Instead she set it back on the ground and supported her weight on it.

“You want to tell me that you’re basically parading around naked without knowing it?” She didn’t sound particularly convinced. When Harry looked down again to check (yep, still clothed), she tapped his foot with her cane. “Your soul, boy, your soul. It’s completely exposed and that’s rude!”

“My… soul?” Harry repeated slowly, utterly befuddled. He wasn’t sure what his soul had to do with anything and how this woman would be able to see it. Said women frowned at him again.
“You really have no idea what I’m talking about, do you?” When Harry shook his head, she sighed. “I’ve seen one or two Retrogrades in my life and you don’t particular look like one. More like a full-fledged Werecat.”

For a moment, the woman mumbled something, which might have involved the word ‘adopted’. Harry was pretty sure he wasn’t, but before he’d decided if he wanted to state his opinion on the matter or not, the woman nodded decisively to herself.

"13 Cumberland Road, boy. Go there as soon as possible, preferably now. They will help you. Tell them that Elisabeth Pythera sent you and that you need instructions on hiding your soul appearance." With that she tapped Harry's leg one more time and hobbled off.

After reciting the weird conversation to Hermione and Ron, they’d indeed gone to the mentioned address. It was a small office building that unfortunately had been closed for the day, so Harry was forced to come back the next day.

Taking a deep breath, the brunet entered the building and awkwardly stopped in front of the reception desk. The middle-aged man sitting there wore an obviously pasted on smile, which made Harry want to turn back around at once.

“Good morning, Sir, how may I help you?”

“Hi, uh... my name’s Harry Potter. Elisabeth Pythera advised me to come here? It’s about-“ Harry vaguely pointed at himself. Oh Merlin, was he really supposed to say this? Preparing himself for being ridiculed, Harry went on: “There’s something wrong with me and she said you could help me. Something about hiding my soul appearance?”

The man studied him with a raised eyebrow. Harry was almost impressed how unimpressed the bloke looked.

„You seem to have it under control.“

For a moment Harry thought he was being mocked as expected (and maybe he was), but then he remembered that he was still wearing the necklace. He pulled it off his neck and waited for the second opinion. The man’s second eyebrow followed the first towards his hairline.

„And why can’t you control it? You should be able to at your age.“

„I don’t even know what a bloody soul appearance is. How am I supposed to control it?“ Harry grit out, already annoyed with the condescending tone the man had assumed.

The receptionist’s eyes flickered from Harry’s face to something above the brunet’s head and finally to Harry’s hands. All the while his face lost its colour and wizard swore he saw the silhouette of a small dog with folded back ears.

“I’ll see who’s available to help with your problem, Sir. If you could please put the necklace back on and sit over there.” The man indicated to a sectioned off waiting area, now sounding a lot nicer than he had the whole time Harry had been talking to him.

Still silently fuming, the brunet sat down on one of the chairs, while Mr. Arsehole was on the phone. More than ten minutes passed until the elevator door next to the reception desk opened. The person stepping out was of Indian descent and approached Harry with the grace of a feline predator. His smile, however, was warm, when he stopped in front of the wizard and offered his hand.
„Hello, you must be Harry. My name is Bagheera. Let’s go upstairs to one of the meeting rooms to talk.“
Chapter Notes

Aaand it’s a wrap, guys and gals! I know it could be longer, but tbh I mostly lost interest in this story. I wanted to give you a completed story, though, so here it is (even if it took a few years)! I hope you like the conclusion anyway :) A big thanks to all of you lovely people who commented and gave me the motivation to finish this.

„So, tell me what your problem is. From the beginning,“ Bagheera requested once they were sitting in a generic meeting room.

„Well, a few days ago people started to react weirdly to me.‘ Flirting, trying to grope me and stuff. Then this woman, Elisabeth Pythera, beat me up with her cane and told me that my ‘soul appearance’ is showing.” The wizard dutifully air-quoted the words to emphasize that he’d absolutely no idea what was going on. “She gave me the address to this building and said I’d get more information and help. Oh and she called me a Werecat.”

The man hummed as he studied the necklace around Harry’s neck. The receptionist had probably told him about it. Instead of inquiring about it, like Harry had half-feared, Bagheera simply nodded and stood up.

„She’s a well-known British Snake-eye.‘’ He went over to a cabinet on the other side of the room, where he pulled a bunch of brochures out of a drawer. When he returned to the table, Bagheera spread them out in front of Harry. “You’re Zooman, which is a separate type of human than the one you’ve known so far. About seventy percent of the world-wide population descended from primates, but Zooman descended from certain other animals. Werecats, for example, from felines.”

The man tapped on one of the brochures depicting several diagrams. Harry barely saw it, too stunned that he was apparently part of two different secret societies, which didn’t even know about each other. What were the odds?

Minimal, probably.

That’s exactly why this was happening to him.

“So, you’re saying it’s hereditary. One of my parents was also something like this?” Harry tapped the stylized picture of a cat on the cover of the brochure in front of him with his index finger.

“Actually-“ Bagheera opened the brochure to another graphic. This one showed a simple family tree with monkey and dog heads. “both of your parents had to be Zooman for you to be a normal Werecat. If Zoomen have offspring with an Ape Man, their children will always be Ape Men, too. It’s possible that, generations later, a non-Ape Man will be born. Those’re called Retrogrades. They usually live like Ape Men and only learn of their heritage after a traumatic experience.”

Traumatic experience, ha! Harry had certainly enough of those and none of them had triggered his newest freakish-ness. It had been the brunet himself. He and his damn curiosity!

“Let’s leave the question where you got the genes from until later, though. You’ve come here,
because you have been sexually harassed, which is no surprise. A soul appearance is something private and is normally hidden. If you’re showing it blatantly in public, it’s even worse than running around naked in public.” Harry cringed upon hearing that. “You were probably also throwing around tons of pheromones. Ape Men can’t resist them. What I’ll be teaching you first is to hide your soul appearance. I’ll also tell you more about Zooman customs and, if you want me to, I can try to help you find out more about your heritage.”

Bagheera sighed and offered him a wry, almost apologetic smile.

“I’ve only got two weeks though, afterwards I’ll return to India. I’m only here for the annual Werecat Ball at the beginning of September. If you don’t have it under control until then, we’ll find you a different teacher to finish your training. These brochures have basic information about Zooman. I suggest reading them until our next meeting, then you can ask questions. For now we should start with the training.”

And thus began Harry’s two weeks of hell.

The following fortnight was illuminating, exhausting and at times utterly embarrassing.

As promised, Bagheera taught him more about Zooman, Werecats and leopards in particular. They’d also more or less figured out why he was a Zooman in the first place. With Hermione’s help, Harry had created a family tree and shared it with his tutor. Bagheera had recognised one of the names on James’ side of the family tree.

Apparently Harry’s great-grandmother had had an affair, though the illegitimate child she’d carried away from it had been blood adopted by his great-grandfather. Harry figured the child and every offspring thereafter had been Werecats, though their soul appearances had been locked away by similar walls than the one in Harry’s mind. Maybe it was magical that wanted to keep the Zooman genes from getting overwhelmed by the Ape Man ones. Harry, of course, hadn't shared his theory with Bagheera. They were, however, very distantly related.

Sometime they just talked and Bagheera told him of his life in India, his husbands and friends. They’d all known each other since childhood and got along surprisingly well considering they were a pretty mixed group consisting of Werecats, a Snake-eye, a Bear-Oak and an Ape Man who, surprisingly had the ability to see their soul appearances and listen to Zooman talk.

The rest of the time was spent learning how to hide his soul appearance. Fortunately, Bagheera’s teaching style leant more towards Remus’ than Snape’s, but it was still a frustrating endeavour. That other heavy-weights finally tested his control by almost suffocating him with their pheromones didn’t make the situation any better.

Harry (more or less) gained control just in time for the annual Werecat Ball Bagheera had been talking about. The brunet hated balls, but was too curious to refuse going. He’d been introduced to Shere Khan, his tutor’s kind of scary husband and several other people, some of which he'd seen on television and in newspapers. Among them was king Mufasa and his family (Harry still shuddered upon remembering the creepy smirk prince Taka, apparently also known as Scar, had directed at him).

Harry was taking a break from socialising and had drifted to the extensive buffet, when he heard a vaguely familiar voice. The brunet slowly turned around, his eyes widening in surprise upon recognising the one speaking.
Fate was probably cackling right now.

"Hidekuni?" The blond standing next to a few dark haired men spun around and gaped. With a few long strides he was standing in front of Harry and eyeing the brunet like he was an oasis in the desert.

"I- I didn't know you were a Werecat or a Zooman for that matter," Hidekuni stuttered out. He reached out his hand to touch the wizards shoulder as if he wanted to make sure he was real.

Harry smiled wryly.

"It's a new thing. I've only known about the whole Zooman thing about two weeks."

"You're a Retrograde?" Hidekuni wondered with an odd look on his face.

"No, a full-fledged leopard apparently. It’s complicated. We can talk about it later, if you want." A shy grin slipped onto Harry's lips. "It’s great to see you again."

Hidekuni mirrored the smile and wrapped his arms around Harry, pressing a kiss to his cheek and taking that deep breath again.

"Yeah, I missed you, too. I'd planned to contact you tomorrow. I just came back this morning," Hidekuni mumbled against Harry's cheek. Someone clearing their throat reminded Harry that they weren’t, in fact, alone. Blushing, he stepped back a bit and looked at the person who'd interrupted them. It was one of the men Hidekuni had been standing with and his broad grin was almost splitting his face in two.

"You must be my little Hide's Darling. Harry right?" The man dragged him into a hug and smacked a kiss on his cheek. "I'm David, his dad. Welcome to the family!"

Harry threw a panicked look over the man's shoulder that begged Hidekuni, who looked like he wanted to sink into the ground, for help.

Said help, in the end, came in the form of Bagheera, who must have noticed the commotion. He appeared next to David as if he'd apparated right next to him, grabbed the other man by the scruff and dragged him backwards until he released Harry. Only then did he let go of David.

"Is there a problem?"

"Bagheera! I haven’t seen you in ages. How’s that old sourface of yours?" David greeted merrily. "No problem at all! Just greeting my new son-in-law to be."

Harry flushed, when Bagheera turned to look at him and nodded at Hidekuni. The older man raised his eyebrows, but motioned him to leave, before he started lecturing David about proper decorum.

Hidekuni, still blushing in embarrassment, grabbed Harry’s hand and quickly dragged him away from his father and the rest of the group (the blond’s brother Kunimasa, his brother’s lover and his uncle, as Harry’d later learn).

“I’m so sorry about that. My dad’s… easily excitable. Not even my mom can do much about it. I think he’s become resigned,” Hidekuni smiled apologetically and stopped in a more secluded part of the room, where they had a bit more privacy.

“Don’t worry, I’ll get my revenge, when you meet my family.” Harry smirked. The Weasley’s alone were a force to be reckoned with.
“That sounds vaguely scary, but… I’m glad I get the chance. I’m glad I asked you for a date and that we managed to stay in contact against all odds,” Hidekuni admitted, making Harry smile. The brunet wrapped his hand around the blond’s neck and leant forward to press a kiss to Hidekuni’s lips, which quickly devolved into an open-mouthed kiss. It was just as good as he remembered.

When they came up for air, Hidekuni beamed in delight.

“Our ears are showing.” The blond raised his hand and softly stroked them. Harry leant into the touch, his eyes going to half-mast. He might or might not be purring. Suddenly he felt something soft graze his hand and when he looked down, he noticed the spotted tail not belonging to him. The brunet grinned at Hidekuni, who shrugged, not an ounce of sheepishness was showing on his face.

Harry was pretty damn glad he’d agreed to the date, too.

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