Harry Potter was not the boy-who-lived and therefore he was not the favored child of his parents. No, his twin brother Nathan Potter was, and Nathan was easily loved by all, including by the supposedly emotionless Harry Potter himself.

Harry had no time for jealousy—especially not of the brother whom he loved dearly. He barely had time to even enjoy his childhood as heir to an ancient and most noble house.

Under the guidance of cold and strict tutors Harry has grown to be a rather emotionally detached young man. However, perhaps his friends could help him learn what it means to have friends that aren’t his brother. And maybe, just maybe, guidance from professor Snape, and upperclassmen could help Harry become the empathetic Healer that he did not know he could be.

That is if he can learn to navigate and cope with his visions as a seer and not fall victim to Voldemort's ever growing obsession with him that may very well lead him to insanity.
!!12/18/2019 CURRENTLY FIXING MAJOR MISTAKES, PLOT HOLES, DIALOGUE AND GRAMMAR. WILL UPDATE SOON. Thank you all for your patience and support, please be sure to leave a comment for anything you might like to see in future chapters!***!!!

Notes

Rewritten and or additions added 10/30/2019
For the past month James Potter has watched and waited. Waited and watched.

A noise near the door put him at high alert, as the noise continued, he realized it was merely leaves rustling against the frame.

James breathed in, and then out. His elbows were propped onto his knees and his wand was clenched between his palms. The other side of the door was completely silent now, only the gust of wind could be heard. His eyes felt dry. There was no doubt that they were red and irritated from the lack of blinking as he intently stared at the entry to Godrick's Hollow. He and his family's temporary home.

The ticks from the grandfather clock in the corner of the living room distracted his ears from the outside, but overshadowed the quiet murmur of his wife upstairs. Her murmurs were the quiet pleas of a mother begging her children to sleep.

Children... More like, child for it was far likely that James' youngest, Nathaniel was the only baby of the two upstairs making a fuss. Nathaniel truly proved himself as James' child with his loud whines and his demanding nature. James' eldest however, was quite the opposite. He could picture Harrison quietly laying in he and Nathaniel's shared cot patiently waiting for his brother to calm and be laid beside him.

'Oh to be oblivious to the danger they were in like his children.'

It felt like decades since his wife Lily became pregnant, and they were forced into hiding. In reality, they have only been hiding for little more than two years, but it did not make it any easier to cope with.

A madman was after their children after all, and James could do little more than hide while his comrades fought and perhaps it was wrong of him, but James found an amount of comfort knowing that his former classmate, Frank Longbottom was just as burdened as he from the responsibility of protecting his own family. After all, his child was also hunted by the madman.

"James..." Lily called out as she descended the stairs.

James did not look up, "they asleep?" he asked, he was not surprised at the exhaustion he heard in his own voice.

Lily nodded. She placed a hand on James' knee in order to steady herself while she slowly knelt at his side and beside the rickety kitchen chair that James had positioned in front of their home's door. The only entry point to their home, James had made sure of that. The thin line that Lily lips had formed displayed her worry but she did not comment knowing from experience that she could not ease James' own paranoia, nor could she convince him to move from the post that he assigned himself.
She grabbed the canteen from the floor that laid at James feet and her lips transformed quickly from a terse thin line to a displeased frown when she felt the weight of it, it felt full.

"Drink," she commanded after placing the nozzle of it onto James' lips. Obediently, James began to sip and his sips turned into gulps when he realized how thirsty he was.

James thanked her and Lily said nothing, but she did however, remove James' overgrown bangs from his forehead before she placed a gentle kiss on his brow.

"It has been a month since you said we were on 'higher alert then ever,' James. Surely, you can rest now. Come, join me on the sofa," Lily begged. She had her hands atop of James' own. She longed to hold it proper but the man's hands were practically glued to his wand.

James' allowed his eyes to meet his wife's own for a brief second, and even the deep sorrow within them could not pursued him to abandon his post. "Lily, there is a feeling..." ever so slowly, James raised his non-dominant hand, it shook even as he clenched it over his chest where his heart lay beneath. "A feeling deep in my heart from my magic's very core warning me that something is coming. Until that feeling goes away, we are on high alert," he said with finality.

"Then at least allow our friends to visit once more. It has been a month James, surely you trust them," Lily continued to beg. James was not listening however, and ever so slowly he stood. His eyes on the door and his wife's pleas deaf to his ears.

"Jame's what is wrong--"

"Quiet, Lily!"

Lily would have protested the command had it not been so harsh and had James eyes not appeared so crazed. So with an audible clack of her teeth, Lily closed her mouth and turned her eyes to the door that James stared at so tensely.

Minutes passed, and the hairs on the back of James' neck stood so stiffly that he could easily pluck them one by one with ease.

"Lily. Go upstairs, now," James said oh so slowly as he roughly grabbed Lily's arm and forced her to stand. He shoved her toward the stairs, "J-James, what has gotten--"

"Go!" the manic urgency in which her husband spoke frightened Lily, but before she could even demand answers for his behavior she felt an offensive spell break through one of the many charms she had placed around and throughout the house. She gasped, someone unwelcome was coming. She looked to her husband, "James..."

Suddenly, James began to move, he looked mad as he began to spell anything and everything in their home to barricade the door. First, the chair he had been sitting upon, then the sofa, then the coffee table.

When he went for the kitchen table he stopped short when another spell hit one of their defenses. The house shook from the power of it and Lily did not argue when James angrily yelled, "LILY, GRAB THE CHILDREN AND GO! DON'T LOOK BACK!"

Lily quickly ran up the narrow stairway to the nursery and barricaded herself inside. Just as James, she began to spell anything within the room to blockade the door. The chairs, tables, the bookshelf, Nathaniel's & Harrison's toy box and any other items her magic latched onto. She did not to waste too much time in doing so. After all, her goal was not to find safety within the nursery but to evacuate herself and her children as quickly as possible.
In the closet there was a plain muggle baby rattle which had been spelled into a port key that would take them to the Potter Manor, where they would then floo to another home owned by the Potter's in America. However, when she opened the closet, and looked in the shoe box where the rattle should have been she was met with an empty space.

Lily was an optimist, 'surely, it is just misplaced,' she thought to herself. In an attempt to soothe her rapid beating heart, she searched calmly. Gently, she moved shoes, articles of clothing and anything else in her way. Her calm movements turned to frantic ones when the rattle failed to reveal itself. No matter how hard she looked, no matter how many 'accio's' she cast, the rattle did not appear.

"Bombarda!" A voice hissed from below.

The sound of the door down stairs exploding made Lily jump and she decided to forego the rattle and use the emergency-emergency port key; Harrison's old blanket which was hidden under the cot in he and Nathaniel's crib.

Nathaniel cried so very loudly and Lily ignored him in favor of her search. However, it seemed as if Harrison was doing his best to calm him. Briefly, Lily paused mid way of lifting the cot from under her children. She wiped away the tears that had formed out of frustration and she pulled herself together.

If Harrison could comfort his brother during a time like this, then surely, she could keep her own calm and get them to safety. Gently, she lifted the cot as much as she could, she only need to grab onto any part of the blanket in order to whisk them away to safety. Lily almost screamed when she saw that the blanket was not there.

Those were the only two port keys they had been allowed to have when the wizarding American government accepted their petition for emergency asylum. Lily did not panic. Now, it was only legally port-keying out of Godric's Hollow that was no longer an option. Lily still had the locket around her neck that would transport them there. They would only need a day to re-corporate and they could be gone the next day to another Potter home in Europe.

Lily yanked the locket from her neck and she tightened the hold she had on the children and said, "Potterbound." The words should have instantaneously activated the port key. However, it did not take Lily long to figure out that the key had been deactivated. "Potterbound, Potterbound, fucking Potterbound!" She yelled and threw the locket across the room when it continued to prove to be useless. The only other person besides James and herself to know of the port keys was the only other person involved in setting them up… Wormtail.

Lily released an inhuman piercing screech at the thought of such a horrid betrayal. They might die, and Wormtail-sweet, quiet, submissive Peter Pettigrew would be the cause. She ran to the door and removed the items she had used to block it in feared that the inevitable bombarda would cause the scattered pieces of debris to hit the babies like bullets.

Downstairs had grown quiet long ago, and with each silent second Lily grew even more paranoid because she did not know what was to come. Lily tightened her hold on her wand and turned to the babies inside the bed with desperate need to see them alive and whole. She herself will die before she allowed any form of harm to come to them.

She gasped when she noticed how Harrison's eyes bore into her own. The baby looked contemplative as he stared at her and held his brother. Nathaniel was falling asleep in the other's arms.
"Lily Potter," Lord Voldemort hissed as he calmly opened the nursery door and invited himself inside. Lily found herself grateful that he did not explode it into a million pieces.

Lily breathed in through her nose and out through her mouth; she steeled herself. Lily was far from a coward; she was a Gryffindor after all, and this was not the first time that she had come face to face with Voldemort. However; she never outright had to deal with the man either. She turned her entire body to face him. Her wand at the ready.

"Where is James!?" She demanded.

"He is alive, you may go to him. Leave us," Voldemort hissed and waved a dismissive hand toward the door, "I have no need for you or your death."

Lily laughed, "I am staying right here, you need not harm these children."

Voldemort used a silent expelliarmus charm on her wand and it flew out of her hand. Lily gasped and was ready to call for her wand, but her plan was cut off as Voldemort threatened her, "attempt to retrieve your wand and your husband will die along with your children. Am I understood, girl?"

Lily gulped and nodded.

Voldemort approached her and spoke as if he had been on a mere stroll and had came upon Lily by chance, "You are right, you know. I will not be harming any child. I will, however, kill the child of the prophecy. You know which child that is. It would save you the loss of two children by telling me."

By the end of his threat, Voldemort had gripped Lily harshly by her chin. His face was so close to her own that she could feel the air leave his nose as he breathed.

Lily began to sob; she would never tell. It would be needlessly cruel to choose which child would die and which would live. Nor was Lily foolish enough to believe that Voldemort would trust her word and not kill both children anyway.

"Please, don't—please. Take me! I have defied you; I still continue to do so! You will not harm these children!" Lily in a state of panic managed a bout of magic that knocked Voldemort back. The Dark Lord became enraged at this, "I have no time for this, little girl!" With a flick of his hand back he sent Lily flying into a wall across the room. It knocked her out upon impact.

"Tch. Now, you two..." Voldemort hissed as he approached the crib, wand in hand.

The children clung to one another which was more than impressive considering that they were mere babes.

One of the children eyed him fearfully and sniffled as snot dribbled from his nose. 'Disgusting,' Voldemort sneered internally.

The other child however; challenged Voldemort. The Dark Lord could tell that it was a challenge the moment his red eyes were met with fair colored amber ones that peered into his own with what could be seen as calculation.

"It could be assumed that it is you that the prophecy forewarns me of. However, due to your asinine mother, both of you must die," Voldemort raised his wand pointedly. Brown eyes continued to stare unflinchingly into the man's own even as the babe's brother continued to snivel and cry.

"I am sure that you would have grown into a formidable opponent, Avada Kedavra!"
Lily awoke to James' desperate voice, "Lily, Lilian! Wake up—" he called out as he shook her gently.

"I'm up James. I'm up," Lily mumbled as she sat up slowly. Her head felt as if it had been torn apart. She looked around the room and quickly noticed that everything was in shambles and debris laid just about everywhere.

Suddenly she remembered why she had even been "asleep" in the first place.

"James! Nathaniel, Harrison—"

"Lily, my girl! They are fine," soothed one Albus Dumbledore—their former headmaster and the current leader of the light and the Order of the Phoenix. An order that they had pledged their own lives to... lives that they nearly lost. He approached the two ever so slowly and he held a twin in each arm.

Lily held out her hand for them. She wanted them both but was only given Harrison. Quickly she checked him over and when she deemed him okay, she desperately reached out her other arm for Nathaniel.

"Lily, calm down!" James demanded as he grabbed her hand. He was slightly off-put by Lily's hysterical behavior.

"No, James! I want my son!" Lily cried. She shook the arm that James held onto in an attempt to shake him off.

Professor Dumbledore smiled sadly but still refused to give her Nathaniel. He did, however, angle the baby so that she could see the lightning shaped scar that faintly glowed on the boy's hand.

A sob escaped the mother and Lily reached for him again. This time Dumbledore allowed her to take him in replace of Harrison who seemed to be dozing off.

James nodded and rubbed a tired hand over his face, "It's Nathaniel Lily. He really is the one of the prophecy," he was absolutely exhausted. James huddled close to his wife and youngest son and held them.

"It is with a heavy heart that I am in agreement. The Longbottoms were attacked this very night as well and while young Neville survived along with his uncle--he was unmarked," Dumbledore stated as he attempted to rock Harrison asleep. However, the boy became even more alert within his arms and physically shook himself awake and Dumbledore allowed a surprised chuckle to escape his throat.

Lily stared at the two men, unsure of their certainty.

"Oh god... Alice..." Lily whispered. She held Nathan closer, prepared to morn her friend. However, she was startled out of her grief as she remembered the man whose fault it was that they were attacked and her dear friend was dead, "Voldemort! Where is—"

James laughed hysterically, "he's dead, Lily. Nathaniel killed him. Besides that mark, that's how we know that he's the prophecy child."

Lily gaped at James and then at her son who was sound asleep within her arms, she then turned to the headmaster and displayed her open disbelief on her face in hopes that the man would provide some answers.
The professor eyes twinkled in amusement, "it's true, the boy is exhausted from what I can tell is magical depletion. He has the mark and it even faintly glows. It is young Nathaniel who has slain Voldemort—at least we are assuming that it is, unless you were the one to vanquish him?"

Vehemently Lily shook her head in the negative, "no, no, I was knocked out… Thrown against a wall."

The professor nodded. He had suspected as much.

"Well, Sirius has gone with the other Aurors, to confirm Voldemort's remains. Only his ashes could be found, we will know for sure if they are truly the remains of Voldemort in a week's time."

The Potter's nod shallowly at the man's report. Lily still did not understand what truly transpired after she was knocked out, how did Nathaniel do it?

As if reading her mind, the professor said, "from the magic residue left in the nursery, I infer that Voldemort attempted an Avada Kedavra and Nathaniel threw it back, most likely with accidental magic alone. I believe that he may have used Harrison's magic as they are both equally weak in magic at the moment."

Lily nodded again. That almost made sense and because she was too exhausted to question anything else, she left well enough alone for now.

"None of the port keys worked, otherwise you all would have been unharmed and in America right now," James stated and looked toward Lily with a look that demanded answers.

She let out a dry laugh, "the rattle and blanket were gone. Not even accio brought them to me and my locket just didn't work... Wormtail betrayed us, James."

James shook with anger, "I'll kill him. I swear it. I'll kill him with my bare hands," and just as quickly as the anger came, it left him. His face fell into his hands and his shoulders shook tremendously from the betrayal of one of his dearest friends. They almost died, and Wormtail assisted in their assassination attempt. Lily huddled closer to her husband and remained silent. Thankfully, the headmaster did as well. They could further debrief later when everything wasn't so fresh.

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Nathan Potter held his brother's hand in a tight grip and lead them down Diagon Ally excitedly.

"Harrison, look! Bargen's Books! We can go there after going to the wand shop and Quidditch shop, okay?" Nathan Potter informed his twin brother Harry Potter quickly as he babbled on about the various shops in Diagon Ally. Nathan nearly bounced on the balls of his feet in excitement. He continued to list what he and his older twin brother would do that day, without pause and without consulting Harry himself. To outsiders Nathan most likely appeared as a bossy and demanding boy, however; that wasn't the case. While Nathan could be bossy at any point in time, Harry could--and has--spoken up for himself when he so wanted. Though he rarely felt the need to. Nathan was his best friend, and usually did things with positive intentions.

Harry nodded in approval and only half listened to his brother and allowed his eyes to drift toward the bookstore longingly as they passed.
Their mother Lily had walked alongside her husband and allowed the boys to be until they finally reached Ollivander's wands. She turned to them and clapped her hands loudly, commandeering her boy's, and James--her big boy's--attention.

They were getting their boy's wands a few months early so that Nathan could use his own wand to practice the practical spells instead of his father's which was a common practice in pureblood families.

Nathan of course, refused to get a wand if Harry was not allowed to get one too. Unbeknownst to Harry's mother and brother, Harry was quite adept with wand work already due to the extra lessons he was forced to take by his father. His hired mentor, would not take Harry on as a student if he were not allowed a practice wand and thus, Harry was forced to use a hand-me-down wand from the Potter vaults during lessons with the man. Harry forced thoughts of the man from his mind. He refused to think about him on a good day such as this and really, it would be nice to have his own wand since his father never allowed him to despite Harry's vigorous training.

"Okay boys are we ready to get your wands?" Their mother asked excitedly.

Nathan jumped up and down in excitement and nodded enthusiastically. He took a peak at Harry and received a small smile in return. On Harry it may as well be a grin. James ruffled Nathan's hair and fixed Harry's bangs out of his eyes before he placed a hand on each boy's shoulder and lead them inside.

"Good evening all, I see that we have the infamous Nathaniel Potter among us, and oh—Harrison Potter as well, a pleasure, my child." greeted the renowned cryptic wand maker himself, Ollivander as the family entered.

"It is indeed a pleasure, Mr. Ollivander. However; please refrain from calling myself Harrison, and Nathaniel as Nathaniel. You may call me Harry, and you may call Nathaniel, Nathan." Harry stated politely, he even nodded after; as was good wizarding manners when dealing with those older and or in higher standing than you.

Their father looked slightly irritated at Harry's words. He prepared to reprimand Harry for correcting an adult in such a manner, but Nathaniel's enthusiastic agreement stopped him in his tracks, "Yeah, Olliva—I mean, Mr. Ollivander! Only Harrison and I can use each other's full names, even our parents use the shorter alterations." Nathan remembered himself and hastily threw in a small nod at the end. He looked toward Harry for approval and smiled wide when he got an approving nod.

Ollivander nodded in return and moved toward a shelf full of wands, "understood, young Potters. Please, this way."

"Who shall go first?" Ollivander inquired politely.

Harry answered for them when he sat in a chair in the far corner and gestured toward Nathan. He ignored Nathan's pout at such a development. Harry was accustomed to such behavior from his brother and rarely did he allow Nathan to have his way just because he pouted a bit--unlike the adults in their lives. Harry stated that he was sitting down so that he could be comfortable, because it would be better to take turns as he knew that Nathaniel would take a long time.

Nathan sniffed a bit at that and childishly bet Harry a sickle that he would only take 5 minutes. Harry raised a brow at the other boy but did not reply or place his own bet much to Nathan's chagrin.
Nathan most certainly did not take 5 minutes. As a matter of fact, he took 30 minutes and his heart was filled with dread when he was informed that his wand was the twin to the Dark Lord's own.

Harry knew of the Dark Lord due to the many time that he was mentioned in passing by his father—that is, when the man felt so inclined to take over his defense lessons.

His father was harsh when he trained Harry. When Harry failed a spell, or staggered a step while dodging, his father would berate him and with crazed eyes he would ask Harry if he wanted himself and his brother to be killed by Voldemort, the Dark Lord, the Madman and any other of the various names that He-Who-must-not-Be-Named went by. The memories were unpleasant but it was due to that that Harry could understand that his brother's wand further cemented him as the Boy-Who-Lived. A title his brother had supposedly earned for surviving the avada kedavra spell.

Harry stood from his chair and approached his brother gingerly. He placed a supportive hand on his brother's shoulder and smiled. His smile was small and crooked but showed his pride in his brother, "You should be very proud, Nathaniel, it is an incredible wand and your new—hopefully life long—companion." he congratulated.

Nathan hugged him tightly. Harry tentatively returned the hug. Nathan was affectionate as ever, "thanks Harrison! your turn now!" Nathan said enthusiastically.

For 30 minutes Harry waved and shook every wand given him. None of them had even sparked. After the 92nd wand, Ollivander looked toward Harry with a gloomy expression plastered on his face; "I must confess, young heir, no wand I have crafted calls for you. They tell me that they refuse to spark because you would only damage them."

Harry ignored Nathan questioning the Wand Maker, "you speak to wands?!"

"Of course not, child. Wands speak to me," Ollivander said incredulously, of course, he couldn't speak to wands! The wand maker noticed the forlorn look on Harry's face. His eyes looked down at his now empty hands shamefully.

"Do not appear so glum, young heir. A wand calls for you, however, I did not make it, and I pity you, because it is calling for you, a mere child. Please, give me one moment."

The Wand Maker traveled to the back of the room in a dark corner, which left the small family alone. Lily rubbed Harry's shoulder gently which he thanked her for as if she were doing him a service. His father watched the two intently, Harry did not notice the frown that formed on his father's face when he thanked his mother for her affection in such a manner.

Nathan tried to encourage him by telling him that he would get a wand, just as he did.

Ollivander returned and in his hands he held onto a long ashen box languidly. Ollivander opened it slowly and the box released a harsh chill throughout the room. Harry felt mesmerized as he stood before the box. Gently, Harry took the wand from its box and immediately, he felt the deep despair and sorrow that emitted from the wand the moment his hand contacted the sleek end.

Before Harry could stop himself, a tear fell from his eye and he grieved with the wand.

Nathaniel ran to Harry's side seeking to comfort his brother. Ollivander placed a firm hand on Harry's shoulder and garnered his attention.

"Harrison Charles Potter--also known as Harry Potter, may I ask why this wand has called for you?" Ollivander whispered with eyes that reflected the sorrow that Harry and the wand both felt.
Briefly, Harry wondered about what the wand was saying to the elderly man. Then Harry considered that the wand may not be speaking to the man at all. After all, the Wand Maker did not make this particular wand, and if it did not speak to him, it wouldn't be odd that he knew little to nothing about it. The Wand Maker's question slightly stumped Harry because he did not know the answer. If Harry were to be honest, the fact that the wand chose him terrified him immensely.

"I don't know..." Harry paused and closed his eyes, and did his best to clear his mind and truly feel the emotions of the wand. His eyes were closed for mere seconds before he opened them with a gasp, "Death," he breathed, "I can only explain it as death," Harry said earnestly.

Ollivander dropped his hand, his eyes were downcast and his smile was grim, "Ah, perhaps it is warning you that you will need it at your death. Or perhaps it is foreseeing you vanquishing another. It is a powerful wand. I can feel that much."

Lily jumped out of her seat, she could not allow such a barbaric conversation to continue. However, before she could interrupt them James placed a hand on her shoulder and gestured for her to watch and listen.

"I see," Harry stated determinedly, the energy from the wand shook his very core. Harry did not fully understand the elderly maker's words but he knew that he would greatly need this wand--it was his and would be by his side until the day he died. Without words, the wand made Harry feel that.

'I am akin to death, but I am not Death itself, you understand that. You understand me,' the wand stated.

Harry looked at the Wand Maker, who looked at him intently with deep knowing eyes.

Harry's eyes returned to his wand and he squeezed it in assurance.

He knew that other children--normal children--would denounce such a wand because they did not understand, but Harry would do no such thing because he did understand.

It was not that Harry wanted to understand such things as death, but Harry often had dreams that revolved around death and eventually he had gotten used to the concept. He remembered that when he first had begun to have such dreams, they had scared him so deeply that he went to his parents for help.

His father had accused him of attempting to get out of his studies and his mother had brushed them off as nightmares, and because Harry was so unsure of himself, he never brought them up again to the two. Not even when the visions taught him things that he knew to have happened but should not know.

Ollivander gazed at Harry, eyes alight with something akin to respect.

"I… did not make this wand, the core is unknown even to myself. However; the wood—which it may be—is mixed with bone. A bone that was given voluntarily by a threstal, if legends are to be believed. It is because of that bone that the wand is near invisible to those who have not seen death. I do not know which wood and core were used, but I do know this. You and Mr. Nathan both—are destined for great things, but who will suffer the most I wonder?"

"OK! We would like to pay, Ollivander—sir," Lily stated looking pointedly at James. James nodded his head in agreement and fished through his coin purse.

"Ah, yes, that will be 9 galleons, please."
James paused momentarily, mouth turned down in confusion, "but we are purchasing two wands." He informed dumbly.

Ollivander nodded in agreement, "yes, however, young Harrison's wand has always been his. I did not make it."

"Got it…” James said in open confusion. He shook it off and hastily paid before he herded his family out the door.

"Merlin, can you believe that man?” James asked conversationally once they exited the facility.

"Oh, leave it, James Potter! You wanted to hear that Drivel. Ollivander has always behaved in such a way, but Nathan is constantly reminded that it was he who defeated He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named and now Harry is being told he will possibly suffer and was given such a grim wand? I am shocked!" Lily bent over to check on Harry who had Nathan glued to his side in a one arm hug. Gently, Lily cupped his face and checked him over.

"Harry, are you ok?" She asked worriedly which genuinely surprised Harry. Often Lily just assumed that Harry was the stronger twin. That he could handle anything. This tender motherly care was usually always reserved for Nathan.

Harry nodded silently in confirmation that he was fine. He squeezed Nathan's hand and looked at his wand determinedly. "I do not believe Mr. Ollivander meant to be offensive. The wand—I agree, it is a sad wand and perhaps it is a sign of misfortune that is soon to come as Mr. ollivander warned... However; it is my wand now."

By the end of Harry's speech, Lily looked near to tears, she hated when he spoke like this. So wise, so old, so dejected.

James rubbed his face tiredly, exasperation evident, "why must you talk speak that!? Can't you be a normal boy, just for today, Harry? Look, you're making your mother and brother awfully sad."

Lily hissed her husband's name at his callousness, she completely failed to stop the man from being insensitive to their eldest. Nathan frowned even deeper than he had been, "S'not Harrison's fault," He mumbled with a slight glare toward his father.

Nathan tugged Harry along gently, "May we go to the bookstore, now?"

"I thought you wanted to go to the Quidditch store," Harry reminded Nathan, confused by his sudden change in decision.

Nathan lead them in the direction of the bookstore. He refused to face Harry and shrugged, "I changed my mind," he stated defensively.
Since getting their wands, both boy's time spent practicing the magic they knew increased and thanks to their father's tutelage, Nathan became even more adept in the few minor offensive spells that he knew. In both Harry and Nathan's opinions, the spells he learned were fun and mischievous but offensive all the same. Even their father remarked on the fun Nathan would have performing spells such as; *Jelly-Legs Jinx, Slug-Vomiting Charm, Trip-Jinx* and a few other similar spells in that category on slimy Slytherins.

Harry knew the spells as well thanks to Nathan. Though, he mainly knew them in theory since his own tutor did not teach him or allow him to perform magics that the man deemed as "childish." Harry though, felt confident that if he truly needed to, he could perform the spells with ease and in the rare moments his father took over his training, Harry would dare ask him to teach him such spells personally. His father denied Harry's requests without much thought and was adamant that such spells were a waste of Harry's time, he had more responsibilities than Nathan after all. And before Harry could even pout, his father would move onto their lesson and Harry would be forced to practice spells like *stupefy and body binding curses* while his father flung spell after advanced spell at him that he was meant to dodge. Most times, Harry dodged the spells with ease, other times he ended lessons with his father with numerous injuries or body transfigurations from odd, yet creative jinxes.

His father did not enjoy Harry's pain. Harry knew as much from the man's apologies that often ended in harsh reprimands over Harry's incompetence. Harry did not enjoy how his father would sometimes dismiss his actions--therefore making his apologies irrelevant--when he said things like, "the Slytherins will have a field day with you if you cannot even dodge their most simple spells, Harry."

It was always 'Slytherins this and Slytherins that' with their father. The man seemed to really hate them and insulted them whenever he could, it made Harry a bit concerned as to what would happen to him if he was sorted into Slythering House.

"Would you truly despise me if I were to be sorted into Slytherin?" Harry asked over dinner one night. Harry knew that his father also thought all Slytherins to be conniving, sneaky and followers of the Dark Lord. However, Harry had found an old book within the Potter library written by his great grandfather. It was more of a journal about the man's time within Hogwarts but what interested Harry most was the man's descriptions of Slytherins. Slytherins were written as those who were ambitious, cunning, resourceful and more often than not; leaders and the more Harry had read about Slytherin house from his great grandfather's journal, the more Harry knew that he belonged. Though he could just as easily end up in Ravenclaw. After all, they could be just as cunning, they merely valued wit, knowledge and intellect more.

His mother responded immediately, “of course not! We could never hate you, Harry!"
Harry nodded his acknowledgment toward her, he appreciated her words and thought he displayed his appreciation appropriately so, he was confused at the slight sad face his mother developed at his response. Harry brushed it off as unimportant and turned his attention to his father who had yet to respond.

Nathan watched on silently, he knew that Harry did need his response because they both knew Nathan's stance on this. Nathan could never hate Harry--for anything--ever. Not only that, but he too had read their great grandfather's journals with Harry and because of that Nathan's impression of Slytherins grew less hateful. If his brother truly was one, then it was a definite fact that they could not all be bad. That was Nathan's opinion at least.

Their father put down his fork and ever so slowly and the tension increased when he still did not speak as he wiped his mouth with his dinner napkin as contemplated on his answer.

“Of course, I wouldn't hate you. You're my son, my heir and you always will be,” their father looked away from Harry when he saw that the boy wore an open look of surprise on his face.”Merlin, child! I know I have not been the most attentive father toward you, Harry, but surely you would not think I could hate you just for being a Slytherin! I am stern with you because there are great things at work in this world. You have always understood that more than Nathan ever could, and perhaps that is due to how strict I can be on you,” James said thoughtfully with a severe frown.

The two redheads at the table gaped at the man. Lily was astonished that James would use such a harsh word to describe his own behavior and they could not believe that the stubborn man would ever admitted fault for anything, especially in his treatment towards Harry.

Harry's own feature became neutral once more. He could tell the man had more to say and patiently he waited for his father to continue.

“With that said, you must keep in mind that a born Potter has never been a Slytherin—”

"Dad!” Nathan shouted in horror. “James!” Their mother had hissed at the same time. She stood from her seat with her hands firmly on the table. Their did something he had never done and he raised his hand. Not in a threatening manner but a silencing one. His face was stern, and his eyes were set firmly on Harry. Slowly their mother set with a deep and scary glare set in her husband's direction but she said nothing.

“A born Potter has never been a Slytherin. You being one would be… undesired but accepted. That would be the case if our family was not in the current position that it was in. Harry, your brother is the boy-who-lived and your mother and I have fought against He-who-shall-not-be-named, more than thrice. If you were to be put into Slytherin with that kind of background, you yourself would be targeted and most likely used against your brother—the-boy-who-lived. Man to man, do you understand?”

Harry grimaced but slowly he nodded. It was unsurprising that the discussion ended in what would be best for Nathan. Harry and his father’s conversations usually did. Always back to Nathan, what was best for Nathan, what Nathan needed, what Nathan wanted. However, typically such conversations were not held in front of Nathan himself because his father knew that not only did Nathan despised such favoritism but he also did not appreciate being out of the loop during Harry's and their father's discussions about his own well-being.

Their father was right though. Going into Slytherin would put a target on Harry's back. They would not accept him—no--they could not accept him. Due to their own parent’s political stances. They were just as obligated to behave under their parents influence as Harry was.
“I do understand. It’s best to go with Ravenclaw,” Harry agreed easily enough. He then continued to pick at the food on his plate.

The tension in their father’s shoulders released ever so slowly, it wasn’t Gryffindor but at least it wasn’t Slytherin, “I see..." he said dumbly, "fine. Yes, best to go with Ravenclaw,” his father agreed.

The two continued to eat and the two redheads gaped looked at one another with looks of confusion. It was not rare that they could not understand the understanding between Harry and his father.

Slowly they went back to eating. Nathan could not help but throw unsubtle glances in his brother's direction. He knew that he would talk to Harry about it in depth later and when he spared a glance toward their mother, he saw the fire in her eyes. She was pissed and even Nathan could tell that she would tear a new one into their father that night.

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Days passed and Nathan grew anxious each time the moon arrived and departed their side of the earth. Nathan was immensely impressed by his own patience. He did not fret and luckily for his brother, he did not bother him... Too much. When he and Harry’s Hogwarts’ letters finally arrived, Nathan maturely did not scream until he saw his brother.

“Our letters are finally here, Harrison!” Nathan practically screeched and ran toward Harry only to be cut off and engulfed into a hug by Sirius who yelled, shook him about, and spun around with Nathan in his arms. Nathan laughed but demanded to be put down so that he could give Harry his letter. He was ignored by the over excited Sirius who continued to prance and yell with Nathan held securely within his arms.

Remus and Sirius were newer additions in Nathan and Harry's lives.

It was not as if the two men were not often spoken about in the Potter household during Nathan and Harry's upbringing. The two boys had grown up hearing tales of their fearless Gryffindor uncles who were their fathers closest companions.

Though, they had not been formally introduced to Nathan and Harry as Padfoot and Moony until a mere two years ago. Together, Nathan and Harry were told that the two had returned from a long "trip" in America. However, later that same evening their father had taken Harry aside and informed him that Remus and Sirius had traveled all over the magical world for Intel on multiple werewolf packs and that once Harry was older he would be able to know more details. At the time Harry had felt like an adult at being told such information when Nathan was not allowed to know but unlike Nathan; Harry knowing such information caused him to view the two men differently. Harry wondered what other secrets they were hiding.

After their return, the two only visited the boys once a month for a year, and in the following year, they would increase their visits to more than two times a week.

Nathan took to Sirius easier than Harry could. The man loved to play despite his age and for awhile he tried to include Harry in he and Nathan's antics but Harry was quieter and more awkward than his brother. He did not wish to play pranks and found conversation with the man strained and stressful. Sirius eventually gave up and turned most of his attention to Nathan and Harry would not admit that Sirius’ actions hurt him.

If not for Remus, Harry probably would have grown resentful of his other uncle, but thankfully, he
and Remus got on easily enough with one another. Remus was just as quiet as Harry and the man was not as overbearing as his other two counter parts. Well, three now if you included Nathan who Sirius had loudly exclaimed to be a mini Marauder.

“Finally, finally! Oh, I am so proud!” Sirius yelled. Harry approached the two and caught his letter from Nathan’s dangling hands.

“Mousy,” Harry called out, almost immediately, a house elf appeared and bowed lowly.

Mousy was the calmest house elf owned by the Potters and ever since the Potters arrival at Potter manor all those years ago after the attack from he-who-shall-not-be-named, Mousy has helped raise Harry from his time as just a wee babe until he was about 5 years old and his parents felt more capable in taking care of both he and Nathan on their own.

“Yes, masters Harry?”

“Our letters came today,” Harry informed and was not surprised to immediately have his arms filled with an excited house elf.

“Oh! Congratulations young master! I will be makings your favorites, tonight! Yes, I will!”

Harry let out a sound that was akin to a huff but it was unmistakable fond laughter to Mousy’s ears. Gently and quickly, he returned the hug.

“I am looking forward to it. Would you please inform our parents that our letters have arrived?”

Harry asked politely.

“Of course, masters Harry, I’ll be doing that right aways.”

“Thank you.”

Mousy smiled, unlike other house elves who would fluster and blush at the boy’s politeness, she was quite used to the boy, so with a kind smile she silently popped away.

Sirius had finally put Nathan down and was regaling with him about all the adventures he, James and Remus had during their time at Hogwarts and the mention of Remus caused Harry to look around and wonder where he was—“Hiya, pup!” A deep voice said from behind him.

Harry was slightly startled and barely had time to register the fright as he was lifted with strong arms when Remus took him into a bear hug from behind which effectively trapped Harry in his hold. The man went as far as to scent mark him too by taking a quick sniff of Harry’s hair before he rubbed his face all over it. Harry huffed a little but took the scenting with no complaint.

After he and Nathan were told of their uncle ailment, he and Nathan coped with it in different ways. Nathan decided that Remus was still Remus and would be treated as such and Harry decided to learn all he could about werewolves so that he could fully understand how best to approach the man.

Harry did not know that Remus knew that he had done so on his behalf and Remus just loved him all the more for it.

“Hello, Moony,” Harry greeted blandly. The werewolf laughed at his monotone tone because the boy made it sound even more bland than usual. Purposefully so, of course. Harry wanted Remus to know just how annoyed he was with him for picking him up.
Remus put him down once he was satisfied that the boy was covered in his scent. “I hear that we got Hogwarts letters today!”

Harry quietly hummed in confirmation at the same time Nathan yelled, “we did!” he ran over to the two and hugged Remus quickly before going to his brother, and shook him by the shoulders in excitement.

Sirius approached them as well. When he noticed that Harry's attention was not focused on him, he relaxed. However, Remus gave him a pointed look.

Sirius internally sighed, Harry was James' son and for that alone, he loved Harry unconditionally, he really did. Albeit not as much as he loved Nathan, which was obvious, but he loved the boy and would die for him. However, Harry was often eerie and off putting in Sirius' opinion. Legitimately, he made Sirius uncomfortable sometimes, but Remus' pointed look was right. Just because Harry did not act like Nathan did not give Sirius the right to openly ignore him as so often he did.

Sirius ruffled Harry’s long hair a bit, and winked at him. Harry looked at him with slight surprise and internally Sirius cringed and felt the weight of immense guilt in the pit of his stomach that Harry would be surprised from a bit of positive attention from Sirius.

“Hello… Padfoot.”

Sirius perked up at that, Harry rarely used his name at all. Perhaps he wasn't bothered by Sirius' inattention

“Hey, kiddo, so… Hogwarts.” Sirius said awkwardly.

Harry gave a gentle smile. Sirius melted a bit on the inside because the boy rarely smiled--at Sirius at least.

“Yeah, Hogwarts.”

Immediately the four dove into a conversation on all there was to know about Hogwarts, and came up with a plan to begin shopping for their school supplies in Diagon Alley as early as tomorrow.

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James and Lily decided to give their godfathers after being pestered for hours by the two grown men and Nathan.

They had decided to get the book and cauldron buying out of the way early, and now all that was left was to get their robes, owls and an animal if they so choose.

“Madam Malkin’s, your favorite place in the world I bet, boys,” Sirius said sarcastically as they entered the tailor's building.

Nathan groaned, he hated getting measured for robes, Harry however, was not so bothered but dreaded the thought of a bored Nathan and Sirius in one room for a long stretch of time.

"We are the same size; you and Padfoot should go to the Quidditch shop until we are done here," Harry said suggestively.

Nathan began to protest immediately, Sirius however; asked if Harry was sure to which Remus hissed Sirius’ name for even considering Harry’s offer.
“It does not bother me in the slightest, the two of you antsy and loud in a small quiet shop however, does indeed bother me,” Harry stated earnestly.

Sirius’ laugh caught the attention of the store’s patrons and Madam Malkin herself who told them to lower their voices or leave. To this Sirius said; "with pleasure," and practically carried Nathan out the door and ignored Remus as the werewolf called out for him.

Remus shook his head, “pup, you can't keep spoiling your brother and padfoot like that.”

Harry shrugged and greeted Madam Malkin and her assistant.

“Oh! Little Harry Potter, welcome, welcome back. Sit, lad, Agnus will be with you in a moment, I am tending to the Malfoy heir at the moment.”

“I am right here, you know,” a pompous cultured voice said in a huff. It came from a boy with snow white hair, who looked as if he’d rather be anywhere else than in Madam Malkin's shop. He looked toward Harry and his expression screamed unimpressed but the other boy was quick to cover the expression up with neutral indifference, “so you’re Harry Potter. The brother of the boy-who-lived.”

Harry raised an eyebrow at him, allowing his own complete indifference to show, unlike the Malfoy heir, Harry didn't have to try to feign his indifference. He never thought others more important just because of who their family was. If he did, he'd have a rather large head about who he was. “That I be, Draco Malfoy, son of the follower Lucius Malfoy.”

Draco nearly lost his pureblood mask to gape at the boy, “what do you mean by “follower,” Potter?” he growled.

“Who knows, Malfoy,” Harry was bored and his tone really expressed that. Harry did not really know what he meant if he were to be honest. More often than not he did not understand the things his father said to him. Though he often made endeavors to use the things his father said to and in front of him to his advantage as he was instructed to do by his etiquette tutor at least..

Malfoy's cheeks turned bright red and he even seemed ready to yell, however; the other boy's mother and Agnus entered their vicinity and his posture changed completely.

“Ah, Harry Potter, as always, it is the utmost pleasure! What can I do for you?” Agnus exclaimed cheerfully, effectively dispelling the earlier tension created between the two boys.

“It really always is Madam Agnus. Today, as usual I will be measured for robes for both my brother and myself. However; this time they are Hogwarts’ robes. Neither of us have hit a growth spurt and are still of equal size,” Harry informed politely.

“Understood young Harry, if you would please stand next to the young Malfoy heir on that stool there,” madam Agnus pointed him where she'd like him to be.

Harry did as he was told and Remus tentatively took a seat in one of the visitor’s chairs next to Draco’s mother who stiffened but did not scoot away as she clearly wished to do.

Remus paid her no mid. He was still nervous from the boy’s earlier… ‘conversation.’ He knew James' words when he heard them and he would be telling James off for being too open about his opinions of other house lord's in front of his children.

“I say Mr. Potter, I do not believe we have ever had the pleasure of meeting face to face,” said Mrs. Malfoy politely.
“I am Narcissa Malfoy Nee Black. I am Draco Malfoy’s mother,” Mrs. Malfoy said regally as she gestured to her son.

Harry nodded his head gently. He was unable to bow as he should due to the fact that he was currently being measured.

“It is a pleasure Lady Malfoy. I am Harrison Charles Potter, elder twin of Nathaniel James Potter and oldest child of James and Lily Potter, thus heir to the noble house of Potter. Forgive my rudeness, I am unable to bow as is proper.”

Narcissa smiled, none too surprised about the youngest Potter’s mannerisms, Lucius often spoke of the boy very well due to the things he saw at ministry gatherings between the Potters and the minister.

“You are forgiven, Harrison,” Narcissa said kindly.

“I thank you, and please do me the honor of calling me Harry, my Lady.”

“Ah, understood, Harry.”

Harry nodded his thanks.

Narcissa and Remus began their own quiet conversation through the measurements. Harry noticed the young Malfoy eyeing him up every so often but ignored him.

A few minutes later Malfoy seemed to come to a decision, with ears bright red he spoke in a near whisper, “I do say that I was quite rude earlier, Potter.”

“Oh?” Harry said boredly.

Draco turned even redder, “Yes. I do hope you can forgive my earlier micro aggression and that we may begin a new—as proper associates.”

Harry held out a hand to him, “I do not see why that would not be possible.”

They shake it on it, effectively impressing all of the adults within the room.

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“Let’s get our own companion animals now, Harry!”

Remus wanted to tell Nathan to ask Harry instead of demand his brother, but Harry immediately told the other boy “ok.” So, Remus assumed that he must want to go as well.

The moment they entered the shop, a snowy white owl flew onto Harry’s head and stayed perched there. Nathan and Sirius shrieked, and Remus looked completely baffled while Harry appeared to be unconcerned.

The shop keeper approached them with a broom, ready to strike, "boy. Do not move. That is an albino devil bird. It’s been nesting at the top of my roof, refusing to leave, and it was only today that it came in and nested in another owl’s cage—” just as he finished speaking a black Dusky Barn owl took the opportunity to perch itself on Nathan’s awaiting arm.

“That owl!” The shop keeper yelled with a pointed finger at the black owl, "it made a nest with this owl! And this owl let him! They’re both sneaky little devils, I tell you!” The shop keeper exclaimed, he raised his broom and eyed the owls warily.

Harry whistled and extended an arm which the white owl jumped from its perch on his head to his arm immediately and latched onto it. The owl turned its head completely around, the shop keeper had lowered his broom by this point and grimaced in disgust at the owl. It starred into Harry’s eyes.
Harry stared right back, “what’s wrong with its eyes, they look like—”

“Stars…” Nathan finished in awe as he peered over Harry's shoulder at the bird. The owl’s eyes were the color of a night sky and it appeared as if there were constellations within them. Nathan swore that he could see the little dipper.

Harry nodded in agreement and looked toward the shop keep for an answer.

“How would I know!? The bugger is no owl of mine! But I would take a guess that it is perhaps blind, or just a freak of nature.”

Harry hummed thoughtfully in response to the man's answer. Nathan whispered a surprised, “cool,” at finding out the owl was possibly blind, but went on to coo at the Dusky Barn owl that instantly began to puff its chest at Nathan’s attention.

“I’ll take this one,” Harry stated.

The shopkeeper gaped, “lad, she’s not mine to give, do what you want. Do you really understand what a devil bird is? They’re bad omens.”

“I understand,” Harry had researched various owls that he could get in order to deliver his postage in the future. “They are birds that are rumored to portend death with a human like shriek. However, she seems just as intelligent as any owl, and I am sure she can deliver the letters that I will need delivered, and I am sure having her away from your shop will be beneficial as well as I doubt she will come back. She seems to have taken a liking to me.”

Sirius was too busy cooing with Nathan over the Dusky Barn owl, however; Remus gave Harry’s shoulder a slight squeeze in support.

The shopkeeper put his broom down and walked towards his cash register, “whatever, it’s your choice. Not like I can actually charge you for it, lad. However; your brother seems to like the Dusky Barn, that one I bred and raised me self.”

Harry nodded and waited for Sirius to pay for Nathan’s owl. Harry knew that owl was Nathan’s without the other boy exclaiming so.

They got the Dusky Barn at half the price because the shopkeeper could not possibly charge the boy who lived at full price.

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In no time at all, the time to depart for Hogwarts arrived, and Nathan and Harry were both anxious to go. Their parents had taken them to King's Cross station and led them to platform 9 3/4 and insisted that they enter the muggleborn way by running through the concealed barrior.

Nathan loved the idea and did not hesitate. He shouted, “Hogwarts, Hogwarts, Hogwarts!” when he ran through and disappeared through the platform's walls.

Harry was less excited and chose to walk briskly instead of running and when he made it to the other side, he was met with his brother's enthusiastic yelling. “Yes, yes, Hogwarts. Today is the day, I suppose,” he agreed and Nathan began to bounce even more.

Sirius and James fake cries came from the wall as they ran out and exclaimed that they could not believe how big the two have gotten. They went for hugs and only managed to catch Nathan between them as Harry hurriedly stepped away.
Remus' laugh came from behind Harry and he caught Harry into a bear hug anyway, but put him down as quickly as he picked him up and even gave him a ruffle of the hair. He told Harry how proud he was of him with such emotion that it caused Harry to look away as he was slightly overwhelmed and embarrassed.

Remus continued undeterred, “I know we haven't known each other long but I love you, pup. So much. Always have. You know how to reach me if you need anything. Don’t be a stranger, alright?”

Again, Harry nodded and very awkwardly he stated, “you as well. I…… ah, love you.”

Remus got very teary eyed then but managed to joke just to break the tension, “geez, don’t stress yourself, pup,” he said playfully with a gentle shove. Harry laughed too—in his own way at least. Feeling that his job was done, Remus scurried off to say goodbye to Nathan.

His mother approached Harry next, ever so gingerly and as awkward as ever. It did not take much investigation to learn that Harry received his awkward nature from her.

“Harry, write often, ok? I want to hear everything, ok? I love you a lot.”

Harry nodded and approached her for once and gave her a gentle hug. It obviously caught his mother by surprise if her soft gasp was anything to go by. She returned the hug swiftly as if she was terrified that he’d run away, and just as she knew he would; he stepped back the moment her hold loosened.

“I love you as well. I do," they both grimaced at how awkward and forced he sounded. "I... I know I am not the most affectionate between Nathan and I, but I feel that I just do not know how to be... Then, I feel that I became frightened to be affectionate in fear that I was taking affection that Nathan could be receiving and deserved because of how often I heard rumor that my brother may be attacked or die."

His mother sobbed quietly as she whispered, “oh, Harry, oh baby, I am so sorry. I had no idea that you were hearing all those whispered conversations."

Harry refrained from informing her that his father too easily told him those kind of things directly. Instead he told her that he will do his best in the school year and that he would protect Nathan like he should as his elder brother. His mother gasped at him, shocked by how mature he sounded, "oh, Harry. You don't need. You shouldn't..... I. Just—thank you. Yes, please protect your brother, but protect yourself too. I could not lose either of you," she said earnestly.

Harry nodded and gently pushed his mother toward his brother so that she could say farewell to Nathan as well. As she went, his father and Sirius approached him. Sirius gave him a quick big hug and they exchanged awkward “I love you’s” when they were finished, Sirius hastily returned to Nathan’s side.

His father remained and gripped Harry’s shoulder—firmly. The man's eyes were slightly watery but he was not quite close to crying, “best to do Raveclaw?” His father questioned.

Harry smirked ever so slightly, “best to do Ravenclaw,” he agreed.

His father nodded, and surprised Harry with his next words, “I am proud of you. I know you think of me as harsh, but that is only because I know what you are capable of, Harry. Never forget that. I know I can't forget it, I see it all the time however, after a stern talking from Moony; I realize that even though I know the things you are capable of.... I do not know as much as I should about you. He dared asked me your favorite food and I can't say that I know, but I doubt you know mine.
either,” his father paused and Harry looked up at him, clearly he awaited a response but in truth, Harry did not know. His father chuckled, "well, no hard feelings. Perhaps you will write and we can better get to know one another through letters?"

It should be awkward, to an outsider this would be seen as so very awkward. A father should not need to say such words to their son, but his father must because he truly does not know Harry and Harry did not really know him either. Not only did Harry learn his mannerisms and expectations from tutors, but his father and mother both barely caught the biggest moments of Harry’s life. His first word, which was “Mousy.” His first step, which they only caught because Mousy popped him into the living room mid step. It actually discombobulated him, but he managed to walk over to Nathan anyway and then proceeded to teach him how to walk as well. They also completely missed his first case of accidental magic because they believed him to be rendered a squib after the attack and once they found out that he was not--that he could properly be the heir to the Potter legacy, they--well, his father--bombarded him with tradition and education through tutors and harsh repetition. They missed so much and they know they did and none of them know how to repair it.

Though, despite all of that, this banter between his father and he was something he enjoyed and hoped to never change. It made him feel mature, as if he had the upper hand in whatever this was between them. It can be awkward and stilted but it is his and his father’s and it is the only thing that the two know how to do in order to communicate with one another.

“I will be sure to write both you and mother,” Harry confirmed.

“Be sure to do that. Watch over your brother, and watch your back as I told you, and only you,” his father's gaze returned to the stern one that Harry was more familiar with.

Harry did not really understand why Nathan had been trained to fight and defend yet, his father and the others rarely spoke to Nathan the way they talk to Harry. So unfiltered and unprotected about the dangers they face.

His father must have thought he was not paying attention and squeezed Harry's shoulder tightly, "the two of you have big targets on your back, do not let your guard down” his father warned once more, his eyes were slightly crazed and Harry wondered what it was that he was seeing.

“I will, sir,” Harry promised.

“Good, take care,” his father said tersely and released his shoulder.

“You too.”

His father shocked Harry when he cuffed the back of his head, and kissed the top of his brow before he walked away without another word. Harry, confused, decided to not think too hard on it as he took both he and Nathan’s luggage aside to put it on the train. He waited at a nearby entrance upon finishing in order to board with his brother.

“Oh, ok, guys! We have to board! Gosh!” Nathan exclaimed through laughter. He was ready to be done with goodbyes because surely, they would all see each other over winter break.

James and Sirius asked for one more group hug which almost turned into full blown playful wrestling. Harry waited patiently.

“Mr. Potter, what a pleasure.” Lucius Malfoy stated as he approached the boy with his family close behind.

Harry bowed slightly, “good evening, Lady Malfoy, Lord Malfoy, Malfoy heir.”

The adults tipped their head in greeting, and Draco bowed back, “good evening, Potter heir.”

Lucius looked on approvingly, and Narcissa smiled warmly.

“Pardon me, I do believe my brother is finally ready to board, I must be going.” Harry excused as he watched Nathan approach. Their father's irate stare at the Malfoy's did not go unnoticed by Harry.

“By all means, have a good year at Hogwarts, perhaps we will finally see you two at Yule,” Lucius stated hopefully.

Harry looked the slightest bit of surprised. Their have been many Yule Balls that have been hosted by various ancient and noble houses. The Malfoys had hosted a few of said celebration parties but never had they invited the Potters due to their bad blood--or so Harry had been told by his father. Carefully Harry said, “yes, perhaps.”

He boarded the train after Nathan, and waved a silent goodbye to anyone paying attention, he was pleased when his entire present family waved back, and even the older Malfoy’s wave as well.

“Come on, Harrison, there’s an empty cart right over here!” Nathan exclaimed as he grabbed Harry by the arm and ran them toward the empty cart. Nathan threw them onto the seats across from one another.

“Hogwarts, Harrison!”

Harry almost laughed, but he only gave a small smile instead. “Are you ready?”

Nathan did laugh, “am I ready!? Am I, ready!? Of course, I am! Are you!?”

“Well, of course, I am,” Harry replied playfully which earned him a gentle kick. The two began to discuss their possible classes and of the excitement that came with having teachers who had taught their own parents and uncles. Nathan took out his wand and began to practice some of the easier second year spells that he knew. He had been struggling with them as of late, and Harry had been helping as best as he could in secret.

They were interrupted by a bushy haired girl who aggressively opened their compartment without so much of a knock. Without pause she asked if they had seen a toad named Trevor because a boy named Neville was looking for it.

“No, we haven't,” Harry answered bluntly. His eyes bore into the girl's own and he had a slight glare in them as he could not believe the girl’s rudeness.

“Oh. Really? Well, Neville Longbottom is looking for it,” She repeated a bit snootily with her nose in the air.

“Oh, is he now?” Harry mocked disinterested in the entire situation. Nathan giggled a bit but elbowed him for his own rudeness.

Just then, Neville himself came out from behind the girl, and shyly waved to the two twins. “Hi, Harry, hi Nathan.”
“Hello, Neville,” the twins greeted in unison.

Harry and Nathan were familiar with Neville Longbottom. Neville and Luna Lovegood were the only two children the Potter children had ever played with and actually met before today. Sure, they went to public social events from time to time, just to be seen, but typically they were surrounded by adults. They could not even attend scheduled play dates because—for the most part—they were still in hiding, and could not trust anyone. This led to the twins growing up very secluded and away from other wizarding children. However; they had met Neville and Luna by chance at a gathering at the ministry and they all agreed to be friends of sorts upon entering Hogwarts.

“Mind if I sit with you? Ms. Granger and I haven’t had the chance to sit down since boarding because I lost my frog,” Neville asked timidly unsure if he would be welcomed.

“Sure, Neville, pop a squat!” Nathan exclaimed slapping the seat next to him.

“What about your frog, you aren’t just going to leave him to roam, will you!?” The girl nearly yelled. She was scandalized that the boy would do such a thing.

“He’s a magic frog...Ms. Granger, was it? The frog will find Neville in due time,” Harry's tone showed exactly how bored he was with it all. Harry did not care if he was rude or not, he just wanted the girl to leave.

“Oh is that right? Who are you then?” The bushy haired girl demanded with her hands on her hips.

“Harry.”

“It’s proper to introduce yourself with your full name!” She demanded, she barely refrained from stamping her feet.

“I believe it’s proper to introduce yourself at all, and knock before we enter a compartment and or room with a closed door, but you do not seem too big on manners yourself.”

The girl turned bright red and looked as if she was about to cry and without retorting she stomped away.

“Yeesh, Harry, you really know how to slam’em down. Not that I don’t appreciate it,” Neville breathed, the girl was a bit overwhelming and made him rather anxious.

They shut the compartment door and locked it effectively and luckily no one else came to bother them. Not for lack of trying. Unbeknownst to the other two inhabitants, Harry silently placed a confundus on their door. Which caused anyone near to become confused and walk away.

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They stick together all the way into the sorting and because of their great grandfather's journals neither Nathan nor Harry were surprised to see the sorting hat that would be placed atop their heads in order to place them into one of the respective four houses of Hogwarts for the remainder of their school years.

In order to remember each house value with ease, he and Nathan came up with a phrase like question; brave and brash like Gryffindor, Sly like Slytherin, hard working like Hufflepuff or booksmart like Ravenclaw?” They would say this phrase to one another nearly every night the week before they left for Hogwarts.

The first to be sorted was a girl by the name of Hannah Abbot. Without much fuss, she was placed into Hufflepuff. Granger—whose first name was Hermione had gone into Ravenclaw. It was
obvious that she belonged there since upon entering the castle, she loudly spouted off about what she had read in, *Hogwarts: A History.* It appeared as if she had memorized the whole thing as she rambled on about the ceiling, the armor and the food that would appear with magic on the tables the upper years sat at. It would have been endearing had she not been such a know-it-all about it.

With each new sorting that followed after, the anticipation Harry in regards to his own sorting grew more and more.

He was quite anxious to be sorted himself and when he heard his name called he grew stiff but Nathan gently nudged him forward with an encouraging thumbs up. The witch who was in charge of the sorting was known as professor Minerva McGonagall. Their mother had recalled the woman to be her favorite teacher and their father claimed that she was the strictest witch within Hogwarts.

As Harry approached, she watched him intently. Her stare did nothing to calm his nerves, and the loud whispers of the student body. Harry tried to ignore them but a few whispers stood out more than the others...

“Is that the boy who lived?”

“No, you idiot, that’s his brother!”

“He has a brother? I had no idea”

“Me either.”

Upon hearing their whispers Harry truly felt like the forgotten child, but he refused to let their words depress him. He looked toward the head table to distract himself from the stares and whispers of the other students and his eyes were drawn to a man in all black robes. The man glared at Harry hatefully and Harry deduced that the man must be Severus Tobias Snape. His father had warned both he and Nathan that the dark and brooding professor would hate them without reason and would even treat them unfairly.

When Harry finally reached the stool, Professor McGonagall stood before. Even close up, she to be a stern, cold and calculating woman, Harry wondered if she ever smiled. She surprised Harry when she did just that and gave him the kindest and most gentle smile he had received thus far within Hogwarts before she politely asked him to sit.

The moment he did so the hat was placed onto his head and he did not startle when the hat greeted him by speaking directly into his head.

“Hello, I am Harrison Charles Potter,” Harry responded slowly within his head. He was unsure as to whether or not the hat would actually hear or understand him.

The hat laughed aloud startling those in the room, “hello, Mr. Potter, I am Marvin,” it responded in his head only.

“Ravenclaw really decided to name you Marvin?”

Marvin laughed again, even louder. Everyone began to wonder what was so funny but no one dared to interrupt a sorting.

“That she did child, good on ye fer knowing yer history.”

“Thank you. I apologize to rush but I do not like all the attention that is on me currently and if we take too long people will begin to question us. Marvin, where do you think I belong?”
“Hmm, polite of ye to ask, lad. Hmm, aye, Slytherin would do ye some good, now wouldn’t it? However; that isn’t where you want to go, is it?”

“It is not,” Agreed Harry.

“You could be great you know. Slytherin would show you the means,” Marvin insisted as he looked through the memories of an emotionally isolated child. He saw a paranoid father who placed too much responsibility onto his eldest child. He saw a mother who was unsure of her role and her relationship with her eldest son as she chose her youngest over him again and again. Marvin then saw the oldest, angry, yet accepting of it all, because he would become great by his own means with or without his family. Marvin saw a Slytherin.

“I do not disagree, however, Ravenclaw is a safe choice. I will be great there too,” Harry insisted.

Grumbling, Marvin dug further, easily finding events and memories that were not the child’s own. The old hat even saw the memories from events that belonged to the Longbottom boy here. The night the boy’s parents had been tortured into insanity. Twitching and aching to the point that they foamed from their mouths as they wailed. It was horrid, really. Marvin saw many more visions swim through the boy’s head, visions that he kept to himself, visions that he should have never even seen.

“These visions child, some of them are downright ghastly aren’t they? Are ye a seer?”

Harry pondered his question a bit. No one had actually asked that question before. However, Harry did only mention his “gift” once in his life and was strongly dismissed as seeking attention, “I think that I am,” he said earnestly but uncertain.

“Aye, I be thinking the same thing. Though the ones I have seen from ye aren't of the future... But I can neither deny nor confirm tha' most have transpired from the things I may have or may have not seen from the other students... How odd. Though, what's more important is the fact that no child could be the same upon seeing the things you’ve seen, lad. Yer surviving somehow and it’s truly impressive, a true Slytherin through and through,” Marvin repeated with confidence.

Harry remained silent, and focused and concentrated his thoughts and desire to show the hat the memory of the conversation he and his father had regarding his sorting.

“Ah, I see. Some things never change... are the separation of the houses still so important? Well this just won't do," the hate muttered to itself.

"Say, if this is what ye want and I give to ye, ye have to promise me to unite the houses as best as ye can. That way, I'll have less students arguin' with me on where they're bein placed. Those are my conditions."

"I agree," Harry said easily, he believed the task to be an easy one and a fair exchnage for what he wanted to.

Harry was rewarded with one final laugh from the hat, "of course ye do! Ye may not know it yet but it's what ye want after all. Ye won't be along either lad. I have asked other students as well, many still reside here as students. Know that I am an ally of yer’s. Ye have big plans and they involve Hogwarts and her occupants and ye all will be needin’ me. Whenever you need me, I sit upon a shelf in the headmaster’s office.”

Harry was baffled and the realization that he may have been given a more difficult task than he thought began to sink in but he pushed his worry aside and said, “Thank you.”
The hat chuckled, telling him that he was such a polite child and that it was a pleasure to meet him before he yelled out, “RAVENCLAW!”
“Good luck.” Marvin whispered as he was removed from Harry’s head.

“Good luck indeed.” Professor McGonagall commended, a small proud smile on her lips. Harry had not the slightest idea as to why the woman sounded so proud but he began his quiet trek to the Ravenclaw table.
Well, it was quiet until Nathan began to clap for him a bit over enthusiastically which caused everyone else to follow suit, albeit slowly.

Nathan was unsurprisingly sorted into Gryffindor, Harry immediately noticed his sad yet relieved smile. Everyone gave a thunderous round of applause—everyone except the Slytherins, of course. The Gryffindor table was the loudest in their applause. Harry clapped—rather excitedly for him though to others, he most likely looked only look slightly impressed but Nathan caught his eye and he knew that his brother was very proud of him.

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After the feast everyone warned to avoid the third-floor corridor if they wished to live before they were granted permission to leave for their dorms whenever their prefect allowed it.
Harry frowned deeply upon hearing Nathan’s excited and curious whispers regarding the floor.

Harry’s thoughts were interrupted as two Ravenclaw prefects called for attention and lead their respective first-year boys and girls to their new home. Before Harry could leave the dining hall he was approached by Nathan. Well, more like attacked as the other boy enveloped him into a fierce hug.

“I wish we could have been in the same house,” Nathan confessed sadly.

Harry frowned and felt momentarily guilty for some unknown reason, “sorry…?”

Nathan pulled him back face extremely red, “no, no, don’t be! That’s not what I meant! I’m really glad that you got Ravenclaw! It suits you!”

Harry nodded and looked at his own tie and robes that had been changed into Ravenclaw colors. Nathan adjusted it for him ever so slightly.

“Well, I have to go! So, uh… bye!” Nathan gave him another hug but didn’t let go immediately, he chose to request a favor from his captive audience, “I know the Granger girl was a bit bossy today, but I think she could use some friends. Try to play nice, ok?” He released him and jerked his head in the direction of the girl.

She was glaring at a book opened in front of her. Though, perhaps she was not glaring at the book per se but glaring at what was being said around her. She was sat between a few other girls who pointedly sat away from her while they snickered into their hands and looked at her every so often before giggling once more..

Harry looked back at his brother and sneered a bit at the request but still agreed—albeit slowly—and promised that he would try but only if Nathan would avoid the third-floor corridor as they had been warned. Surprised, Nathan agreed and scurried off, looking back toward Harry every few seconds as he exited.

The first years were taken to Ravenclaw Tower where they were met with elegant stairways and windows. The ceiling itself was painted with stars of the night sky that twinkled and glistened.
Their prefects introduced them to Professor Flitwick—a man who was extremely short but well proportioned that he had to be half goblin—as their head of house. He also happened to be their charms teacher as well.

“Good evening, everyone, good evening!” the small man greeted happily.

“As you may have been told, I am Professor Flitwick, I am your head of house and also your charms professor! Ravenclaw is home to its founder Rowena Ravenclaw, and home to those who value learning, wisdom, wit and intellect. However, we are not “the House for the Incredibly Smart,” but we do have some of the best scores in Hogwarts. Slytherins come close in second,” he said merrily and winked at the crowd and many of the students giggled at his antics.

“I assume that most of you are quite studious or are at least academically motivated. Which I think is fantastic. Perhaps many of you have read all of your books and can recite them perfectly. Repetitive learning can be quite effective. However; I encourage you to branch out, and study things beyond what you are told to. However curious you may find yourself, I assure you I will have a book to help you in your endeavor, and if I don't I'll be sure to find it for you, so do not be shy, "at this he eyed Hermione as he spoke and gave the girl a slight and private smile.

“Ravenclaw has only a few simple rules. One, You never stop learning, keep your ears open to new information. Two, Help your fellow Ravens if they are ever in need, whether that be with homework or studies. With that in mind, you are warned to not make fun of one another for what you may not know. Some of you will know things that others do not. Do not hold such things over one another. Help each other. Three, Put everything back as you find it, if you borrow a book from our extensive collection around us,” the professor made a grand gesture toward the bookshelves that surrounded the circular room's walls as he twirled in a circle, "be sure to borrow it no longer than two weeks and always be sure to put it back in its proper place. Lastly, be respectful and have fun! Any questions? No? Good! Ms. Stickney, show the ladies their dorms and Mr. Hilliard, you take the boys!”

“Yes sir.” Say the two, telling their respective youth to follow them to their dorms.

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“Hi, I’m Terry Boot, but you can just call me Terry, since we’re roommates and all. Let’s get along, yeah?” Terry extended his hand out to Harry.

’Ah, a muggleborn.’ Harry assumed internally.

Harry shook the other boy’s hand, “Harrison Potter, please call me Harry if you will.”

Terry beamed and sat on the edge of Harry’s bed as Harry continued to unpack his luggage.

“Are you perhaps muggleborn?” Harry inquired politely instead of stating the obvious as he usually would.

Terry laughed heartily, “what makes you ask that?”

Harry looked at the boy curiously, he wondered if the other could see the slight amusement in his eyes, “you shook my hand.”

Terry laughed again, this time nearly rolling off the bed.

“I guess that would be a clear indicator. Although, I’m not muggleborn though. My dad is a wizard, but raised me in the muggle world with my muggle mother.”

“I take it that he loved the muggle world enough to not educate you on the wizarding one then?”
Harry inquired curiously.

“Something like that,” Terry replied vaguely.

Harry hummed satisfied with the answer.

Terry quickly learned that Harry wasn’t much of a talker unless prompted and decided to ask him about wizarding culture and etiquette and received quite the rundown from the other boy. Terry decided that although Harry was a bit abrasive, loopy and weird; the boy would be a good friend to have.
Terry and Harry had chattered through most of the night. Terry was quite the talker and was enthusiastic to share that he knew an abundance of random factoids--mostly about muggles--and when he saw the interest in Harry's eyes when he shared them, he hurriedly tried to share all he knew. Terry was also more than willing to share how life in the muggle world worked when Harry had asked and Terry shared his experience with the other boy as much as he was able.

Terry did have a habit of going on tangents when he told stories but he always managed to reach the conclusion that lead him on his tangent. While Terry seemed to talk an awful lot, he was also very curious and asked questions in between and he asked lots of questions, "so you're a heir, what does that really mean to you? What about your brother? You're awfully polite is it true that pureblood kids are raised learning more etiquette than even royals?"

Only slightly annoyed, Harry answered the other's questions since Terry had been kind enough to do so himself and after Terry learned as much from Harry about etiquette as he could in such a short time. When Harry did not speak of etiquette, he spoke of his brother; Nathan. It was obvious that he loved him and Terry warmed up even more to Harry upon learning that he was not as cold as he appeared. After awhile, Harry became visibly irritable from speaking so much, Terry would share more stories of his own life in the muggle world once more.

They spent so much time getting to know one another that they did not sleep until two in the morning! It was understandable that the two were actually quite tired by the time they arose.

As they traversed the tower and approached the commons area, the magnified voice of their head of house blared loudly through the tower walls. A loud chorus of 'good morning' in the cheery man's voice could be heard accompanied by the groans of disgruntled students being awakened by all the noise.

Terry groaned loudly before his mouth opened as wide as it was able, "boy, isn't he chipper early this morning?" he remarked through a noisy yawn.

Reflexively, Harry released a subtle yawn of his own through out his nose and nodded in agreement.

“Good morning, good morning, my early birds! I will be standing at the exit, please do not leave unless you receive your schedule for the term from me. I have also spelled a map of Hogwarts onto the back of said schedule. So, do not lose it or well, you will be lost!” Flitwick said in greeting with a giggle to Harry, Terry and Hermione, they were the only three there. Not that it mattered. Everyone in the tower had to have heard the man with the powerful Sonorus charm he had used to amplify his voice.

With timid steps Hermione followed behind the two and greeted them with a hurried 'good morning.' Terry stopped, bowed and introduced himself to Hermione. Last night, Harry had taught him how to properly greet a wizarding lady and Terry was fascinated to learn about such a thing
and he was a rather adaptive lad in his own opinion and took to the brief lesson like a fish to water.

Harry grunted a good morning and continued to approach the professor who awaited them with their schedules in hand. It surprised Hermione tremendously that the boy even replied at all. It alighted a hope within her; maybe she and Harry could still be friends.

“Ah! Mr. Potter, how did you sleep, lad?” Flitwick inquired.

“I slept well,” Harry stated bluntly, and politely took the paper from the professor's hands. He wasted no time and intently looked over the schedule.

Flitwick was completely unperturbed by the boy’s blunt and near biting reply. He gave Harry a blinding smile and slapped his back in good nature. “Good to hear it! If you have any trouble, any at all, come to me, alright. I do mean that, Mr. Potter!”

“Thank you, I appreciate it,” Harry thanked with no emotional infliction. Though no one else could tell, Harry was rather thankful to have such an attentive and kind head of house.

’Ah, he's terse but well mannered. Such a polite little lad.’ Flitwick praised to himself, he gave Harry one more slap on the back. “Think nothing of it! Spend the day locating your classes so that you have no such trouble tomorrow when the term actually begins!”

Harry promised that he would, and proceeded to exit Ravenclaw tower, waiting for no one.

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Half an hour later, Terry entered the dining hall in great haste with Hermione hot on his tail. He threw himself into the seat next to Harry and Hermione politely sat herself next to Terry. “You left me!” Terry said disbelievingly, his cheeks red from incredulous laughter. He found the situation a bit amusing.

Harry bit into his toast, he didn't even look at the other boy, “I didn't know that I needed to wait for you.”

Terry seemed to think on this, what Harry had said was true. Terry hadn’t actually asked Harry to wait for him, “right. Ok. Wait for me from now on, k?”

Harry looked at him curiously. He was a bit surprised at the request but he nodded in agreement.

It seemed his response was the correct one. Terry beamed at him before he looked beside himself in surprise, “oh! Hey, do you know Hermione?” he asked and leaned back as he did so, so Harry would be able to get a better view of the girl.

Hermione blushed like mad with embarrassment. She remembered their first encounter. Surely, Harry remembered her for that.

Slowly, Harry put his toast down and stared at the girl. His face did not reveal anything but his boredom. If anything he was more bothered by the interruption of his breakfast. “Can’t say that I do. Would you like to introduce us, Terry?”

“Sure!” Terry beamed excitedly, “this is Hermione Granger, a proud muggleborn. This is Harrison Potter, heir of the house of Potter, he knows just as much as you do, Hermione. I think you two will get along.”

Hermione bowed tentatively as if coached and she most likely was if Terry’s smug look was
anything to go by, he felt rather good that he could get so much accomplished in just thirty minutes.

Harry bowed in return, “a pleasure,” he said politely.

“A pleasure indeed,” Hermione squeaked.

Done with the conversation Harry was prepared to finish off the rest of his egg and toast in peace but was interrupted yet again by Hermione.

“I—apologize for my behavior on the train, it was rude of me!” She said hurriedly, face somehow becoming even more red. Harry feared that she would combust soon.

“It was,” Harry agreed. Though, he frowned once he realized that he was being needlessly cruel. After all, according to his brother, Harry had been rather rude too. He remembered Nathan’s request to be kind to the girl and poured her and Terry a cup of tea in good nature showing that all was forgiven, "let’s move on from it." He lifted his own cup in cheers. Something he often saw Padfoot do when he won a bet against his father and Moony.

The bushy haired girl sighed with open relief and raised her own glass shyly. Terry followed suit and Hermione was forgiven. Immediately, she began to insistently inquire of what books had Harry read and if he would like to trade any for her own.

Fifteen minutes after breakfast had officially started, Nathan entered the room. He was clearly out of breath from his haste no doubt, and as soon as he entered he headed his way over to Harry. A pestering red-head boy was hot on Nathan's trail and loudly complained about how hungry he was while he insistently tugged on Nathan's sleeve in an attempt to redirect them to Gryffindor table. When the other boy realized that Nathan would not be redirected, he reluctantly trudged beside him to Ravenclaw table.

“Good morning, Harrison!” Nathan greeted happily.

“Good morning,” Harry said before he took a sip of his tea and offered his cup to Nathan who took it hurriedly and took a big gulp before he handed the now empty cup back to his brother. “You’re fifteen minutes late,” Harry stated, accusing but firm, he poured another cup of tea for himself.

“Yeah, Ron--,” Nathan gestured to the boy next to him, "--Dean, Seamus and I stayed up really late!” Nathan did not seem all that bothered by Harry's blunt observation about his tardiness.

“I see, and this must be Ron,” Harry stated with a pointed look at the red headed boy in question. Ron attempted to smile but ended up grimacing at Harry before looking away.

“Oh! Yeah, sorry, I didn’t introduce him properly, did I? This is Ronald Weasley, but you can just call him Ron. He’s one of my dorm mates.” With a slight push, Nathan pushed Ron forward, and forced him to face Harry.

Ron tipped his head after being poked by Nathan, and greeted Harry, “Nice to meet you, Mate.”

Harry stared at him intently, “a pleasure, I am Harrison Potter, but you may call me Harry.”

Ron scoffed, “oh, I know who you are. Nathan the git, has told anyone who would listen about who you are.”

Nathan shoved him playfully, ears bright red in embarrassment, “lay off, Ron!” he demanded
halfheartedly. Nathan loved his brother and wasn’t afraid to show it, but he didn’t want to be made fun of for his admiration. Harry relaxed ever so slightly, if Nathan already found a friend within his house then Harry was glad.

Harry coughed slightly and garnered the attention of those around him. He gestured to the two next to him, “this is Terry Boot, my dorm mate, we only have two to a room in Ravenclaw. The girl on Terry’s left is Hermione Granger, a proud muggleborn. Hermione, Terry, this is my brother, Nathaniel Potter, refer to him as Nathan.”

The two Gryffindor’s exchanged polite pleasantries with the two Ravenclaws.

Terry threw an arm around Harry’s shoulders, “Nathan you don’t need to be so embarrassed. Harry told me quite a bit about you as well!” he said through a grin at Harry.

Nathan looked VERY pleased at such a revelation. Harry, never the shy one about his affection for his brother batted Terry away and confirmed Terry’s earlier statement, “yes, I did.”

Ron and Hermione laughed at the Harry’s blunt and unapologetic attitude, it was really refreshing in a way.

Harry’s nose scrunched up a bit. He did not understand what was so funny. He cleared his throat in order to gain their attention, but he pointedly spoke to Nathan, “Ron and yourself should go and eat, and then explore the castle. If it is amendable to you, I would like for you to meet with me in the courtyard at 1 pm so that we may discuss the best times we could get together and study this term.”

Nathan agreed hurriedly, he and Harry had already discussed that they would study together during their time at Hogwarts and their parents & tutors also pushed the idea. “Hey, can we come too? Maybe we can make a study group?” Terry asked contemplatively.

Harry stated that he didn’t care what the other did and returned to eating his breakfast. Nathan elbowed him for his rudeness before telling Terry that a study group sounded like a fantastic idea before he and Ron scurried off to their respective table to eat.

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After breakfast, Terry and Hermione followed Harry who briskly marched through the halls of Hogwarts castle. Together they marked places of interest along with the locations of their classroom. They were headed to the potions laboratory when the airy voice of the Grey Lady greeted them from behind, “hello, children.”

Hermione and Terry let out startled yelps, surprised by the ghost’s presence. It was obvious that the two had never met a ghost, but surely, they remembered the words of their prefects about Ravenclaws’ ghost. Ravenclaw’s daughter herself. The Grey Lady looked slightly hurt at their reactions. She sniffed her nose at Terry and Hermione as she floated passed them and instead chose to give her undivided attention to Harry since he was the only one to greet her, “are you lost?”

“No, we are not, we are merely wandering. I hope we did not disturb you,” Harry amended.

The Grey Lady floated further into his space, the chill of her presence sent a shiver down his spine. Otherwise, he was seemingly unperturbed by her proximity.

“Marvin told me about you. You are… Harrison Potter,” the Grey Lady stated ominously. Her voice echoed within the halls even though she spoke in mere whispers.
“That I am,” Harry replied in a whisper of his own.

“And the two with you?” The Grey Lady asked with pointed looks toward the two scared Ravenclaws.

“Hermione Granger, and Terry Boot. They are both first year Ravenclaws, like myself,” Harry answered for them and stepped away so that the two could no longer use him as a wall to hideaway from the Grey Lady.

The ghost woman sniffed her nose at them again, and returned her attention to Harry, “you may continue to wander. If you are ever lost call for me, I will be there.”

Harry nodded and bowed. He poked the other two roughly and prompted them to bow as well, “we thank you.”

She nodded her satisfaction, the Grey Lady floated away, as she did so her eyes never left Harry until she passed through the wall and disappeared.

Terry shook physically, “how unsettling!”

Hermione agreed and tightly held onto Harry’s arm, she was still visibly shaken. She was a brave girl, the sorting hat had told her so, however, the Grey Lady was a rather unsettling ghost.

Harry shook his head at the two, disappointed in their behavior, “Helena Ravenclaw was betrayed gravely, twice in her life. The first betrayal ended in her death. I believe it is in her right to be “unsettling” in her afterlife,” he defended curtly.

Hermione perked up, clearly she remembered something, “that’s right, she was stabbed to death by the ghost of Slytherin, the Bloody Baron,” she said mechanically, most likely repeating the words of a textbook.

“Indeed,” affirmed Harry, Terry however, still looked contemplative, he turned to Harry, “wait, you said that she was betrayed twice. Well, one we all know, which was the betrayal of the Bloody Baron, but what was the second?”

Harry stared off at the wall where the Grey Lady exited. Hazily, he could see the echo of a handsome boy with dark brown hair, dressed in Slytherin robes talking to the Grey Lady with sympathetic eyes as she wept her gratitude. Gratitude for what, Harry did not know but the memory felt wrong but when he saw it, he hurt. He felt betrayed and because the emotions did not feel like his own, he could only infer that they were the Grey Ladies because as she wept with her head in her hands Harry could see that the older boy’s sympathy did not quite reach his eyes.

“Who knows,” Harry answered cryptically. Slowly the echo disappeared, Harry looked away and pulled out his map.

Terry, already used to Harry’s odd behavior shrugged it off. He pointed to the potions room on Harry’s map and suggested that they go and find it.

The other two agreed and Hermione was all too eager to get away from where they were and lead them to the potions laboratory herself. The journey passed by rather quickly with Hermione pointing out things she learned from “Hogwarts: A History,” whether she raved about the corridors, the paintings or complained about the danger of the enchanted armor while they walked.

They knew they were near the potion laboratory when they saw more and more Slytherins occupying the halls, some were spoke among one another. Others stood menacingly along the
corridor walls, only there to intimidate the other houses who dared ventured into Slytherin’s dungeons.

“Potter!” Draco Malfoy greeted when the trio were deep into the dungeons, “looking for the potions room?”

“Yes.”

“This way then,” Draco said with a pointed thumb that was directed at a particularly dark corridor. Harry looked down at his map, he wanted to be sure that he and his cohorts were being lead in the proper direction. When he confirmed the laboratory’s whereabouts, he did not hesitate to follow. Terry and Hermione scuttled to do the same.

It seemed that Malfoy was already pretty familiar with the dungeons and it took them no time at all to reach the potions room. It was located right in the middle of the dungeons, so even before they had Malfoy's assistance, they had not been lost at all. Harry saw that the door to the room was closed, and on its knob hung a sign that said, “do not enter.” How unlucky that they would likely not be allowed entrance today.

Harry could not help but feel heavy disappointment since he had so dearly hoped to properly meet the Potions Professor. Despite his father’s constant warning of the fearsome, “Snivelus,” who was supposedly a whiny and mean git, Harry was excited to be taught by the Severus Snape. There was most certainly more to the professor than what he had been told by his father and Harry knew this because he had read about Professor Snape himself. Upon investigating the man's background, Harry learned that Professor Snape was remarked as the most efficient in his field and not just within magical Britain but the entire magical world! It was titillating even if most of this years’ work would be revision for Harry and even Nathan since the two had worked so hard with their own private potions tutor. Over the past year they were both taught the basics of potion brewing. Whereas Nathan did not enjoy potions at all, and struggled with the material; In contrast, Harry loved potions. He even studied ahead due to his interest and has been able to grasp basic potions easily enough. When the material was too difficult for him, he was quick to display his resourcefulness; he asked his tutor questions or he found material to help him better grasp the material he struggled with. Harry was so immersed in his eager thoughts that he forgot to thank Draco and co for their assistance. He did so politely once he remembered to.

“You’re welcome, Potter. Friends of yours?” Draco asked with pointed looks directed at Hermione and Terry.

Just as Harry replied with “of sorts,” Terry and Hermione agreed that yes, they were indeed friends.

“I’m Terry Boot,” Terry said with a lavish bow.

“And I am Hermione Granger, a—” Harry elbowed Hermione aggressively cutting her off mid speech and curtsy. He shook his head to the side once, and hoped that along with her studies and wits that she would understand that it would be unwise to scream that she was a muggleborn in Slytherin dungeons.

“This is Hermione Granger, I think of her as a Historian in the making,” Harry said for her using words that his own father had used in regards to his mother during political gatherings that he and Nathan were often forced to attend. Hermione’s cheeks flared in a bright ugly red. It was clear that she was angry but nodded remained quiet as she pouted.

Draco nodded approvingly. Draco made a dismissive hands to the much larger boys who had
dutifully and quietly followed behind him as they traveled through the dungeons, “this is Gregory Goyle, and Vincent Crabbe.”

The two gruffly greeted the Ravenclaws who greeted them politely in return.

Just then the potion room’s doors swung open and revealed an irate professor Snape, “who are the dunderheads making a ruckus outside of my—” the professor stopped short at seeing Harry and Draco Malfoy, he did not even acknowledge the other four students.

“Ah, Mr. Malfoy and company and my, my what a surprise. Mr. Potter and company,” Snape said silkily.

Terry and Hermione paled and backed further behind Harry, already, the two feared the notorious potions professor due to all the rumors they had heard from the upper years the previous night.

Draco, Vincent and Greg did not appear too worried. They knew that their potions professor and head of house favored his Slytherins. However, the man was still easy to anger and because of this none of them spoke without being prompted.

Harry found everything about their current situation a bit annoying, he could not understand why everyone had suddenly turned so stiff. He braved himself and addressed the man, “Professor Snape. Good evening. I did not realize we were so loud.”

“Well, you were,” the professor said snootily and crossed his arms. Internally, he was not surprised that the Potter brat would be the first to speak, the lot were attention seekers.

“Then allow me to apologize on the behalf on all present. My fellow Ravenclaws and myself were only attempting to learn of the whereabouts of your classroom so that we would avoid being late due to getting lost this coming Tuesday. The Slytherins were kind enough to educate us on the classroom’s whereabouts. It was a poor decision to get to know one another in front of your classroom upon finding it. For that we apologize,” Harry amended with a bow. He did not see the Slytherin students who stopped in their tracks in the hall stare at him intently in speculation. It was not often that those outside of their house behaved so traditionally.

Professor Snape showed the slightest bit of surprise at the boy’s polite attitude and manners. Such behavior matched the pureblood etiquette that was the Potter line. However, Potter Sr never behaved in such a way and the professor refused to believe that the crude man would never teach his lot such manners. Perhaps their mother—hastily the professor spelled the thought of the woman from his mind.

“I would think that Ravenclaws and Slytherins would refrain from such deplorable behavior,” the professor said with a sneer directed at Harry and Harry alone.

“It is no surprise that a Potter within Ravenclaw would lack proper decorum however,” the man added nastily, just because he could. “How you tricked the hat into your placement, no one will ever know.”

Harry bristled but refrained from expressing any further displeasure from the adult’s words. He did however, furrow his brow and turned down his lip and looked far more innocent than he actually felt, “the hat said that it could see that I value knowledge just as much as my fellow Ravens, sir. Are you suggesting that I do not belong because I mistakenly trespassed and unintentionally disrespected you? I really am sorry, sir.”

The professor bared his teeth at the boy, and then at the students who had stopped to watch the scene. He did not feel the usual satisfaction when they all jumped and scurried away from his
room. His eyes returned down to the irritating little Potter below him and sneered. How was he already being roped into looking like a bully by a Potter? This boy... was clever. Desperately the brooding professor tried to find the similarities between the boy and his bully of a father, James Potter. Yet, there was virtually nothing. The boy had his father’s square jaw but that was it. The rest of his features looked as if they belonged to someone else, the boy was near... pretty. He was not even as masculine as his father either. However, looking closer, Snape could see that he did not look similar to Lily either, but he did have the features of the Black family lineage. The boy most likely took on the features of his grandparents.

“I am doing no such thing Mr. Potter. Merely stating facts. I suggest you watch your tongue in the near future. Lest it gets you into trouble.”

“I do apologize sir, now, for my microaggression,” Harry amended and he sounded as if he were truly sorry.

'Disgusting little ingrate’ Snape sneered internally. As if suddenly remembering the other occupants near, he sneered menacingly. Pleased when the other two Ravenclaws and even Draco and his lackeys flinched.

“You may all carry on, away from my classroom,” Professor Snape permitted.

“Yes sir,” they all said in unison, Snape slammed the door in their faces immediately after.

“This way,” Draco commanded, leading them away from the classroom and away from the dungeons.

“Thank you for that Malfoy, we really appreciate it,” Harry thanked, yet again speaking for his little group. The two seemed to not mind it at all, and followed suit, thanking Draco and his companions.

Draco dismissed their thanks with a wave of his hand, “it was no big feat, just think of paying me back in the future,” he said with a snide smirk.

Terry and Hermione looked a affronted at this but said nothing as Harry accepted the Draco’s words and promised to return the favor sometime soon.

Draco looked at Harry approvingly, “I'll hold you to it. Well, see you later, Potter, Granger and Boot. Come on guys,” and with a flourish of his robes, the Malfoy heir and his guards left their sides and returned to their dungeon.

"That was the last class we needed to locate," Harry informed them as he checked the time on his wrist watch. "It's time to meet with Nathaniel," he said. He did not wait for a response from his companions and immediately headed to the courtyard. While they walked, Hermione did not share any facts that she had read this time. She was silent and deep in thought. What she really wanted to do was ask Harry why he had stopped her from telling Malfoy that she was a muggleborn but she did not exactly know how to ask such a thing without offending him. Hermione wasn’t ashamed or embarrassed to be a muggleborn and it was because of that that she had felt disrespected by Harry’s actions.

Once they reached the empty courtyard, Hermione prepared for an argument and squared up her shoulders in order to feel taller, “hey, Harry,” she called out.

Harry looked at her skeptically and sat on a nearby bench, “hm?”

“When we were in the dungeons, and I was introducing myself to Malfoy, you stopped me. Why
Harry thought on how he should say what he wanted to say to the girl. He learned early on that she could be quite the crier if spoken to too gruffly.

So instead of asking, ‘why did you think he needed to know that you are a muggleborn?’ He stated, “no one cares that you are a muggleborn.”

That actually didn’t sound any better, now that he said it out loud.

Terry gaped at him and Hermione’s cheeks puffed at this. “I didn’t say that they do! I’m just very proud to be one and just because Slytherins hate them doesn’t mean that I should be ashamed for who I am! Are you embarrassed to have a muggleborn for a friend!?”

‘I never said that we were friends,’ Harry thought cruelly. He did not respond immediately and instead closed his eyes and inhaled deeply through his nose.

When he opened his eyes he saw that Hermione's own were alight with anger which made him feel a bit angry himself, ’first of all; not all Slytherins hate muggleborns. That is your own prejudice assumption. Second, you are the only one who cares that you are a muggleborn. You being one does not make you any better than anyone else. Yet you act as if it does. You have barely been here long at all and yet all you do is state why muggles are far superior, you have said--and I quote; ‘why do wizards still floo when muggles have created telephones? They are so much easier for communication!’ ‘Why not use cars? The transportation is much easier that way!’ End quote. I could say so much more but I doubt that I need to. I am tired of you treating wizarding culture as if it is backwards and needs to be changed by your muggle graces. Even today while we walked through Hogwarts' walls you constantly compared the two worlds, 'staircases that move side to side like this are rather dangerous, don’t you think? We have escalators back home, they move up and down and are better controlled.' 'Ghosts that had such gruesome deaths shouldn't be around children, it's traumatizing!' On and on you went making us sound backwards and barbaric."

“I did not—” Hermione attempted to interrupt. However, Harry was not having it.

“No. You will listen. First rule of Ravenclaw: you never stop learning, keep your ears open to new information. You expect this rule not to apply to you because you know everything because you have read ‘this’ book and ‘that’ book. You won’t give the real wizarding culture a true chance, yet you expect everyone to marvel at you and what you know and accept that your muggle ways are superior, better and more straight forward.

I respect how easily you research material. However; you are bossy and recite the information you read to appear as if you are smarter than everyone else. It is childish. I stopped you in the dungeons because you are already known as a know-it-all muggleborn. Therefore, flaunting your muggle heritage would be unnecessary, rude and would make Slytherins hate you for more than your knowledge.

Again, not every Slytherin hates muggleborns but most Slytherins despise muggleborns like you,” Harry had read that in his grandfather’s journals, and perhaps it was not exactly true or accurate but in this moment, Harry did not care. “You want to change things that need not be changed, simply because you don’t like them or understand them; or because you believe the muggle equivalent to be better. You don’t want to try to understand wizarding culture because you think that you already do, because of books you read and it is unfair to us.”

Hermione was crying in earnest again, but did not run away... yet.
Harry continued, “no one cares that you are a muggleborn, you are the only one who does. You are in our world, our culture. Adapt and learn because before you are a muggleborn, you are a witch and that is what matters to us. You are the only one forcing yourself to be seen as different by constantly reminding everyone that you are different, and it will lead to you being ostracized even by those who are not blood purist.”

Hermione wiped the tears that fell from her face, "you do not have to be so bloody mean about it, Harry! You could have told me I was annoying you or making you feel inadequate with comparing my two worlds you--you--git!” She said with a loud sniffle and left in a rush. Harry stood still with a firm frown on his face. He wanted to call out to her that she was leaving her things behind but felt that it would be petty. Hermione bumped into a confused Nathan and Ron, and did not apologize and ignored him when they called after her.

Terry sighed and glared at his friend, “a bit harsh, don't you think Harry?”

Harry shrugged and refused to look at Terry, he was feeling a bit not good about what he had just done. Terry sighed again, “I’ll go after her. Here’s my schedule, and here’s hers. Create a good study time for all of us, we can discuss subjects later this week. After we actually attend the classes and if Hermione wants to even study with us after that.” Harry took the items dumbly.

Terry gave his shoulder a squeeze, "seriously. That was really harsh, mate, but you're my mate and you said some things I agreed with and some I didn't... We can talk about it later tonight, for now, it wouldn't be right to leave a girl alone after your mate made her cry..." after his speech, Terry excused himself to Nathan and Ron as they approached and left.

Nathan frowned at Harry. It was obvious that his brother had yet again made Hermione cry, “what happened, Harry? You promised.”

Harry tapped his hand against his leg out of nervous habit. He did promise Nathan that he would try to be Hermione’s friend and he was trying but the girl was such a know-it-all! She was not always right (and she was not always wrong for that matter) and she wasn’t better than any other student just because she was an intelligent muggleborn.

“Let’s not worry about that for now. I’ll... apologize later. Let me see your schedules,” Harry demanded with an outreach of his hand.

Nathan and Ron eyed each other warily. They didn’t feel comfortable leaving the situation as it was. Nathan however, knew that nothing would come out of trying to force Harry to speak about it. They handed him their schedules and began planning their study times.

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It was the end of the day and Harry was sat at one of the kitchen tables, drinking tea while the elves chattered about.

Mousy had told him the location of the kitchens, as she had been a Hogwarts elf herself in the past. He would definitely tell Nathan about the kitchens when the other boy had time, but he was rather popular in his house and occupied with getting to know his housemates. For now, Harry sat alone quietly sipping his tea and introduced himself to any elf he had not already familiarized himself with.

“Harrison, my boy!” The headmaster called out upon entering.

“Please call me Harry, headmaster Dumbledore,” Harry demanded curtly.
The headmaster frowned ever so slightly before he smiled brightly. His eyes twinkled vibrantly, “right. Harry, my apologies. I was sent to look for you as it is nearly curfew.”

Harry pointedly looked at the clock that hung on the back of the kitchen wall, “I have 30 more minutes.”

The headmaster shook his head, already near fond for the boy before him, “be that as it may it is only the second day of the term. Your head of house would like a headcount of all of his students an hour before curfew.”

Harry knew not to argue and stood. He walked over to the sinks and gave his cup to Tippy, the elf on dish washing duty. “Thanks masters Harry! You are welcomed here any time, yes you are!”

Harry smiled ever so slightly and tipped his head in thanks. The house elf became flustered at Harry’s appreciation.

The headmaster placed a guiding hand onto Harry's shoulder and together the two walked to the exit, they passed by the Head chef, Pops. Pops had been washing vegetables but stopped and chased the headmaster and young boy to the door just at the door. The old elf grabbed Harry’s hand firmly and shook, “it was nice speaking wit’ ya, Harry,” the old elf said with a heavy Irish accent. Harry smiled crookedly, speaking with the elf had been most enjoyable, mainly because the elf was one of the few that Harry knew who spoke so articulately. "I hope we may do so again sometime soon, Pops.”

Pops grinned, his pointed and dirtied teeth made him appear quite intimidating. He released Harry’s hand and looked up at the headmaster, “this be’s a good lad, headmaster,” Pops stated firmly.

The wrinkles near the headmaster’s eyes crinkled in amusement, “I agree, Pops.”

Pops nodded and patted Harry’s back, he walked with the two out of the kitchen’s door, “glad ye agree, yer gonna be treating him real well, headmaster.”

Harry’s eyes gave away his surprise at the bite in the elf’s tone, he never heard an elf be so outspoken with someone of the headmaster’s status.

“That I will,” promised the headmaster, the twinkle did not leave his eye but his smile was not as true. Pops gave one final and pointed look to the headmaster and gently nudged them out into the hall with a whispered ’good night.’

The two walked in silence for a few moments. The only sounds to be heard were the crinkling of the fire upon the candles that lit their way and their soft steps that echoed within the halls. It was the headmaster who broke the peaceful silence, “how are you liking Hogwarts, Harry?”

“I like Hogwarts quite a lot, I am excited to begin classes,” Harry stated with no particular emotion in his voice.

The headmaster laughed with his entire upper body, “spoken like a true Ravenclaw! Well, I am glad to hear it, my boy!”

As the headmaster laughed, Harry could hear a similar laugh within his mind; it sounded much younger however, “come play, Ariana!” The voice called, it sounded akin to a distant echo.

“Pops was fiercely protective of you, Harry. It seems that he already knows more of you than even I. Though, i reckon I have known you longer, no matter how brief,” the headmaster stated. They stood in front of Ravenclaw tower’s door.
Uric the Oddball’s portrait recited the week’s riddle; “A word I know, six letters it contains, remove one letter and twelve remains. What am I?” he sing-songed. The two ignored him for the time being, too busy watching the other.

Frowning Harry confessed, “I do not understand what you mean, sir.”

“Well, I do not know you as I know your brother. I had few short visits with him but as you may know; he wears his heart on his sleeve, it is easy to know him. His wants, his desires, what he likes and dislikes. You on the other hand are not so open,” stated the professor fondly, their was a distinct lack of twinkle in his eyes.

Harry agreed, “most adults in my life think I am quite the anomaly.”

Again, the headmaster laughed. Harry was getting quite tired of the sound, as it caused memories that were not his own to attack his mind.

The headmaster patted his back gently, “that is because as I do, they do not know you.”

This time, it’s Harry who laughs. The professor’s words were so alike to his father’s own, “perhaps you and everyone else could try harder. Maybe it is not that Nathan wears his heart on his sleeve but that everyone makes an effort to know him more? Of course, you do not really know me, but it is not as if you cannot still learn.”

The professor considered his words, disturbed at how old they sounded.

“Dozens,” Harry said suddenly. The headmaster was slightly startled out of his stupor.

Uric shouted, “CORRECT!” and opened the doors to the tower.

“Good night, sir.” Harry said with a wave of his hand.

“Hm? Oh, yes, good night indeed, Harry,” the headmaster called out just before the doors shut in his face.

He would need to keep an eye on the boy, he could not quite put his hand on it but he knew that he needed to make an ally of himself to Harrison Potter. He felt that if he did not, then he and many others would face dire consequences.
The week had been near uneventful. After much pushing from Terry and Nathan, who thought they were both wrong and right for different reasons; Harry apologized to Hermione. He admitted that he had been far too harsh but he notably did not take back what he had said.

Hermione apologized as well, 'not for my pride, of course but I can be less pushy about it,' she had said stubbornly.

They accepted each other's stubborn half apologies and moved on from yet another scuffle. Terry and Nathan supposed that was better than nothing.

Out of the twins, it was obvious that Nathan was a bit more open minded than Harry in terms of muggleborns having open pride in their heritage. So was Harry as long as they did not flaunt it as if it made them better than anyone else.

'Take our mother for example, Nathaniel. She is as stubborn and proud as Hermione but it's not something she flaunts or use against our father for his wizarding ways.' Harry had stated before he agreed to apology.

Nathan placated his brother by informing him that he understood but thought that Harry should not apologize for what he said and why but for how he said it. In the end, Harry admitted that he needed not have been so strong toward Hermione and Hermione promised to be more open and learn more about traditional wizarding culture.

The two luckily made up before classes begun, because during their first class Harry had been immensely distracted by Hermione's insistent hand waving every single time a professor asked a question.

Calmly and as politely as he could, Harry shared that the professors were more than capable on calling on students and all students were typically given chances to share what they knew and or were given chances to learn about the things they did not know.

Harry also strongly recommended that Hermione not raise her hand when another student proved incapable to answer the professor's question as she had in their previous classes. The professors--while impressed with her knowledge--did not appreciate her conduct, they were fully capable of helping struggling students reach the correct answer. The least appreciative of Hermiones actions were the other students, of course. They did not appreciate her attempts to answer for them and they openly expressed as much with the bushy haired girl herself.

Hermione did not understand their ire until Harry explained that through her actions, she had shown that not only did she think her professors incapable of teaching but that she thought her fellow
students were incapable of learning. Hermione had turned pale at his words and really thought about them and luckily she stopped her eager hand raising by midday, otherwise she would have had a difficult time coping in potions class if she would have continued as she had been.

It was clear that Professor Snape would take no nonsense within his potions classroom, especially that of unnecessary wand or hand waving. The adult demanded that the only time a hand should be raised was if he called on someone or if one did not understand the material given.

When it came time to put brew, it was the professor who separated them and paired them with who he deemed fit. That was how Harry was paired with his partner, Susan Bones. In Harry's opinion, the girl was just as stern as Hermione but where Hermione was confident in her textbook knowledge, Susan was confident in her person and was definitely a lot cooler than Hermione--for a girl at least. That was the impression Harry had been told of Susan by his housemates at least.

Yet, when partnered with him the girl had blushed fiercely and stuttered while introducing herself to him. She even almost knocked over their cauldron. In the beginning of their brewing, Susan's hands shook and she would shy away whenever she deemed Harry to be too close and honestly; it stressed Harry out.

Now, they were halfway through with their itching remedy potion, and Harry couldn't wait for it to be over, "you need not be so nervous. Clip the mint sticks at the ends and then place them in the potion delicately," Harry coached. He forced his tone to be as kind as he could muster and he was pleased when Susan dutifully followed his instructions without error.

Harry uncharacteristically smiled at her in an attempt to make her less nervous before she blew up their potion.

He really hated to be near the girl. Not because she was so odd, but because all he could hear was the sound of her family screaming as they were brutally murdered by Voldemort and his so called "Death Eaters."

Even before his father could teach him the names of Voldemort's followers, Harry learned it from horrendous visions such as one of a crazed woman exclaimed to be a proud Death Eater--a devoted follower of the Dark Lord while she viciously tortured the Longbottoms.

Susan called out to Harry and distracted him from his gruesome thoughts, "like this?" she inquired tentatively.

Harry corrected her hold on the scissors by taking her hands into his own and correcting their position. Somehow Susan managed blushed even brighter. Harry thought she looked like a ripe tomato. "like that," he said sounding a bit strained because he was restraining from laughing at the imagery of Susan with a bright red tomato for a head.

She thanked him and looked away and went back to clipping. Satisfied, Harry returned his attention to their potion and stirred it just as the book directed.

After a few minutes, Susan tugged onto Harry's sleeve, "yes?" Harry asked slightly confused.

"I will have to leave the rest to you for now, I must go to the lady's room," Susan whispered so lowly that Harry had to strain himself to hear her.

Harry called the professor over and told him of the situation. As a general rule, they were warned that the professor never ever allowed a student to leave during potion making—or even at all, really. However; Harry discretely expressed that the matter was urgent and the professor reluctantly allowed the girl to leave when he saw her squirming.
Harry continued to do his part in the absence of his partner.

Harry had barely touched the stirrer when the entire floor trembled as if there were a small earthquake.

Immediately everyone began to speak among one another, confused as to what could have caused the mini earthquake.

The floor shook again, harder this time.

Again, the floor shook even harder, it seemed that whatever was causing the quakes drew near to the classroom with each shake.

While his fellow students panicked, Harry’s head began to feel as if it was trying to split open. As clear as day he saw the images of the remains of a girl and nearly vomited. She had looked as if she had been squashed like a mere bug. The strands of orange hair told Harry that he was seeing the remains of one Susan Bones.

“Shut up!” Professor Snape snarled which spooked Harry out of his vision.

Snape rushed to the door and cracked it open ever so carefully. Slowly he peered through the opening crevice and concealed his surprise when he saw the back of a giant troll.

Gently, he closed the door and spelled it locked, he then began to hurriedly spell away the potions from the tables throughout the room.

Harry’s eyes stared at nothing as they gazed around the room. He still felt slightly sick, from what he had seen earlier and when his vision began to blur he groaned.

When Harry closed his eyes this time, he saw a club and smelled a scent so foul and rancid that he was threatened to become sick again. From his textbook readings he assumed a troll was near and suddenly the professor's defensive actions made horrific sense.


Everyone began to answer all at once, “Yes—”

“Shut. Up,” the man hissed in a whisper, “nod your understanding.”

They looked to one another confused, but they complied anyway.

“Good, now, quietly go to the back of the room, and enter the storage room where the cauldrons are.”

The other students groaned but complied. Harry assisted in getting everyone in. Terry and Hermione were the last to enter and hesitated when Harry did not follow suit. When he gestured for them to go inside with a tip of his head they did so reluctantly with skeptic looks toward him.

Harry approached the professor and whispered, “Which way was the troll going?”

The man's eyes widened slightly in surprise. However, he quickly regained control of himself and sneered, “how on earth do you know of the—I suppose it doesn't even matter. It was going east, what concern is it of yours, boy!”

The professor asked as he pointed his wand at the ceiling, he flung it in a harsh and circular motion
and hissed the word, “Periculum!” Instantaneously a loud alarm assaulted their ears and sounded throughout the school.

Just then, another vision overcame Harry and he grabbed the professor’s robes for support. This one was hazier than the last.

Immediately, Harry was assaulted by overwhelming smell of garlic. It was so strong and distracting that Harry could barely focus on the music he heard within the room he envisioned. He could not tell what instrument it was due to the snarls of a three-headed dog from the center of the room. Harry wanted to warn the professor on Susan’s behalf but this just felt so much more important, so much more urgent.

“Three headed dog; music—coming from a harp. The smell of garlic burns my nose,” Harry managed to warn cryptically. He was breathless and his head felt like it was going to burst. Eventually, he released his hold on the man's robes.

Snape stared at the boy dumbly. His behavior reminded him of his most hated coworker Sybil Trelawney, the deviations professor but it lacked the over theatrics the woman had and was much more detailed then she would ever dare utter.

Snape looked toward the door gravely, there was only one person who strongly smelled of garlic and Snape had been wary and suspicious of him since the man was hired.

It sounded as if the bumbling idiot was attempting to get past the Cerberus and if he was attempting to get past Cerberus then that meant he was going after what it was that the Cerberus protected. If Snape caught him in the act, the headmaster would be forced to fire the dunce once and for all.

With suspicion Snape looked down at the child before him. The boy was too distracted by an unknown pain to open his eyes; this was no mere ploy for attention. The child's descriptions had been far too vivid and accurate. More importantly; even if he had managed to sneak off to the third floor and see the Cerberus, it was doubtful that he knew how to subdue the creature. It was not common knowledge.

“Go,” the boy commanded suddenly, peering at Snape with pained and squinted eyes.

“Excuse me?” Snape hissed.

“Go, I can keep the room barricaded if it comes back, Boot and Granger can help. It’s a distraction—the troll,” he said.

The child's face morphed into surprised confusion at his words, it was as if he was confused as to how he knew that and to be honest, Snape was too.

Go,” to prove himself capable, the child performed a few protective charms that were far above his year before he pushed him away toward the door. After little internal debate, Snape reluctantly left the room and prayed to Merlin that he was not making a fool’s mistake as he ran toward the third floor.

“What’s going on, Potter!?” Ernie Macmillan demanded from behind the storage door. His hands shook, he was scared out of his wits.

Harry looked behind him and saw Terry and Hermione among their fellow Ravenclaws, then his gaze locked onto the other Hufflepuffs that surrounded him. They all looked toward Harry for guidance. “Troll in the dungeons. It walked by this room,” Harry stated, he saw no point in lying.
Everyone paled at such a revelation. Harry placed a hand on the storage room door and yanked Terry close with his free hand and whispered fiercely, “Terry, you and Hermione need to keep everyone calm, I’m locking you inside. I need to go check on Susan Bones. She went to the bathroom and the troll was headed her way,” Harry shoved Terry away and saw the other boy nod with demands that Harry be careful.

Harry slammed the door shut quickly and ignored the protests from his distraught and confused classmates. He spelled it locked and though the sound was muffled, he could hear Terry take command. Confident that his fellow students were in capable hands Harry left, and headed toward the bathroom.

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Harry made it to the bathroom just in time. The troll’s club had been raised in the air ready to strike Susan who was cowered against one of the sinks in the far corner, farthest from the door.

With little fear felt thanks to the adrenaline is his heart. Harry thought quickly, he raised his wand and yelled, “REDUCTO!” From the doorway.

Harry meant the spell with every fiber in his being. Never in his life had he yelled so loudly. Thankfully, Harry had braced himself against the door way because he would have surely been thrown back otherwise. He had only performed the spell a few times in his short life with his father. Never had he performed the spell so strongly.

The troll’s club burst into a million pieces, it was practically turned to ash. The troll startled and fell backwards against the wall with a yelp. It broke every sink in sight and Bones had barely dodged the debris that followed behind the troll's tumble. 

“Bones, to me!” Harry commanded. Shakily Susan ran passed the troll and to Harry’s side.

The troll furious upon losing its club attempted to go after Susan but it slipped on the puddles of water it created from the broken sinks. Harry commanded Susan to run and get help, which she did hastily with promises that she would get a teacher.

Harry did not respond, he refused to take his eye off the troll\ who continued to stumble.

Distantly Harry could hear the echo of his loathed tutor, 'Troll’s skin is practically invincible to most spells, should you find yourself corned by a troll, it may be best to use what is around you, boy.' With those words in mind, Harry quickly took in his surroundings. His eyes zeroed in on the broken sinks and the water that surrounded the troll and next, Harry did the very first thing that came to mind.

He concentrated fully, and willed water to create itself from his wand, and slowly but surely, water poured from his wand shaping into a sphere at the tip of it. Quickly, he pushed it near the troll while it was still unable to stand and engulfed the creature’s head with the sphere.

Immediately, the troll panicked and thrashed about the destroyed room. It attempted to scream which forced large amounts of the liquid to swim into its lungs. It mucked about the room like a wild dear in a tea cup shop. It slammed its head against the walls and further destroyed the stalls as it continued to panic and gulp for air, but with each attempt it failed to remove the water helmet that Harry had created.

The troll fell over onto its side, gurgling as it did and once it stopped moving Harry removed the spell and was glad that he had that proof that he did not kill the beast when it coughed and gasped for air in its passed-out state.
As he shook with exhaustion Harry receded his wand and attempted to catch his breath. Those spells were too much for him and he felt as if he were drained of magic.

Harry was tired and saw no reason to stay there, if he did, the teachers who were sure to arrive would pester him with questions. He had proof that Susan was safe and felt satisfied with that knowledge alone and with one final look at the beast, he knew that it would not be moving any time soon.

Hurriedly, he exited the dungeon bathrooms and struggled to walk properly due to exhaustion. Potions would be ending soon, perhaps he could sneak off to a nearby classroom and rest.

The moment he was out of sight, Professor McGonagall rushed in along with professor Flitwick and professor Dumbledore close behind. None of them saw Harry as he quietly sneaked away along the castle walls.

Chapter End Notes

Sorry for the long wait on an update and sorry that this one is so short. To make up for it I will do my best to get the next chapter posted tomorrow, it will be much longer and Harry is revealed for what he really is.
This boy is not yet a man

Chapter Summary

Harry manipulates the situation and so does the headmaster.

Rewritten and or additions added 10/13/2019

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

After finding a defeated and unsoundly sleeping troll, the staff present moved quickly to remove it. After, each staff member of Hogwarts were tasked with doing a headcount for every student to make sure that no one had been hurt. It was well into the evening that the staff had even thought about finding who had subdued the troll.

When little Susan Bones literally ran into Professors McGonagall, Flitwick and headmaster Dumbledore, she all but yelled about a troll in the girl's bathroom and not much else. Naturally, they assumed that it was one of their cohorts who defeated the beast, but upon questioning it was discovered that all staff had been away from the dungeons at that time, even Severus Snape had not been near. It was not until little Susan Bones approached her head of house later that day with worry for her peer that they learned of the culprit who had allegedly saved the girl from near death.

It took them even longer to find said culprit because he was hid away and holed up in an abandoned classroom.

The culprit was none other than Harry Potter who current sat quietly between his housemates Terry, Hermione and the Hufflepuff Susan Bones who had all been brought into the head master’s office for a stern talking to since they were the only students who had known of Harry’s involvement in stopping the troll.

Professor McGonagall reprimanded Harry since he had entered the office. For the past thirty minutes while she harangued Harry, she only stopped to breathe and as she did Harry had only opened his mouth to apologize.

“Honestly! Facing off a troll on your own!? It’s—it’s such a—”

“Gryffindor thing to do?” Snape added unhelpfully from his seat beside the headmaster's desk.

Professor McGonagall turned red and looked towards the headmaster for help. The man had not spoken since his students had entered. To be fair, none in the room gave him the opportunity to. Especially his deputy headmistress who felt the need to harangue the poor dears over their heroism ever since she entered. He dared not openly disagree with the woman however and kept himself busy by sucking on his lemon drops.

Though now, he appeared to have permission to speak, “I believe that it should only be Mr. Potter who receives the ramifications for his actions,” he offered as a compromise. After all, it had been Harry who locked his fellow classmates into the storage closet and it had been Harry who decided to battle a troll instead of seeking help from his professors.
The other three students in the room looked ready to protest but were cut off by Harry's quick agreement, “fair,” he stated. Terry gaped at Harry disbelievingly and he looked geared to argue but he kept his mouth shut when Harry gave him the slightest of glares.

Professor Dumbledore’s eyes twinkled, “glad that you agree my boy. This situation is not to be spoken of outside of this room. No one besides the students here need to know what happened, don’t you think?” The question was poised at all but the head master’s eyes never left Harry.

Harry sagged in open relief, he was glad that he and the headmaster were on the same page, “yes, I think so wholeheartedly. I believe that my fellow classmates can keep this matter private.”

Snape sat quietly as he watched the Potter boy relax at being denied the glory of his victory. It was a very un-Potter thing to do.

Hermione and Terry looked at one another confused, surely any other young boy would want their defeat of a troll known by all! Though, their friend was not exactly any other boy now was he? After a pregnant paused a quiet “yes… we can,” was muttered by Hermione who nudged Terry. Terry held his nudged arm tenderly and he glared slightly at his friends but nodded along in reluctant agreement. Terry then looked to Bones uncertainly. The girl had not spoken since she entered the office and currently she looked none too pleased by the turn of events.

“Is that what you want?” Susan asked briskly. Her eyes were hyper focused on Harry.

Harry looked the girl directly in the eyes, she flinched slightly but not of fear, she actually looked shy. Really, it was Harry who should be flinching because the moment their eyes connected, he was assaulted with a vision of an older women with similar features to Bones begging for her life as a wand was pointed toward her legs, breaking them.

“That is what I want,” Harry answered bitingly, he broke eye contact and tried to breathe steadily. Susan regarded him contemplatively for two uncomfortable minutes before she agreed with a nod of her head, “fine. However, I must tell my aunt of what has transpired here tonight.”

“Of course, my dear,” the Headmaster agreed, though Harry could tell that he was not entirely pleased by the idea, "you, Ms. Granger and Mr. Boot are free to go."

Susan stood and bid the professors, Hermione and Terry goodnight. Harry however, received a shy and timid goodbye and word of thanks for saving her life. Harry awkwardly accepted her gratitude and curtly but politely demanded she rest and leave his name out of her report to her aunt. It was only once Susan was gone that Hermione and Terry stood ever so slowly from their seats. The two were hesitant to actually leave their friend behind. They thought it unfair that he would suffer the consequences alone.

“LEAVE!” Snape snarled and the two comically jumped in the air and practically ran out of the office. Harry shook his head in amusement, the barest hint of a smile graced his face.

“Minerva, is there anything else you would like to say?” the headmaster asked kindly.

Professor McGonagall crossed her arms and sighed, “no… Professor Flitwick is already on the floo with his parents as we speak. Points have been deducted and no detention will be necessary seeing that the girl made it out just fine, thanks to Mr. Potter," she stood and was prepared to leave but stopped in front of Harry momentarily.

“That was very foolish, Mr. Potter. You could have died,” she said seriously for the fifth time that
night.

“I know. In the future, I will not act so foolishly on my own or get other students involved in my antics,” Harry promised sincerely.

The transfiguration professor sighed and gave him a look Harry dared to call fond. Harry did not understand why he would receive such look from a professor that he did not even know. Professor McGonagall gave him one final gentle pat on the shoulder before she took her leave.

Professor Snape glared at the back of the professor as she took her leave. He was irritated that she would comfort a Potter in trouble just as she always did in the past. The moment the transfiguration professor was gone he spelled a privacy charm and turned to Dumbledore, his eyes demanding that the Headmaster speak.

“Harry, my boy…” the headmaster began, his voice was just as exhausted as Harry felt, and it must have showed because moments later professor Snape was at Harry’s side with a potion in hand.

“Drink. It’s a pepper up potion,” the potions master commanded. Harry complied with no fight at all knowing that he was in capable hands.

“Professor Snape tells me that before you had disappeared, you had… warned him of three a three-headed dog, music from a harp and…”

“The smell of garlic. Burning his nose,” whispered Professor Snape with eyes focused intently on Harry.

Harry thought on it for a moment, it was hard to remember the specifics of the visions he saw most of the time and that particular vision had been awfully hazy. “Yes, I believe so…” he closed his eyes and attempted to concentrate on the memory but could only see darkness. It was as if the memory was closed to him.

Opening his eyes, he is met with the glare of Professor Snape, “don’t hurt yourself, Potter.”

“Sorry.”

The headmaster rose from his place behind his desk, and leaned on the front of it. He stared off at a wall behind Harry in contemplation.

Harry had told them of the why’s and how he faced the troll but how did he know where to go in the first place? There are two sets of bathrooms located in that section of the dungeon. One in the east wing, where the battle was fought and one in the west wing.

“Harry, what exactly inspired you to go to the east wing? How did you know Ms. Bones was there and not in the west wing bathroom?”

Snape had not thought of that and he looked very curious for an answer even though he already had his suspicions.

Harry frowned, he was not stupid, they were trying to figure out if he had seen into the future. They could just ask, “well, I did not know of a bathroom existing in the west wing of the dungeons. I could however tell that the troll was headed East by its footsteps.” Harry decided to be as none obtuse as he possibly could. “I saw vivid imagery of Bones’ squashed and mangled corpse, deduced that she was and or would be attack by a troll and knew she would be dead in a moments time.”
Headmaster Dumbledore hummed, but his expression was grave, and professor Snape paled before his face morphed into one of anger. The little brat had not told him of the danger his fellow student was in! Harry turned to him and he almost looked apologetic.

“I got the vision of Bones before the one that smelled of garlic. And while I can't explain it precisely, there was a feeling deep in my heart that told me to direct you there instead of to Bones. Whatever was near the smell of garlic... well, it was of a more pressing matter. I cannot easily recall what that even was.”

Professor Snape looked disgusted, “more pressing than the death of a student, Potter!?”

Harry grimaced but nodded, “somehow, I knew what I saw with Bones had not happened yet. What I saw was too vivid. The clearer a vision is, the easier it is to change, I believe. The garlic vision was different. It was not clear but it was not overtly hazy. It tugged on my very being. It felt urgent and it felt like a matter that I could not handle so I sent you there instead.”

“And? You could handle a troll!?” the Potion Master scoffed. He was partially offended to be guided and used by a child. A Potter no less.

“I could handle a troll,” Harry confirmed. He was not gloating at all. He had no reason to fore he had proven himself by stopping the creature.

The headmaster interrupted the two. While he was intrigued by their current argument, he was more than greatly disturbed by the youngest Potter’s visions. “What you saw before smelling the garlic sounds quite scary and traumatic,” he whispered and approached Harry.

“It was, I doubt I will ever forget it,” Harry confirmed. Now that he was reminded of what he had seen, he felt rather shaky and uncertain. There had been so much blood. Bones’ face had been unrecognizable.

“Do you get visions like this often?” prodded the headmaster gently.

“Yes. I remember times from when I was very little... I would wake up from awful nightmares wailing...” often, Harry had wet the bed, but he decided to redact the information when he saw the scowl of the potion professor directed at him. “I would wail and wail and was too young to explain why. When I was about seven years old, I would bring up old memories that I had seen of my parent's past. It disturbed them greatly and they accused me of not only eaves dropping but attention seeking as well. I never brought it up again after that,” Harry confessed. His face was blank and his tone was neutral. He did not allow himself to feel any particular way about his parents reactions and misunderstanding of his seer like abilities. The two had reacted with fear because they were scared because they could not understand how Harry knew so much without being told. If Harry were either of them, well, he's be confused and scared too.

Professor Snape sneered, “and were you not attention seeking?”

Harry frowned at the accusation, “I wasn’t, sir—that I can promise.” Harry made a face of deep thought, “have I done something to you to earn such ire and distrust, sir? If so, how can I make amends?” Harry inquired honestly. Were the three of them not having a rather normal none antagonistic conversation about Harry's possible visions? Harry could not understand why the man was so aggressive toward him.

Professor Snape got into Harry’s face and was so close that Harry felt spittle fling onto his face as the man spoke, “are you so above me that I need a reason to hate you, Potter? You—"
“ENOUGH, Severus!” The headmaster commanded authoritatively his voice reverberated throughout the room and the power of it sent chills down the spines of the other occupants in the office. The headmaster's face displayed his disappointment toward the other man in the room.

The professor backed off immediately, his cheeks were the faintest of red.

“He is a child Sever-- Professor Snape! There is nothing he has done to deserve such treatment. This behavior cannot go on,” stated the headmaster sternly. ‘Was his potion professor's behavior his fault?’ He wondered. The man did not hesitate to constantly remind the headmaster of the favoritism that he displayed for the Potters in the past. Was that truly still bothering the younger man?

Harry's eyebrows jumped in surprise at the headmaster's reaction. The adult truly acted as if he were offended on Harry's behalf. Perhaps he truly was, Harry could not tell because rarely did adults stick up for him. They usually allowed him to fight for himself or blamed him for problems that were out of his control. It was a curious thing to see one defend him so venomously!

Harry warily turned his attention to the professor, “I truly wish to make admins. I admire your work quite a lot, sir. After class I wanted to ask you many questions about your mastery and what I could do to possibly follow in your footsteps but then the troll incident happened. Though, even before that it felt as if you would never make the time to speak to me,” Harry confessed blandly. His voice was as monotone as usual but his frown displayed his displeasure.

Professor Snape's face curled into a deep and menacing frown, “am I supposed to feel bad that I am not kissing the robes of one of the great Potters, boy?” Professor Snape would never admit it but the boy's earnest words made him feel a bit ashamed and even embarrassed.

Harry did not reply immediately, much too shocked and intimidated by his professor's words. Briefly, he looked toward the headmaster who watched the two intently.

Clearly, the professor expected Harry to be defiant, and argue with him but Harry did not wished to do such a thing. He had seen his brother argue with his parents and often all involved left the situation more angry than before and so Harry chose to do what he normally did in these situations and actually think about what it was that he wished to convey. He was silent for a good five minutes and after a bit more thought Harry said, “I don’t want you to kiss my robes, I want you to teach me. I admit, I want to learn more from you than the average student but I will be more than happy with a plain education if you could treat me just as anyone else, professor.”

Professor Snape tutted and glared at him. ‘As if I would ever give special treatment to a Potter,’ he thought nastily. ‘I have treated you like any other and will continue to do so,” he said aloud and did his best to ignore the headmaster's disappointed frown as he continued to speak, “and since you seem to be so very sensitive, Potter. I will be sure to leave you be during class and if you have any questions over the material it will be up to you to approach me about them if that is what it takes to cease your whining.”

The headmaster's face lit in a blinding smile because he knew that that was as close as they would get to the dark clad man saying, 'fine. I was too harsh and too mean but it is not in my nature to be nice, so I will ignore you instead but not ignore your academics.' Harry looked pleasantly surprised and with a wave of the professor's hand, the topic was dismissed, “anyway, if the dramatics are out of the way. I believe that we have a more pressing matter at hand, the boy is obviously a seer, Headmaster. Who knows what he has seen? We should legil—”

With a frown, Harry interrupted the professor and ignored the man's snarl as he did so. Harry did not like to be so openly spoken of as if he were not there. Besides, it should be his choice what happens to him, “I do not think it right to speak for me, if possible, I would like to keep this
between the three of us.”

The headmaster eyes widened ever so slightly in surprise. His lips turned down and his brow furrowed in confusion. He was curious and asked, “why is that, my boy?”

Harry refrained from smartly replying, 'because it is what I want.' He knew that that would not grant him with what he wanted. Not only that, but it would be extremely rude and childish. If Harry were to be honest, he would admit that he was a bit frightened for anyone to know of his ability. Through research, Harry had learned that in the past, seers were harassed for their sight. Even now, the ministry had a special classification for seers and legally seers born in Britain had to be identified and registered through the ministry and it was public knowledge that ministry used them as they pleased.

Harry did not want that for himself, “firstly, most of my visions are of the past or current events. I have seen the Longbottom’s tortured, the Bones’ murdered and I… know of Ariana," Harry stated deliberately, he was being a bit manipulative and was pleased upon hearing the headmaster’s sharp intake of breath.

Yes, Harry knew of Ariana, but not much but from the headmaster's reaction, he could tell that she had not met a good end and sadly--or well, luckily for Harry--that could work to his advantage right now.

Beyond his fear of the ministry, Harry also had great concern for his brother, “Nathaniel, is the boy-who-lived. I am not fully ignorant as to what this means he is already a target as it is and my parents are stressed from it. If I am truly a seer and they learn of it, it will only add to their plate. My father..." professor Snape's lip curled downward, "is a... paranoid man. In the past he made me fear being taken for ransom for being Nathaniel's brother alone. And if being the boy-who-lived's brother was enough reason for enemies of the Potters--of the boy who lived--to take me. Well, then this would just be another reason for them to take me and they most likely wouldn't be interested in any form of ransom. Not when I alone could proved to be so useful, don’t you agree?” Harry could not prevent the slight tremble of his lips. There had been multiple times when he asked to leave the walls of the manor only to have his father grip him harshly by the shoulders and yell of kidnappers and Death Eaters as he shook Harry madly. His mother would have to quite literally pry his father off of him.

There was a moment of silence before Professor Snape approached. The headmaster stepped aside and watched as the potion master gripped Harry's shoulder firmly.

It was obvious that he wanted Harry to meet his gaze but Harry refused to meet his eyes. He was scared of what he may see and stared at the man's nose instead, “that is not a child’s concern, Potter.”

Harry laughed ruefully, the professor's hold reminded him of his father's. Most times, after his father shook him about roughly or yelled at him he would gently but firmly grip Harry's shoulder or even hug him in apology. Though it was always followed by words like, you must understand, the world is dangerous. You could die, your brother could die. It's my job to prevent that, I can see it in your eyes, Harry. You understand.'

“One would assume so,” Harry said darkly.

The professor released his hold, slightly surprised by the boy’s cold tone.

Headmaster Dumbledore rubbed his face tiredly. He looked 50 years older in his already ancient body. The boy was a mere child, and the headmaster should not even be considering keeping such
knowledge from the boy’s parents. However; Harry was right. His brother is the-boy-who-lived, and while young Nathaniel was not overly powerful as of yet, he was still a strong symbol to the public. With a loyal—seer brother who was proving to be quite the prodigy—who was to say that the boy could not aid in future endeavors?

The headmaster Dumbledore smiled when Harry's shoulders stiffened in reaction to the prolong silence. However, that was the only indication to the boy's discomfort. The headmaster was impressed. The boy was so cold, so calculating, so controlled, so... Slytherin. With that thought, the old man knew that the boy before him would be more inclined to aid him if he felt that Dumbledore was willing to aid him in return. If the headmaster were to accept the boy’s request tonight, it would show Harry that he could trust him. Not only that, but it would make the young wizard feel respected which was something the boy seemed unfamiliar with. Perhaps, he could even join the Order at the earliest convenience.

“Alright, Mr. Potter. I will accept your wish and as a sign of true faith and trust, shall we all swear on our magic?” the headmaster asked casually as if a swear on his magic was as normal as him eating on lemon drops. Professor Snape was in shock if his out of character gaping face was anything to go by.

“You can’t be serious—Headmaster he’s a chi—” Professor Snape began, but a wink from the headmaster stopped him because in the brief eye contact the men had before the headmaster's eye had closed, there was a message through legilimency passed. One that said, 'we will discuss the importance of this action later. Please trust me.'

“All parties present, shall not discuss Harrison Charles Potter’s visionary gifts with anyone other than those currently present unless given explicit permission by Harrison Charles Potter himself. So mote it be,” the head master called out as if he were speaking to mother magic herself.

“So mote it be,” Harry stated breathlessly truly surprised that an adult—especially one of Headmaster Dumbledore’s status would agree to his terms. Oh, Harry knew that a favor would be asked in the future but for now, he would accept what he could get.

After a few moments of silent fury professor Snape as well, snarled a “So mote it be.”

The headmaster smiled, “good. Good. Harry, when you feel that you are having a vision that is of the utmost importance do feel free to come to me.”

It seemed that the favor would come sooner than expected and Harry hummed, “I understand, headmaster.”

Headmaster Dumbledore surprised Harry once more as he knelt before the boy, and forced him to look him directly in the eye. Harry felt confused as to what the headmaster’s goal was at this moment and he blinked hard when he heard the voice of a much younger headmaster screaming the name "Grindelwald."

“And please feel free to share any visions such as the one of Bones, or the Longbottoms--no matter their nature. I could not imagine seeing what you have but if it were me, I know that I would be very scared and shaken. I thank you for being honest of your visions and know that professor Snape and I believe you. We do not believe you are commandeering for attention and we will support and help anyway that we can. Understand, my boy.”

Harry stared at him shocked. He felt—he felt, “I am overwhelmed.” He stated instead of responding to the Headmaster's words.
The headmaster looked at him sadly, “that is quite alright, child. Just know that the offer will never go away, ok, my boy?” Harry merely nodded and stood from his chair when prompted.

“Good, my boy. Good,” the headmaster stood and placed a guiding hand on Harry’s shoulder and guided him to the door.

“Is there anything else I can do for you, Harry?”

Harry shook his head and he gave the headmaster a genuine shaky smile. One of gratitude, “no, sir. Thank you.”

The headmaster returned a beaming smile of his own and with jovial pats on Harry’s back the man said, “think nothing of it, child. Think nothing of it! Goodnight, Harry.”

“Good night, headmaster. professor.”

The moment the door shut behind the boy, professor Snape advanced on the headmaster, “Albus, what the hell are you thinking!? Listening to the whims of a child, and a Potter no less! Should I be surprised!?”

The headmaster took a seat at his desk. He pet Fawkes fondly as he did so, “What I did was for the greater good, Severus!” the potions master snarled at the words. He loathed to hear them every time the man dared uttered him because often they were used for his manipulations. The older man sighed and professor Snape knew that he would not yet be allowed to know the man’s purpose of listening to the whims of a Potter brat.

"Honestly, the boy really does not deserve your anger, he has not done a thing to you. Your behavior is… childish,” the headmaster reprimanded sternly. He looked over his glasses and was not surprised to see the red tint on the man’s cheeks.

The headmaster sighed, “give the boy a chance. Get to know him—both of them.”

Professor Snape looked at the headmaster disbelievingly; “get to know—”

“Yes. Get to know them, Severus. You know not a thing about them, only about the seed who created them. To judge the boys based on that is cruel and unfair and it will not get back at James. Not in the way that you think it will. At least not regarding Harry.”

It was surprising that steam did not burst from the potions master’s ears with how openly he seethed at the words. To be read so easily irritated him to no end. Yes, he wanted Potter to suffer, but knew he could never directly attack the man, nor should he. Lily would continue to never forgive him if he did.

With sad eyes the headmaster spoke in a demure tone, “during their isolation, I did not get the chance to speak with James or Lily often and now I daresay I wish that I had tried harder. In my recent conversation with James, it seems that he has always left Harry to… his own devices. I do believe that is why the lad is so closed off. He’s had to take care of himself for quite some time.”

That caught professor Snape’s attention and with a raise of his brow he gestured for the headmaster to continue. With a sigh the headmaster demanded that Snape make a wizard’s oath to not relay this information to anyone and with a glare, the potion master complied with a sneer.

“If I were to look at it from an outsiders point of view—which I am--it appears that young Harry was dutifully neglected by his parents, much to my disappointment. So much so that neither James nor Lily actually know the boy. When asked, they spoke distantly of his upbringing and to
summarize their explanation of the boy's childhood; he was coached and educated by his tutors, while he was nurtured by house elves. Allegedly, Harry was not a fussy child in the least, while Nathan was quite the opposite. Most of their focus had been on their youngest it seems and because of Harry's quiet nature, they did not see that their actions were damaging him even if only emotionally. Of course, I do say this from the information given to me, I feel it is quite inappropriate for me to summarize young Harry's life in this way and I am most likely missing the entire picture.”

Professor Snape sneered at this, “stop skirting around the fact that they neglected the boy. Though, of course, it is unsurprising that James Potter would grow to abuse his own—” the headmaster silenced the professor with a wave of his hand.

“I would not dare accuse James of such a thing—”

“Of course, you wouldn’t, he was and still is your favorite, he could get away with bloody murder and you—” the headmaster attempted to silence the potions professor once more but the other man refused to be hushed, he was no child.

“NO! You will listen to me. You may not know the entire picture but you can tell that something isn't right with the Potter heir just from speaking with him! He was surprised when you stood up for him and he was not surprised when his feelings were dismissed... by me..." the professor ran a hand through his hair, "you cannot sit there and say that the boy has not been negatively affected by whatever happened to him in the Potter home. You cannot excuse James’ behavior. You stand before me, refusing to say it out loud even when it is obvious that the boy-who-lived was treated better than his own brother! How is any of that excusable to you, Albus!?"

The headmaster refused to look at Snape. He allowed the man his ire and looked on guiltily as he harangued him. The headmaster knew that the treatment of Harry was not right and though he did not know the extremes of the child's upbringing, he still did little about it. The headmaster was only allowed so little interaction with the Potter's during their solitude and when he did have the chance to speak with them--and on rare occasions even see them--he admits that he was much too focused on the boy’s brother, Nathan. The headmaster wondered if Harry remembered him openly favoring his brother just as all the other adults did in his life. The headmaster banished the thoughts from his mind. He justified himself. The greater good could not afford to worry about the emotional need of another child who would most likely lead longer and far more normal life than the-boy-who-lived would.

“What aren't you telling me?” Professor Snape asked through squinted and suspicious eyes, "explain James and Merlin—Lily’s neglectful behavior,” he demanded which surprised the headmaster who raised a curious brow at the man. "Severus, I need not tell you such a thing, you would only use it against—"

“If you say that I will use it against the Potter’s, I will leave. To have you think so little of me, Albus. I do not deserve it, "the potion master snarled. Honestly! He was the only professor in the damned school that actually cared about the rare abuse cases the school got! He would never abuse information that could help him help the student, even if the student was a blasted... Potter.

The headmaster considered the younger man for a moment before he sighed an apology, “you are right, I lost myself for a moment, forgive me, Severus.”

Professor Snape sneered and aggressively gestured for the headmaster to speak and answer to his previous demand.

“In my opinion, it was not abuse. Not outright and not on purpose. It was little things you see. Lily
admitted that in the beginning; it had been difficult for her to look at the boy, though she did not explain why. She also informed me that she had been reluctant to touch him. She confided such information to her wet nurse who had suggested that because Lily did not indulge having much skin-to-skin with Harry as she did with Nathan, she was not as fond of him. It got to the point to where Lily spoke with him very little and would exclude him from things like taking Nathan on a picnic on the Potter manor grounds."

"Are these things Potter Senior has told you? Conveniently, the blame is all on Lily is it not?"

"No, my boy. These are all things Lily has told me herself. She is quite torn up about her behavior. James is quite the opposite, he is very defensive of his behavior. He did not outright ignore Harry, but more often than not, he was the one to establish Harry's education. You may have noticed that Harry is quite the role model for what a heir to a noble family could be. Well, that is thanks to hours upon hours of tutelage from an abundance of stern pureblood tutors. Not only that--and I will not say more until I learn more myself--but James... There is something bothering him tremendously. I believe he is suffering from post shock and Harry has suffered the brunt of his symptoms from it.

I just understand that with the strenuous amount of tutoring and isolation, Harry himself, stopped seeking out time with his family until recent."

Professor Snape looked at the head master in disgust, "why would he try to be included where he was not only clearly unwanted, but ostracized and harassed? Think, Albus!"

The headmaster shook his head, "there is that, but forgive me, Severus, I am ever one to see things from both sides. I meant was that I was told that young Harry also did not attempt to talk or interact with his parents, even as a wee babe. A babe that lacks intelligence and instinctively reacts to emotions. It was almost as if Harry had none, and it got worse as he developed and for young and inexperienced parents like James and Lily, a child such as that is difficult to understand."

"It sounds as if he is emotionally stunted. I have seen it in my Slytherins who were grossly neglected in their developmental years, and that is no fault of their own.” The potion master said darkly.

The headmaster’s eye twinkled in fondness, a mere minute ago, he was practically begging the man before him to stop bullying the young Potter twins and now here the man was defending one of them at every turn and against the headmaster of all people.

“I do not disagree with you, Severus. I just am unable to condemn young James and Lily when I believe that it is not too late for them to fix what they have done. Especially when most of Harry's emotional trauma may not be entirely their fault. The visions... Harry has said that they have plagued him for quite sometime, and from his actions it would explain that he was traumatized long ago and it further affected his development negatively. As I said, I am in no way defending James or Lily—or even myself and I know that Lily already feels quite awful about it and James will as well when he truly understands and realizes what his actions have done. Now, all any of us can do is move forward and work on helping young Harry and treating his as best we can from now on.”

The snort that escaped Professor Snape at that was one he could not control. It was such a Gryffindor want. 'Oh, no repercussions for anyone in regard to the neglect of Harrison Potter? That’s ok, we will all forgive and forget, and Harry will too.’ It was downright asinine.

The young professor said nothing in response instead he chose to abruptly leave and bid the headmaster a short and curt 'good night.'
He knew what abuse did to magical children in magical families. It damaged them and—not always—but usually led them to becoming death eaters. Would Harrison Potter be subjected to the same fate? Did Severus Snape truly want to prevent such a thing or; would he insure that it happen?

Chapter End Notes

This chapter was shorter than I thought, sorry, also, I hope to go through the chapters I currently have and correct them. I mainly write straight through because this is simply a stress reliever writing but now that people are actually invested I hope to put more effort into going further.

I also want to thank you guys so much for the comments. I will post the story either way but the comments are so inspiring and I genuinely love that you are taking the time to invest in my story. So thank you for that, very much.

Who would you like to see more of?
Chapter Summary

Chapters like this remind me of times when I was young. I was always told that I was a very mature child and so the adults treated me as such but more often than not, an adult should have acknowledged that I was a child and should have treated me as such.

a.k.a the chapter where Harry Potter is treated like a kid and doesn't understand how that works.

Chapter Notes

Partially unstable Snape is my new favorite thing so I wrote a lot of it. It's kind of subtle but easy to see once you notice.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

For the next week Snape obsessively observed Harry Potter and when he allowed himself to watch the child unbiased eyes, he saw qualities in the boy that he thought a Potter incapable of. For instance, the young Potter had a natural understanding for potion brewing. He did not struggle with preparations for ingredients, nor did he get similar ingredients like; clover sprouts and fungus sprouts confused despite their similarities unlike his peers who continuously struggled to do so.

Begrudgingly, Snape had to admit that Potter performed extremely well in his class. The boy obviously knew the material and the control he displayed when he brewed proved that he knew what he was doing--well, knew as much as a fourth year, at least. Hell, the boy even seemed to enjoy potions despite Snape’s initial attempt to make the class hell for the boy in the beginning. Snape detested to think about his behavior that the headmaster so kindly called ‘deplorable.’ The boy was nothing like the dreadful Potter senior or even the youngest argumentative Potter but he--Severus Snape--had downright bullied the Potter heir. According to the headmaster at least.

There was nothing to be done about what was already done. The Potter heir was talented and somewhat intelligent in his own right and not only that but the boy was a seer as well. Snape could benefit greatly from being seen as the boy’s mentor and confident and of his own obligation he decided that moving forward and possibly teaching the boy a thing or two would be enough to make him and the headmaster forget his past actions.

He would never admit it, but in his on way; Snape had already begun to make amends for his behavior. One day after class, he demanded that Harry stay and offered additional reading materials for the boy to study. If the Potter heir understood the subject matter than he would be allowed to approach Snape for more challenging course work. However; if he could not comprehend the readings he was briskly told to not bother Snape or complain about his course work in the future if he could not understand the simple material graciously offered.

The boy knew a grand opportunity when given one and he had promised to study hard and when Snape abrasively responded that he better, Harry had taken it in stride. The interaction had left...
Snape feeling pleasantly surprise that the boy did not cower or shy away from him, but except Snape's words for what they were, not how they were said. Most students did not react that way; even his Slytherins could be over sensitive in response to Snape's abrasive personality. If it had not been apparent that Harry Potter was different from his peers before then his acceptance of Snape's behavior certainly proved that he was.

The boy's interactions with others was also placed under Snape's scrutiny. It seemed as if Potter was rather revered as an enigmatic character among his peers. Especially by the boy's fellow Ravenclaws. Where Snape thought him aloof and over confident. His schoolmates seemed to view him as someone only the brave and worthwhile could approach. It irritated the man to no end and he longed to ensure that the Potter Heir's ego did not inflate.

The Ravenclaw whose enamorment by the Potter heir that surprised Snape the most was the boy's own head of house. When Snape watched Potter's interaction with the half goblin it was obvious that Flitwick seemed to like him quite a lot and found joy in how flustered the boy became when given compliments. To say that Potter was severely awkward in response to the compliments would be an understatement. It was as if he was not used to getting them at all and when Snape remembered his conversation with the headmaster in regards to the boy's treatment at home; it was safe to assume that Potter really was not used to receiving them.

A slight ding from Snape's wrist watch startled him from his thoughts. He looked at the time and was relieved that the class time was coming to an end. To Snape's annoyance, a majority of the students began to hurriedly add last minute additions to their potions. Not Potter, of course. The boy been working languidly on the additional material Snape had gifted him earlier because had the time time to do so since he finished his brewing for class much quicker than his peers.

“Class is dismissed. Clean up and leave. Potter, stay behind,” Snape demanded gruffly, he did not bother waiting for a response and he swept through the room and aided students in bottling what they had so that they could leave as soon as possible. Once the other students left, Snape began to grade swiftly, if the colors were too off it lowered the student’s grade slightly. Despite popular belief that Snape graded too harshly and unfairly, he actually did not grade the younger year students too harshly on their potions. Their essays however were always harshly scrutinized. It would not do to have a bunch of bumbling dunderheads to be illiterate as well as idiots.

Potter dutifully approached Snape’s desk and waited for orders. Snape peered up at him from his chair, “well? Sit.”

Snape was satisfied when the boy simply nodded and did so.

“I take it that you have already begun to review the material that I graciously provided?” Snape inquired.

Potter thought carefully before he spoke and Snape was further impressed that one so young would make efforts to choose their words as carefully as he. Only most Slytherins were trained to do so, and that was because they were trained so harshly and strictly by their parents or tutors. Surely, Potter senior would not have taught the boy before Snape to behave in such a way. Thus, Snape deduced that a tutor was the one to teach Harry the skill.

“Yes, sir. I have finished half of, ‘Altheda’s Journal of Useless Herbs, and I have also read most of my material from 'One Thousand Magical Herbs and Fungi, and the contrast is quite interesting. It seems that Phylida Spore disregarded most muggle herbs and fungi in her works unlike Altheda who used them almost religiously. However; the material that you gave me is not so much about potions making am I correct to assume that you want me to remember the basic plants and other ingredients beforehand?”
The smile that overtook Snape's face was feral. Harry could see all of the man's teeth and had he been any other student, he would most certainly be quite scared but Potter did not seem affected in the slightest.

“You are correct, Mr. Potter and in your observations regarding your reading material, you are spot on. Some of the most interesting potions use muggle herbs, usually the more medical ones. Perhaps… I was correct in my assessment, you are indeed not as dunderheaded as I had thought and you can obviously comprehend more difficult material but just to be sure. You will not write the essay given on the rubric. Obviously, you understand potion settings and safety and will not need to detail the dangers of idiotic mistakes like the others. You instead shall write an essay on Altheda’s studies and potions that would not exist today if not for her. What potions might that be? Well, it is up to you to research such a thing. Here,” Snape said as he handed to slips of paper to Potter.

“One of those slips is a permission slip to get your needed materials from the restricted section in the library, some important reading material is there and will aid you in your studies. Do not abuse this. Yet another gift that I am graciously giving you,” Snape slightly sneered as he spoke and Potter responded with quiet “yes sirs” and "thank you's," on queue. Snape nodded and made a note to himself to ensure that the boy always upheld such politeness. It would assist him well in the future.

“I am glad that you understand, Mr. Potter. Moving on, the other slip will be given to professor McGonagall.

It is a form excusing your tardiness but the time is written for three minutes ago so do not be any more late than you already are. You are dismissed,” Snape said with a mischievous grin. He did not wait for a response from the boy as he stood up and made his way to his desk. He sat down and smiled in satisfaction when he heard the classroom door shut behind Potter after he exited in haste.

Snape still found it hard to talk to the boy, his dreadful father was always at the center of his mind, but he found the boy above par in terms of manners and academics. On those merits alone, Snape knew that eventually he would be better able to separate Potter senior and the Potter heir in his mind. More than that, he knew that there was no better way to get back at thine enemy than through his son--his heir no less.

"This essay is dreadful,” Snape muttered aloud. He gave the youngest Weasley a T for troll as he deserved. If the Potter heir turned a less than stellar essay in to Snape, he would probably skin the child alive. He would most certainly not be accepting a less than perfect essay from Potter, and he would get it even if the boy had to write it ten times over.

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The next few weeks passed by quickly and relatively with little to no major problems. After, Susan Bones told her aunt about what happened with the troll; aurors from the Ministry of Magic visited briefly and questioned the professor’s, and Harry about their involvement.

Really, their concern did not lie with the fact that a child defeated a troll that threatened the lives of all of Hogwarts' occupants. They were much to engrossed in their search of the answer to; "how did the troll even get into the school?" They were unable to find the answer or a potential culprit and the case has been classified as unsolved and thus if any other suspicious persons or activities revealed themselves than the M.o.M would once again become involved.

Nathan as curious as ever, involved himself and found out most of this information through Hermione. Luckily, the girl kept had kept her mouth shut in regard to Harry's involvement.
Which Nathan had yet to catch on to because he was much too busy with his position as Gryffindor’s newly appointed star seeker. A position that he got by breaking the rules.

The story that Harry had been told was that Draco Malfoy had allegedly "stolen" (quotations on the word stolen because according to Malfoy himself; Malfoy's never steal,) Neville’s remembrall that the pudgy Gryffindor received from his grandmother. Allegedly, the only way to get it back was to fly after Draco who had dared Nathan to do so, after taking to the air with the remembrall in his clutches.

Well, Nathan's pride would not allow him to do otherwise so, of course he flew after the other boy and when the two were caught flying when they were explicitly ordered not to by the Gryffindor head of house; Professor McGonagal.

Nathan was not punished but rewarded with a position on Gryffindor's Quidditch team.

Well, Draco let everyone know how unfair that was and many agreed. Many including Harry. Not because he was jealous like the Malfoy heir or many other students. No, Harry merely did not agree in rewarding Nathan’s disregard for the rules. He did not voice such a thing, nor did he voice the fact that Nathan lacked the much needed experience of playing actual Quidditch in a team. No, he could not openly voice his disagreement because Nathan seemed so very pleased with himself for making the team on born skill alone that Harry would have felt bad to bring up anything negative about Nathan's new position. So, Harry chose to congratulate his brother and promised to support him in any way.

That was why he currently stood in the Gryffindor stands, standing between Ronald Weasley who stood with Seamus Finnigan to his right and Neville Longbottom to Harry's left. Harry even went as far as to allow his brother to place his Gryffindor scarf around his neck while he played.

Nathan was doing very well, it was obvious that he was flying with inexperience but he made up for it with his natural abilities and keen eye. Harry tensed with anticipation the moment he could tell that Nathan spotted the snitch. Harry began to quietly clap and softly cheer Nathan on as everyone else whooped and hollered but suddenly Harry stopped mid clap and was violently assaulted with a vivid vision of Nathan screaming before he hit the ground and quieted immediately. His body and limbs were splayed in inappropriate angles and before Harry knew it, he was back in reality and choking on a sob caused by the vision that had felt far too real.

“Harry, mate. Are you okay?” Neville asked worriedly. He placed a comforting hand on Harry’s shoulder and his eyes were alight in deep concern.

Harry looked at the other boy, and his panic must have shown on his face because Neville immediately moved his hand forward and snaked arms around Harry's shoulder. "Mate, you l-look sick," Neville stuttered. The other boy's hold was comforting but it did little to console Harry who wanted to tell the other boy that; 'no, he was absolutely not alright because he just saw his brother die before his own eyes.'

Ron, whose eyes had never left the game, suddenly stopped his cheering and said, “hey, something’s wrong with Nathan!” Harry internally screamed when he saw his brother’s broom jerking and fighting against Nathan's control.

With no time to explain, Harry broke from Neville’s embrace and ran as fast as he could to the bottom of the stands. When he saw Nathan truly lose his grip on the broom, a burst of adrenaline shot through Harry and he was able to move in even greater haste then he already had been. He pushed through anyone in his way and he had just made it to the bottom of the stairs when he heard not only Nathan’s scream but the screams of all who noticed that something was horribly, horribly
wrong when Nathan fell from his broom.

Harry continued to run towards the field. His brother falling fast but Harry was faster. When he was right under Nathan, he wasted no time and took out his wand, “ARRESTO MOMENTUM” he screamed as many times as he could with the short time that he had.

“ARRESTO MOMENTUM, ARRESTO MOMENTUM, ARRESTO MOMENTUM, AR-” before Harry could repeat the incantation once more, Nathan fell directly on him.

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“Harrison! Merlin, Harrison, wake up!” Nathan screamed.

“’M wake…” Harry managed, but he found it extremely difficult to speak, was he lying down? He tried to sit up but a sharp pain in his right arm and Nathan’s own hands on his chest stopped him from doing so.

“Stop! Stop trying to move and stay down, Harrison!” Nathan commanded hysterically. Faster than the crack of a whip, Nathan looked up toward the Ravenclaw Head of House who peered down at Harry in deep concern. ”Professor Flitwick, do something please! I think Harrison's arm is broken!”

Were there others? Harry tried to look around to confirm but black and white moving blobs clouded his vision.

“I can see that Mr. Potter, Madam Pomfrey is on her way. In the meantime, professor McGonagall could you check on Mr. Nathan while I do my best to see the damage made to my Raven?” Professor McGonagall nodded, and she had to use brute force to extract Nathan from Harry’s side without hurting either of the two.

“Harry? Can you hear me?” Professor Flitwick asked gently. Harry thought that he responded with “yes sir” but he did not see professor Flitwick grimace when he merely released a sound that sounded like a gurgled hiss. Professor Flitwick proceeded to shine a light from the tip of his wand into Harry’s eyes but Harry barely registered it and proceeded to vomit all over the man’s robes. The small professor grimaced slightly but gently held Harry’s head sideways so that he would not swallow any of the vomit and choke. He then proceeded to run his fingers through Harry’s hair in comfort. It almost distracted Harry from the awful pressure in his head that made him feel like his head was going to burst.

“A broken arm, a concussion, and--” Professor Flitwick poked lightly at Harry's ribs and Harry began to cry in earnest. Tears fell from his eyes and he whimpered like the little boy that he was. His head of house apologized sincerely and then spoke to the forming group at large, “he has a bruised or broken rib also.” The half goblin finished, Harry did not know who the man was talking to and he did not care unless it was someone who would make him stop hurting.

Harry was instructed to swallow by who he thought sounded like professor Snape and he did so successfully. He did not even grimace at the taste of his own vomit. It must have deemed him able to ingest potions because a moment later, a vile tasting liquid was forced into his mouth and he was once more instructed to swallow and seconds after he did so he went into a deep sleep.

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“Madam Pomfrey! Harrison is waking up!” Nathan shouted.

“Nathaniel, please lower your voice,” Harry groaned irritably through gritted teeth. Nathan
apologized and handed him a cup of water. Harry thanked him and tried to sit up but a weight on his legs prevented him from doing so. To his utter disbelief and surprise his mother slept deeply with her head resting on her arms atop of Harry’s legs.

Nathan noticed Harry's bemused look at their mother and jumped up and ran to their mother's side, "Crap, I was supposed to wake her, the moment you were up, Harrison!" Nathan exclaimed.

"Mum! Mum, get up, Harrison’s awake!” Nathan said urgently as he gently shook her. Their mother woke up slowly and when she looked at Harry she began to weep softly and from how puffy her eyes were she had already cried quite a lot. Harry grimaced, uncomfortable with her display of emotions and he decided to ignore her tears. Instead, he inquired as to how long he had been out of commission and was appalled to learn from Nathan that he had been unconscious for three days.

“Harry, how are you feeling?” His mother asked in a whisper as she cradled his face in her hands, and Harry was overwhelmed by the tenderness of it all. She did not touch him like this, only Nathan received touches like this. Harry was saved from responding when Madam Pomfrey abruptly arrived.

“Mr. Potter, good afternoon!” She said without preamble, she did not wait for a reply and politely requested that their mother step aside before she began to check him over.

“Do you remember what happened?” Madam Pomfrey asked. Harry responded in the negative and she tutted in response.

“You used your body to cushion Mr. Nathan’s fall from more than 100 feet in the air. Had you not been so quick witted and used Arresto Moment against Mr. Nathan’s person, you both would likely be dead. Unfortunately, however; the spell was not enough and once he landed; he sprained his knee and wrist and he broke your arm, two of your ribs and gave you quite the concussion. Do you know what a concussion is, Mr. Potter?” Harry once again responded in the negative and Madam Pomfrey smiled at him kindly.

“A concussion is an injury to the brain that results in temporary loss of normal brain function. It usually is caused by a blow to the head or in this case, your brother landing on yours.”

Nathan, more like their mother than Harry ever could be began to weep loudly; “I’m really sorry, Harrison! I was angry when you said that I should wait until I was more experienced to play but you were right because look at what happened!”

Their mother pulled Nathan into a comforting embrace and gently shushed him. Harry wanted to respond but his head hurt too badly. He turned to Madam Pomfrey and politely requested a pain relief potion which the healer kindly provided. Harry waited a few minutes for the potion to take effect and before Madam Pomfrey left he asked what his recovery time would be and was relieved to learn that with proper care, healing magic and the ingestion of potions; he would make a full recovery in a mere week and a half. She then left to inform the rest of the staff that he was awake.

Cautiously Harry looked to his brother and mother, “I do not blame you for my current… predicament, Nathaniel,” Harry said jokingly. He lifted his arm that was surrounded with a brace--or was it a cast? Harry did not really know but it fascinated him immensely and he made a mental note to ask Madam Pomfrey about it.

Nathan did not laugh. In fact, he sniffled loudly and his eyes began to water once more. "That isn't funny, Harrison!" He said with trembling lips. It was difficult for Harry not to laugh at him for looking so ugly as he cried.
To disguise his amusement, Harry sighed heavily, “Nathaniel, please calm yourself. I am fine, we are both fine. If I had not acted as I did then you would be dead. I am grateful that we both got away with none too serious injuries. However; I hope this has taught you, and your captain that you should practice more before participating in future games.”

Nathan looked away and turned his sheepish gaze toward their mother and gestured for her to speak. Harry raised a brow in intrigue.

The grimace on their mother's face while she spoke made both boys feel rather nervous as to what it was she was about to say. “Nathan is not allowed to play again until second year. Your dad was here briefly but he was called back into work after a meeting with the headmaster and Nathan’s head of house. He was none too pleased to hear of the injuries that you suffered from saving Nathan from his fall that was proven to have happened due to Nathan’s inexperience of playing Quidditch. Your dad went on to say that it was a preventable injury to his heir--or something like that. You know heir talk from your dad irritates me and makes me uncomfortable.”

Harry did not know this but he did not bother to mention so. Their mother continued to speak, “anyway, it is against the rules for first years to play on the teams anyhow. I really think your dad is more angry at the fact that Nathan was given permission to do so without either of us being asked permission and so he has informed the headmaster and professor Mcgonagall that Nathan will not be playing until he properly tries out for the team next year.”

“I see,” Harry said blandly. Internally, he was impressed with his father. Harry thought that their father would be proud that Nathan was allowed to join the team so early due to his raw talent alone but obviously that was not the case. Harry asked Nathan how he felt about the situation.

“Harrison, without you, I’d be dead,” Nathan said incredulously. Not only as if Harry had offended him but as if the question was stupid in itself.

“I LOVE Quidditch. Don’t get me wrong, but knowing all the plays and rules are extremely different from actually participating in the game. I was excited but I wasn’t ready and even though you were apprehensive, you supported me playing and I just cannot be angry about being unable to play, not when I have your support either way.”

Without asking Nathan crawled into Harry's bed and hugged him with his nearest arm. “Thanks for saving me, bro.”

“Of course, Nathaniel. I am very proud of your acceptance of the situation and it relieves me greatly that you are willing to wait a bit longer to play.”

Nathan smiled briefly before engaging Harry and their mother in tales of his adventures at Hogwarts thus far. Nathan also spoke of his new friends which Harry briefly laughed at while Nathan listed most of Gryffindor. Unsurprisingly, the boy-who-lived would be pretty popular in that particular house. Harry just hoped that Nathan would not be too hurt by those who are only getting close to him due to his title alone.

Once Nathan and their mother left Harry was allowed other visitors and throughout the day he was visited by other Ravenclaws--specifically the upper years and a handful of Hufflepuffs that he had become friendly with due to their similar class schedules. The most surprising visitor so far had to be one Draco Malfoy.

“Potter. Glad to see that you didn’t die due to your brother’s horrible flying,” Draco said as he approached Harry’s bed. He plucked a strand of hair from Harry’s robe and made a face of disgust before he flicked on the floor.
“Now, now, Malfoy, no need to insult my brother. I must say, your visit is a surprise. A welcomed one, but a surprise nonetheless.” Harry said and gestured for Malfroy to take a seat in the chair beside his bed.

Politely Draco declined his offer, “no thank you. I just came by to ensure that you were in fact not dead and to also invite you and yours to the Yule ball that my family and I will be hosting come the season. I do hope to see you there, and please give regards from my Mother to Sirius, she hopes to see him there as well,” surreptitiously, Draco placed a few invitation cards on the nightstand next to Harry’s bed and atop of them laid one chocolate frog.

After he received Harry’s thanks, Draco exited and only a minute later, Terry and Hermione entered.

Terry had looked on apologetically when Hermione ran to the bed and engulfed Harry into a fierce hug. She avoided his bad arm but not his ribs and Harry grimaced slightly in pain but did not vocalize it, nor did he remove her from his person. Even Harry could not be so cruel to remove her once she began to sob loudly.

Harry could barely deal with his crying mother and already here was another weeping woman being openly emotional. Awkwardly he comforted her and assured them both that he was just fine. In response Hermione berated him, “just fine!? Of all the asinine things you have said Harry--I cannot believe you! You did not see Nathan fall on you, you were as good as dead to those of us in the stands!” She continued to rant and expressed that Harry couldn’t understand how scary it was to see him so dazed and confused when he came to on the field.

"Hermione, listen. Truly, I shall heal in less than a month," Harry said lightly. He still did not believe his injuries to be that serious.

To Harry’s surprise, he received a vicious glare from Terry, “not cool, mate. Look at you, all banged up in a hospital bed. You could have died.”

Harry did not immediately respond, he had to truly think about their worries and put himself in their shoes. If it were either of them hurt and confined within the infirmary, Harry gathered that he’d be pretty upset too. Though, he doubted he would be as emotional.

Smartly, Harry did not verbally reply and instead, he used his good arm--the one not restricted by Hermione's hold on him and reached out toward Terry. The other boy leaned in closer so that Harry would not have to reach very far and he quietly gasped in surprise when Harry gave him a tentative squeeze on the shoulder along with a slight crooked smile.

"Your worry is understood, but really, I will heal and as you can see, I am alive."

Harry felt that Terry and Hermione were overreacting but he would not tell them that, and he had to admit; it felt good to have the two worry over him.

Not once had the two mentioned Nathan since entering and furthermore they did not let him disregard his own health as his parents often did. They cared about him, and currently, him alone and Harry supposed that he cared about them too. Not as much as he did Nathan but much more than he did others that he did not consider family. Perhaps, they really are--dare he say; his friends.

Once Hermione was done reprimanding him for endangering his life to save Nathan's own, she shared her and Terry's belief of who it was that caused Nathan to fall from his broom.

Harry also was in the belief that someone had clearly hexed his brother's broom, but he did not
agree with Hermione or Terry that it had been Professor Snape who had done so.

However, Hermione was adamant, and stood firm because according to her; she had witnessed it herself. Not only that but it was her who had stop the hexing by setting the professor’s robes on fire thus breaking his concentration from the spell. That was when Nathan fell from her point of view.

Terry supported Hermione, "mate, we swear that he won't get away with trying to kill your brother! We'll go to the Headmaster right away and we'll let him know what we saw."

With hands on her hips and face set in a determined frown, Hermione nodded her agreement, "Ronald Weasley can testify in regards to Professor Snape's motive. He has shared that more often than not, Professor Snape targets and belittles Nathan in class. He absolutely hates him!" she stated. It was evident that not even her respect for authority figures allowed Hermione to ignore when they have done wrong.

While Harry appreciated his friend's loyalty to not only him, but by proxy; his brother. Something did not sit right with him. Professor Snape--while cranky and abrasive--was not particularly violent with students. He was notoriously mean, but wasn't he to everyone? And didn't Nathan still fall despite the two stopping Professor Snape who had supposedly been hexing the broom himself?

There were too many questions not being asked and Harry wanted the full story, and he could get it without accusing a professor of attempted murder and thus he insisted that he would like to inform the Headmaster of what they have shared with him.

The three argued for a few minutes, but eventually they reached a shaky agreement to allow Harry to speak on their behalf.

After thirty more minutes the three friends were interrupted by a knock and with great surprise, it was the Headmaster who entered followed by Professor Snape.

Headmaster Dumbledore kindly but sternly dismissed the two uninjured students and informed them with a twinkle in his eye that they were past curfew and Filch was making his rounds through the halls. If they did not Hurry then they would surely be caught by the man and given detentions that not even he as the Headmaster could save them from. Terry and Hermione looked properly frightened and with haste they bid the two adults and Harry goodnight. When they drew Harry into a hug he assured them in a quiet whispered message that he would inform the Headmaster of what they shared with him in regards to Professor Snape's involvement in Nathan's fall.

Once the two left, the Headmaster took the seat next to his bed and Professor Snape remained standing next to the older man.

“How are you feeling, Mr. Potter?” the Headmaster inquired softly.

“Just fine, considering the circumstances Headmaster.”

Headmaster Dumbledore smiled tiredly, no doubt tired from the stress of the week’s events.

Harry knew the public duress the headmaster was under due to one Hufflepuff that he had grown familiar with as of late. That Hufflepuff was Ernest Macmillan and though the two got along well, his visit was quite surprising.

During Macmillan’s brief visit, he had brought the dreadful Daily Prophet and within its papers were multiple articles that were tearing the Headmaster--and even Harry's brother--apart. The articles claimed that Nathan would not have fallen had the Headmaster not allowed a first year
student to play. The articles further speculated that his brother had been granted special privileges because he was The-Boy-Who-Lived.

Strangely enough, Harry himself was portrayed as the poor neglected stepping stool of The Boy-Who-Lived who had not hesitated in sacrificing himself for his brother. Harry found it comical how that part was not so far fetched, but Harry saved his brother because he loved Nathan and it was Harry’s responsibility as the heir to look after him, there was no other reason.

The voice of Professor Snape interrupted Harry's thoughts rather abruptly, “Mr. Potter, you acted very quickly before your brother’s fall. You even used the best spell possible for the situation despite having little time to think or process the situation,” while the professor spoke he stared intently at Harry, it almost felt as if he were trying to force eye contact. Harry had never been a fan of eye contact and he has unconsciously made it a point to stare at people’s noses in order to avoid it. Thus Professor Snape could not find what he searched for. When Harry did not volunteer to reply the man merely continued to stare until the headmaster spoke, “did you have a vision before your brother's fall, my boy?”

Harry was hesitant to answer but he nodded in the affirmative, “yes, I saw Nathaniel die. I am sure of it. The moment his body had hit the ground, he stopped screaming and his head was at such an odd angle that it surely meant death. However, what really gave away his death was the dead look in his eyes. I’ve seen the look of death before, and that was it.”

The two older men released harsh breaths and Harry himself, breathed deeply and he focused his eyes on his own shaky hands that laid clenched atop his lap. He was relieved to have said it aloud.

When he looked up, he saw the two men who stared at him with eyes that practically screamed weary and deeply concerned.

“I am fine. Nathaniel is alive and well. It didn’t happen,” Harry said aloud. He ignored the tremble of his lip and looked away from the men. The words were the same thing he had been telling himself since he woke up. Harry peered at the adults before him once more and when he saw how their mouths were thinned, Harry assumed skepticism from them and it made him frown. He felt slightly hurt.

“Mr. Potter, may I hug you?” The headmaster asked suddenly. His voice had been soft, but it still caught Harry off guard tremendously.

Growing up Harry received the occasional hug from his family, but if they weren’t from Nathan, Mousy or Remus, they were fleeting and given in haste and even after all these years, hugs from anyone but the people mentioned made Harry feel awkward. Would hugging the headmaster be awkward? Without speaking Harry forced himself to relax and slowly used his free arm to express invitation and the headmaster beamed at him and engulfed Harry into a tight comforting embrace.

The headmaster stroked Harry's hair and continued to speak in soft tones, “Mr. Potter, since you already know of her, I do not believe that it would make matters worse for you to hear this. However, just keep it between us. Alright, my boy?”

Harry felt good, he nodded and snuggled closer to The Headmaster. Harry felt overwhelmed and he even wanted to cry but refrained from doing so in fear that the Headmaster would release him from his hold.

“Good, lad, good. Well, did you know that I personally witnessed the death of my sister?”

Harry stiffened and Snape sucked in a harsh breath of air.
“After I witnessed such a awful thing, I desperately wanted a hug, but I was all alone and I never got one and I think that I would have felt a lot better if I had and I want to tell you that it is because of you that Nathan did not die. You saved your brother and he is alive as I’m sure you saw earlier.”

Yes. Nathan was alive but in the vision that Harry witnessed he wasn’t. When Nathan impacted the earth, he had landed hard. So hard that Harry was surprised that his body did not bounce at all upon landing. Harry saw his brother’s eyes, they were dead and unseeing and that scared Harry so very badly that he did not wish to even think about it.

Harry sniffled and physically trembled as he fought the sob in the back of his throat. However, a second later he released a choked off sob before he began to cry in earnest.

Even while his mother had visited she had not truly asked how Harry felt emotionally but he was glad that she didn’t because he would have probably cried as he was now and she would not have been able to cope with seeing such strong emotion from Harry. When he had brushed her worry off and assured her that he was fine she had looked extremely relieved and immediately began to coddle Nathan without prodding Harry any further. Harry began to whimper without realizing it.

“He’s alive. He’s alive. He’s alive, Harry. You saved him,” Headmaster Dumbledore said. He gently rocked them back and forth.

Harry would later be embarrassed by his behavior for he had never been hugged or held in such a manner by anyone other than Remus—and that had occurred only twice in his life.

Though Harry supposed that that is his own fault. He has always been uneasy when it came to the display of his emotions. Unfairly, Harry had been taught by his father and tutors that such displays could make him appear weak. However, right now, he did feel weak but in the presence of such powerful individuals such a the Headmaster and Professor Snape Harry felt that it was okay to show such weakness. Especially in front of professor Snape who did not consider him to be strong or powerful in the first place.

Speaking of professor Snape, the man had finally chosen to take the chair located at the other side of the bed. He sat tensely and quietly but did not interrupt them for the duration of Harry’s breakdown which lasted a mere 30 minutes before he gently pushed the headmaster away and said, “I’m done, thank you, headmaster,” in his usual manner of blunt speech.

The Headmaster smiled fondly, but did not attempt to touch Harry again, the child was so reserved. Harry coughed in his hand, and eyed Professor Snape shyly. In response, the man slightly bared his teeth at the boy and Harry slightly relaxed knowing that it was the professor’s attempt at an impromptu smile.

“I am embarrassed. Perhaps we can move on?”

"There is nothing to be embarrassed of, my boy, but I can tell that you have important things to share. So by all means, please do," Headmaster Dumbledore said with a dazzling smile.

Harry attempted to return the smile, but akin to Professor Snape, he was not used to doing so suddenly and instead of smiling, he gave what appeared to be a grimace before he spoke, "my... friend, Hermione Granger has stated that she witnessed professor Snape jinxing Nathaniel’s broom-I do not agree but I did promise to speak to you about it, Headmaster.”

The professor sneered viciously and he cursed Hermione’s name which Harry did not approve of and neither did the headmaster as he gently requested that the younger man calm down.
“Now, now, Severus, I am sure that once Ms. Granger learns that you were canting a counter curse she will take back her words,” the older man soothed before he turned and addressed Harry, “unfortunately, my boy. Someone did jinx young Nathan's broom but we do not know who. I apologize, whoever meant harm for your brother is still at large. We are doing everything we can to find them.”

Harry refrained from thinning his lips and disrespectfully displaying his displeasure at the Headmaster's words. He nodded his understanding before he released a big yawn.

The headmaster chuckled and stood, “I do believe we have overstayed our welcome, Professor Snape. I will take my leave, I am quite tired myself,” the headmaster winked at Harry as he ruffled his hair and bid him goodnight. Harry felt warm and fuzzy as he watched the man leave.

Once the headmaster was gone, the professor stood as well, “quite. Here, Mr. Potter.”

The professor handed Harry a small vile that looked like it contained the potion dreamless sleep.

“What have I just handed you, Mr. Potter?”

“Dreamless sleep, sir.”

Professor Snape gave him that feral grin of his, but as quickly as it came, the smile was gone, "for this night only, Mr. Potter. It’s hard when traumatic memories are forced to the surface, they can make for a fitful sleep,” the man said as he eyed Harry intently. Harry met his eyes briefly and was not surprised to see that the man’s eyes looked just as haunted as his voice.

Harry frowned, but he often did sleep fitfully as his mind often replayed his most vivid and traumatic visions to him. Without another thought, Harry swallowed the contents of the vile. once it was all gone, he gave it back to the professor and thanked him. The man nodded in acknowledgement of Harry's appreciation but said nothing--not even good night before he swept out of the room, leaving Harry to sleep--hopefully without dreams.

Chapter End Notes

***Revised and edited 12/18/2019

You comments, kudos and support have just meant so much to me so I decided to post a new chapter as early as possible.

Again, thank you so much for reading!
The calm before the storm

Chapter Summary

***Revised and edited 12/19/2019

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Time in Hogwarts passed by so quickly, in no time at all Halloween came and went and so did many other weeks. Over the many weeks that passed, Harry noticed that there was a notable development in his relationships with his peers. Especially his fellow Ravens.

The acquaintanceship that Harry had with his peers was amenable to say the least.

Often, if asked Harry would help his fellow first years with their homework. More often than not, second years approached him too. Harry had a direct way of looking at things and his peers found his explanations to be just as helpful as an upper years.

Gradually his peers learned that Harry was not as mean as they initially believed, he just was not as expressive. So when they continuously asked him for help, whether they genuinely needed or just wanted an excuse to approach him and Harry responded politely and patiently every time. Well, they felt that they could approach him for anything.

Even personal conflict. However, that was because Harry was not shy in silencing others who were being unnecessarily rude. Not only to him, but on the behalf of others as well if he caught them. Now, shier and or weaker students felt that they could go to Harry if they were being bullied or belittled. It was not as if Harry did not give results either. Harry personally believed that most conflict could be resolved with conversation. Thus he often attempted to encourage conversations among all involved in cases of conflict that were brought to his attention in order to amend the situation and insure that it does not transpire again. Harry did not believe that he was tougher and could handle any situations, so if a conflict was too much for him to handle, he did not hesitate to get an upper year involved or even a professor.

Oddly enough his peer's behavior placed him into a place of leadership that did not go unnoticed by upper years who more often than not would requested that first through third years go to Harry with issues so that he could bring it up to upper years on their behalf. The role was an odd one and it was even odder his peers accepted it easily enough and were not jealous or resentful of his status among them.

No, there were other reasons that his first year peers were jealous of him. Reasons that Harry could not control.

Initially, their behavior had baffled Harry, most other times his housemates were friendly with him. However; when the upper years were being friendly with him, he could see the slight sneers of his year mates directed at him before they would huddle together and whisper quietly to one another while snidely watching Harry and whichever upper year was giving him attention at the time. Now he knew that it was not he who they were upset with. His year mates merely did not approve of the special treatment the upper years treated Harry with beyond the duty they assigned to him as 'Peer
Representative. No doubt it made his peers feel inadequate. The other first years were never outright open with their jealousy, unless; it was one of the Prefect elect, Joseph Kama who chose to dote on Harry.

Joseph Kama was a Ravenclaw who was rather popular with the general population of Hogwarts.

Harry thought that he could be popular based on his looks alone.

Joseph had dark and unblemished skin. His hair was jet black, short and kinky yet, one could tell that it was extremely soft as it often bounced despite the measured steps the older boy walked with. The upper year also had soft round and inviting eyes, and if Kama allowed one close enough; they could also see the few lone moles that spread across his face and neck.

The older boy also seemed quiet and reserved while in groups. This did not weaken the quiet authority that he held over most of his peers. Though with a few select fellow upper years and Harry Joseph could be quite talkative. Joseph was quite intelligent too, he was the top student among the third students last year, and he would no doubt be at the top once again this year.

Joseph openly had a soft spot for Harry but that soft spot did not extend to his brother Nathan and that did bother him. Harry knew that he could not force anyone to like and or tolerate others. That was why Harry chose not comment on Joseph's indifferent and dismissive attitude in regard to his brother since the upper year was never rude or disrespectful about Nathan.

That was most of what Harry knew of Joseph thus far—personally that is.

Sometime toward the end of September, Joseph had begun to help Harry with his extra curricular studies or he even shared with Harry the things he was learning as a fourth year.

If he wasn't assisting Harry with his studies, Joseph liked to discuss heir responsibilities. The discussions were never anything too serious, but Joseph did strongly encourage Harry to behave like a heir more openly, especially with other heirs of important families. Joseph was very adamant about it to the point that he challenged Harry to do his absolute best (but not pushing too far against his limits) and reach out to his peers instead of always waiting for them to approach him.

Joseph was someone that Harry held in high regard and so he really did try to follow the older boy's advice but doing so forced him to see his social skills were severely lacking, even with all of his heir training.

Outsiders could easily see that Harry was not like other children his age. He shied away from attention where other children shined, he was extremely articulate was regularly told to stop speaking so boring and pompously by his peers who often could not understand the difficult words Harry chose to use. Harry also found it difficult to "play" and "relax" due to his visions and upbringing.

On the rare occasion, Harry found himself feeling inadequate and wishing he could be like other children his age. He had never felt like this growing up, but he had also never been exposed to other children for as long as he had in Hogwarts. When Joseph caught wind of Harry's feelings, he demanded that Harry ignore such thoughts and never change his person. Instead the older boy gave it his best effort to consistently help Harry navigate mundane and childish conversations and even encouraged Harry on multiple occasions to “play” with his peers.

At first Harry scrunched his nose up at this, but after a bit of persistent encouragement, he gave in to Josephs whims since he did not wish to disappoint the older boy.
when he did, his relationships with his peers became more informal. Harry found that he actually liked that quite a lot. It also helped him cope with being unable to see Nathan every single day.

Some other upper years saw how well Harry had taken to Joseph and took it upon themselves to mimic Joseph's behavior and take Harry under their metaphorical wings. They tried but Harry had found them much too pushy. He felt overwhelmed and eventually he began to snub them for their attempts. Harry was not an idiot, he knew that those students only wanted to get near him in order to get closer to his brother. They made it obvious by mentioning Nathan whenever they could when Harry was kind and allowed them close.

Joseph on the other hand made it a point to not even mention Nathan. Not even on accident unless Harry mentioned him and even then Joseph actually had to feign his interest.

Joseph's disinterest in his brother was not the reason that Harry liked him so. Harry was extremely appreciative that Joseph did not chase him about like other upper years.

While Joseph made himself a readily available resource for Harry he did not always offer assistance until Harry truly asked. Harry nearly always took the bait greedily and slowly but surely Joseph continued to worm his way into Harry’s daily life without even trying.

By proxy, it also involved the upper year in the lives of Terry and Hermione’s who looked up to the upper year immensely for how cool he was and how kind he could be to under classmen. While Harry did idolize Joseph as they often did, he could easily admit that he respected the older boy for his ambition.

It was because of that respect that Harry found himself assuring Joseph when he politely asked Harry to write him during the winter holidays a month and a half later into their acquaintanceship.

Harry found that he truly liked the relationships that he was developing between he and his peers.

Though, he supposed he could say the same thing in regards to his budding relationship with some of Hogwarts' staff members.

Staff members like his Head of House, Professor Flitwick who had monthly meetings with all of his first, fifth, and final year students. So far in the year Harry has only met with the man twice.

From their meetings Harry learned that the small professor was quite the talker. The man did not speak over Harry as Hermione, Sirius and his father tended to but nor did he prod Harry to talk more than he wanted or needed, unlike professor Snape and Nathan. The professor reminded him of Remus because of his patience.

Another staff member that Harry had grown closer to during the semester had been Professor Snape, and that particular development was the most surprising in Harry's opinion. Though it made sense that their relationship would develop into something more than professor Snape reluctantly tolerating him. It would have been impossible for it not to, since the two saw each other, during, after and even outside of classes more than three times a week.

More often than not they discussed the extra material that Professor Snape had given him, but more often than not their conversations grew less professional and more relaxed.

If Harry could read mind then he would know that Snape was even more surprised that he actually found himself enjoying conversations with one of Potter Senior's spawn.

Or a student for that matter but despite Harry's status as a... prepubescent none-dunderhead, the boy was actually pleasant to converse with due to his maturity and dry wit.
When the two weren’t discussing the curriculum or potions (which both enjoyed leisurely); Snape took it upon himself and asked mundane questions. Questions that went beyond Harry's academics, sometimes he just asked questions in curiosity to Harry's general week and how it was going. Snape even asked about his visions if he felt so inclined.

The questions in regard to Harry's visions were never self serving questions that most would ask a seer. No, Snape did not ask of his own fortune but he did often inquire after the nightmares created from them. Oddly enough, the cold and cynical professor found himself wanting to give Harry--a Potter--the space to talk about his most ghastly visions or visions that he did not quite understand.

These conversations were held in the professor's office outside of class hours, and often they ended with Snape intimidatingly helping (more like forcing) Harry to meditate after drinking a cup of a tea the boy said to be his favorite; mint with honey.

As their meetings progressed and became longer and more relaxed, there was always a mug of mint tea with honey awaiting the boy on the table beside the chair he usually chose to seat himself in. The chair was placed across from Snape's own in anticipation for their conversations. Snape dared to accept that he was actually beginning to enjoy the Potter heir's company. It was not often that Snape found one so willing to be in his presence since he was known for being an abrasive and curt man and where others coward away; the Potter child was drawn to him and Snape found the boy all the more odd for it.

Harry on the other hand just allowed himself to enjoy his time with the grouchy professor and did not read into it too much when his favorite tea awaited him along with "his" chair when the time came for their impromptu meetings. Harry realized that he would most certainly miss those conversations the most during Winter break as the train pulled into the station. Really, he will miss everything about Hogwarts and its occupants very much during the holidays at home.

Nathan practically ran from their cart in order to say farewell to the many classmates he had grown close to. Harry was in no such rush, so he moved at a leisurely pace behind Terry and Hermione and continued to listen in on the conversation between the two that he had not been verbally participating in.

When Hermione noticed her Parent's presence however, she was anxious to reunite with them. She practically tackled both Terry and Harry into a fierce hug with tears in her eyes before she said goodbye and left to be with her parents. Terry too, left to be with his family once he saw them but not before he took Harry into a one armed hug demanding that he not forget to write.

Harry continued to be approached by various students of his house and even students of other houses.

Oblivious to the wide eyed surprised stares from his parents, Harry exchanged polite nods of acknowledgement in expression of goodbyes at his fellow students. Eventually Joseph, followed by Hufflepuff Cedric Diggory, Slytherins Adrian Pucey and Peragrine Burke approached him directly.

“You said you’d write,” Joseph reminded him casually. With firm hands he fixed harry’s collar that had become disheveled after Hermione’s rather physical goodbye.

Harry thanked him and said, “I will, I am not as aloof and forgetful as many think me to be, Kama.”

Joseph smiled at him crookedly, “I call you, Harry, it’s only right that you call me Joseph, don’t you think?”
Harry looked away, he felt almost shy, but nodded in agreement nonetheless. The smile Joseph gave this time was fond, “good. Now, thanks to my friend Burke here,” ‘Burke’ winked and blew a kiss at Harry from his place behind Joseph.

"I have heard that you are going to the Malfoy's Yule ball. Perhaps I shall see you there. I'll be sure to say hello if I do." With that Joseph departed but not before he gave a respectful nod toward the rest of Harry’s family who were openly gawking at them. Harry did not miss the kind wave directed at him and only him from Diggory as the other boy followed after his peers.

Since Harry was done with farewells he stepped closer to his parents so that other students would not attempt to speak with him. Nathan chattered on with their mother and Harry was content to listen until a firm hand was placed on his shoulder demanding his attention. Why did so many feel the need to touch him?

When Harry looked up he peered into the eyes of his father and the man quirked an eyebrow and discreetly gestured toward the retreating backs of Joseph and co.

“You’re popular.” He stated. Harry grimaced slightly, "they think me more special than I actually am.” Harry stated factually.

Now it was James’ turn to grimace as unbeknownst to Harry; at that moment James felt very ashamed fore he knew that it was his fault that Harry thought so lowly of himself. He did not speak on such thoughts. Instead he chose to silently guide Harry to his brother and mother so they may return home.

When they reached the Potter manor, Harry immediately retreated to the sanctuary of his rooms after he greeted Remus, Sirius, Mousy and the other few house elves located who lived in the estate.

Harry would have skipped dinner had his presence not be sternly demanded by his parents, later in the evening.

The conversation was dominated by his father, Sirius and Nathan, of course and Harry had been content to listen. Remus did not approve of the attention Harry was not receiving and loudly asked if he had anything to say. After he thanked Remus, Harry brought up their invitation to the Malfoy Yule ball.

“Absolutely not! No! We are not going!” Sirius all but yelled, “why would we go to some Death Eater Christmas gathering!?"

At the mention of Death Eaters their mother hissed Sirius’ name. She must have kicked him too as the man hissed in pain and hunched over his plate, most likely clutching his knee under the table.

“What’s a Death Eater?” Nathan asked innocently. He had heard the phrase in passing at school, but it was always said with such contempt and venom that he had always been too shy to ask what it meant.

“A follower of he-who-must-not-be-named, Nathaniel.” Harry informed before he took a bite of his pasta. His father grimaced but there was no point in lying to Nathan now that he had heard the name from a member of his own family. “Personally, I am interested in going as the Potter heir but also because my classmates Ernest Macmillan and Susan Bones will be there. Susan has promised to introduce me to her aunt, Madam Bones, the current head of the Department of Magical Law Enforcement.” Harry said casually.
Lily perked up at this, “Susan and Ernest? Are these more friends of yours?” she asked. Lily was desperate to learn anything that the boy was willing to share. Ever since she had seen him be so sociable with his classmates at the station, she wanted to know so much more about those Harry was willing to associate himself with. Especially when he was so closed off and abrasive towards her most days.

“No, they’re classmates, associates if you will.” Harry said bluntly. His mother seemed deeply disappointed by his answer and frowned deeply.

Nathan kicked Harry under the table playfully and urged him to tell them about Terry and Hermione. “He referred to them as his ‘friiieeends’ the other day! Hermione cried and hugged him! You should have seen his face. He was mortified” Nathan singsonged teasingly.

This time it was Remus who perked up, “ah, Hermione is the muggleborn you’ve taken under your wing, isn’t she? You’ve mentioned her in your letters.”

Harry nodded, “she is indeed, I would have invited her to be my guest at the ball but I do not believe it would be a good environment for her. While the event is not limited to purebloods, no muggleborns from backgrounds deemed unimportant were invited—or so I was told by Draco Malfoy. So I would not like to try my luck and put her in a stressful environment that would not appreciate her as I or Terry do.”

Sirius took this moment to speak once again, “see!? Why would we go somewhere where muggleborns aren’t invited!? They’re just as magical as the rest of us!” Sirius directed his words at Harry so it was Harry who responded.

“I do not disagree with you, however; I am not muggleborn and muggleborns like mother have been invited. Why should I not go because a select few were not invited themselves? Should I have not gone to Hogwarts because some muggleborn--who perhaps lacked, money or magical talent was not invited? I think it is an excellent learning opportunity, I would like to go. We can go as a family because we all been invited.”

Sirius grumbled childishly and angrily threw his napkin onto his plate before he stood and exited, “I’ll pass,” he growled as he left. Remus looked at Harry apologetically before he excused himself and followed after the other man.

Harry frowned. He felt obligated to ensure Sirius’ presence as he had swore to Mrs. Malfoy that he would do so.

Their had been a personalized note from Mrs. Malfoy within Harry's invitation to the ball. In the missive she requested that Harry write her so that she may impose a favor upon him.

Curious, Harry did so and Mrs. Malfoy wasted no time in asking Harry to speak with Sirius on her behalf. Harry thought that once he had agreed he would hear no more from the woman but she had written back to him, thanked him for his cooperation and then proceeded to inquire after his health and schooling.

After that the two had began exchanging letters as if they were old friends. Mrs. Malfoy was respectful and graceful in her approach toward Harry. Not once had she belittled him or made him feel childish but at the same time she did not treat Harry like an adult either.

Mrs. Malfoy was appropriately maternal but impersonal in her letters and it was quite refreshing. It was likely due to their developing acquaintanceship that Harry felt bad that he has been unable to relay the various messages to Sirius from Mrs. Malfoy. This was not for lack of Harry trying, of
course. Whenever Harry had tried to bring the woman up Sirius immediately tensed and would change the topic abruptly. Harry knew when to take the hint that Sirius did not wish to hear it and he respectfully left the man alone.

Harry would keep trying for Mrs. Malfoy sake, and he thought the ball would be the perfect opportunity for the two to reconnect. He turned toward his father who had been quiet for most of the evening, "what are your thoughts on the matter, father?"

“I personally am not one for fancy get-togethers. Especially those of the more traditional variety.” his father paused and grimaced, “I know to be weary of something hosted by the Malfoy’s. I’ve always hated them growing up, due to how I was raised and their opposing beliefs.

If the attendance will be as diverse as you say, there may be more benefits to attending than not. It's not as if we would be attending as 'friends--" his father spat out the word in distaste, "--of the Malfoys. We would be attending as the Potter family and it would be a positive thing to venture out in public more often." ‘Now that we are no longer in a self imposed exile,’ James thought to himself bitterly. He looked over at his wife who mirrored his self depreciating expression.

"I think it could be a great learning experience and an even better chance to make connections with more witches and wizards in our community,” she said in support.

"I couldn't have said it better myself, Lils." James said. He leaned over and kissed his wife's cheek.

Nathan gagged and then groaned obnoxiously. He dreaded the mere thought of socializing with haughty traditionalists. He looked toward his brother for support but groaned once more when saw the excited twinkle in Harry's eyes.

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The Potters spent the first week of Winter break spending time with one another. Harry did his best get as much free time to himself as possible but his parents did their best to annoy him during the rare occasions he was able to find peace alone.

The time for the ball could not have arrived sooner for Harry. He and his family--yes, this included both Sirius and Remus--arrived at Malfoy manor by floo.

They were greeted by a human butler who guided them into the elaborate Malfoy manor without preamble. Once they reached the ballroom, they were immediately greeted by Mrs. Malfoy who stood near the entrance of the ballroom.

“Good evening Lord Potter. I say this on behalf of the Malfoy family; we are thankful that you could make it,” she said in greeting and presented her hand to James.

Stiffly he grabbed it and kissed the air above it, "we thank you for having us, my lady."

With a pleased and airy smile, Mrs. Malfoy greeted Lily with an elegant curtsy which was mimicked back at her with ease.

"Please. This way," Mrs. Malfoy said. She lead them toward the ballroom that was decorated with albino plants, white curtains, white carpet and even white furniture. If not for the colorful attire of many other party goers than each Potter would have been blinded by the see of white.

“I do so hope the decor is to your liking. It was rather fun to put together.’ Mrs. Malfoy said humbly at the gawking faces of Sirius and Nathan, “do mingle and of course there is plenty of food and drink to go around.”
That was all the older men of the Potter family needed to hear. Sirius practically dragged Remus to the beverage table and when James dutifully remained, Lily nudged him toward the direction in which his best friends had gone and with a flippant wave of her hand, she gave him silent permission that he could go with them which James took gratefully.

Nathan unconsciously scooted closer to his mother, grateful that she would not be leaving their side. Lily wished to greet those she knew. She was just about to inform her two boys to stay by her side when she saw Narcissa Malfoy at her eldest side just a few feet away.

Harry was rather occupied with scanning the room and appreciating its decor when a gentle hand landed on his shoulder.

"Yes, missus?" Harry said when he saw the face of Mrs. Malfoy above him. He blushed a bit when nervousness crept from his tone. Which was certainly a rather difficult feat when in the presence of Narcissa Malfoy.

In Harry's opinion Mrs. Malfoy radiated what a powerful and confident woman could be and he felt slightly ashamed that he felt his own mother could never radiate such energy.

With careful and well manicured hands, Mrs. Malfoy took Harry's hands into her own and bent over slightly so that they are eye to eye. kissed his hands and spoke to him in soft tones, “thank you for convincing Sirius to come, Harry. I know that my messages were not enough and though he is ignoring me, it is nice to see him alive and well.”

Harry blushed and closed his eyes briefly. If he concentrated hard enough, he could hear the voice of Mrs. Malfoy weeping.

If he concentrated harder, he could see her clutching the hem of her gown that was red with blood and sobbing, “my baby, my baby, my baby.” Over and over.

Harry opened his eyes and forced himself to smile at Mrs. Malfoy kindly and told her to think nothing of him convincing Sirius. Even though it had taken days of incessant pestering. Harry had even agreed to commit a prank or two but that was of no matter. However, he did know that as a Slytherin, she could do no such thing as see it as a simple favor.

Voluntarily, Harry helped her once more when she saw her eyes search for Sirius who had runaway, "if you ask Sirius to speak with you while Remus is at his side, he is likely to be civil."

Mrs. Malfoy smiled mischievously, "If you keep doing me favors, I will be unable to pay you back young man," she said jokingly with a wave of her finger. She excused herself and left them, most likely in search of Sirius.

Harry looked toward his mother and brother, the two looked quite uncomfortable so Harry decided to not leave their sides until the two relaxed. They traveled along the walls of the ballroom and greeted those who acknowledged them. Luckily, they found someone each of them knew quickly.

Nathan spotted Neville Longbottom from across the room with hawk like precision.

The pudgy boy stood tensely beside the woman both Harry and Nathan knew to be his grandmother along with a tall, unfamiliar and burly man who looked strikingly like Neville himself.

Neville spotted them too and waved them over with a desperate look on his face.

“Hi, Nathan, hi Harry, good to see you. You remember my grandmother, right?” Neville said
quietly once they reached his side. With a look of uncertainty, Neville gestured toward the grandmother in question who he refused to make eye contact with.

Nathan nodded enthusiastically and bowed sloppily, seemingly overjoyed that there were people he knew here, “of course! Long time no see, Mrs. Longbottom!”

Neville smiled but the smile was quickly replaced with a grimace when he introduced his Uncle, Carl Longbottom. Nathan was a lot shier in his introduction of the current Longbottom Lord but bother Harry and Nathan politely greeted the large man. Carl dipped his head in a shallow nod of acknowledgment and excused himself after greeting their mother with an air kiss above her hand.

“My, you boys have grown quite a bit, haven’t you.” Mrs. Longbottom commented tersely while she looked at the back of her son in distaste as he retreated. She turned her attention onto their mother, “how goes the boy’s home education? The last I heard they were focusing on charms.”

Lily smiled brightly, “they have completed their home courses and now self study in addition to their Hogwarts education. They still receive etiquette lessons and Harry has an abundance of heir duties and lessons that I still don’t understand. I think he’s much too young for them but James insists.”

Mrs. Longbottom nodded but did not physically express any further emotion, “you may not understand the importance due to your muggle upbringing but it is a relief that your husband does and that you are not hindering Harry because of it. The boy seems to be a fine heir, if only Neville was as enthusiastic as he about his duties.”

Neville grimaced and Nathan and Harry grimaced along with him. Harry discreetly watched his mother and when her hair began to slightly frizzle—as it so often did when she was angry, Harry hoped silently that she would just remain quiet. Mrs. Longbottom did not seem to notice their mother's growing agitation or perhaps she just did not care.

“Well, Come, Lilian, I will introduce you to the other respectable women present. Your time in seclusion has done nothing for your social standing and it is time to mend that. Especially when the heir of your family has so much potential. Neville, mingle with the young Potters. Come along, Lilian.” Mrs. Longbottom demanded. She did not wait for a response and elegantly she walked away fully expecting their mother to follow.

Harry could tell that his mother was planning to stubbornly refuse to follow Mrs. Longbottom's lead, he gently nudged her forward and when she looked at him in betrayal Harry discreetly pointed to Mrs. Longbottom and playfully rolled his eyes and shrugged in a 'what can ya do?' manner. Harry didn’t really understand why this soothed his mother, but it often did when Nathan did it when their father was being abrasive toward her, so Harry decided to at least try. His efforts worked and his mother giggled at his actions. She then told the three of them to have fun before she began to slowly follow the older and pushy woman.

For a few minutes the three caught up with one another. Nathan and Neville joked about the homework they were avoiding much to Harry's chagrin. When Nathan and Neville began to discuss Quidditch, Harry politely excused himself and left the two to entertain one another.

Unlike the rest of his family, Harry was fine on his own and he wanted to find Ernest or Susan. He found Earnest first. The other boy was in a corner near the desert table and he looked to be in the middle of what looked to be a heated debate with Slytherin students; Theodore Nott, Blaise Zabini and Draco Malfoy.

Draco spotted Harry before he could approach the group and waved him over, “Potter, nice of you
Harry quirked a brow in amusement. If his father heard this conversation he’d have an aneurysm and possibly even force Harry to leave. Harry however was not his father and decided to indulge them, “I believe that the Cruciatius is the only one of the two classified as a curse and thereby wins by default.”

Draco rolled his eyes, “of course, you’d agree with the Hufflepuff, Potter and of course, you’d give such a Ravenclaw answer too.”

Ernest looked at the white haired boy smug, “right is right Draco.”

“Whatever,” Draco muttered, “where are your manners, Macmillan? Potter’s your friend is he not? Do not worry, I will introduce him on your behalf.”

Ernest looked put out but before he could speak, Draco gently nudged Harry along as he introduced him to his fellow Slytherins.

“Potter, that there is Theodore Nott, heir to the most ancient and noble house of Nott. The fellow next to him is Blaise Zabini. The Zabini name is a respected name in its own right for its pureblood traits in Italy. Friends, this is Harry Potter, heir to the most ancient and noble house of Potter.” Harry did not miss how Draco purposefully neglected to mention his other title; “the-boy-who-lived’s brother.” It made him feel more included and confident as if he was his own person in his own right and not an extension of his brother. Harry acknowledged the other boy’s with a nod of his own when the two briefly nodded toward him.

“So, Potter. It’s odd to see you lot at a traditional event such as this; I thought you and your family were blood-traitors.” Theodore said casually. Ernest began to sputter before he was hushed by a glare from Draco who watched Theodore and Harry’s interaction with intrigue. Harry has heard the term quite a few times now. Specifically when haughtier older pureblood students referred to the Weasley’s and even Sirius on occasion.

“Hm. I suppose we are traitors in the sense that we do not deem ourselves above others because of our blood alone but otherwise we are rather traditional, I am being groomed as the Potter heir, after all.” Harry said carefully, these were words his father had taught him to say in situations like this. He did not elaborate further because he was unsure that he actually could.

Theodore looked thoughtful in regards to his answer and accepted them with a thoughtful hum.

Blaise spoke next, he gleefully asked Harry what it was like being the brother of the boy-who-lived.

“It is like being the brother to any other, I suppose” Harry stated, once again he refused to elaborate further.

Blaise rolled his eyes, “well you’re dull.” He stated with a pout.

“Hey! Your questions are dull!” Earnest said in Harry’s defense. Harry noted that Earnest's defense made him feel good.

Theodore and Draco laughed at Blaise's expense and Harry did not understand how but he noticed that such behavior eased the tension from the group. He did not join in on their laughter because he did not find anything funny at that moment. Once they got all of their laughter out of the way, they all moved on to much friendlier topics such as; Quidditch, classes, and even girls. Harry noted how
the three of them blushed when discussing the girls at Hogwarts and the girls present at the ball.

As if summoned, a group of girl’s pass them by. Harry recognized one of the girls as Pansy Parkinson and another as Daphne Greengrass. Both members of Slytherin house. The girls looked at them briefly before they looked away and giggled among one another. They left as quickly as they came. Harry thought the behavior extremely odd.

The other boys must have thought it strange too because they made faces of disgust once the girls were far enough away. All except Theodore, who looked extremely pale, “I’m to be married to Parkinson.” he whispered as if he were being sent to the gallows.

“Oh? She is quite open in her affections to, Malfoy.” Harry stated curiously as he thought of how Parkinson was often found with the Malfoy heir in school and even once or twice, Harry heard other students gossiping of a marriage contract between Draco and Pansy.

Harry did not take marriage seriously because he did not understand just how serious it was. In Harry’s opinion, if marriage could be so easily done by others his own age then it could not be that big of a deal.

“Pah! As if my father would marry me off to her. Her family has nothing to offer to the Malfoy line.” Draco stated meanly, toward the end his voice became more silky and refined, Harry was very certain that he was repeating the words of someone much older than he.

Harry frowned, why would Draco say such a mean thing--even if he were merely repeating someone else and what did Draco even mean by that? Instead of asking these things aloud, Harry asked, “she is a mean-spirited girl but she is of a pureblood family. I’m sure by the time you two are older you will get on well.” Harry said to Theodore in support.

Theodore groaned and without thought, he playfully nudged Harry, “you sound like my dad, mate. Lighten up!”

Harry almost smiled at the playful atmosphere that surrounded them. He’s only acted this way with Nathan and Terry. It felt good to find other boys his age who would not take him so seriously or call him creepy or deem him too cold and mysterious.

Just then Draco’s father approached them, his expression very stern. He spoke with authority as he spoke to them, “boys. You have been in this corner long enough. Disperse and mingle.”

The other boys immediately dispersed and went separate ways to different areas in the room. Harry began to move from the corner as well. He planned to follow Earnest who had went over to where Susan Bones and her aunt stood.

However, he was stopped by the elder Malfoy's firm hand on his shoulder.

The moment the man’s hand came into brief contact with the skin of Harry’s neck, Harry began to see a hazy vision of the man behind him performing the cruciatus curse on a young woman in muggle clothing. Beside the woman lay the body of an older man. Harry could not tell whether or not if the man was dead and he really did not want to know. The vision continued to plague him and distantly, he could hear the woman’s screams as she begged for Malfoy to please just kill her. Harry wanted to vomit and he wanted this man to stop touching him, immediately.

Harry was broken out of the memory his mind conjured by the voice of the man who canted ‘crucio’ with boredom coloring his voice while a young woman who Harry still could not identify wailed and cried, “Mr. Potter, how are you this evening?” Malfoy inquired politely as he guided
Harry through the ballroom.

“I am well. Mr. Malfoy, the festivities are wonderful. The decorations are my favorite.” Harry stated in a near whisper as he struggled to cope with what he had seen.

Malfoy did not seem to notice Harry's turmoil and he continued to speak politely, “I will be sure to mention that to Narcissa, she personally chose the decor after all.”

Suddenly, Harry was placed in front of the blonde man with gentle hands on his shoulders. Once Harry looked up he saw that he stood before a group of men that included; professor Snape and two other men whom Harry did not know.

“Gentleman, this is Harrison Charles Potter, heir to the most ancient and noble house of Potter. He is a brilliant young man with a knack for potions or so I am told by Severus. Mr. Potter, this is Mikhil Greengrass, and Alekzander Avery. Both are lord’s of their respective houses and of course, you know potions master, Severus Snape.”

Harry said hello but honestly he felt very out of sorts with this situation. It wasn't everyday that he was introduced to so many people.

“It really is a pleasure Mr. Potter. Severus here was explaining that you are the top student in his class.” Avery said.

That was news to Harry as he was yet to know of his grades so far. The only reason that he knew he was doing well was due to the confidence he had in his studies and also how competitively Hermione treated him at times.

“Professor Snape has graciously challenged me. There have been many times that I have disappointed him.” Harry said politely.

Malfoy chuckled, “well, that is only to be expected. As long as you correct yourself, I am sure he will have little room to complain.”

“Excuse me, Mr. Malfoy, professor Snape never complains. He informs me of where I can improve and expects no less from me. I am grateful to him.” Harry amended quickly.

“Clever and polite. How nice for a Potter.” Greengrass complimented, as he looked toward his colleagues and not at Harry. They then began to ask Harry questions that made him feel as if he were undergoing some kind of interrogation. Questions such as; inquiries as to whether or not Harry was learning Latin as most pureblood children did; he was. Or what his favorite subject in school was, if he had a favorite painter or book and even his plans for the future.

Harry answered their questions as honestly as he could but he did not understand the deep interest these adults had in his person. He was relieved when professor Snape changed the subject to his potion studies, which they all were able to join in easily but unlike professor Snape, the other three adults were not interested in the subject matter. They were interested that Harry comprehended it so well. After a long while of testing Harry’s knowledge, an abrupt change in the music occurred and it became slightly louder.

Harry was extremely surprised when Greengrass grasped him by the shoulders and gently but forcibly turned Harry so that he was facing the room at large. The man stood behind Harry and whispered into his ear, “do you see the short beautiful brunette across the room.”

Harry looked toward where he was directed to do so, and saw a young girl that looked like a much prettier and feminine version of the man behind him and nodded.
Greengrass chuckled, “that is my youngest daughter, Astoria Greengrass. She is only nine years old so the other boy’s deem her too young to dance with. However, you’re a mature young man, aren’t you? I implore you to offer her a dance and get to know her.” Greengrass gently pushed Harry forward and Harry was glad for his chance to escape the overbearing men. Professor Snape did not look like he was enjoying himself either but Harry heard a puff of air—which was a laugh coming from professor Snape--leave the man’s lips when Harry was told to go and dance with Greengrass’ daughter.

As Harry made his way to the center of the floor, he noticed that his brother and Neville were nowhere to be seen but the other children present were finding partners at the persistence of their pushy parents as well. Harry calmly approached Astoria and introduced himself before he politely asked her for a dance. The young girl seemed appropriately shy but took his hand nonetheless. Due to dance lessons Harry was forced to participate in by his tutors; Harry was able to lead the younger Greengrass with ease.

Astoria was obviously familiar with dance and she stepped in tune with him as elegantly as a developing nine year old could manage. He made sure to compliment her on her dancing as he had been taught to by his own tutors. Harry found that his compliment was genuine; truly the girl danced quite well and she had yet to step unto Harry’s toes. He was utterly confused when her face became even redder than it already was but he dismissed it as she gave him a compliment of her own; “you are an excellent dancer yourself, Potter heir.”

“You are very kind, miss.” Harry said in thanks.

In the middle of their dance, Astoria began to look around shyly, and bit her lip. Something Harry’s mother often did when she wanted to ask him something but was too anxious for his reply. “I am not a mind reader, Ms. Greengrass. Ask what it is that you wish to ask.” Harry was unable to keep his bluntness out of his tone but the girl should really just speak her mind. Perhaps, he was far too used to Hermione’s pushy personality.

Astoria looked around shyly once more before she leaned in, choosing to whisper her question into Harry’s ear. “I’ve never danced at a ball before. I know this is an odd request but could you spin me around like a princess? I’ve been practicing!”

Harry looked at her incredulously and Astoria looked away, embarrassment coloring her cheeks. Harry felt apprehensive for all of two seconds before he received a vivid vision of himself spinning the girl, and she in turn laughed in open delight. It was not often that Harry received such kind and gentle visions and in the rare moments that he did, he made haste in ensuring that they come true. “Be prepared, I will spin you now.” Harry said in warning as he separated them slightly.

And Harry did, he helped the girl twirl in an elegant circle and the girl laughed with more delight than his vision had foreseen, and only slightly did she lose her balance toward the end but Harry caught her easily. She was a small little thing. Coincidentally the song ended just then and the two began to separate. Harry was prepared to bow as he had been taught to but he was caught completely off guard when adults nearby began to clap for them. Harry did not like the attention at all, which was most likely evident on his face as he could not help but to scowl slightly. He also did not know how to respond but luckily he did not need to. Astoria seemed to love the attention and she curtsied politely and Harry focused on helping her stay balanced while she did so which seemed to only cause the adults to coo and clap even more.

Harry wanted nothing more than to find a corner where he could be alone. Frankly he was done socializing and wanted to leave. Astoria seemed to be a perceptive girl and knew--possibly from her own etiquette lessons--that Harry could not simply leave her alone, she pointed to a girl slightly
older than her, “that is my sister, Daphne Greengrass, could you please walk me to her?” The younger Greengrass requested quietly as if she were trying to not startle Harry. Harry did not respond verbally but he did offer her his arm. Hopefully, she would take no offense to his more quiet and abrasive behavior, but Harry could only wear his social pureblood mask for so long and he was just so overwhelmed with all the interaction.

As they approached the elder Greengrass, Harry grimace as he noticed that she was with several other Slytherin girls. They all stood in close proximity and seemed to be whispering among one another and as he and the younger Greengrass approached they all briefly pointed toward them and giggled. Harry felt the younger Greengrass tense, she was most likely assumed that they were laughing at her Harry guessed.

Harry politely extended the arm that the younger Greengrass was latched on to to the elder Greengrass girl. Immediate relief spread throughout Harry's body and he felt less claustrophobic to have his space returned to him when Daphne Greengrass gently took her sister by the hand and out of his hold. He nodded to the group of girls who openly stared at him in interest.

"Goodnight, miss. Thank you for the dance.” Harry said to Astoria Greengrass, it was not said kindly but it was also not said meanly. The girl chose to take it kindly since Harry had been so kind to her during their dance. She blushed and smiled kindly in return before Harry abruptly turned away and exited the ballroom altogether.

Harry exited hastily and found a terrance with an open roof to hide away in. Harry was not surprised to find Remus already there sitting at a lone table all by himself.

Remus did not look up from his glass when Harry had entered. Instead, he subtlety sniffed at the air and turned only after he caught Harry’s scent. “Hey, pup, finally exhausted your social battery, huh? Come, join me.” Remus said through a smile.

Harry approached him languidly, “I guess I am… socially fatigued. How did you know?” Harry asked as he took a seat across from the man.

Remus laughed, “because I know you, pup.” He took a sip of his drink and Harry stared at liquid intently as he did so. Harry knew by the smell that it was some kind of fermented fruit because of his potions studies.

“Want a sip?” Remus asked playfully. He snorted when Harry's face contorted in distaste at his question. Despite that, Harry did nod in affirmation. He has always found himself curious as to why the adults in his life drank odd drinks that made them act funny.

Remus handed over his glass with an amused smile on his face. Harry sniffed it and was surprised that it smelled rather nice. The smell was akin to one of his mother’s subtle perfumes which did not make him enthusiastic to partake in the drink but still he braved himself and took a small sip.

“Oh.” Harry said in surprise as he processed the new flavor. It was unlike anything he had ever drunk. It was sweet going in, however; it burned going down. He thanked Remus and handed the glass back over to the man who was laughing quietly at his reaction.

“Good, huh? It’s a white wine, infused with cherry blossoms from Japan. Very fancy. Do you know what wine is?” Harry shook his head in the negative. Harry only knew of the more acidic alcohols, and even some beers as some forms of yeast used in potions could change the potions effects but otherwise he did not know of many other forms alcohol that people drank just because they could.
Remus smiled at him fondly and kindly educated Harry on wines. He spoke of how wine was made, places famous for their wines and he even discussed how the Malfoy’s were providing their finest wines from France in order to further show off their wealth. Harry then asked about Cherry Blossoms, and Japan and while Remus did not know much, he knew more than Harry did and was willing to share that knowledge.

Harry listened intently while Remus spoke and only spoke up in order to ask a question or to express his thoughts or confusion which Remus dispelled as best as he could.

It was moments like this that Harry realized that he could speak with Remus for hours. Remus never demanded that Harry speak, nor did he try to force Harry to speak more. Remus was quite fine with speaking enough for the two of them.

“Thank you, Remus, you’ve taught me quite a lot.” Harry said when Remus’ words became more slurred.

“Any time, pup. Think you can face the masses once more?” Remus said and fixed his hair which Harry appreciated since Mousy had worked very hard to style his hair for the evening. It was not as wild as his father’s or his brother’s and it was nice to style it so that he would look more mature and sophisticated.

In response to Remus’ question, Harry grimaced, he honestly felt quite overwhelmed by the part. He grew irritated just thinking about going back inside it, not to mention; the repetitive ballroom music agitated him IMMENSELY. It reminded him of times when Nathan would play his records very loudly and the boy’s music taste was not very big and he often listened to the same song for hours on end until he grew tired of it. The notes from the songs grated on Harry’s last nerve and would make him unreasonably agitated. Nathan had only stopped playing the records so loudly upon noticing that they seemed to upset Harry terribly.

“Perhaps, if you were to come with me…” Harry said stiffly through slightly gritted teeth at the mere thought of returning to the ballroom.

Remus smiled tiredly, “I think I am more cowardly out of the two of us. I was only invited because Sirius insisted as he would not have come otherwise but I’m not exactly welcomed here due to my lack of social standing and perhaps even what I am.”

Harry frowned at that. Yes, Remus was a werewolf and it was the worst kept secret of their family. Despite that, not many people outside of their close circle knew of his condition. As for his social standing, he was a close friend of their family, surely, those attempting to get in their good graces would not openly insult, Remus. "Ah, however, Remus heard better than most humans. " Harry thought to himself. Remus has probably heard every crude insult against his person since the moment he entered.

“We could go to the gardens. I am sure that that is where Nathan and Neville Longbottom have run off to. Herbology is Neville’s favorite subject and Nathan has been following him around like a lost puppy.” Harry offered because he refused to leave Remus alone, feeling unwelcome. Harry knew all too well what that was like.

“Let’s go.” Harry said as he stood without waiting for Remus’ agreement. He took the older man by the hand and the vision that came to him stirred some unknown emotion within him, he felt awed, yet he wanted to cry.

In the vision Remus was holding a small child in his lap as he read from a children’s story book. The child was obviously asleep but Remus did not stop reading until Mousy quietly popped into the
room and Harry gasped when she spoke and said, “masters Sirius be’s calling for master Remus, and it is masters Harry’s time to be in his bedding so Mousy would like to takes him. Mousy can’t read very well so she thanks you for reading to the young master.” The vision began to escape from him as he could not focus on it as he lead Remus through the ballroom and that made Harry feel rather melancholy.

They reached the outside and the garden came into view. Harry slowed their pace, “Remus,” Harry called out without actually looking at the man fore if he did he would become flustered.

“Yes, Harry?”

Harry cleared his throat before he spoke despite there being nothing to actually clear away, “earlier in the semester you gifted me the book; ‘Arthur the Once and Future King ’ and I’ve been unable to finish it during the break. When we return to the manor--back home, of course, could you read the last few pages of to me? This is a childish request, of course, so feel free to refuse me--”

Remus approached Harry’s side and casually held an arm over his shoulders and shook him gently, “pup, of course. I’d like that. We could make hot cocoa too, with real chocolate and all.”

Harry refused to meet the older man’s face but Remus could tell from the lift of his cheeks that he was smiling.

“Could it just be the two of us? Is that too selfish or too much to ask?” Harry requested. Nathan did not enjoy reading as much as Harry did anyway, and his brother always received everyone else’s time whenever he wanted, and while Nathan did not have to share such time with Harry, Harry nearly never had alone time with anyone but his father and that time was used to discuss training and Harry's duty as heir. While Nathan’s alone time with their father included games of one-on-one Quidditch, shopping for new toys or even just going out for ice cream. Nathan did try to include Harry of course. However, more often than not the adults would voice their displeasure in such an arrangement, well except for Remus, of course. The man seemed to actually like spending time with Harry.

“Of course, pup! That’s not selfish at all. We rarely have one-on-one time. I’m really looking forward to it, thank you for asking.” Remus said earnestly.

The two finally reached the gardens and just as Harry predicted, Nathan and Neville were there, crouched down near the Lilies of all places.

“Harry, Remus, come join us! Neville said that he knew more than one thousand plants and we are trying to find plants and herbs that he doesn’t know.” Neville blushed at the unintended praise.

When Harry and Remus were close enough, Neville greeted Remus and encouraged Harry to his side with a gentle hand to his back and the four continued the night in each other’s company.

It was only hours later that they were interrupted by the presence of a house elf that informed them that lord Potter was searching for his party so that they could leave. They walked Neville back to the manor before they bid him a goodnight. Harry did not miss the sad look Neville gave them when he said goodbye and went off to search for his grandmother.

Harry was happy to return home, especially when he found himself sipping delicious hot cocoa Remus had made him as he read to him in his room. The man had insisted on that setting because it was very late into the night and Harry was obviously sleepy and sure enough it only took the reading of ten pages before Harry released a yawn. His yawns were very subtle and most people did not notice when he yawned but Remus did. He tucked Harry further into bed and bid him
goodnight with a kiss on his brow. He took the mug from Harry’s nightstand and left him to rest and Harry fell asleep with tears of happiness in his eyes.

Chapter End Notes

***Revised and edited 12/19/2019

This chapter has a little more character building because I'm trying to speed up the story progression.

The summers will have a little meat in between so that I can write more character interaction because many characters are important for Harry’s end and if you want a somewhat good ending for him you’ll cope with all of the characters lol.

I have also made the world slightly different. The families aren’t so minimal and small and you might even see more siblings because it doesn’t make sense to have all this talk or heirs and marriage if an only child character is the only possible heir and there are only three people for them to be married too.

****the feed back from the last chapter was truly a surprise... I cannot express my thanks enough. I am glad you are enjoying this story as it is still a big stress relief but I am no longer writing it just for myself but for you all too <3 thank you for inspiring me to continue writing this.
Who You Really Are: Part one

Chapter Summary

Harry is Nathan's best friend and you better not forget it!

***Edited and or revised on 12/28/2019***

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“Hello, Harry, and co.” Joseph greeted kindly from his place in the doorway of the carriage on the Hogwarts Express which included, Harry, Terry, Hermione, Nathan, and Neville.

Harry nodded to Joseph in greeting and when the other boy requested for Harry to follow him with a tip of his head. Politely, Harry excused himself from his group and followed Joseph to an empty nearby cart and sat down across from the older boy.

With a kind smile, the older boy asked how Harry had liked the Christmas gift that he had gotten him and if he had gotten any other gifts that suited his fancy from others.

Harry pondered the questioned and remembered that over the holidays, he had received a surprising amount of Christmas gifts--not only from his friends, associates and classmates but even gifts from the general public which had not happened in the past.

For the past decade, only Nathan had received such gifts of admiration from those who viewed him as their savior, but now that it was well established that Nathan had a sibling, Harry had begun receiving them too. Harry gave most of those gifts to Nathan anyway though as they were things that his brother would enjoy far more than Harry would.

From his parents, Harry received the usual books and trinkets.

Their gifts were things that Harry would need; scroll paper, ink, rare feathered quills and a few dress shirts. Harry did not care that they did not put much thought into things he wanted--not just needed because he was grateful for their gifts nonetheless.

From Sirius Harry had been gifted a surprising amount of potion ingredients. They were ingredients often found in novelty prank potions. Sirius gleefully told him that he was only to use them for pranks but if Harry spread them about his already rather large potion palette than he should be able to use them in more useful and practical ways. From Remus he received two books; a special edition of Harry’s favorite book “The Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe” by C.S Lewis and another book he had never read before. It was titled “Bridge to Terabithia” by Katherine Paterson. Remus had said that the book made him cry fiercely, even as a grown man because the two main characters somewhat reminded him of Harry and Nathan. Harry hoped that once he read it near to the end, Remus would read the ending with him like he did with the last book he gifted Harry.

Harry had also received lovely gifts from Terry and Hermione. Terry had sent him a leather-bound muggle journal while Hermione sent him a very expensive looking muggle “fountain pen” as she
called it. The most surprising gift of all—due to its sender—came from Mrs. Malfoy. She had sent him a pair of fine gloves made of dragonhide.

While Harry appreciated every gift, he received in some shape or form, his most cherished gift came from Joseph.

During the month of October Harry had begun to display an immense interest in healing magic along with his potions obsession. He had begun to focus on potions and plants used for healing specifically and his fascination with healing grew and grew to the point that Harry could confess that wanted to learn anything he could about healing.

Harry could focus on topics he was hyper-fixated on for hours without focusing on much else. So, Harry's few interests were not a secret among anyone who paid the slightest attention. Harry just didn't expect for someone like Joseph to pay attention or even care about his interests.

However, for Christmas, Joseph gifted Harry a book on human anatomy and Harry after reading it; Harry could not believe that he had not studied anatomy the moment he showed interest in healing because now, he wanted to learn so much more about the human body.

Many of the concepts in the book were too difficult for Harry to understand and due to that he had settled for simply memorizing the human body in its entirety until he could understand the more difficult concepts such as; physiology, which the book seemed to mention in detail. Harry planned to ask madam Pomfrey a few questions inspired by the material within the book. For now, he settled on memorizing the easier concepts such as; the bones, muscles and the everyday function of the human body. Harry found immense interest in his studies that he would not have discovered if not for the book that Joseph had gifted him, and for that; Harry was extremely grateful.

Harry relayed all of that to Joseph and made sure Joseph Knew how useful he found the older boy’s gift. “Your gift was most useful. It did not bore me, and I will be making an effort to memorize the material. Thank you.”

Joseph smiled widely, “that is good to hear. Your gift as well was spectacular; I had never heard of “For the Law that all is Magical” by Justus Pilliwickle before and it was remiss of me to be so ignorant of its importance. It made me happy that you knew that I was interested in law without being told.”

“I listen, Joseph.” Harry stated with a frown because he did. Harry did not avoid his common room like those outside of Ravenclaw believed.

One of the best things about Ravenclaw was that you could sit alone with an open book and the other students were polite enough to not bother you and possibly disrupt your studies. Especially if you made use of the desks that were spelled with various privacy charms. So, Harry felt no need to avoid the space where most Ravenclaw students gathered during the day in their free time.

Instead of using the desks to study, Harry spelled his own privacy spells on his favorite love seat in the corner of the common room. While their were other chairs and tables nearby, other students tended to give Harry the space since he so obviously wished to be alone and not be bothers. After a week of he and Joseph becoming acquainted however, the older boy began to sit near Harry and other random upperclassman of their house followed suit. If Harry was in the mood to be included he would remove his privacy charms and would listen closely to the conversations the older student had with one another around him. Sometimes Joseph tried to include Harry into the conversation that was being held at the time but Harry’s answers were always short and rarely did he look up from the notes he was taking, or the books or toms he would be reading at that time and perhaps that was why Joseph thought that he did not pay much attention when he spoke to the
Joseph chuckled, “you just pretend that you don’t at times.” He said fondly.

"I saw you at the Malfoy’s Yule ball but couldn't catch your eye as you ran out of the room and onto the terrace. It didn't look as if you wished to be bothered so I did not pursue you. I was rather disappointed however, I had wanted to introduce you to me friends.”

Harry grimaced and apologized, “I was very agitated. The amount of people present was very aggravating, and they all acted strangely to my presence. I am used to people ignoring me and I did not enjoy the attention I received at the ball. I did wish to greet you but knew that I could not hide my agitation if I had.” Harry confessed.

Joseph placed a thoughtful hand to his chin to match the thoughtful look on his face and hummed. “I see. Are you up to being social now?”

Harry nodded.

Joseph stood from his seat, “follow me then,” he said with a grin that showed all of his teeth. Curious, Harry followed him.

Once they arrived at Joseph's presumed carriage, Harry was met with the curious stares of Cedric Diggory, Adrian Pucey, Peregrine Burke and a fourth year Ravenclaw girl with a wine stain birthmark across the top of her face. If Harry remembered right, her name was Penelope Clearwater. She often assisted her underclassmen with homework and guidance.

Now that Harry had thought about it, it was Penelope who Harry sought help from when earlier in the year, Hermione would not leave the bathroom due to unexpectedly starting what the older Ravenclaw girl explained to be Hermione’s “period.” Which was a normal part of a woman’s life. Later that day, Penelope even gifted Hermione with what appeared to be a small booklet on what exactly a period was. Hermione had allowed Harry to burrow it when he asked but she seemed flustered that he would have asked to borrow it in the first place and Harry still did not understand why she would be so flustered about something that every being with a uterus went through.

“Hallo again, Harry.” Cedric said. Cedric gave a friendly wave and Harry responded with his own quiet hello. The others followed suit and greeted Harry who began to feel awkward being at the center of their attention.

Joseph guided him to sit down between Penelope and Peregrine and Harry squirmed a bit because he was practically sat in both of their laps. Harry tried situate himself and give the older students more space but Peregrine chose help him by placing an arm around Harry's shoulder and holding him closer. “You can’t go around sitting on young women, Potter. It’s improper.” He said into Harry’s ear with a teasing grin.

Penelope rolled her eyes, “he was fine, Perry. Stop making him uncomfortable,” she demanded sternly.

Harry however, agreed with Burke. It was improper to intrude on Penelope’s space as he had, “I’m fine,” he said curtly, but his face was tense. It was obvious that he was not comfortable with being held so close by another and it was hard for the older students to not laugh endearingly at Harry's discomfort.

“Enough teasing, guys. Be nice, it’s Harry.” Joseph said as if they all knew who Harry was and as if just being Harry meant something special. Harry watched intently as he saw that the older boy
was completely relaxed. He went as far as to spread his arms on the top part of the carriage’s chair and behind Cedric’s and Adrian’s head with his legs spread. Harry thought that he looked very cool.

“Harry, I want to formally introduce you to, Adrian Pucey; a prodigy when it comes to ancient runes and arithmancy. Peregrine Burke here has a wealth of information in regard to wizarding culture, even internationally. Cedric Diggory over here is one of the top Quidditch players here at Hogwarts and he’s the fifth top student in my year, right behind Mrs. Clearwater next to you. As you all know, this is Harrison Charles Potter, I am sure if you allow him your first names then he will do the same.”

Harry nodded his agreement to that. However, Peregrine sniffed in distaste.

“Don’t call me Peregrine. Call me Perry or nothing at all.” Peregrine--well, Perry demanded as he shook Harry playfully in camaraderie.

Harry nodded seriously and decided that he would take Sirius’ advice and remove the stick from his arse and tell a joke or two from time to time; “ok, Nothing At All.”

This seemed to be the right thing to do as all other occupants burst into laughter while Perry gaped at Harry incredulously.

“And here I thought you were just an old man in this little body, Harry. You have jokes, thank Merlin.” Perry said as he pinched Harry’s nose between his fingers. Harry fought him off by shacking his head roughly which only made Perry laugh.

Harry had noticed that Joseph had grown quiet and was watching the group with a look that said that everything was going his way. A look of pure contentment and dare Harry think; power.

Joseph caught him staring, he had even managed to look Harry directly in the eye and even the older boy seemed momentarily surprised by the brief eye contact, but thankfully he did not make a big deal of it. If Harry could read minds, he would be able to hear Joseph think about how vibrant and powerful Harry's eyes looked.

“Harry, I had wanted you to meet this group of students not just because they are my friends but because we have plans for big things and we can tell that you do as well and together we can help one another reach our goals. We have something to offer you and you have something to offer us. What you have to offer us will not merely benefit us alone, but it will benefit society as a whole.”

While Joseph spoke, Harry saw that the others in the cart were listening intently, this peaked Harry's own interest.

“Harry, what is one thing that you think all of us in this cart have in common, besides being Wizards?” Joseph asked.

Harry thought on it for a moment and it did not take long to think of their names. All of their surnames appeared on the pureblood tapestry that Harry was forced to read during his private lessons on etiquette.

“Based on our surnames alone, it is easy to assume that we are all purebloods and were raised as such based on our behaviors.” Harry stated.

Joseph smiled. Penelope cleared her throat and said, “actually, I am a half blood, my mother was a wizard, my father is not.” Harry did not miss how she used was.
“And I was raised by two muggle women,” Joseph stated proudly, when Harry’s face momentarily displayed his surprise, Joseph's smug look turned into a grin.

“I see. Is this where I finally learn more about you?” Harry asked with a tilt of his head.

“No need to bore you with those details, Harry but I will feed your curiosity. I was raised by two muggle women one is a very successful muggle doctor, the other a successful lawyer. When they discovered my heritage, they educated themselves on as much as they were allowed to and they used that education in order to help me learn all that I could to survive in the Wizarding World when I decided that I wished to be apart of it.

When I was ten years old, we went on a trip to Gringotts because my mothers wished to have a magical banking account for me along with my muggle one. As you may know, the account had to be open under my magical signature and blood. When we went to do just that, we discovered that I already had several accounts that belonged to the Kama family, an assumed extant pureblood family from France.

I was eleven years old when I entered Hogwarts and learned that my name meant something thanks to Perry.” Perry blew a kiss at Joseph, "you're welcome," he said seductively.

An ugly snort escaped Joseph's lips before he continued, "anyway. I learned that not only was I different from muggles, but I was different from other wizards as well because of my pureblood heritage. My parents not only believed in adapting to your surroundings but they believe in working hard and being the best. So when Perry and his parent so graciously offered to help me find tutors to educate me on my pureblood heritage under the guise that it would elevate me socially almost immediately, my parents were all too enthusiastic in their agreement.”

“Ah, social elevation. That is why you are so amenable to students like Hermione and Terry. Muggleborns and halfbloods with promise.” Harry assumed as much. Both Terry and Hermione had a vast amount of potential, even though they were a muggleborn and a halfblood. If Joseph’s name was associated with their future success it would do well for the boy’s family name. The only problem with that was: Terry and Hermione were Harry’s and he would not allow them to fall under another's wing so easily, but Harry was sure that Joseph could understand that.

Joseph shrugged slightly, “Somewhat. I confess that if they were not your friends, I would not be as inclined to give them much attention. Do not get me wrong, they are brilliant but right now I am looking for equals. Not promising projects, I am much too young for that.”

Harry showed no outward emotion but internally he preened at Joseph acknowledging him as an equal.

“Why me? I know you do not wish to gain my favor in order to get closer to my brother, the-boy-who-lived. You have pointedly shown that you do not care for him much. so again, I ask; why me?” Harry questioned.

Joseph laughed ruefully and removed his arms from the back of the seat. He placed them on his knees and leaned on them. “The fact that you even have to ask is an answer enough, Harry.

I watched you for weeks before I approached you. I watched you guide other students and control them with mere gestures before you backed away into the shadows. When they succeeded due to your efforts, you took no credit. I watch you exaggerate your brother’s minimal successes and allow him to overshadow your own. Our peers and the professors are deluded by his title and think him stronger than he actually is, but we know the truth—all of us here know that you are the stronger twin.”
"That is untrue. There are many thing Nathaniel triumphs over I. Physical strength and speed are the first things that come to mind." Harry said defensively.

Joseph frowned, I mean no disrespect, Harry. I admit that I have not had much chance to compare your physical traits. I misspoke as I was referring to your magical prowess. After all, I’ve seen you perform—not only advanced magic but wandless magic.”

Those words made Harry tense immediately. Perry released his hold on him as Joseph got up from his seat and went to kneel before Harry’s own.

Joseph placed a gentle hand over Harry's knee, “Hey, hey. I am not going to tell of your successes if you do not wish me to.” Joseph soothed. “I only meant that these are not things you brag about or show off. You are very humble, and I respect that immensely.”

Harry pointedly looked toward the rest of the members occupying the carriage and they quickly soothed that they would not tell as well and that they wholeheartedly agreed with Joseph.

“What you said about Nathaniel is wrong, you know.” Harry began, “Nathaniel is more than just physically strong. He just has not applied himself as he should.”

Joseph lips thinned and made no comment. Harry decided that Joseph would learn just how powerful Nathan was on his own. Joseph did not grow with Nathan, he did not watch as the boy had to mentally dial down how much magic he forced out with each spell. Sure, it was a testament to the amount of control he did not have but it showed that he was far more powerful than he could control. If anything, Nathan refrains himself far too much now.

Penelope checked her watch and told them that they would be arriving to Hogwarts in a mere ten minutes. Joseph grimaced, he stood and retrieved his robes from the overhead speaking as he moved in hurried movements.

“Harry, I introduce you to my closest companions and I mention your leadership skills and grace, because I believe that everyone within this cart has the power to unify the wizarding and muggle world with the unique skill sets that they have to offer, and I believe that I know where to start. My parents are involved in a muggle organization called the International Union. Their group meets once a week and participate in volunteering in their communities or donating to local and international organizations and schools. They follow a moral code of ethics in hopes of bettering the world and their society. Union members are not exclusive to, but are mostly known to be, mayors, city or government officials or just general members of society who have major influence. Those members are either wealthy, have high social standing in the muggle society or have some other means to offer the club or the world by having a trade that is once again beneficial to the club or the community. Often these members invite younger individuals to come to meetings and sometimes mentor them and teach them their way of moral code and life, more often than not, those younger individuals become members, and repeat the cycle of the International Unions belief and moral code. I was one of those mentored, I have been educated on how to lead and inspire others to follow me. I have been sharing with my friends here what I have learned.” Joseph's eyes shone as he spoke, it was evident that he was prideful in what he had accomplished.

"You wish to form a similar group here at Hogwarts," Harry guessed.

"I knew you’d understand easily, Harry.” Joseph said. Penelope saw how disheveled his collar had became after Joseph had put on his robe and she fixed it for him, rather aggressively and choked him slightly with his tie.
"You're a doll, Penny," Joseph said sarcastically. He turned to Harry and helped him with his tie but was much less aggressive than Penelope about it, "anyway, if we were to start something similar within Hogwarts, we could affect the lives of generations to come. The union has been around for nearly a hundred years, and in that time, they used their money and resources to nearly eradicate a muggle disease that had been killing them quite rapidly. They cured this disease around the world and thousands upon thousands of people know of their work and welcome their presence and aid. A group of muggles did that, Harry. Without magic. Imagine what we could do in a hundred years with our magic. Imagine the magical countries around the world that we could unify. I want that influence. I want to be powerful and not hinder our society’s growth but improve it. Do you know that Dragonpox has not been eradicated merely because those who cannot afford the cure can't be cured before they spread it to others? One sip of the cure and a wizard can no longer be infected or infect others."

Joseph released Harry's tie and ignored the younger boy's slight disgusted frown at the concept of needles and continued, “once upon a time even you should have been forced to swallow the medication, despite an entire bottle being worth 60 galleons and even more so if it is personally requested from a potions master, that is nothing for you and your family. Though, what of the wizards who have no such resources? What about, halfbloods in muggle societies, or of Squibs and muggleborns who may not even know what the disease is!? If we could simply eradicate it, it would be of no concern and the entirety of the wizarding world would have us to thank!”

Harry had never heard Joseph speak so passionately or so much in one sitting, clearly he had been wanting to speak with Harry about this for sometime.

“He wants you to eradicate Dragonpox.” Adrian said sarcastically from his seat while he pulled his robe on.

“What I am saying, Harry.” Joseph bites out with a playful glare directed at Adrian. “We—myself, Penny, Perry, Cedric and Adrian have formed the Wizarding World’s first humanitarian organization. One that can work towards goals such as; the eradication of Dragonpox. We’ve yet to agree on a name but that is not the point of this conversation. The point is that you—all of us, the other students included, are wizarding society’s future and it is up to us to ensure that it improves since the adults around us are so clearly content with things remaining stagnant as they are.

“We’ve stopped.” Penelope informed politely.

Joseph cursed under his breath and informed Harry that their group meets on Wednesday nights. They have a fifth-year prefect friend who can give Harry leeway on curfew if he wished to come. Joseph was charismatic, and he was unashamedly passionate about his beliefs and ideals. Admittedly, Joseph sounded like what Remus called; "a dreamer." Someone with big ideas and lofty goals that war far too large to accomplish, but Joseph had a drive and he already had a system to follow and pursue his goals. A system that has proven to have worked if his story of the International Union's accomplishments rung true. Harry was more than a little bit interested and he promised to try and make time for the meetings, even if only to feed his own curiosity.

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Harry kept to his promise and met with Joseph, Cedric, Penelope, Peregrine, and Adrian their first week back in school. Rather than merely sitting in on a meeting or two, Harry was pulled in as a founder. He had even helped them decide on a name and together, they decided to name the group, W.A.U.R.T, pronounced wart and it stood for; Wizardry Alliance of Understanding Rapport and Temerity.
The name may sound silly, but it fit their goals and the reason they wished to form the club. While their major goal was to vaccinate a major Wizard disease in order to become well known and trusted in small communities; they also wished to unify wizards but also maintain tradition. In order to do this, they would need to cater to not only the elite but to those deemed as outsiders by society in.

They would not allow discrimination or elitism from purebloods or traditionalists, but they would encourage their traditional practices and life. Muggleborns and halfbloods would not be allowed to use their status to shame the traditionalists in the club, but they would be allowed to defend their own rights and beliefs through rapport and education. Muggleborns and halfbloods would also be given education by traditionalists to learn of their ways as well to better understand why purebloods were the way they were. The temerity in the name was the groups resolve; they would not allow bullying or harassment of any sort but they would stick to their beliefs.

Penelope had suggested that they further establish themselves and quietly gain more members by calling themselves a club but not an open listed one. Members were invite only which Harry thought was smart.

They invited 60 students to join with no particular restriction to year, or magical background. The only stipulation was that those who were blood purists were not invited. Adrian had been the one to suggest the rules for visitation because from his math, there would be a chance that fifty percent of those invited would not show up but it would be of no matter because either way the group that does show up would be very diverse.

Adrian was not known for his arithmetical prowess without reason as thirty students had shown up for their first public meeting. During that meeting the new group established what Wart was, the rules and the beliefs of the club.

The students wanted to keep it short and simple so Wart was established as a group based on unification akin to Joseph's shared beliefs. The few purebloods who came were a bit antsy about mingling with those they viewed as beneath them on the belief of mere unity, but a few strong words from fellow purebloods Joseph and Peregrine got them to agree to at least come to a few more meetings before they turned their noses up at the club. The rules that were agree upon also helped to ease the anxiety of those who feared to harrassment due to their own beliefs.

The rules that Harry and the others created were satisfactory enough to the new members. So it was established that there would be no bullying or discrimination and members would be allowed to share their beliefs through the rapport that Warts would grow to be known for.

After their first public meeting, one of the older pureblood students from Hufflepuff suggested that they do a service project in order to entice more members to join. It was Harry who came up with the idea that they host a banquet for muggle raised halfbloods and muggleborns to learn proper etiquette when in formal settings. With the donated funds of the more richer students, they were able to raise the money for the food and decorations and with advertisement from the more popular students like Peregrine, more than sixty students showed up. The project was also great for publicity and now even more students were interested in Warts, and Harry was suddenly very grateful that he devoted the last few weeks of Winter to Warts because he could not be prouder to be a part of something so astounding and made by students.

While Harry was busy with Warts, Nathan had taken it upon himself to behave in a manner that most troubled his older brother.

Nathan was hiding something along with Ronald Weasley and he refused to tell Harry what it was that they were hiding. It did not make Harry feel any better that just two days prior, Nathan had
gotten a detention with Ron for breaking curfew which caused both to miss the etiquette dinner despite Nathan's promise to Harry that he would be there in support since it appeared that Harry was going quite attached to the organization he helped create.

Admittedly, Harry had been a bit angry with Nathan and had been doing his best to distracted himself with his latest academic fascination; Wizarding diseases. The library had a surprising amount of material to study from.

It had only been an hour into his studies when Nathan rushed to his side and plopped into the chair across from Harry. He was panting and sweating slightly as if he ran there, “Harrison, I need to talk with you, right now!” Nathan said urgently.

Ron appeared from the same corner Nathan had come from and was panting and sweating himself. “Nathan, mate! Don’t tell him, he’ll tell your dad for sure!” Ron said in a harsh whisper, and the red headed boy had the nerve to look at Harry apologetically before he shrugged in indifference once he saw that Harry would express no outward emotion but what Ron did not know is that Harry was extremely irritated.

“He’s my brother, Ron. I trust him more than anyone! And besides, he could help and you’re wrong because he didn’t tell our dad about the detention!” Nathan huffed undeterred.

“I am right here,” Harry said irritably, with a flip of his hand. The other two boys did not notice that the flip of Harry’s hand spelled a silencing charm around them, “are you finally going to tell me what mess, Weasley has dragged you into these last few weeks? If not. You both can leave.”

Ron glared at him angrily, while Nathan gasped and looked openly hurt, “Harrison, are you mad at me? You’ve never spoken to me like this before!”

Harry took three slow deep breaths, “and you have never hidden anything from me before, Nathaniel.” Harry spoke in his own form of hurt, “you may have thought that you were subtle that I did not see through your lies, but I did and did you think I did not notice how you and Ron would whisper before our study group and immediately quiet once I approached? Is this about me informing father of your curiosity regarding the third door corridor?”

“This isn’t about the third corridor—though I did enter it on accident the night I got detention, there’s a Cerberus in there, by the way! But this isn’t about that, this is about Hagrid who has a dragon egg in his quarters!”

Ron hissed Nathan’s name and Harry sucked in a sharp intake of breath.

“Start from the beginning, Nathan. Start with the Cerberus.” Harry demanded.

Ron attempted to quiet Nathan once more with a harsh yank on Nathan’s robe, he even attempted to drag him to the exit. Harry was prepared to tell Ron to stop manhandling his brother, but he did not need to as Nathan yanked his arm free and spoke for himself, “Ron! Knock it off! Harrison is my brother—my best friend! I know him and I know that he doesn’t want to see me hurt or in trouble and you on the other hand have been making me lie and break the rules and for what!? Heck if I know because all you’ve seem to do is mess things up between my brother and I! If you aren’t going to accept my brother’s help, then just leave but I cannot bear hiding anything from him any longer! I am becoming physically sick!”

Ron’s face turned an alarming shade of red and Harry noticed that his eyes began to water, knowing his brother, Nathan probably would have felt guilty if he was not near to crying as well, Harry, however; could not really find it in himself to feel bad for Ron. While the other boy seemed
friendly, and even attended their study groups; Harry noticed that he had a mean and nasty jealous streak. When Nathan wanted to spend time with Harry and Harry alone, Ron always managed to butt in, he even found ways to make Nathan feel bad for trying to exclude him from Nathan and Harry’s alone time because he wanted to spend time with them too. Harry knew that that was not the case. Ron just didn’t want Nathan to spend time with Harry because Ron figured that the more time, he spent with Nathan the more Nathan would forget about Harry and spend time with him. So, no. Harry did not feel bad for Ron who currently glared at Harry nastily before he exited with a stomp of his feet. Nathan did not move an inch to follow him, nor did he even look Ron’s way as the other exited.

Nathan sniffled, and sniffled some more before Harry finally gave in. He stood from his seat and approached Nathan’s side, the other boy scooted over hurriedly so that Harry could sit beside him, and Harry’s bottom had barely touched the seat before Nathan buried himself in his side and cried in earnest. Harry thought it lucky that he sat in the most isolated corner within the library.

Harry soothed his brother as Nathan cried for about ten more minutes before he finally quieted and removed himself from Harry’s arms. “He is so sensitive, I wonder how he did not end in Hufflepuff, really.” Harry thought to himself fondly.

Silently, Harry brandished a handkerchief from his pocket and handed it to his brother who wiped his face and then blew his nose in it before he handed it back to Harry. Wandlessly Harry used a cleaning charm and spelled the fabric clean before he tucked it away back into his pocket.

"It is hard when we fight with our closest friends, I am glad you stuck up for yourself,” Harry said kindly and said nothing more because he wished to allow his brother to speak and say what was on his mind that.

Harry was not expecting for Nathan to glare at him and aggressively stated; "you’re my closest friend."

Harry looked at him in mild surprise and confusion at the sudden spoken words. Nathan turned to Harry fully and gripped his shoulder firmly, “you’re my best friend, Harrison. We’re different. You may be quieter than I am, but you have more patience than I’ll ever have and begrudgingly, I accept that you’re mature than I am right now.

But that’s okay! Cause you’re my big brother too.” Nathan was rambling and Harry did not know how to stop him. "You’re not weird or sneaky and you don’t tell on me because you’re jealous that I'm the-boy-who-bloody-lived and you're not. You know me better than anyone and I know you better than anyone, so I know that my words are true.”

The words only caused Harry's confusion to grow even more, Nathan has never called him weird or jealous, and he also knew that Nathan never would say those things. It had to be Ron who had been saying those things to Nathan about Harry… and that slightly hurt Harry because while he did not like Ron’s bad influence upon his brother, Ron has never been outwardly rude or cruel toward Harry so Harry had assumed that they were at least acquaintances who respected one another.

“"You’re a good big brother too.” Nathan said suddenly and looked away from Harry. That surprised Harry as he had come to notice that the other twins in school rarely acknowledged who was the eldest unless they were being petty and that was perhaps due to the fact that none of the other twin students had a heir counterpart like Nathan. Harry was raised as the eldest and as if he were a few years older than Nathan, when they were only minutes apart.

Nathan rarely made a fuss that Harry was treated so much older and given so much responsibility. Nathan has often uttered the phrase; “I do not envy you and your heir duties, mate!” When Harry
declined times of play due to his heir studies, responsibilities and duties. Harry understood that Nathan was merely being honest and not poking fun at him because they both knew that Nathan would not be able to cope with their father being so cold and contrite with him as he was with Harry when teaching him. Nor would Nathan had been patient as Harry had been in the summer when most of his heir lessons were focused on an introduction to politics.

Harry finally spoke and said, “you are my best friend too Nathaniel and you are the perfect little brother. I just wish that you did not hide things such as encountering a Cerberus or Hagrid’s dragon egg from me.”

“I know, I shouldn’t have. I know! It’s just Ron is so bloody pushy! He wants to go on all these adventures and so do I but he’s a bloody maniac about it!”

Harry grimaced, “I noticed. You both are very... Gryffindor.”

Nathan shoved him playfully, “lay off, mate!”

Harry laughed in his own way, something quiet and reserved and for a few moments the two sat in companionable silence before Harry asked, “did you see anything else in the Cerberus’’ room?”

Nathan shook his head in the negative, “no, not really but Ron and I think we saw a trap door under the Cerberus.”

Harry nodded, his face serious and he asked himself; ‘why would a giant Cerberus be guarding a trap door? Why was there a Cerberus in the school in the first place?’

Instead of asking those questions Harry asked; “did you and Ron have a plan on how to get rid of the dragon egg?”

Nathan looked slightly embarrassed, “we were going to write his brother who apparently works with dragons but now I don’t think that will happen, he seemed pretty angry.”

Harry patted his brother’s back in comfort and said; “there are other dragon reserves besides the one Ronald's brother works at, Nathan.”

“Really? But they’ll report that Hagrid had an egg in the first place, right? I don’t want to get Hagrid in trouble! Have you met him? He’s so nice and friendly and loves magical creatures, he doesn’t want to hurt anyone, he just wants a pet dragon.” Nathan said hurriedly with pleading eyes.

Harry grimaced, he had met Hagrid and the half giant was very kind if not a bit slow and childish. One evening—without prompt—the man had explained to Harry that he knew he and Nathaniel’s parents and that he respected the both immensely. The man had even gone on to say that if Harry ever needed anything that he could come to him and he would do everything in his power to help him.

Harry had relayed such an interaction with his mother and father for confirmation of Hagrid's words which he enthusiastically received along fond memories and photos of the groundskeeper who often irresponsibly kept them out passed curfew for tea.

“Well, Nathan, you trust me, and I trust you, so, how about a deal of sorts.” Harry said as he was struck with an idea.

Nathan looked at him with open confusion but gestured for Harry to continue.

“You write and tell father all that you are willing regarding the third corridor—it does not matter
how much, and you do not have to tell me what you tell him. Either way, I will not breathe a word of what you have told me about the third corridor to anyone. Instead I will take the blame for discovering the dragon egg that Hagrid currently owns and tell father that I am worried that Hagrid will get caught and arrested. Father is very fond of Hagrid and would not want him in trouble, so I am sure that he could find the best solution for Hagrid.”

Nathan tried to argue that it would not be fair for Harry to take the blame at all but after receiving stony silence from Harry he accepted the deal and yanked Harry into a brotherly hug.

“Thank you, Harrison, thank you! It feels so good to have that off my chest, really!”

Harry patted his back as a puff of laughter escaped his lips, “you have never been very good at lying or keeping secrets from me, Nathaniel.”

Nathan laughed and released him, “yeah, I’m sure if you weren’t here, I would have been just fine, I probably would have let Ron convince me to find a way inside the trap door!”

Harry grimaced, and Nathan looked at him fondly and pinched his ear and told him to relax.

“Oh.” Harry said dully which only caused Nathan to laugh once again.

“Oh, hey! Can we please tell Hagrid of our plan? He was really upset when I told him that he could get in a lot of trouble for having the egg, I’m sure it will make him feel a lot better if we told him what we were doing. He also mentions you a lot, so he’d be even happier to see you too!”

Harry wanted to cringe and tell Nathan, “absolutely not.” However; the other boy looked positively thrilled at the thought of visiting Hagrid together. So, with great reluctance, Harry agreed.

And hours later, Harry regretted his decision only slightly. Hagrid was a talkative, talkative man and if not for Nathaniel including Harry in the conversation, Harry would not have gotten a word in otherwise.

Hagrid was about to tell another story when Harry saw the time and realized that is was much past curfew and the track record that the groundskeeper had with keeping students out pass curfew meant that he could not write them a slip and excuse their tardiness. Harry stood, “excuse us, Hagrid but it is well after curfew and Nathaniel and I must return to our respective dorms.”

“Oh! I didn’ mean to keep ya fer so long! I’ll walk ya.”

“Uh, actually Hagrid that is not a good idea, remember how angry professor McGonagall was the last time you walked me to the Gryffindor dorms? Harry and I will be fine on our own!” Nathan said quickly as he stood in front of Hagrid.

Hagrid pouted at this, “yer right, Nathan… are ya sure ya two can make it on yer own?”

“We will make do, Hagrid. Goodnight and thank you for the tea. It was very nice.” Harry said as he gently took Nathan by the elbow and lead them out. Nathan waved as Hagrid bid them goodbye.

Harry lead them through the corridor as stealthily as he could, he had decided to drop Nathan off first before he would make his way back to Ravenclaw tower, they were one floor away from the Gryffindor floor when they heard a yowl from Mrs. Norris which was quickly followed by Filch’s ragged breaths and heavy footsteps. The scruffy man himself rounded the corner only seconds later and spotted them. The man was as quick as Mrs. Norris and was by their side in an instant.

Filch yanked the two by the arms and shook them about, “look what we found here, Mrs. Norris! I
know exactly what to do with you too, oh yes! Snape just found others breaking curfew and he’s giving them a most deserved punishment but for you brats he might even make you into potions!”

Harry gritted his teeth to the point of pain. How dare this man grab them this way? Harry tried to remove himself from the man’s hold but the man only gripped him harder to the point of digging his nails into Harry’s skin. The only reason Harry did not react further was because the man’s hold on Nathan seemed to be much looser. Nathan looked at Harry helplessly and Harry shook his head and hoped that Nathan would understand him and not react.

Filch kept muttering to himself as he continued to drag Nathan and Harry deeper into the dungeons in the direction of the professor’s quarters.

They reached the door and Filch briefly let go of Nathan so that he could bang on the professor’s door, “SNAPE. I found two more stranglers, they’ll need a good lashing or two, that’s for sure.”

Professor Snape opened the door and exited his office and Harry looked at Nathan in disapproval when he hissed Draco’s surname upon seeing the other boy who solemnly followed behind professor Snape.

“Release them, Filch. I will take it from here,” the professor demanded as he glared disapprovingly at Harry and Harry alone. Harry frowned slightly. He did not like the man being disappointed in him, at all.

This seemed to excite Filch who asked what professor Snape had planned for the three trouble makers.

Professor Snape sneered and spoke through clenched teeth, “they will be picking slime fog eyed frogs for potion ingredients this coming weekend with Hagrid. They will do so near the forbidden forest, it will be most unpleasant. Now, I will walk the little ingrates to their respective dorms, you are dismissed, Filch.” The professor forced Filch to remove his hands and replaced the grouchy man’s with his own, he bid the man good night before he escorted the three students to their respective dorms.

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“Alright, boys. Slime frog pickin’s easy. Ya have yer nets and I’ve been told by Pr’fessor Snape that ya all know that they’re found burrowed deep in the muddiest parts of under tree. Let’s get start--”

“Wait! Are we not going to wear gloves while you have us tool away in the dirt like common house elf!?” Draco asked indignantly. Nathan rolled his eyes but did not comment and Harry looked toward Hagrid, curious for his answer.

“No ya wouldn’ wan’ to be doing that. Gloves irritate the slime of the frog, you know that, Mr. Malfoy, yer learning it in yer potions class.” Hagrid stated kindly and pointedly ignored Draco when he grumbled under his breath about informing his father that he had to toil away in the mud.

When Nathan and Harry tried to work together Hagrid made sure to separate them and reminded them that this was a detention and not a get together. Nathan was the most upset at this but did not argue and began to work further away from Harry.

After an hour or so Harry still had no luck in finding any frogs. He knew that the area he was in was too dry and he dared to go deeper toward the wetter grounds, and he did not notice Draco who followed quietly behind him.
Harry began to dutifully dig under the visible root of a rather large oak tree. After a few minutes of digging THREE fog eyed frogs jumped out and away from Harry going deeper into the forest. Harry gave chase for he knew that they would lead him to a colony of them, he thought that if he were to get enough for professor Snape’s classes than he’d be allowed to keep some for his own purposes, and he had many an experiment that he would like to test.

Harry did not run hastily, nor did he run without thought. However, it was dark, and he managed to trip on a lone root that was half buried into the ground. Harry took to the air before he landed back down to earth and rolled down a hill uncontrollably and he only stopped when his back hit the base of a tree at the bottom of the hill.

Unknown to Harry Draco had quietly followed after him in hopes of finding frogs for himself. Harry also did not hear Draco yell out, “Merlin, Potter, don’t move!” From his place atop of the hill, nor did he see Draco frantically run for Hagrid.

No, Harry did not see or hear Draco at all. He was far too focused on the sight that took place a mere thirty feet in front of him.

The moonlight shone spectacularly on a puddle that Harry had assumed to be water. However; the reflections of the liquid dazzled a bit too spectacularly and gave no reflection of the moon or stars. No, Harry identified the puddle as unicorn blood and when he allowed his eyes to follow the trail that flowed into the puddle, he saw the form in front of him was that of a dead unicorn.

With no desire to discover what killed the creature, Harry quietly stood and searched for a slanted route to take him back up hill since the original hill he fell from was much too steep to climb. Harry frowned deeply as he felt intense pain from his wrist when he attempted to dust his clothing off with his right hand. It could be sprained as he could still move it about slightly and saw no indication to a broken bone. Tenderly Harry held his wrist and trekked around the dead creature. He did not see the hooded form that sat crouched at the opened belly of the unicorn before it was too late.

Harry stepped on the creature’s robe and was met with a rather terrifying hiss of his surname before he fell to the ground.

The pain that surged through Harry's sprained wrist was hard to ignore, but Harry did and stood as quickly as he could and ran faster than he thought possible, away from the creature. Harry did not have a clear direction as to where he was running but he was running away and he ran faster when he heard the creature begin to tail after him.

Harry unsheathed his wand and cast a joke spell that Sirius had taught him to make the ground beneath his feet softer as he passed in hopes that it would slow the creature down.

It did, however, the creature stabilized itself with ease still pursued him persistently. Harry was beginning to tire from exerting himself both physically and magically and just when his legs were about to give in, an arrow shot passed Harry's face and landed in the beast's chest!

Harry heard the beast retreat with a hiss. Harry did not look or ponder where the arrow came from, and quickly tucked himself away behind the nearest tree and hid. He did not know if whoever or whatever shot the arrow was friendly or not.

Harry waited for a sign that whoever shot the arrow would go away. Sweat from his brow dripped into his eyes and caused him to shut them tightly in order to cope with the slight burn. He held his breath when he heard the sound of at least three sets of hooves draw near. Harry wanted to breathe when he heard what he assumed to be a warrior’s cry from two of the creatures and the sound of
their fast stampeding hooves moving away from him. However; he sucked in even more air once he heard the remaining creature approach his hiding spot.

“Come out. Now, child, no harm will come to you.” The creature demanded. Harry centered himself with a quick breathing exercise before he relinquished himself from his place of hiding. He was met with the form of a centaur. Slowly, the creature approached Harry before he bent down and gripped his waists tightly before hoisting him up in his arms. Harry’s breath quickened and he reached for his wand.

“Don’t child. If you were anyone else, you would currently owe my herd and I a life debt. However, you are lucky, the stars favor upon you and guided us here to defend your sight.” The creature demanded sternly.

This did not calm Harry down in the slightest but he slowly lowered his hand from his wand and to his tender wrist.

The creature continued to speak as he galloped to what Harry hoped was the safety of Hogwarts, “the unicorn you saw has not been the only casualty. My brethren and I have been trying to corner the beast attacking them for the last four months.” Harry frowned while he listened, four months ago the term began.

The centaur continued, “the blood of a unicorn is innocent, pure. To attack it for its blood is a sign of great evil, a sign of that one seeks immortality in the worst way.”

“Those who consume the blood of a unicorn, they will live a cursed life.” Harry whispered, quoting one of his textbooks.

The centaur nodded his agreement, “you are a smart boy, Harrison Potter.”

Harry whipped his head up to peer at the creature’s face so quickly that he almost gave himself whiplash. Faintly he could see the creature’s amused smile, “that is right, Harrison Potter. I know who you are, I know that you see things yet to come and I know that you see things that have been. Perhaps, I even know more about the night Voldemort was vanquished than perhaps you do. It makes me wonder, do you know who you are like I do?”

“I know who I am,” Harry stated somewhat stubbornly and a bit too quickly. The centaur did not reply due to his gaze being occupied by an approaching figure.

“Firenze, what are you telling the star child?” A gruff voiced centaur asked when he caught up to them and galloped alongside them. The creature stared at Harry intently and Harry stared right back. The creature bared its teeth at Harry and its teeth were large and blunt. Harry knew that the creature could quite literally bite his hand off with ease.

“From the look of confusion on his face, I am telling him things he has yet to be told, about what and who he is,” The centaur “Firenze” said. As the three approached a clearing, Firenze was gruffly instructed by the chestnut colored centaur that he had referred to as “Bane” to put Harry down. Firenze did so; albeit, reluctantly.

Bane gripped Harry’s shoulders and demanded that he look to the stars, “without magic, you nor I would be here. You would not have the magic you and your other humans hold dearly, nor would I or Firenze exist as we do now. I have been alive for a long time, Harrison Potter. I--and magic herself, have seen how you humans destroy yourselves to destroy us. Creatures entirely of magic. Never have the stars or magic encouraged us to interfere with the fate of humans if they were not an immediate danger to us. However; the stars as of late have repeatedly cried your name. It was
the stars that saved your life.” As Bane spoke, Harry saw a rather quick vision of his own body charred on the forest floor, from the height he saw himself he assumed he was seeing his death from Bane’s eyes. He eyed the centaur warily and was met with a cold stare.

“That is what would have happened--should have happened but the stars and magic herself did not want it so and it was due to that that we aided you and it would not have been so if you had intention to harm and for that, we are tentatively allies but to be allies with one as weak and ignorant as you does not set me at ease.”

Harry frowned and asked the centaur what it meant, Bane merely looked to the stars and then to Firenze who watched with a deep frown and pursed lips. Harry heard Nathan call for him and he looked towards the trees where the voice had come from. Vaguely, he could see the shadows of a giant man--presumably Hagrid, Nathan and another centaur approaching them quickly.

Before Harry could respond with his own call, Bane shook him roughly and placed a rough hand on the skin of Harry’s neck. Harry heard Bane say, “see and learn.” Before Harry knew it, he was laying down in a bed.

He tried to sit up but his _head_ was too heavy to pick up. He went to grab his watch from his nightstand but froze in shock when he saw his chubby arm. It looked like a baby’s arm!

Suddenly, he felt a light slap to his face and looked over and gasped when he saw another baby who he knew was Nathan from the freckles on his nose.

Harry tried to speak but he only made a garbled sound to which Nathan laughed at before he began to suck his thumb. A mere few seconds passed before the sound of exploding wood met their young sensitive ears.

The sound surprised Nathan greatly and he began to cry in earnest. Harry reached over and attempted to soothe him but accidentally poked his brother’s eye due to poor motor skills. Nathan cried louder and Harry tried to move once more but fell back in surprise when he heard the sound of a door opening quickly before it was slammed closed.

“Bombarda!” Harry heard a voice hiss and immediately the spell was followed with more sounds of exploding wood and even glass. Nathan’s cries grew louder, and Harry knew that he was truly damaging his developing vocal chords, so he determinedly went about calming the other babe down. Their mother approached and Harry saw that she was crying from the corner of his eye. She left as quickly as she came, and Harry wondered what was happening.

Harry watched their mother as she approached them with her wand unsheathed, she was prepared for an attack Harry noted.

“Lily Potter.” A voice hissed, their mother turned quickly and stood in front of their crib defensively as she aimed her wand toward the intruder.

Harry listened in intense concentration as the two spoke to one another, “where is James!?” their mother demanded.

“He is alive, you may go to him. Leave us.” the intruder hissed. “I have no need for you or your
Harry frowned thoughtfully at this, then why was the man attacking? 

Lily laughed, “I am staying right here, you need not harm these children.” Harry peered up at his mother in awe, he had always known her as awkward, meek and occasionally stubborn, this was extremely different from what he was used to.

The intruder must have used a silent Expelliarmus charm on their mother’s wand as it flew out of her hand and from Harry’s view.

“Attempt to retrieve your wand and your husband will die along with your children.” The intruder threatened. Harry could hear his mother gulp and he saw her nod her agreement.

“You are right, you know. I will not be harming any child. I will however, kill the child of the prophecy. You know which child that is. It would save you the loss of two children by just telling me.”

There was a prophecy? This was news to Harry, if his deductions were true and this was truly the past then Harry had a front row seat as to how his brother was deemed the boy-who-lived.

Their mother began to sob, “please, don’t—please. Take me! I have defied you, I continue to do so! You will not harm these children!” Their mother was panicked.

“I have no time for this, little girl.” The intruder hissed menacingly, the next thing Harry knew his mother flew from before their crib and into the wall. The intruder stood in place of their mother and appeared into Harry's view.

“Tch. Now, you two…” The intruder hissed wand in hand and pointed at Harry and Nathan. Harry held Nathan close and Nathan did the same in return, he whimpered slightly with snot dripping from his nose.

The intruder grimace in disgust and Harry would have too if he were not so concentrated on his magic, because he was disgusted. What kind of cowardly man attacks children, let alone babies? Harry could not move but with his eyes he dared the man to attack. Harry did not know how but he would not let the man harm his brother. He was scared, of course he was but the desire to protect his brother was stronger than his fear.

The man must have seen the challenge in his eyes because he said, “It could be assumed that it is you that the prophecy forewarns me of. However, due to your asinine mother, both of you must die.” Before Harry could properly process that this man was he-who-could-not-be-named and that he-who-could-not-be-named did not actually know which of them was the prophecy child, the man raised his wand pointedly.

“I am sure that you would have grown into a formidable opponent, Avada Kedavra!”

The moment the words were spoken a bright light engulfed the room. The man screamed in agony and Harry almost screamed too but he was too awed by the bright light that came from his chest. The light took the form of a giant feminine humanoid woman. Harry could not discern any visible traits for when he peered up to take in her form, he could see nothing but the bright light of her back.

The man continued to scream above their crib as his face began to melt. He gripped their crib like a mad man but would not or perhaps he could not release his hold as he continued to scream. Harry watched in awe induced horror and fascination. The room and possibly the entire home began to shake and as the shaking increased, Harry grew
more and more fatigued as if the woman made of light were draining him.

The woman slowly spread her arms out and as she did so all of the items not nailed to the floor began to float—including Harry’s and Nathan’s crib. The woman of light tensed and began to draw her arms together. She struggled for a few more seconds before her hands connected into a ferocious clap which caused the room to nearly implode. Harry felt awfully exhausted the moment her hands connected, and he began to drift into a deep sleep. Before he did, however, the woman of light placed her head near Harry’s own and as she kissed his forehead, he felt the most soothing warmth spread through his chest. His eyes felt even heavier and he could keep them open no longer. Faintly he could hear the light woman say, "my baby" before he finally succumbed to sleep.

When Harry awoke, he was greatly surprised to see the face of the headmaster in front of his own.

The headmaster checked both he and Nathan over intensely for injuries before he picked them up. Harry looked over toward Nathan and felt great relief to see that his brother was physically fine. Vaguely, Harry could hear the voice of his father, he sounded desperate as he called for their mother, “Lily, Lilian! Wake—"

“M up James. I’m up.” Their mother mumbled, she clenched her head as if she were in great pain and from the knot that had formed on her crown, she most likely was. She looked around the room and as subtle as he could he could see Harry did as well, and he noticed that everything was in shambles and debris lay just about everywhere.

“James! Nathanial, Harry—” their mother began frantically only to be cut off by the headmaster.

“Lily, calm down!” Their father demanded, slightly off-put by their mother’s behavior just as much as Harry was.

Harry was shocked, if the scar was one of the end all indicators then that meant that Nathan was not the boy who lived and technically neither was Harry. Unless, the marking was not physical and he-who-must-not-be-named marked them as his equal by attacking them in the first place. Harry’s mind was running rampant with theories, he wanted to learn more—especially in regards to the prophecy but his eyes were becoming heavy, too heavy for him to fight.
A sob came from their mother’s lips which startled Harry out of his thoughts. She reached for Nathan again, and this time Dumbledore allowed her to take him in replace of Harry. He must have noticed Harry’s sleepy gaze because he began to rock him gently back and forth in a soothing rhythm.

Harry used every bit of strength he had to stay awake. He could hear his father speak, "It's Nathaniel Lily. He really is the one of the prophecy," James huddled close to their wife and Nathan and if Harry were bitter, he would deem this the night that they began to treat him coldly.

"It is with a heavy heart that I am in agreement. The Longbottoms were attacked this very night as well and while young Neville survived along with his uncle--he was unmarked," Dumbledore stated. He attempted to rock Harry asleep but at the same time Harry shook himself awake upon hearing news of the Longbottoms demise. The headmaster gasped in surprise at Harry's movement and laughed softly.

"Oh god... Alice..." their mother said in a whisper. Suddenly, she startled out of her thoughts as she remembered something of utmost importance, “Voldemort!” ‘Ah, again with this name. So, that is the name of he-who-must-not-be-named.’ Harry thought. Their mother continued to look about frantically, “where is—”

Their father laughed a bit hysterically, "he's dead, Lily. Nathaniel killed him. Besides that mark, that's how we know that he's the prophecy child."

With her eyes opened comically wide, their mother gaped at Nathan who was asleep within her arms, she then turned her disbelieving gaze onto the headmaster.

The professor eyes twinkled in amusement, "it's true, the boy is exhausted from what I can tell is magical depletion. He has the mark and it even faintly glows. It is young Nathaniel who has slain Voldemort-at least we are assuming that it is, unless you were the one to vanquish him?"

Vehemently their mother shook her head in the negative, “no, no, I was knocked out… Thrown against a wall.”

The professor nodded as if he had suspected as much.

“Well, Sirius has gone with the other aurors, to confirm Voldemort’s remains. Only his ashes could be found, we will know for sure if they are truly the remains of Lord Voldemort in a week’s time.”

His parents became subdued and their mother looked awfully thoughtful.

"From the magic residue left in the nursery, I infer that Voldemort attempted an Avada Kedavra and Nathaniel threw it back, most likely with accidental magic alone. I believe that he may have used Harrison's magic as they are both equally weak in magic at the moment." The headmaster said thoughtfully as he attempted to make sense of how the d+Dark Lord was defeated and why he would mark Nathan and only Nathan. It forced Harry to remember the woman of light. He knew that it was not a manifestation of his own magic because the magical signature of the woman felt far too different from his own and she felt far to sentient to be a simple being entirely of magic, but Harry could not figure out who she could possibly be.

Their mother nodded again, and Harry figured she was just accepting the easy answer, one that she could easily understand.

"None of the port keys worked, otherwise you all would have been unharmed and in America right now," Their father stated with a look of silent anger marring his features.

Their mother let out a dry laugh, "the rattle and blanket were gone. Not even accio brought them to
me and my locket just didn't work... Wormtail betrayed us, James."

"I'll kill him. I swear it. I'll kill him with my bare hands," his father said in righteous anger. Anger that left him as quickly as it came and his fell limp against his mother.

Wormtail was a name that was an unspoken accepted taboo in the Potter home, and now Harry knew why. Yet, he still did not know what came of the man. It was something he knew he needed to find out.

While his family and the headmaster sat in somber silence, Harry's body suddenly grew very cold and heavy as if he was submerged in water. He could not breathe, and he frantically closed his eyes and fought to breathe. Suddenly he found himself back in the forbidden forest gulping for air.

When he was able to compose himself, he realized that Bane the centaur still had a rather tight hold on his neck. Harry looked up at him wide eyed and baffled. He felt overwhelmingly confused.

Bane’s face revealed nothing, but he noticed that the centaur’s eyes were no longer so cold, “do you know who you are, Harrison Potter?” Harry found himself being asked the second time that night. When Harry did not respond, Bane lowered himself so that they were eye to eye, “do you know who she was?” Bane asked urgently. He placed a pointed finger on Harry’s chest, right over his heart and right where the woman of light appeared from his chest.

Harry looked at Bane’s finger, then towards Bane and he must have looked terrified because Firenze finally stepped forward and forced Bane to release his hold on Harry, “you moved much too soon, Bane! Look toward the stars, they do not approve! He was not ready for this!” the pale centaur yelled defensively as he gestured toward the stars angrily. Harry noticed that they were twinkling like mad, were they actually speaking? As he continued to watch he could have sworn he saw a few of them move.

Bane moved quickly and was in Firenze space quicker than Harry could blink. Bane stood so close that their noses were touching, “and when will he be ready!? When more unicorns are killed!? When we are killed!? I will not coddle him. Unlike you, I do not live to service humans.”

Firenze looked hurt and dejected, “brother--”

“Harrison! Harrison!” Yelled a frantic Nathan as he broke from the trees and made a beeline to Harry’s side.

Nathan’s true gryffindor shone as he pulled Harry away from Firenze’s hold, “what did you do to my brother!?” he demanded.

“Calm yourself, child. We have done nothing.” Firenze said in an attempt to sooth Nathan which did not work at all as Nathan held Harry closer defensively.

“You’re lying! Look at how scared” he is!” Harry sneered slightly and attempted to speak and dispel the belief that he was frightened. However, he could not speak and when he rose his hand to his throat to see if he was hurt, he discovered that his hands were shaking tremendously. Maybe he was scared, if not then he was shocked. His entire world view has been changed after all.

The centaur who arrived with Hagrid was dark, if not for the light shining on his midnight blue mane Harry would assume that he was black. “Firenze, Bane, you will explain yourself back at the colony. Giant,” the dark centaur said in distaste with harsh eyes directed at Hagrid who had followed Nathan and the centaur to Harry. “Take your brood and go, the boy there,” he gestured to Harry, “witnessed the murder of the fifth unicorn since your lot have begun school. Take care of it
or we will begin killing those who enter here once more. Understood?” The unicorn looked toward Harry--not Hagrid but Harry--expectantly and Harry once again felt that there was another great pressure being placed onto his shoulders, but he nodded nonetheless and received a nod in return. Firenze and Bane followed behind the dark centaur so forlornly that Harry assumed that the darker one must be there father or at least a leader in some capacity.

Hagrid saw Harry holding his wrist tenderly and gently took it in his own and examined it. “Tha’s not good, not at all.” the half giant muttered anxiously.

Harry gently took his hand back and he had half the mind to shake Nathan off of him but he felt that his brother was very tense and frightened himself and so he left him be. “It’s a minor sprain, healer Pomfrey can fix it right up, so I suggest we go and leave this place.” Harry said curtly, irritated from his anxiety and pain.

Hagrid agreed and led them from the forest, and Harry was surprised to see Draco waiting for them when they reached one of the many dirt roads that lead into the forest.

“Merlin, Potter! You’re actually alive!” The platinum blonde exclaimed while he completely ignored Nathan’s and Hagrid’s presence in favor of Harry’s. Harry was touched that the other boy looked openly relieved that Harry did not actually die.

“No thanks to you, surprisingly.” Nathan muttered with no sarcasm and he thanked Draco for getting help.

Draco rolled his eyes, “perhaps if it were you, I would have left you--”

Harry glared at him, “I hope you would not have left my brother to die.”

Draco once again rolled his eyes, “perhaps I would not have because then I’d have the boy-who-lived indebted to me, but I suppose his brother will do just fine.” he said with a smirk directed at Harry.

“You’re a prat!” Nathan growled but Harry smiled ever so slightly, and the four spent the rest of their walk-in silence.

Madam Pomfrey had healed him with ease, but not before she fussed at Harry and jokingly assigned him his own bed. Despite that, she sternly told him that she better not see him in her infirmary again anytime soon. Nathan was allowed to stay by Harry’s side, and he chose to do so closely as he slept in Harry’s infirmary bed. With the dim light from a lantern overhead, Harry stared at he and his brother’s clasped hands and he could not help but focus on his brother’s scar. A scar that had always looked entirely too plain to Harry and if what he experienced was truly the past then Nathan’s scar was exactly that. Plain and un-special.

Harry grimaced, all his developing life Harry had been told that Nathan was a target to you-know-who--to this Voldemort but no one had ever explained why. He and his family were attacked as a whole but the wizarding world accepted and spread the unproven fact that Nathan had apparently killed the man. Perhaps, if the headmaster and his parents were a little quieter about what happened then Nathan would not have such a target on him, and it was due to that that Harry could not help but be angry on his brother’s behalf. No, on his family’s behalf.

Harry closed his eyes and attempted to rest because tomorrow, he would have to request time with the headmaster and inform him of the dark centaur’s demand but Harry felt that they were one step closer to figuring out who had attacked them this night because if Harry remembered right, that figure was the same figure he envisioned attacking him in the Slytherin dungeons when he had met
the bloody Baron many months ago. Harry was also smart enough to request that Hagrid do a headcount of all the professors before he went to bed, and whoever Hagrid discovered to not be present tonight would be the biggest perpetrator.

Most importantly, Harry needed to learn what or who the woman of light was... or is and what the centaurs meant. Were they merely trying to confuse him with all of this, “who and what are you” nonsense? Perhaps, it had to do with the woman of light who was the true vanquisher of Voldemort. Harry grimaced because he could tell no one because no one would believe him. Besides Nathan that is. If Harry discovered who the woman of light was then perhaps he would discover the answers to the centaur’s questions. He was a Ravenclaw after all and even he was victim to his own curiosities.

Harry breathed deeply and once again tried for sleep. A sleep he knew to be most restless due to questions left unanswered. Most of which he could find answers to but the hardest discovery of course would be that of the prophecy.

Chapter End Notes

I really appreciate your support and the investment you have put in following my story! Sorry when my reply to your comments become lengthy, I just get very excited to reply and show my appreciation! You all are awesome!
Father

Chapter Summary

Harry has been wronged by his family that much is clear but can he move past it simply because they want him to? Or will his thoughts of inadequacy set him up for failure?

Chapter Notes

See end notes

See the end of the chapter for more notes

It was a few days after Harry's confrontation with the centaurs and he currently sat at his usual place at the Ravenclaw dining table with Terry, Hermione at his sides. A surprise addition to the table was Nathan. His brother and Ronald Weasley had yet to make up and instead of Nathan merely changing his seating place at the Gryffindor table, he decided to just sit at the Ravenclaw table with Harry.

Thankfully, a majority of his fellow Ravenclaws did not outwardly display their disagreement with Nathan’s presence. Those who did share their disapproval were politely told to mind their business by Harry himself or a few other random students who saw no harm in Nathan being there.

Harry himself was as grateful for Nathan’s as Nathan was of his presence. Due to the fact that Harry was still rather shaken from his world being turned upside down by the centaurs. It had only been a mere two days since Harry’s deadly encounter in the Forbidden Forest and Harry was rather surprised to hear that it had been the unremarkable defense against the dark arts professor; professor Quirrell who had been relieved of his post at Hogwarts.

Well, relieved was the term that headmaster Dumbledore had reluctantly used the night the headmaster announced the news. Harry was later informed by Hagrid that professor Quirrell was to be given to the centaurs for hunting and killing an endangered mythical breed illegally in their lands. Harry had demanded that Hagrid not tell Nathan of such an event and instead chose to write to his father to see if the man knew anything about the situation. It all seemed abrupt and hasty in Harry’s opinion.

As if on cue, the owls for students with post swooped in. Hedwig came and went after she received a treat and a fond pet from Harry. Hedwig was as solitary as Harry it was because of that they got on so well.

Harry reviewed his mail and he put the usual postage from Sirius, Remus, his mother, and lady Malfoy to the side. Typically, Harry opened mail from his mother first, but he was rather curious about the inquiry from his father. Of course, he hoped the man would inform him of his results regarding Hagrid and the dragon egg. More than that however; he wanted the man to give him more information in regards to his inquiries on the legalities of the former Defense professor’s sentence. As he opened the parchment, he noticed that Nathan was watching him with much
intrigue, he raised a brow at the other boy and with it he conveyed that Nathan was being nosy. Nathan looked away sheepishly at being caught and he idly began to focus on his own mail.

As Harry looked at his father’s letter, he immediately noticed that it only took up three lines and under the man’s signed name was a crudely drawn self-portrait waving at Harry. Harry was baffled by this to say the least and he only became more baffled once he actually read the letter.

*My heir, Harry,*

*We will speak soon. Look at the teacher’s table.*

--*Your father, James*

Harry looked up and he could not control his face from displaying his surprise quick enough as he saw his father sitting next to professor Flitwick with a mischievous grin on his face while he waved at him, imitating the crude drawing that was included in his letter.

A curious but quiet noise escaped Harry’s throat. His father could not speak to him or give him the answers to his questions while so far away so, Harry lost interest in the man’s presence and put his focus toward his food. Nathan on the other hand must have gotten a similar note because he looked toward the head table and nearly began to bounce in his chair from excitement. He then nudged Harry repeatedly and gestured to the head table.

“Yes, I’ve noticed, Nathaniel.” Harry said plainly. Nathan inquired after their father’s presence aloud, and Harry thought about answering him, but Hermione provided a quicker answer than he, “yesterday, professor Flitwick temporarily took over professor Quirrell’s class. That’s James Potter--your dad, right? I read a few textbooks about the aurors and your dad and they mention your father’s dueling skills in detail. Maybe he’s here to take over the Defense post permanently?”

“Cleverly thought, Hermione,” Harry complimented. He ignored Hermione’s slight blush and looked toward the head table once more and could not refrain the frown that formed on his face when he saw his father speak animatedly with professor McGonagall while professor Snape’s lips were slightly down turned. The man was sulking, dare Harry think. Professor Snape must have felt eyes on him and looked in Harry’s direction. When they made eye contact, the darkly clad man slightly bared his teeth in a subtle snarl.

When the man did this during meal times it usually meant, “stop staring at me, you brat and pay attention to your peers.” Usually, Harry would humor him and look away but this time Harry gave the man a forced smile and straightened his own shoulders to inspire his professor to do the same. The professor frowned slightly before he straightened his own shoulders ever so slightly and began to focus on his meal.

“That’d be so cool! Auror Potter is known for his use of offensive spells, perhaps we’ll learn more than just defense and theory!” Terry gushed excitingly which brought Harry’s attention back to his table.

As the three other first years continued to gush about auror Potter Harry zoned out. Harry could not relate to his peer’s excitement that his father would possibly be working at Hogwarts for an undetermined amount of time. While the man was family--his father--Harry did not wish to see him everyday as he had growing up. Coming to Hogwarts had been the best thing to happen to he and his father's relationship with one another because the less they saw each other, the less they argued.

Harry’s attention remained elsewhere for the next ten minutes, until the headmaster had finally called for everyone’s undivided attention with a clank of his silverware against his goblet.
“Good morning, students. I am sure that some of you have noticed our guest…” The headmaster began. He gestured for their father to stand which the man did with pride coloring his face and his head held high.

“If I may introduce to you, your temporary Defense Against the Dark Arts instructor, auror James Potter.” The headmaster made a grand gesture with his free hand toward their father and the rest of the students applauded and bid him welcome. Harry clapped softly and subtly glanced over at his brother who seemed to be utterly captivated by their father’s presence as he clapped over enthusiastically. Harry silently thanked Merlin that his father would only be teaching temporarily and returned to the rest of his letters, food forgotten and his mood more than soured.

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Hours later, Harry was in his first Defense class taught by his father. The class was only halfway in and Harry was already rather irritated since his first class with he and Nathan's father was not going as well. At least not as well as Nathan’s apparently had.

Nathan had gushed and raved about how their father had taught the Gryffindor and Slytherins a few offensive spells such as the stunner stupify and a stinging hex. He had even allowed them to practice among one another and get a feel for the two spells and had complimented Nathan’s magical strength when the boy successfully used both. Even though Nathan had been able to perform it since getting his wand one year ago.

The Ravenclaws and Hufflepuffs however, were being quizzed on theory and when Harry says Ravenclaw and Hufflepuff, he really means himself.

“Mr. Potter, what is stronger than the Protego charm?” His father questioned him as he paced idly.

“Protego Duo.” Harry answered easily.

His father nodded and turned his attention to the rest of the class. “What Mr. Potter failed to include is that the Protego Duo is more powerful than the incantation of it’s more simple form; protego.”

Harry looked down toward his notes in frustration and embarrassment. He did not fail to do anything. His father had not asked him for such an explanation and the latter information should be common knowledge anyway. Usually, Harry could ignore his father’s criticisms at home but for some reason, the setting being at Hogwarts was making it difficult to wave off his father's remarks. Perhaps because he was beginning to have so much leeway among the other students in his year. He was usually not seen as stupid or weak but his father was certainly making him feel that way.

His father continued, “now, who can tell me a spell even stronger than that of Protego Duo.”

Harry did not even bother to raise his hand, he rarely ever did in any of his classes. However; he made it a point to not even pay attention to his father as he returned his attention to the notes he had been writing earlier before his father chose to target him.

“Ah, yes, you with the very curly hair. Misses?”

“Granger,” Hermione answered promptly, “A spell stronger than that of Protego Duo is Protego Maxima. However; Protego Horribilis is deemed even stronger even though it does not cover as broad of an area.”

“Very good, Miss Granger! Ten points to Ravenclaw.”
Harry continued to pointedly ignored what was happening around him and chose to take his own set of notes. He was not taking notes about the protego charm--no, he already knew much about it from his prior training and studies back home and his father knew that. Harry was concentrating on year three spells and theory, using notes from Adrian’s old journals to study from.

“Mr. Potter! You have dutifully been taking notes. Let’s see if your applied knowledge is better than your theory. If you would, please come to the center,” His father said sternly. His voice was laced with the tiniest bit of annoyance that was easy to identify if one were to listen closely.

Terry and Hermione looked at one another in confusion, Harry's father's attitude had not gone unnoticed by the two.

Harry's father stood a few feet across from him with his wand at the ready. He instructed Harry to assume the position and Harry did so dutifully.

“I will cast the harmless tickling charm; Titillando, at Mr. Potter and he will perform a simple Protego charm and reflect it.” His father stated to the room at large, he did not look happy or smug, just stern. His face and language told Harry that what he said better happen or he would be met with fierce disappointment which was usually followed by passive insults.

Hermione’s hand shut up immediately, and she did not even wait to be called on, “but sir! Not even most adult wizards can successfully perform the charm! It is very difficult to perform and requires not only a lot of practice but harsh control over one’s magic!” Her cheeks were bright red and she was doing her best not to display her indignation at Harry’s father's demand. Admittedly, Harry felt rather good to see his fellow Ravenclaw’s nod their agreement at Hermione’s words. The Hufflepuffs watched on curiously and awaited his father’s response with baited breath.

With a kind smile directed at Hermione, his father said; “this is true Miss Granger. Harry, however, can perform the charm adequately. To his fortune and advantage, Harry has been tutored in harmless charms such as the protego since young. Unlike, muggleborns such as yourself. It is why I was very impressed with your answer because it is something Harry should know like the back of his hand but apparently, he does not.”

Quietly, Harry seethed at his father's response. He did know the charm quite intimately. He had been forced to.

It appeared that Hermione as well was unimpressed by the response, her cheeks actually puffed out. She wanted to inform the man that the only way Harry could perform the charm adequately so young would be due to being forced to practice it harshly and repetitively which could be quite draining on the body and taxing on the mind. Hermione smartly remained quiet but trembled with anger.

This time it was Susan Bones who spoke out, “professor Potter, one of my good friends in Gryffindor had told me that they and the Slytherins got to focus on more practical and offensive lessons. Why is it that us--Hufflepuffs and Ravenclaws do not get similar treatment?”

Susan’s cheeks were as red as Hermione’s and she looked toward his father with defiant eyes. Momentarily, Harry saw her glance his way and he was surprised to find her eyes alight with worry. When she was caught she quickly returned her eyes to her staring contest with his father. Harry noticed that Ernie--who was sat beside Susan--stared at his father with the most disapproving frown an eleven year old could muster. Harry did not know when he had earned such Hufflepuff loyalty but he was flattered that he had it and in a way Susan had spoken on behalf of all students present.
By teaching only theory and defense to a group of Ravenclaws who are said to only be book smart and a group of Hufflepuffs who are said to be cowards; his father was indirectly sticking with stereotypes that Hufflepuffs weren’t brave and therefore needed to study more defense than offense and he was also indirectly saying that Ravenclaws could not be fighters and needed more tactical lessons rather than practical.

His father began to look almost shy but his pride kept his expression neutral and he spoke with authority, “because I am the professor and I deemed this lesson the best suited for your class, after much thought and consideration, Ms. Bones.

Now, it seems that you all lack faith in mister Potter and it makes me wonder what kind of weaknesses he has been expressing to garner such tender treatment.” His father spoke through a genuine and uncertain frown. He was not being coy but he really believed that they were defending Harry because he could not defend himself and in Harry's opinion; that just would not do.

Harry numbed himself to any emotions and met his father with a blank stare. He readied his wand that he had lowered it when his classmates had begun to ask questions, “I think it’s very important that my classmates at least know the movements for the charm, I think I could show them that much even if my shield may not meet your satisfaction, professor.” Harry said.

Harry saw from the corner of his eye that Terry watched the scene warily from his seat. Harry knew that his voice was completely dull and void of all emotion. Often times Harry spoke in clipped or curt manners, because he felt that he could not bother to use more words than necessary to express what he had to say. However, even then one could always pick out certain emotions, whether it be anger, annoyance and the occasional open tone of happiness but that was only once one got to know him a little better and learned to spot the difference. Terry was one of the few who could spot the difference and would be worried that he could hear no emotional affliction. Terry called such behavior "Harry's shutting down, behavior." Which Terry had seen occur only when Harry was extremely angry or stressed.

Hermione as well, could discern most of Harry's odd behavioral quirks and she must have noticed Harry shutting down as well because she exchanged worried looks with Terry from her own seat.

“Are you ready?” His father asked as he pointed his wand at Harry.

Harry nodded and before his father could even finish canting, titillando Harry had canted protego even quicker. Not that anyone besides himself heard as he had whispered it very quietly. He was too angry and insulted to say it louder than a whisper.

In the past, Harry would have taken his father’s words and criticism as fact, he would have apologized for being a disappoint and would promise to do better.

Now, however, after spending so much time away from his over bearing father and distant mother, Harry has met people like; professor Snape, professor Flitwick and hell, even the Bloody Baron who has taken Harry under his wing as an honorary Slytherin. Those people and beings corrected Harry’s mistakes by first praising what he got right before they went on to explain what he did wrong. They explained their disappointment instead of leaving Harry to wonder why he was not good enough. They did more than speak at him or around him unlike his father.

For the first time in his short lifetime, Harry felt that his father was too harsh on him, at least in comparison to his brother. Or in comparison to how other adults have treated Harry so far ever since he and his family had come out of hiding entirely.

No matter what Harry did, he was met with harsh criticism from the man who currently stood
before him with an uncertain look displayed by his raised brow and thinned lips. Even now he doubted Harry, despite Harry’s dueling tutor telling the man that Harry had great promise as a dueler.

If he succeeded and the shield held, he doubted that he would receive any praise from the man, for he rarely ever did. His father would merely tell Harry that he did what was expected of him and if Harry failed then Harry would never be allowed to forget it. His father would mention it and use it as an opportunity to remind Harry how easily he can fail. Usually, Nathan would defend his honor by arguing that Harry did his best and that that should be enough. However; they were no longer home, Nathan would not just be defending Harry’s honor from his father or the harsh tutors that agreed with the man but to the entire school that would undoubtedly learn of his failure from his father himself. Harry was not allowed to fail. Harry was not allowed to be careless.

Nathan was not treated like he. Nathan received praise for nearly everything he did, and when he failed the blame was somehow almost always placed onto Harry because Harry should have helped Nathan succeed because he was the oldest, he was the heir and he was the one with more tutoring lessons than Nathan.

Harry felt anger and he put that anger into his spell and when his father’s titillando landed on Harry's shield, the man was flung back with so much power that he was thrown to the other side of the room and into a nearby armored statue while he laughed uncontrollably. Harry did not even smile at the silliness created. He did not even feel triumphant.

Fortunately, his father was not a weak man, and he stood up while he giggled uncontrollable due to being hit by his own tickling charm. It was obvious that a bit of wind was knocked from him as he choked and coughed in between his laughter but the man gained his composure quickly after he easily dispelled the tickling spell and doing a short breathing exercise.

With measured and controlled steps, his father walked to the center of the room and grabbed Harry by the shoulder firmly. He pulled Harry to his side in an almost one armed half hug that would be seen as fatherly by the class, but to Harry, it felt authoritative and oppressing.

"And that students, is how you perform protego.” His father stated. He looked down at Harry in what Harry could have mistaken for slight pride and awe. The protego charm really was a difficult charm after all. It had taken Harry 3 hours of training everyday of an entire month to perform it with ease and it had taken another month to be able to hold it for more than 5 minutes without becoming fatigued. The month after that, Harry was magically fatigued and had to take a break from spell casting to regain his strength and allow his endurance to recover and grow. Harry had been miserable, extremely so. However, his father had told him that it would be worth it because if he or Nathan were ever attacked Harry would be grateful that he could defend them with a right and proper shield even though the training to perform said shield was magically and mentally taxing.

His father released him and with a clap of his hands he dismissed the class three minutes early with demands that Harry stay after. Terry, Hermione, Susan and even Ernie Macmillan looked at Harry with worry. They were apprehensive about leaving him alone with the abrasive man that he knew as a father.

“Our next class is potions, I will be sure to let Snape know why you’re late.” Terry said in a stern manner that surprised Harry because while Terry was extremely smart, he could be rather aloof, a bit too playful but respectful in the presence of authority. Currently, Terry was bordering on being disrespectful with his arms crossed while he watched Harry’s father place an authoritative hand on Harry’s shoulder with an openly disapproving look marring Terry's face.
Susan Bones nodded along with Terry's words and then watched Harry and his father with a similar stubborn look that matched the one Terry was giving the two but with sadder eyes. Hermione gently pushed them both towards the door, and quietly reprimanded Terry to refer to professor Snape as “professor Snape” as she ushered them out.

When everyone left, it left Harry alone with his father.

“Come,” his father commanded as he lead them to his desk. His father more or so plopped down in his seat and with a flippant wave of his hand he silently commanded Harry to sit down at the seat in front of the desk. Harry did so heavily. He was slightly fatigued from performing the protego charm and so once his bottom touched the chair, he slumped. He sat up quickly however, because he did not want to give his father a chance to remark on his posture.

While his father got comfortable Harry could not help but feel uncomfortable himself. If felt as if the were in his father’s study. It always felt suffocating being alone with the man at those times because those were times he taught Harry his responsibilities as heir and went over his lesson summaries given by his tutors. Nearly always, his father criticized his marks harshly. Harry would be lying if he said that his father’s presence in school was appreciated by him. No, he missed the brisk bluntness of their letters that gave them the privilege of not speaking about personable matters in person.

“How are you, Harry?” His father inquired awkwardly.

Harry frowned deeply, is this what the man wanted to speak about? His father could have easily requested his presence after classes instead of cutting into his other class times. Professor Snape was going to be most upset. Perhaps, that was what his father wanted. The man never hid his dislike for the potions master until he and Nathan began school and that was only after their mother demanded that he stop for the hundredth time.

“I am well.” Harry said stiffly.

“How very good.” His father said and despite his words, he looked nervous and unsure. This made Harry feel awkward and he longed to ask the man if he could go to his next class, but he knew not to press his luck and risk irritating his father.

Suddenly his father’s mouth formed a whimsical smile and he spoke with a deep fondness, “I spoke to Hagrid for you as you asked. You were right to come to me. I got the egg taken care of with little to no problem just yesterday with none but Hagrid, myself and now you the wiser.”

Harry hummed, this was very good news. Nathan would be able to relax tremendously once he heard it.

"Now, in regards to your inquiry about professor Quirrell..."

Ever so slightly, Harry perked up at this since he has been anxious to hear word of the details of the sentencing since he had written to his father a few days ago.

With eyes that revealed nothing, his father watched him. Harry refused to squirm under his gaze and waited patiently.

His father's face became serious and his voice lost the warm tone that it carried only a few seconds prior, he spoke in a stunted and unsure manner. “…I… inspire you to… Not trouble yourself with such thoughts. Dumbledore, the centaurs and myself have taken care of the problem to the satisfaction of the Department of Magical Law Enforcement and that should satisfy you enough.”
The words caught Harry so off guard that he gasped, if not for his control, he could have gaped at the man and displayed his disbelief, but he refrained. He could not stop the slight twitch that came from the refrain of reigning in his aggravation. In the past, his father would not hesitate to inform him of such a thing! The man was beginning to withhold information from him and Harry did not know why.

Harry had thought that their recent exchange of letters had become strained and lacking in information, because now, when Harry made inquiries about the current status of his father’s auror position or his mother’s progress with her charms, his father would barely acknowledge those curiosities and concerns in his replies, often choosing to change the subject to Harry’s studies or he would be direct and tell Harry to focus on his studies. None of this would be a problem if not only a few months prior, his father had no qualms about sharing such information with him.

Before Harry could say anything his father stood and told Harry to follow suit. He then walked Harry to the door with a guiding and firm hand on his shoulder, dismissing him. As they walked the man informed him that he and Nathan would be having a private dinner with their mother and himself next week, Saturday evening in his father’s school quarters.

Harry remained quiet and decided to use his silence as agreement. Once they were both outside of the Defense Room his father noticed his solemn, silent mood and forced Harry to face him.

For a moment he simply took Harry in with his hands laid heavily on his shoulders. His father’s expression looked pained and thoughtful.

Slowly, big hands rose and were placed on either side of Harry’s face gently. While his father was lost in his own thoughts, Harry was assaulted with the image of a slim and utterly gorgeous woman with dark brown hair that was curled slightly at the tips and ended at her waist. Her eyes were a dark auburn color, darker than Harry’s own but not by much and as Harry saw her smile he noticed that while her teeth were rather crooked, they were white and her smile appeared kind. She had four beauty marks. The most noticeable one was on her neck because it was above a jagged scarred line that circled around the woman’s throat. She was gorgeous. She was beautiful. She was radiant and Harry was overwhelmed from the mere image of her.

"Who was she?" Harry heard the echo of the voice of Bane the centaur ask him cryptically in his mind.

Harry’s came back to his father idly fixing his hair from his eyes. Harry was slightly out of breath and watched his father with wide eyes. The man patted his back, then he gently pushed him in the direction to the dungeons after he demanded for Harry to keep working hard. Was it a demand or was Harry over thinking? His father looked and sounded awfully loving just then.

Harry was so dazed from his thoughts that it was not until he reached the potions room, that realized his father did not give him an excuse slip for professor Snape despite causing Harry to be nearly ten minutes late.

When Harry entered the potions room, professor Snape did not look happy at all. “Another Potter late to my class for the second time today. It seems that the arrogance of your father is reflective of you lot.”

It was physically impossible for Harry to refrain from gaping at the man before his eyes began to burn and he was forced to close them. Harry said nothing despite feeling very hurt.

Just last week, during one of their recurring meetings professor Snape had complimented Harry on his individuality and now here he was insinuating that Harry was like the man who jokingly told...
others that he was adopted. Not to mention that Harry also felt very raw from the ordeal with his father.

“With all do respect, sir. Professor Potter kept Harry behind as miss Granger and miss Bones informed you the moment they entered the class room, sir.” Ernie Macmillan said through teeth that were obviously clenched.

Harry saw that the majority of the students present nodded in agreement to Ernie’s words and it made him feel a bit better.

“I see that mister Potter is too good to speak for himself and has a need for others to do it for him.”

The words reminded Harry of what his father had said earlier, "it seems that you all lack faith in mister Potter and it makes me wonder what kind of weaknesses he has been expressing to garner such tender treatment.”

Maybe Harry really was soft because right now, he found himself feeling very tender in response to professor Snape's words.

"15 points from Ravenclaw for careless tardiness, mister Potter and 10 points from Hufflepuff for your cheek, mister Macmillan. Is there anything you’d like to say on your own behalf, Potter?” Professor Snape said through sneer most severe.

“I… apologize for my tardiness, sir.” Harry said quietly with eyes on the professor’s nose in slight defiance. He felt disgusted with himself that he choked up a bit when he said “I.” However, he made the right decision by remaining respectful when he saw that the other students were watching the scene intently and gave him subtle nods of support and looks of respect.

Before the professor could make fun of him for almost crying in front of the entire class Harry politely asked if he could sit down. He was thankful that his bangs currently covered the entirety of his eyes because he knew that they were very red, like his neck likely was.

If he could have seen the man before him clearly, he would have seen the quick flash of regret light the professor’s eyes before the man gruffly gave him permission to sit down.

Harry sat next to Ernie who surprised him by rubbing his back in comfort. Harry did not brush him off and he remained mournfully silent for the rest of the class.

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Snape sat stiffly in his seat at the table in the staff room. They had just completed a routine weekly staff meeting and regular staff were leaving. Thankfully, Potter senior left with the other professors who were not heads of house because he longed to discuss with the headmaster how the man has already grated his nerves in a week.

There was really no easy way to begin to explain the list of reasons Potter senior was an awful professor but Snape could surely try. For instance; the man unfairly distributed points to Gryffindors and took an unfair amount from his Slytherins. (professor McGonagall would express that the same could be said for Snape in regards to his Slytherins but hell, if he didn't give his Slytherins points, no one else would.) Potter senior had also given detentions to his Slytherins (and ONLY Slytherins) for things he could not possibly prove that they had done and he had taken to distributing any detentions Snape gave to Gryffindor students with McGonagall, ensuring that they more than likely receive no actual punishment. The man was hell but he was subtle and charismatic about it. Far more charismatic than he had been in the past and it only made the headmaster, the
other professors and students (who were not Snape's Slytherins) accept his behavior and believe his lies all the more.

But not Snape. Snape saw through the bully’s manipulations and trickery.

"Now that the weekly overview has transpired, is there anything those remaining wish to disclose?" The headmaster asked those present.

“"I am quite worried about young Mr. Potter,” Flitwick said to the room at large the moment Potter senior left. The headmaster eyed the small man with interest and Snape sipped his tea acting as if he were disinterested.

McGonagall perked up at the small man's words, “why would you be worried about Mr. Potter? I have never seen him quite so cheerful.”

“I meant my Mr. Potter, Minerva.” Flitwick said with a sly smile.

McGonagall looked rightly embarrassed but the only thing that gave her away was the tint of her cheeks.

“May I inquire as to why you are concerned, Filius?” The headmaster inquired kindly despite the concern evident in his eyes.

“Well, he has just been so… sullen this past week. He no longer speaks out in class, nor does he make himself available to assist the others in their studies as he did most mornings and evenings which has been a regular practice since mister Potter had begun assisting his peers earlier this school year. Now, he has begun to wake before his fellow Ravenclaws and only reappears for classes giving no one any chance to speak with him. This was not the case weeks prior to this one.

If you have not noticed, he has also not eaten in the dining hall all week, I am concerned as to whether he has been eating properly at all. Even his closer group of friends have approached me and voiced their concerns about his behavior and frankly, I am very worried because he respectfully cancelled our monthly meetings despite confiding that he quite enjoys them in the past!” Flitwick fiddled with his wand nervously and allowed the staff present to take in his words.

Snape frowned deeply himself but gave no comment. It became such a habit that he is only just now realizing that he and Harry had been meeting twice--sometimes even three times a week, prior to this one. It was as if Harry had been openly avoiding him and if Snape really thought about; this week Harry was always five minutes early and would not utter a single word the entire class period. Even during partnered potions. Harry had begun to partner with the Macmillan boy who took to his silent directions with a natural ease in comparison to his past partner Susan Bones.

After Potter seniors first day, Snape felt guilty for harassing the Potter heir for his tardiness as he had and the days following, Snape made an effort to not to draw attention to the boy by calling on him, or watching him too closely in silent apology for upsetting the boy so last week.

Snape even planned to call Harry to his office this weekend and speak with the boy on the matter of his reaction because he actually missed the child’s company. Mostly, Snape selfishly missed how the boy looked toward him for guidance and sometimes even comfort from his struggles on the rare occasion.

If Snape were to be honest, he would admit that he has already grown rather attached to young Harrison Potter, despite the fact that he is fathered by bloody James Potter. The same James Potter who tormented Snape during his own school years, and with the way Potter senior continued to
call him Snivellus with his younger child was further proof that the man hadn’t changed much from the bully he had been in his time at Hogwarts as a student in Snape’s opinion.

The headmaster had listened attentively while Flitwick spoke and when he responded it was while he gently stroked his beard as he thoughtfully stared at nothing, “I will talk with young mister Potter as soon as I can. I have not had the fortune of more one on one time with him as all the students are my responsibility, so I appreciate that you have shared your concerns with me. Is there anything or anyone else that I should know about?”

Flitwick looked at McGonagall and Snape nervously as if he was unsure to speak more while the two were present. Snape sneered at him, McGonagall however felt more put out and crossed her arms over one another stubbornly with her lips pursed thinly.

“Perhaps, we could continue this in your office? The concern with my Raven is a private one. One I do not think he would appreciate being told to staff who may have more bias opinions if I am to be blunt, headmaster.”

The headmaster looked mildly surprised at Flitwick’s words but he stood nonetheless and told Flitwick to meet him in his office. Flitwick bid them a goodnight and ignored McGonagall’s harsh stare as he trekked behind the headmaster obediently.

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Snape had waited for Flitwick’s meeting to end with the headmaster while he sat on a waiting chair outside of the headmaster’s office. An hour had passed by the time Flitwick exited the office and the small man did not seemed at all surprised to see Snape waiting. Flitwick smiled kindly before he bid Snape a ‘good night’ and took his leave.

It was only a moment later that the headmaster cracked his office door open and permitted Snape to enter.

“Severus, my boy. Please, sit.” The headmaster spoke as he himself sat at his chair behind his desk. Immediately, the older man opened a canister on his desk that seemed to have a never ending supply of lemon drops. Promptly he removed one and popped it into his mouth. He then proceeded to open a drawer in his desk and took out a small black case. When it was opened small bits of Blackest Licorice were revealed to be inside. Blackest Licorice was licorice so black that it was coined as tasting like the color black itself in all its bitterness. It was Snape’s favorite. The headmaster held it out toward Snape with a knowing smile.

“Blackest Licorice, my boy?”

Snape pretended to be disinterest but took one and proceeded to eat it slowly. The headmaster knew that Snape would not speak at all while he had food in his mouth so he used the time to summon a house elf and request tea. By the time the house elf returned with the tea Snape had swallowed his licorice.

“Did Flitwick speak of the Potter heir?” Snape inquired brazenly before he took a sip of his tea.

The headmaster stared at Snape skeptically over his glasses, “now Severus, It’s just us, you do not have to refer to young Harry so formally. Also, you know that I shouldn’t be sharing things with you what the other professors tell me in confidence.”

“I understand, however, you know that I have been a confidant of the Potter heir. Even more so
than Flitwick. I think Flitwick is misunderstanding of the relationship the Potter heir and I have. He assumes I dislike the child as much as I dislike the boy’s father, and if the look he gave professor McGonagall meant anything than he has noticed her favoritism of the youngest Potter and her disinterest in the elder and did not want to say anything she did not need to hear and report to Potter senior. Am I correct, headmaster?”

The headmaster leaned back into his chair. He furrowed his brow deeply and stared at Fawkes who had perched himself near the door behind Severus. “Professor Flitwick cannot help his assumptions, Severus. After all, you have treated young Nathan rather harshly in the past.”

Snape sneered and the headmaster held his hand up in a gesture of peace, “yes, I know. You have taken to ignoring the boy now and I must take that for the improvement it is in regards to your person. Nathan is a rather bright reflection of his father at times but even you cannot compare him to James in his school days. Nathan is rather thoughtful, and near sensitive where James was brash, blunt and at times over confident.”

Snape scoffed at the headmaster’s refusal to call James Potter the bully that Snape knew he was.

The headmaster continued, “I also implore you to not be harsh on Minerva. She is rather hands off-”

“She is too hands off,” Snape interrupted.

“Please, Severus, do not interrupt so. As I was saying, Minerva is rather hands off with her own lions. It is unsurprising that she does not know young Harry--a Ravenclaw--very well. She does praise his transfiguration work tremendously and has stated that while Harry knows more practically, Nathan beats him in application but she praises him nonetheless.”

Again, Snape scoffed, this time with a roll of his eyes, “please! Harry is ahead in all of his courses. You sound like Potter senior, complimenting every little thing the youngest Potter does!”

“Now, Severus, those were Minerva’s words, not mine.” The headmaster stated, his eyes were twinkling in amusement which irritated Snape even more as he was already irritated from his impatience due to not getting an immediate answer to his inquiries regarding Flitwick’s talk with the man.

“Will you be sharing professor Flitwick’s concern with me or not, headmaster?” Snape demanded gruffly.

The headmaster stood and grabbed a few grapes from the fruit bowl that lay on the tea table. He greeted Fawkes and gave the phoenix a few grapes before he replied to Snape, “Severus, listen. Do not speak until I am finished.” The headmaster said sternly as he approached his desk and leaned on the corner nearest to Snape.

Snape merely nodded, he felt properly chastised. He gestured for the older man to speak.

“I will share with you what I think you should hear in order to help young Harry cope with the rest of the year. I trust that what I shall say will stay in the office and most importantly not be heard by or used against James’ person. Is that clear?” The headmaster stated sternly as he stared into Snape’s eyes with a stern look that matched his tone.

“Crystal.” Snape agreed through gritted teeth.

The headmaster considered Snape’s sincerity but he knew that the man was very fond of Harrison Potter. He trusted him to use this information to merely help the boy as they could not outright
intervene even if they did not agree with his upbringing.

“Filius noticed that young Harry began to act oddly ever since his father appeared in the castle. He also observed that James is rather strict with Harry but not with Nathan. For example; during breaks, Filius observed James telling Nathan to relax or have fun. While any fun that Harry had was called a distraction if noticed by his father. Earlier this week, Ravenclaws Terry Boot and Hermione Granger were teaching young Harry and a Hufflepuff by the name of Ernie Macmillan how to play a muggle game called Jacks. It's actually an intriguing game, Severus. You take pointed pieces of plastic and a rubber ball and then proceed to gather all the pieces while also catching the ball after bouncing it. Muggles find interest in the most mundane things.”

Snape did not reply to the headmaster gushing about muggles and curtly asked the headmaster to continue, "headmaster, if we could remain on topic...

Thankfully, the old man took no open offense and continued, “yes, forgive me. I am easily distracted in my old age. Moving on; while they played in the courtyard they had gathered a small and diverse audience of muggleborns, halfbloods and even other purebloods besides young Macmillan. Other teachers such as professor Sprout gathered as well. It’s simply refreshing to see the students mingling in such a way, which has been happening more and more since young Harry has begun to take part in the little club he and some fourth years conjured up.”

It was hard to control himself from displaying his annoyance because the headmaster was rambling yet again, however, Snape had noticed Harry and a few upper year students meeting weekly and coming up with ways to make students of all backgrounds mingle. Once Harry was speaking with him again Snape would be able to learn more about his little group and what it was that they were trying to achieve. Now, however, Snape wanted the headmaster to get to the point and so he did not comment but merely stared blankly at the older man.

“Ah, sorry once more, my boy. I appreciate your patience. During their play, they were interrupted by James, who seemed interested at first. However, once he saw Harry in the middle of it all he had allegedly looked more irritated than interested and promptly told young Harry that if he had time to play than he had time to study and it dispelled any good mood among the group who only broke apart when Harry gestured for them to do so. There have been other instances but surely there will be more since it has only been a little over a week since James appeared," the headmaster said somberly. "It appears that James is a rather strict father figure, but there is little

“I see…” was all Snape said. He did not know how he did not see it earlier. He should have been more observant especially after the talk he and the headmaster had at the beginning of the year.

When he searched the crevices of his memory, Snape could remember how often he saw the youngest Potter with Potter senior in the halls. The two often milled about and were surrounded by other students while they told jokes or were awed at by simple minded students as Potter senior performed some trivial spell that he used for pranks but rarely did he see Harry with them. In fact he rarely ever saw Harry with Potter senior in the halls. If the boy has been as sullen due to his own father's presence as Flitwick expressed than it was unsurprising. Harry reminded Snape of his younger self very much and like his younger self, Harry most likely used Hogwarts as his place of escape from a home life he did not enjoy and it made Snape care for him all the more.

Snape stood from his seat, “I appreciate you telling me this, headmaster. I will be honest, Harry has been avoiding me this week. I... acted... inappropriately in class one evening and perhaps damaged our tentative trust that we had created. I am planning on... remedying the issue tomorrow evening.”

With a blinding smile of pride at Snape, the headmaster wished him luck and in response, Snape looked away shyly.
This made the headmaster smile all the more because he often found young Harry reacted similar to any praise that Severus had given him. Snape would deny it, of course or more than likely not realize that young Harry held him in high regard due to his own self hatred and self doubt which made the headmaster quite sad.

Snape prepared to exit but stopped when the headmaster stood and approached him. A gentle hand was placed on Snape’s shoulder and he was walked to the door.

“Oh! Severus, I thought I would inform you and the rest of the staff that Lily shall be in tomorrow evening upon James’ request. Apparently, she plans to use this privilege and time to inquire on her boy’s classes. She may approach you as his potions professor, I just thought that you should know.” The headmaster said seriously.

He received no response from Snape he looked paler than usual, the headmaster patted the Snape's back gently in support and opened the door. "If you need me, you know where to find me, Severus. I am here for you."

With a nod Snape exited and once the headmaster shut the door, Snape stood in the corridor rigidly, his mind racing.

*Lily,* was coming here, to Hogwarts? Snape had not heard from her since she went into hiding with Potter senior all those years ago after the attack at Godric's Hollow.

The last he did hear from the woman was through a letter of her *apologizing* to Snape for ending their friendship many years ago in their school days.

The most surprising thing that she had written in the letter was that she had finally begun to understand pureblood, and wizarding culture and understood that Snape had been saving face in front of his fellow Slytherins when he defended his own honor and denounced her.

Snape had never written back and beyond that letter, the two had not had any other opportunities to actually speak with one another. Snape was glad for it, he was uncertain if he wished to continue having any type of relationship with Lily after her heart felt written apology. Slowly he walked morosely toward the dungeons to his quarters. He wanted to sleep and rid his mind of such the woman he pretends to no longer care about.

Chapter End Notes

I had said that I wanted to end year one in this chapter but the character interactions got rather lengthy, so there is one or two more parts after this that will conclude year one! (I really want to conclude it quickly, ha ha but this is a coming of age story with needed character development so a majority of interaction needs to be taken into consideration to really see how Harry (and eventually Nathan in later MUCH SHORTER chapters/paragraphs) grow and develops meaningful relationships.
Saturday evening came awfully fast, much faster than Harry would like because he was sat at the dinner table located in his father’s private quarters with Nathan, their mother and of course; he and Nathan's father himself.

This was an odd occurrence for Harry, not because of the setting but because he was not really given a choice on whether he wanted to eat with them or not. Back home, they never paid any mind if he was at the dinner table and so often he was allowed to eat alone unnoticed.

Well, almost unnoticed. Nathan, of course noticed when Harry was not around and more recently; Remus noticed as well. The two had often tried to encourage Harry’s presence during meal times until Harry stated that he strongly preferred to eat alone. In truth, he simply felt awkward, because he rarely had anything to contribute to the discussions had, nor was he really asked to.

Harry poked at the pasta on his dinner plate morosely while Nathan told a story that had transpired during one of their Herbology classes. Harry only half listened so that he could reply when Nathan prompted but otherwise, he remained quiet.

From time to time Harry could feel his mother's eyes on him but pointedly, he ignored her much to her chagrin.

After a few minutes more of Nathan’s rambling and of his mother attentive stares. Their mother politely interrupted Nathan’s story and asked Harry if he had anything to share of his own. Nathan looked sheepish to have taken all the attention so far and waited eagerly for Harry's response; most of which Nathan already knew about or was a part of.

Harry glanced toward his father who listened with intrigue. Of course, he was listening. Harry knew that the man wanted to catch him saying something incriminating that would prove that he was neglecting his studies or shaming the Potter name as its heir. Harry would not fall for it and simply replied that his semester had been rather mundane, but his classes were interesting at least.

Their mother glared angrily at their father who--in her opinion--had intentionally intimidated Harry into speaking less. His father guiltily looked away and Harry was becoming very agitated and confused because he did not understand why the two were acting so strangely.

“But Harrison! What about Warts?” Nathan asked enthusiastically. He looked at Harry with unbidden pride until he saw Harry’s disapproving glare.
Nathan mouthed “what?” with a defensive look on his face. It was obvious he felt unsure and confused by Harry’s reaction. Harry knew that Nathan was genuinely confused as to why Harry did not want him to mention Warts as it was a point of pride for Harry himself but Harry did not want their father discovering Harry’s involvement within Warts so early due to fear that the man would probably consider it an extracurricular.

Harry knew that their father could force him to end his involvement with the group if the man thought it to be a distraction or something that took too much of Harry’s free time which could be used for studying or training.

It could be said in Harry's defense that Warts was all about learning. Not only that, Harry has been able to create more connections with peers his age under Joseph’s helpful guidance and thanks to Cedric's fondness for him, Harry was even gaining some influence in Hufflepuff. Another amazing benefit of Harry's involvement with Warts was his growing friendship with the other founding members themselves. He knew that he could call on them for help within reason and he could trust that they would do their best to aid him. In turn, Harry would do the same for them, more so because of their involvement with Warts than just their growing friendships alone.

Harry played it safe and downplayed his role as an organizer of the club, “some upper year students have created a club in order to better help students of various backgrounds mingle and better socialize. Their first event was a free course of Wizarding etiquette lessons for muggle raised halfbloods and muggleborns. It was quite successful, I was one of the pureblood raised volunteers and I provided title lessons.”

It was obvious that Nathan did not approve of Harry blatantly downplaying his role and he displayed so with a deep and unhappy frown.

Harry had done more than that as he was the current Programs Chair; even Nathan knew that much despite his disinterest in the administrative side of the forming organization. Being the Programs chair meant that Harry was the one to put events together entirely. Nathan glared at him discreetly, but Harry was thankful that he did not comment or correct him.

His father looked thoughtful but approving and Harry allowed himself to breathe.

Their mother beamed at him, “that’s amazing, Harry! I wish I had something like that during my Hogwarts years. As a muggleborn myself, it would have helped me a lot.”

“Right, it would have, but you’re doing great Lils. You take to Wizarding etiquette like a real pureblood.” Their father complimented playfully. Their mother smiled uneasily but thanked him nonetheless.

Harry wanted to move on from the topic so that they would not ask him any more questions regarding Warts. In an attempt to distract them, he turned to Nathan and prompted him to tell their father of their tutoring lessons with the other students and how they were going.

It was easy to keep Nathan going once you got him started. He mentioned that although the group started off with himself, Harry, Hermione, Terry and Ron, they currently had 10 other students besides themselves who consecutively showed up and traded notes or helped one another.

“Who are the others? Perhaps we know their parents,” their mother asked, pasta long forgotten. She always became enamored with Nathan’s stories and to be fair Nathan was a rather entertaining storyteller because he told things rather animatedly.

“Oh, yeah! Now, it’s just Hermione Granger, Terry Boot, Neville Longbottom, Susan Bones, Ernie
Macmillan, Blaise Zabini, Theodore Nott, Lavender Brown, Tracey Davis and sometimes even Malfoy when he’s not feeling hateful and Nott or Blaise come.” Nathan answered.

Their father looked impressed, but his expression shifted to that of confusion a moment later, “have you not made up with Ron?” Their father knew that Nathan had had a spat with the young Weasley from their exchange of letters, but he must have assumed that the two would have gotten over it by now.

Nathan grimaced, “I tried but he won’t lay off Harrison!”

For a long while, their father said nothing. Harry saw their mother watching him intently and Harry could not help but note that there was a tad bit of annoyance coloring her eye.

“I would like for you to make up with Ron as quickly as possible. In the past we were…” he paused, “...friends with his parents and we have recently reconnected with them. There have been talks of plans of get-togethers with our family and their. I would prefer there be no awkward tension among us and theirs.” Their father said authoritatively.

Momentarily, Nathan looked extremely surprised. Usually, his father would side with most of his decisions and tell him to brush it off, but now his father spoke to him as if he were Harry and it actually hurt Nathan to be frank. He did not like feeling this out of control at all.

Nathan did not argue but he pouted severely and refused to look at their father at all and muttered that he understood and would talk to Ron later.

Their mother spoke viciously at their father, “just because we are friends with the older Weasley’s does not mean that neither Nathan nor Harry should be forced to be friends with their kids. As long as they are respectful to one another there is no need to force a friendship for our sake.” She spoke icily and then she angrily took a sip of her wine that had been ignored until now.

Their father’s eye twitched and their mother’s glare did not waver.

Nathan and Harry looked at one another in open apprehension and confusion. The two noticed the tension that suffocated the room ever since they had entered but they could not understand why it existed.

“Talk to the boy at least. Have Harry go with you, I am sure that this is all a misunderstanding.” Their father said to them as he watched his wife warily. Their mother did not even look at the man in her ire, she instead took another angry sip of her wine.

“Please eat more of your food, Harry,” their mother instructed curtly when she caught him staring at her.

Harry’s eye openly twitched in annoyance and their mother looked less sure the longer Harry stared at her without responding to her earlier command.

He decided to be kind and replied with a truth, “I hate pasta.”

Nathan nodded in confirmation, “Yeah, he does. Harrison hates lots of foods that aren’t sweets. He eats really plainly otherwise, you guys should know that by now.”

Their mother looked dejected for not knowing such a thing. Harry would say that she even looked guilty. Possibly because pasta was one of Nathan’s favorites and she had not considered what Harry would have liked at all. Their father nervously laughed it off and stated that “Harry has always eaten like a bird,” and called for a house elf to bring Harry boiled chicken with plain
vegetables on the side. Harry thanked his father formally when the food appeared a moment later.

The night continued a little less tense and awkward than it started. However; their mother would glare at their father from time to time and their father would pointedly ignore said glare and did his best to make conversation with his sons.

With Nathan he mainly asked after his antics with his peers, and with Harry he inquired after his classes--well, as much as he could before his mother would glare at the man and ask Harry less questions regarding his education.

By the time dinner was over, they all felt extremely tired.

Their mother wanted to walk them both to their dorms and when their father had said that he wanted to speak with Harry alone their mother glared at the man in the most vicious manner yet and said, “James Potter, you better not speak about anything that he does not need to hear, or else.” She threatened openly.

Surprisingly, their father retorted with a heated reply of his own, “Lily. I promised that I wouldn’t. There are other matters that I need to speak with Harry about. Take Nathan and then cool off. We do not need to act this way in front of them.”

Their mother looked momentarily affronted. However, she nodded stiffly and laid a gentle hand on Nathan’s back while the two walked past Harry and their father. Nathan gave Harry a look that said they would be talking about this strange and tension filled night later, and Harry merely nodded his silent agreement.

Once the two were gone, his father released a harsh breath and Harry heard him mutter, “Merlin, I love her but that woman is acting like such a pain…”

He then turned to Harry and placed a firm hand on his shoulder and guided him as they walked through the door and into the halls.

The corridors were as chilly as always and from his father’s slight shiver, Harry knew that the man was not yet re-accustomed to them.

When he spoke his teeth chattered ever so slightly, “I received an interesting letter from your brother who told me about a Cerberus in the school that is apparently guarding a trap door. Allegedly, he found it on his own and while he is playfully mischievous you have never instigated his desire for trouble and now that I know of his row with Ron it’s safe to assume that Ron was the one who discovered it with him? Stop me if I am wrong.”

Harry said nothing.

His father nodded, taking Harry’s silence as confirmation, he sighed and breathed deeply through his nose. “I see and what did this row with Ron exactly intel?”

“That… is between Nathan and Ron. I don’t too much care for the other boy beyond the fact that he is my brother’s friend and that we sometimes study together. I saw no gain in ensuring his friendship until you stated your own friendship with his parents.” Harry stated plainly. It was the truth. Harry was not desperate for friendship, but he would admit that it was nice to have his current friendships and to have someone besides Nathan to talk and play with and Harry knew that Nathan felt the same. His brother had many friends inside Gryffindor and only reached out to the other House students upon Harry’s insistence. Yet, Nathan was closest with Ron and thus was still hurt by the row that he and Ron had. Harry could not understand how they ignored one another for
so long because he was lucky to have friends who voiced their true opinions regarding his person instead of holding him on a heroic pedestal and becoming angry with him when he doesn't meet their standards.

Harry watched as his father cringed at his words. Harry expected to receive a look of disapproval or even to be verbally reprimanded for his blunt honesty, but the man just looked guilty and sad.

It was impossible for Harry to know that his father internally struggled with how his son spoke and regarded friendships. He and his wife had fought constantly over Harry’s socially awkward behavior, they even tried to point fingers at which one of them as the parent was to blame. It was why things had become so tense between them.

“Right...” his father said quietly. Subtly, he looked side to side paranoid and Harry wondered who it was that he was looking for.

“Harry, look--I should have said this when I had you in my office. It’s about Quirrell. I cannot reveal too much but you must look out for Nathan and yourself. Quirrell could--” His father was cut off by the sudden yell of his name.

When Harry looked down the hall where the voice had came, he saw his mother and she looked both angry and hurt, “James Potter. You promised. Does our son’s well being mean nothing to you?” she asked in a whisper. She sounded so very choked up and the display of such raw emotion made Harry feel uncomfortable, but his discomfort was quickly replaced with irritation when he saw the caught look on his father's face. It had to be his mother’s fault that his father had suddenly began witholding information from him and she must be truly intent in doing so because there was no way she had walked Nathan to his dorm and back so quickly. She must have sent Nathan off on his own and waited to catch his father in the act. How annoying.

Before his father could reply Harry briskly walked away and past his mother in the direction of Ravenclaw tower, “I am going to my dorm now. Please, continue your spat without me. Goodnight.” Harry did not hear them call after him because he briskly turned the corner and ran into none other than professor Snape.

“I apologize, professor, I was not watching where I was going,” Harry said quietly with his eyes on the man’s robed chest. Harry was still rather hurt by the man’s cold and overly abrasive behavior at the beginning of the week and he was still unprepared to be alone with the man he had begun to look up to so soon after the harsh treatment he had received. Often, he did not meet the professor’s standard, but the man often followed his criticism with veiled praise, and playful rapport before he effectively told Harry what he needed to do to improve. However; last week even Harry knew that the man had been unnecessarily mean.

“Mr. Potter… Good evening. I just left your dorms after requesting your presence, but you were not there... Are you busy?” the professor asked in a sarcastic drawl that said, ‘I can see that you aren’t busy, and I am only asking to save face.’

Harry wanted to say that yes, he was and push past the man, but he knew that would be extremely rude and he had already disrespected enough adults for the night. So, he shook his head in the negative.

“Good, if you would follow me then.” The professor demanded and led Harry from the corner from which he came away from his parents.

Once they reached the professor’s private quarters, Harry’s mood rose slightly when he saw that his signature tea awaited him. He quickly sat down in his usual seat, grabbed the tea with shaky
hands and took a much needed sip and closed his eyes in contentment as warmth physically flooded through him.

Professor Snape said nothing for a long while. It was only when Harry opened his eyes that he spoke, “you seem stressed,” the man observed.

Harry shrugged and when Snape snapped at him to cease his shrugging, Harry found himself near pouting and close to tears once more. Why the hell was he being so emotional!? His father has commanded him harsher than this and it rarely fazed him! If Harry ever felt anything during those times it was exhaustion and sometimes irritation or anger. Never this awful painful feeling in his chest that made him hate himself outright. Harry HATED that the man before him made him feel this way, a way his father never has.

“I do not know what I have done to… anger you. If you have brought me here to yell at me or compare me to my father then I wish to be excused, sir.” Harry said harshly and placed his tea onto the table next to him before he began to take in deep calming breaths. He was impressed with himself because despite the tears that threatened to fall, his voice remained clear as if he were not about to cry at all.

For a long while the professor said nothing-- after a while, Harry heard the man take a deep breath of his own before he demanded that Harry look at him.

Reluctantly, Harry complied and once he saw the professor’s face; he saw regret and even sorrow in the man’s eyes.

“Mr. Potter--Harry. I’m--I am... sorry,” professor Snape began, hissing the “s” on “sorry” when he spoke.

He continued and Harry was almost amused by how uncomfortable the man was, “I am sorry, and I apologize for... my behavior earlier this week. It was…. inappropriate.” The professor ground out through gritted teeth.

The next bit came out smoother and less forced, “my unfair behavior shall change, I ask that you allow me to prove myself.” Even if it seemed like the professor did not want to say the things that he did, he still said them, and his eyes looked awfully sincere. Harry considered the fact that adults rarely ever apologized to him. So, he did not plan to take advantage of the professor’s vulnerability. However; he did not actually forgive the professor and Harry was very truthful with the man, so he would show him that he was willing to allow the professor to prove himself by being entirely truthful of how he felt.

“I appreciate that, professor. I do not forgive you for that treatment. I have felt disgruntled, disturbed, strange, and disorganized since you spoke at me last.” Harry had tried to understand his own feelings time and time again since the event transpired but he just could not comprehend the things he had felt. However, now that he sat before the man, he felt utterly relieved and elated that the man himself knew that his treatment of Harry had been wrong. Harry felt that he understood himself a bit better now.

“I think it made me... very sad for you to treat me that way and I would most certainly like us to return to before.”

The professor’s face did not reveal his emotions, but the man nodded all the same and allowed Harry to continue to express himself.

While nervous, Harry hoped that saying what he felt aloud would help them both understand why
the situation had transpired so that they could avoid it happening again.

“I noticed that you did not insult me without insulting my father. I do not know what my father has done to you, but I do believe that I am merely his son and not him, so it is not fair to take out your anger for him at me. Respectively, the same can be said in regard to Nathan.” Harry said quietly, slowly and thoughtfully.

Professor Snape grimaced slightly, “of course, you’d notice that.”

Harry smiled slightly, “to be fair, sir. My father has never uttered a positive word about you either. Even before Nathan and I arrived to Hogwarts, we were told to…” Harry paused and grimaced himself when he remembered his father’s exact words, ‘watch out for Snivellus, the bat of the dungeons.’ Harry would not be saying that to his professor. He instead said; “…be mindful of you because you may target us for being his children. However, Nathan and I make it a point to make judgments about others only when we meet them. Nathan experienced and continues to experience what it’s like to be judged on other’s assumptions due to his title as the-boy-who-lived. So, he tries not to do it to others, and I try to follow suit. I am very proud of him.”

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Snape took in another deep breath. The moment the boy had said that he would not forgive him, Snape felt his regret and guilt increase ten fold. However, that dissipated when the boy followed his words with the desire that he and Snape would go back to what they were before.

If that were the case, the boy should be telling him of his week, not of his bloody brother, the-boy-who-lived-to-get-on-Snape’s-last-nerve. The youngest Potter was not as golden as Harry so often painted him.

Even when Snape thought of the brat in a less bias light, the boy was still argumentative and rude, especially when he and the Weasley boy were getting along.

“Mr. Potter, your love and admiration for your brother is known by everyone but I am more interested in how your week has been since we spoke last. I feel that I have missed an awful lot.” Snape drawled, pointedly moving the topic from the-boy-with-no-respect-for-authority-if-his-brother-was-not-around. He refused to openly acknowledge--to Harry that is--that he found it harder to accept Nathan Potter and separate the boy from his father. Unlike Harry, his brother was such a reflection of Potter senior in many ways.

Mainly in look, Nathan Potter looked just like his dunderheaded father. Despite the boy’s hair color reflecting Lily’s own fiery red, it was still short, messy and tousled, just like his father’s. Another attribute from Potter senior, bestowed unto the youngest Potter was the man’s square jaw line, and round brown eyes. Admittedly, the boy was growing to be on the finer side of handsome, much akin to James Potter.

In comparison, Harry on the other hand was on the finer side of pretty and he was softly feminine in a way that caused Snape to often find himself being over protective when Harry roughhoused with other boys.

Not that Harry was ever the instigator when it came to rough housing and that just made Snape all the more protective.

Truly, Snape could not help but think of Harry as delicate, the boy’s soft dark brown hair was well groomed and went well past his shoulders. His skin bordered on the line of being too pale skin. Their were moles that dotted face, and he had big doe eyes that made him appear doll like.
It would be unfair and inaccurate to see the boy entirely feminine, of course because despite his near feminine looks, Harry was also handsome, but in a pretty way and Snape also knew that Harry was a strong young man who often stood up for himself easily. The boy also led with a natural ease that typically came to most men. Yes, Harry was a fine young man and with the right direction, the boy could turn into a great man and Snape wanted to help him get there.

After Snape’s declaration, he and Harry spoke for hours. When asked, Harry discussed Warts at length, and it sounded like quite the organization with the intelligent Ravenclaw Penelope Clearwater as acting president. The young woman held such a reputation among the staff that she had no competition when it came to her chance of being the Head Girl her seventh year.

The former president and current Public Relations chair for the club had a reputation of his own. Ravenclaw Joseph Kama, a student who had managed to fade into the background for two years before he suddenly appeared with a following of influential students.

Surprisingly, the organization even included two of his own Slytherins; Adrian Pucey who was the current treasurer and Peregrine Burke who was the acting vice president.

According to Harry, he and the other founders of the club have even discussion about approaching the young Percy Weasley about a secretary position under Clearwater’s recommendation because in Clearwater's opinion, they needed an acting Gryffindor on their administrative team if they truly wished to unify the school.

It was absolutely astounding that students so young had come up with such a humanitarian organization in Snape's opinion.

When Harry told him all that he could of Warts, Snape inquired after Harry’s visions just to be sure that the boy had nothing of importance to discuss from them. Harry seemed to be reluctant to share anything at first. This disgruntled Snape as just last week the boy had shared some of his most gruesome visions with Snape with little to no restraint. Snape supposed he deserved this distrust. He did not push or pry, he merely waited for the boy to speak. It did not take long for Harry to come to a decision and tell him, “the centaurs did more than warn us about the unicorn killer.”

"What do you mean? Did they threaten you more than you shared?” Inquired Snape, he was doing his best to keep the slight panic from his tone but he knew that Harry had not told them everything in his defense of the centaurs. Snape KNEW more happened than Harry told of his confrontation with the beasts but the headmaster would not allow Snape to press Harry on the matter further the night it happened.

Harry shook his head, “no sir. I still don’t know whether or not what they showed me is true, but they showed me what supposedly happened the night my family and I were attacked by he-who-shall-not-be-named.”

Snape stood from his chair abruptly and went to Harry’s side. He knelt down and gripped the boy’s shoulders with his hands tightly as he shook him lightly. “You foolish boy, how could you not have told me, or the headmaster at least?”

When Harry's expression turned into one of mere thoughtfulness, it only caused Snape's desire to shake him harder grow. He wanted to yell, ‘you have two adults under oath you foolish, child. Use it to your advantage and do not keep these things in!’ However, Snape used all his inner strength and refrained.

“As I said; I do not know if what they showed me was true. You know how fickle divination is. Also, with what the vision revealed, I knew that it may cause doubt whether I myself was being
truthful of what I was shown.” Harry said in his defense.

Snape removed one of his hands and placed it on his knee to balance himself. He left the other on the boy’s shoulder to physically remind the boy that he was there by his side. “Well, let’s hear it. I will tell you whether it sounds ludicrous or not.” Snape demanded not unkindly.

Harry spoke for what could have been fifteen uninterrupted minutes. The story could have easily been told in nine, but the boy never could speak long without becoming agitated. When he spoke for longer than three minutes when speaking of a topic that did not interest him, he would have to stop and take long breaks just as he did tonight. Snape did not rush him; he never did and he has never been more glad for his patience than he was just now. By the end of the boy’s tale Snape was absolutely stunned because if what the boy has told him was true, then this would change everything.

However, it was not the possibility of Harry being the prophecy child that alarmed him, but it was the supposed “woman of light” who saved Harry and his brother’s life. Lily was always adept in charms and Snape wondered if the form was a protective charm of her creation. Snape would have to discuss this further with Dumbledore before he began to grasp at straws.

“Please do not tell anyone!” Harry's voice pleaded in a rush, quite literally yanking Snape from his thoughts. Small hands, gripped Snape’s wrist and when Snape opened his mouth to speak, Harry interrupted him, “no, not even Dumbledore, for now at least.”

Snape was ready to put his foot down and remind Harry who exactly was the adult in the room. However, the real fear he saw in the child’s eyes stopped him.

“And please tell me, Mr. Potter. Why I should not inform the headmaster of such damning information? If your reason meets my satisfaction, then we may be able to bargain.” Snape said sternly.

“As I said. Well, the possibility of what I seen being untrue is reason enough. You, yourself have told me many times that fate can always be changed and divination itself is a load of rubbish,” was Harry's immediate response.

Snape rolled his eyes, “I get it, Potter. You are turning my words back onto me, good job. Continue, why else should I refrain from sharing this news with the headmaster.”

Harry became sheepish and looked away from Snape. When he spoke next, it was in a mere whisper; “being the Potter heir is enough. I could not bear the possibility of having another title. Especially if that title is the possible-boy-who-lived.”

Once Harry finished speaking, Snape stared. He stared and he stared until his knee began to ache from being bent and knelt on the ground for too long. Of course, Harry would shy away from more responsibility and really, the boy was under enough pressure as it was already. What with his father grooming him to be the perfect heir, much akin to… Malfoy. Snape felt as if he had an epiphany with that thought alone.

Unknown to the general public, Snape was rather close to the Malfoy's in general, and he was rather close to the current Malfoy heir he could not help but compare Harry to. When Draco confided in him the boy always felt stressed and separate from his father while at the same time trying to emulate his father and receive his praise. Harry seemed to be the exact opposite of that and that is possibly due to Draco’s situation being much less abusive, well, it wasn’t abusive at all. Perhaps it was a bit too strict and structured at times, but Lucius has never taken a hand to his son, nor would his wife allow him to do so. It was clear that despite the boy's similar upbringing as
heirs, Draco was more confident and socially adept not just because his parents took the time to interact with him and stroke his ever-growing ego from time to time but unlike Harry, Draco also actively interacted with peers his own age as he grew. Harry on the other hand had no such luxuries and was raised by a house elf and handsomely paid tutors who were technical, blunt and sometimes even harsh from what Snape could tell from Harry’s explanations on the rare occasion Snape got him to speak on the matter.

Where Draco sought ways to receive glances from his father, Harry did his best to stay out of his father’s line of sight. Where Draco sought to make his father proud, Harry sought to simply meet the man’s standard so that the man would be satisfied enough to leave him be. Where Draco was encouraged to ask questions and learn, Harry was expected to know and was reprimanded when he didn’t. It was an extremely stressful environment for Harry. More so than young Draco, even as the Malfoy heir who also had to meet the public’s standard or face harsh ridicule and family shame.

Typically, when Draco complained, he wanted to be coddled and held, things his father had begun to do less and less the older the boy became. Snape wondered if Harry needed such comfort from an adult since he had so rarely received it in his short youth. Well, how should he--the none affectionate and grumpy Severus Snape--go about offering affection and care to a child he may be unused to receiving such a thing?

“Harry… I have always taken a slight interest in muggle medical studies myself. Especially, their psychological studies. Psychological is a word that relates to psychology and psychology is ‘the scientific study of the human mind and its functions, especially those affecting behavior in a given context.’”

Harry looked at him as if he was positively barmy while he spoke, but Snape pushed on.

“The other day, I read a muggle article on how hugs cause a rise of the chemical associated with happiness and less stress in one’s body. It is produced during a hug. What I am saying, Mr. Potter, I think that you would be quite the benefactor of a hug in an effort to increase the chemical of happiness within you.”

Snape released his hold on the boy and outstretched his arms, “do not feel pressured to give me a hug because you feel that I am demanding one. The choice is yours, Mr. Potter.”

Harry only hesitated for a second before he slowly rose from his chair and stiffly placed himself in Snape’s arms. Funnily enough the boy’s hands remained at his sides.

Snape did not hesitate, and he quickly engulfed the boy in his arms, “do not feel afraid to wrap your arms around me in a way that is comfortable Mr. Potter. I will not be offended.” Slowly but surely, Harry wrapped his arms around Snape’s torso and sunk further into the hug and relaxed.

Suddenly the boy began to shake, and Snape would have released his hold on him if Harry had not begun to hold onto him so tightly the moment that he had begun to shake.

“Oh, Mr. P—Harry. Harry, you foolish, foolish boy.” Snape hissed. “You are not alone, child. You do not have to let your worries and fears build up to this point.” This point being; ‘until your body shakes uncontrollably from the force of your tears.’ Harry cried so quietly, it was as if he practiced the art of silent crying. Snape only heard the idle sniffle from the child every now and then and that was only when he listened very closely.

Snape moved one of his hands to the back of the boy’s hand so that he could have a better hold of Harry as he got into a more comfortable sitting position on the floor. Harry's body rested sideways into his lap once Snape was fully seated. Snape held Harry tightly as if he was scared that the child
would forget that he was there if he could not feel his physical hold.

Snape cursed the Potters, and even Lily who had visited him earlier this day who had came to Snape inquiring after both of her children’s schooling in his classroom so fair. Initially that is.

When asked, Lily had been bluntly informed that her youngest Nathan was disruptive, argumentative, and only barely passed Snape's curriculum. When she asked of her eldest, Snape had described him as an "adequate" student. Which was a high compliment coming from the man.

By the end of their impromptu parent teacher meeting, Snape had dismissed Lily by politely inquiring if she needed to know anything else in regards to her children's schooling and to the unpleasant surprise of Snape, she asked what was the foundation of Harry's and Snape's relationship as professor and student.

Apparently, the boy had mentioned Snape often, but briefly in his letters home. Allegedly, according to his mother at least; Harry only did that to people in which he held high regard for.

To Snape's embarrassment, he lost the slightest bit control of his temper and snapped at the woman for her nosy. He had gone as far as to tell her that if she had actually cared—even if only an ounce for her son then she would try harder to learn these things from him herself instead of going behind his back and sharing with others what he had told her in confidence. Snape had gone on to say more. More than he should have and he did not regret it. Not even when Lily had been brought to tears.

While Snape was plagued with his own thoughts, he could not have known that Harry was not only crying for himself and all of his frustrations, but he was also crying for a small dark haired child. The small little boy was sat alone in his dim room while he read at his desk—well, attempted to read, through his quiet sobs while an older man threatened him with physical harm from the doorway of the smaller boy's room. Harry had deduced the boy to be professor Snape himself from the boy’s own dark hair and crooked nose which caused him to cry even harder.

Harry cried until he cried himself to sleep and he was shocked, yet happy when he awoke the following morning laid upon a transfigured bed in the living room of the professor’s private quarters and wrapped in a cozy comforter.

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The weeks passed but not without incident. After the second week of his father working at Hogwarts, Joseph had approached him. The older boy had been extremely livid and had apparently been on Harry’s behalf.

Allegedly, (according to Joseph) Joseph had attempted to get into Harry’s father’s good graces after class one evening in order to learn more about Harry’s personal life at home. Admittedly, Joseph could have been less Slytherin about it and merely asked Harry himself. However, he did not only want to know about Harry’s educational background at home but about embarrassing things the boy may have done in the past as well. Such as streaking naked in his home, breaking important decor, coloring the walls with kiddie paint and so on. While Nathan had done all those things, Harry hadn’t because his father would never tolerate it from him as his heir. When he was told this, Joseph had gone on a rant about how those behaviors were a normal part of childhood and how he himself had done those things. Harry was flabbergasted as to why Joseph was so upset that Harry did not act out as a child.

Apparently, Joseph was upset that when he attempted to inquire his desired information from Harry’s father, the man had gone on to call Harry strange. He had even thanked Joseph for taking
him under his wing because he assumed that it was Joseph's hard work that had Harry behaving like a normal child among his peers because he knew that Harry could not be “normal” on his own. This enraged Joseph who went to Harry that following day and demanded to know just who the hell did Harry’s father think he was? Joseph only became even angrier when Harry earnestly responded with, “the man is my father, there is no need to think about who he is.”

Joseph reminded Harry that he had two mothers and he went further and said, “if that is what a father is then I’m happy to continue to go without one. You know that the way he speaks about you—to you, is not right, right Harry?” Harry had responded that the man was his father, he had every right to talk to Harry however, he wanted, and Joseph did not verbally respond, he just shook his head angrily and walked away.

From that moment since, Harry was not alone with his father. Hell, Harry was barely alone in the halls. If a Wart’s member was not at his side than a member of his house was. It seemed that alongside Warts, all of Ravenclaw had made it a point to put up a united front that told Harry’s father that “while he was in school, he was Ravenclaw’s responsibility.” Even professor Flitwick had asked his father to refrain from too much alone time with Harry under the excuse that it was the best way to avoid jealousy from the other students. Surprisingly, his father complied and let Harry be for the most part.

Even the man's insults in class came to a stop as the Ravenclaws stopped caring for house points and would outright tell the man that what he said wasn’t right. Even his colleagues from Hufflepuff would join in but they responded by contradicting his father’s jabs with compliments to Harry’s form and person very loudly in front of the man. Harry was flabbergasted by this behavior to say the least. However; he was not ungrateful, not in the slightest.

Especially because it had made his weeks much easier for his studies. Harry had been studying even harder than usual since the Summer began which was only 7 days away.

It was well into the night and Harry was at his usual table in the library with a rather strong notice me not charm placed around him. He hated to be bothered during his extra-curricular studies and he was currently very deep into his anatomy study. This time from a book from the Hogwart's library because Harry had already memorized the material from the textbook Joseph gifted him the last holiday season. Due to that Harry memorized the small details given in regards of the entirety of the male human anatomy which was much simpler than that of a woman’s which the book only provided the basics for. Now, he currently studied from a healer’s journal-turned-textbook from the restricted section that detailed a woman’s anatomy tremendously. It even had side notes in its margins.

He had gotten passed the details of the uterus, which the book had gone into great detail about. It also mentioned its functions, but it was the details in regard to childbirth that fascinated Harry.

It even taught Harry about abortions, stillbirths and how even modern potions could; lessen the pain of child labor (which sounded awfully painful to begin with), cause abortions (the journal even detailed as to why abortions were sometimes chosen as an option), but apparently there were no potions that could not prevent stillbirths or miscarriages. Harry was far too young to truly understand most of what he read but he had a near eidetic memory and thought there was no harm in learning material that could potentially help others.

Others like Narcissa Malfoy who Harry saw in a vision to be having a possible miscarriage last Winter.

Sometimes, his visions invoke a strong emotion within him and that vision in particular invoked the need to help Narcissa Malfoy. Harry did not know how he could do so because he had no
qualifications or skill to do so but, there also did not seem to be anything currently available in the Wizarding medical field that was dedicated to preventing child loss during pregnancy. Harry also had to consider whether it was by magic or curse that made her unable to create another child or if it was by the graces of her own anatomy. Either way, Harry felt that surely a skilled healer or potions brewer could help her if they looked for the right thing. For example, if he understood the text right and assumed that what Narcissa suffered from was a miscarriage, then the body part known as her cervix could be too weak to hold the pregnancy and therefore the possible focus could be a potion strengthening it or perhaps even a form of healing magic from the wand to heal any possible damage. After awhile, Harry began to form a headache. For now, he would have to investigate it on his own in private. Even Harry knew that it would be inappropriate to inquire of the woman’s lack of fertility with anyone. Especially the woman herself. Perhaps he could bring it up with Madam Pomfrey.

Harry’s thoughts were interrupted by loud whispering voices. He was surprised that anyone else was up this late, his curiosity peaked as to who were the upper years who needed to study so late. They couldn’t be his fellow first years, as it was well past curfew. The only reason Harry was allowed in the library so late was because he had gotten special permission from Flitwick.

The voices grew closer and Harry was able to recognize them, the voices that belonged to Nathan, Ron and surprisingly Hermione. Nathan and Ron weren’t an unexpected pair because the two had made up a few weeks prior to today after Harry locked them into one of Filch’s janitorial closets. He had refused to let them out until they made up or at least discuss why they fought at length. From what Harry could gather the two had a heart to heart that led Ron to apologizing, not only to Nathan but to Harry as well. Harry accepted the other boy’s apology simply because he wanted to move on. He did not really know whether the other boy meant was sincere or not. Ronald did, however, immediately treated him less coldly and no longer tried to infringe on Nathan and Harry’s alone time since making up with his brother.

“Don’t you see Hermione, I want to do this so that Harrison doesn’t have to.” His brother’s voice hissed.

Harry could hear how frustrated Hermione was by her tone, “no, Nathan. You don’t have to do anything and you are not just doing this for Harry. You are embarrassed and ashamed that Harry has been pulling all the weight—your weight—until now! Admit it, you were embarrassed when Ernie called you out for ignoring your father’s behavior toward Harry.”

Harry frowned, they were just going to speak of such things in loud whispers in public? Thankfully they seemed to be the only one’s present within the library.

He should stop them and let them know that he was nearby. He really should but he had not known of this interaction between his brother and Ernie and he wanted to know more.

“Hey, lay off! It’s not Nathan’s fault that his dad doesn’t fawn over Harry like the rest of you,” Ron spat defensively.

Hermione huffed, “no offense, Ronald but this has nothing to do with you and furthermore; I do not care much for your opinion. At all.”

That caused Harry to smile because just a few weeks prior, Ron had made Hermione cry for the third time this school year when he called her a friendless know-it-all. Harry did not know how but Hermione said that he had helped her tremendously. Harry did not do anything but ask her, “why do you care for his opinion at all? He does not seem to care for yours so why do you hold his in such high regard that you allow him to make you cry?” Apparently, she felt a lot more confident upon hearing that and it showed.
Ron gasped, affronted and from his intake of breath, it sounded as if he was prepared to speak once more but Nathan cut him off, “look, you don’t get it, especially being muggleborn and all. Harrison is the heir, dad tells me all the time that he holds Harrison to a different standard because of that! And besides, the stuff dad does and says doesn’t bother Harrison! He knows that dad is full of it. Honestly, the two seem to like going at one another. Mum and I just leave them be for the most part.” Harry frowned. He did not like “going at” his father, nor was he allowed to. What the hell was Nathan talking about?

“You don’t know that Nathan! If you haven’t noticed, your father--URGH! Nevermind, this isn’t for us to discuss while Harry isn’t present. My final answer is no, Nathan. If you want to really do something for Harry, then you would leave well enough alone like he asked you too.” Hermione huffed and left the two, she walked past Harry’s usual table and looked at it. Harry knew that Hermione could not see him or focus on him because of the charm but it still felt as if she were anyway. Hermione sighed before she glared at the shelf that Ron and Nathan were behind. Quietly, she leaned against it and listened.

Ron sighed loudly, “Nathan, mate. Look, we don’t need her! The know-it-all that she is. We can do it without her. We must! If we don’t the greasy git will get it and hand it off to Voldemort!”

Hermione’s face soured at the other boy’s words.

“First, stop calling her a know-it-all! She’s one of my brother’s closest friends and she’s my friend too!”

Hermione gasped quietly, and even in the dimly lit room, Harry could tell that she was blushing while she smiled so happily.

“Second, this isn’t about doing it with or without her, Ron! Like I said, she’s my friend too. I want her help because this is about doing something on my own because I chose to and I can’t ask Harrison like I always do because for once, it’s time for me to take charge and to act. You have older brothers! How do you not understand that? Just—forget it, Snape is going to go after it. It will be today—even now, maybe. Let’s g—” Harry was truly baffled the more his brother spoke. What the hell did Snape plan to steal and why were he and his brother's friends always accusing the man of doing something nefarious?

Hermione seemed to have heard enough. She rounded back around the bookshelf and asked, “you’re going to go anyway, aren’t you?”

“No, don’t answer. I don’t want Harry involved with this mess. So let’s go—but only to show you that it is well guarded. Once you two see that no one has gone after the bloody thing then perhaps you will leave matters be.”

What in the world are they referring to? What is this thing that is meant to be stolen? Has there been more threats without Harry’s notice? Harry has felt awfully blind since his father had begun to withhold information from him and now, he felt just as lost as Nathan usually did when the adults in their lives began to vaguely discuss you-know-who and or matters within the ministry. Their voices were getting further and further away, and the last thing Harry heard was Hermione’s quiet voice, “Dumbledore is gone from the facilities for the day so we…”

Harry quickly stood from his seat and tailed after them, why would the lack of Dumbledore’s presence be of importance?

'The corridor!’ Of course, his brother had not forgotten about the corridor. Harry had no proof that the other boy still investigated the corridor, but Harry knew that he had.
It was obvious that Nathan did not plan on sharing those discoveries with Harry because Nathan apparently felt that he had to do something foolish and brave all on his own. Nathan seemed to know what was in the corridor and he thought that Snape wanted to give to you-know-who of all people.

The trio rushed through the halls as if they were being chased. Harry could barely keep up with them and it only grew more difficult when Harry had to hide from wandering prefects, Filch and even Mrs. Norris at some point. Yes, Harry could be in the library after hours, but he could not be caught wandering the halls, or off route from Ravenclaw towers. Currently he did both.

When he saw that the trio was headed to the third-floor corridor; he decided that there was no reason for them to go in there and possibly get hurt by the Cerberus. He was going to call out and stop them, but when he heard Filch’s recognizable footsteps scurrying behind him, he ducked and hid in between two armor sets. If Filch caught him he would not be able to stop them at all.

Filch took his time as he walked by. He sniffed the air and circled near Harry’s spot several times before giving up. Thankfully, Harry had forgotten to remove his notice me not charm. No wonder it was easy for him to sneak about.

Harry made haste to catch up to the trio. It felt as if five minutes had passed during Filch’s time investigating Harry’s hiding spot and those five minutes would give the trio enough time to find trouble.

Once Harry reached the door that he knew the Cerberus was within, he unsheathed his wand in preparation. His heart raced as he opened the door and to his surprise, his ears were not met with the snarls of a three headed beast but the sound of a harmonic harp playing and… was that snoring? cautiously, he peered inside and he saw the harp playing from the corner of the room, the beast asleep and the trap door opened wide beneath him.

Harry approached the door ever so quietly. Even though he knew that the harp's melodies would keep the Cerberus asleep, he wished to be safe and not take any chances. He looked down below and darkness greeted him.

Briefly, he thought about turning around and retrieving a professor but a feeling in his gut told him that he had no time. Harry closed his eyes and did his best to clear his mind. The only thing he allowed himself to think about were; his brother, Hermione and Ron in hopes that he could force himself to have a vision of them. He has tried to force visions multiple times in the last few months and rarely was he successful in his endeavors and it seemed as if this time would be no different.

Harry decided that he wasted enough time, he aimed his wand into the hole and cast two cushioning charms below. He then proceeded to jump into the unknown.

Harry quickly reached the bottom in no time at all, thankfully. However; he landed onto a soft mass of hairy feeling vines. When Harry attempted to stand, he could feel the vine like ropes move quickly up his body and tighten around him. Devil’s snare, Harry recognized the plant from one of his herbology textbooks and despite how panicked he felt at being constricted, he forced his body to completely relax like the books had instructed. Slowly, he raised his wand and cast ‘lumos solem’ which emitted a bright light from his wand. Oddly enough, this spell had been a focus in professor Sprout’s class as of late. Immediately, the devil snare scurried away from the source of light and Harry was able to get away.

He continued to hold the spell for a source of light as he quickly made his way through the chambers. He approached the next room cautiously but in haste. The closer he got the easier he could hear the delightful sounds of what he could only explain as bells. Though, when he got
closer, he quickly learned that they were not in fact bells, but birds--no, he took a closer look and
saw that they were not birds either but keys with wings! Harry remembered professor Flitwick
teaching them this charm in one of his charm classes just a month ago! Harry was noticing a
pattern.

If there were keys then there would have to be a door for them to unlock and lo and behold, when
Harry glanced across the room, he saw a door that was wide open in waiting. The trio beat him
here too, and when Harry noticed the flying brooms on the floor, he could not help but be grateful
because they no doubt had to fly about and catch the keys which his brother had most likely done
so skillfully and quickly.

Knowing that his brother had already did nothing to ease Harry's anxiety as he himself ventured
further. The next room's floor was occupied by a giant chess board on the floor. Most of the pieces
were destroyed, and Harry knew that a game had already been held. Since he did not see the trio,
Harry decided that he would not waste his time by investigating the room and pressed on.
However; he was stopped by a pained moan at his feet when he was a mere 20 feet from the next
chamber’s entrance.

His heart leapt into is throat when he heard the noise, he should not have felt so relaxed when he
saw who the noise emitted from, but he was just grateful that it had not been his brother.

“Ronald.” Harry called out. Calmly he approached Ron and knelt beside the other boy who laid
on the ground looking worse for wear.

Ron groaned and smiled at him tiredly, “Harry, mate, good to see you. I see you studying healer’s
work all the time. Think you can do me a solid?” the orange haired boy raised his arm to the best
of his ability and revealed a broken wrist.

Harry pursed his lips and sucked in a harsh breath, “just because you see me read books on
anatomy does not mean I am studying healer’s work.” Gently, Harry grabbed the other boy’s arm
and stretched it out onto the ground. He ignored the other boy’s moans and groans and complaint
of pain while he performed a simple bandaging charm for Ron’s wrist.

“It’s broken, there isn’t much that I know how to do for that.” Harry touched the big knot that
formed on the boy’s forehead, Ron cringed away. Harry rolled his eyes and forced the other boy to
sit up. Harry ignored Ron’s complaints and informed him that he had a concussion. Harry knew
that due to his own experience with concussions in the past, he knew that Ron needed to stay
awake and sitting up would help him.

After Harry helped Ron get into a comfortable leaning position against one of the destroyed chess
pieces, he turned the other boy’s head side to side and noted the lone gashes that marred his face.

“In two minutes or less, tell me what you’ve gotten my brother involved in and I will heal your
shallow gashes.” Harry demanded.

Ron looked offended and Harry knew that he planned to decline his offer, but Harry had no time to
truly negotiate. He pressed a finger roughly against a gash that caused Ron’s bottom lip to split
further. Ron tried to slurp up the blood that fell but failed, “merlin! You’re nuts, mate! Snape, the
git is going after the philosopher’s stone that’s here in the chamber. We know he’s been trying to
to get the philosopher's stone for you-know-who and if he gets the stone then he can bring him back,
and we can’t let that happen and you can’t stop us!”

“You can’t bring someone back from the dead!” Harry hissed as he pinched the wound again on
accident.
“Ow! Ow! He’s not dead! He never died! A few weeks ago, we heard the git threatening professor Quirrell about the stone, they were both working together to revive their master! That’s why Quirrell was kicked because he got caught gathering the blood of unicorns for Voldemort to sip, Nathan told me so!” Ron slapped Harry’s hand away, and Harry growled slightly.

Harry cast a few episkey spells on several of Ron’s wounds, the episkey could only do so much and Harry could tell that Ron’s lips would need more advanced healing or he would scar something awful. Luckily, for Ron, he did stop the bleeding.

“Honestly. You idiots. Even if what you are saying is true, do you think you could win against grown wizards!? You’ve put my brother in danger!” Harry yelled.

Ron yelled even louder, “well, it’s better than being a coward, and letting you-know-who come back and kill a bunch of other innocent people! You don’t understand, Nathan’s the boy-who-lived, he can’t be killed by you-know-who”!

Harry grimaced because Ron did not know how wrong he was. Harry said nothing more and left Ron alone. He needed to make haste to the next chamber.

The odor in this chamber was most foul and when Harry recognized the form of a collapsed mountain troll, he left the room as quickly as he could.

While this room was the most plain, the door from which he came was engulfed by black flame and Harry could have sworn that he saw Hermione’s bushy hair flow by as if she had left from where Harry had entered before he stepped into the room entirely causing the flames to erupt once more and blocked his view.

Harry turned his attention away from the flames behind him and was met with the site of a lone table that had various vials atop of it.

The entrance to the next chamber stood beyond the table and was engulfed in purple flames. ‘Is this a joke?’ Harry thought annoyed. Purple flames were for decoration, besides a slight tingle one barely felt anything from the flames. Then again, Harry would not have known such a thing fore it not had been… professor Snape teaching him… Harry thought about Snape’s words the night the man had taught him about such a thing. They had been discussing the benefits of using various magical fires to brew potions and when Harry had inquired of the many kinds, Snape had gone down a list and when the man reached purple he had said, ‘purple flames are nothing but a mere parlor trick, Mr. Potter. One that I had invented myself. It produces heat that can make one sweat, however, it does not burn upon being touched. Call it magic.’

Trusting Snape’s word completely, Harry approached the flames and reached out and when his fingertips were grazed by the fire, he felt nothing but a slight tingle.

Slowly, but surely, Harry walked forward and as the flames surrounded his body, he could feel the potential heat. He knew he could not stay in the flames long and removed himself from the flames by hurrying to the other side and when he finally made it through, he was shocked to find his brother standing in front of a mirror with professor Quirrell standing menacingly behind him.

Harry tried to think of every spell he had learned to make something or someone immobile. Though, every spell that he thought of, he could not yet perform well. The man did not notice him and for that matter, his brother didn’t either. Harry knew that it was not due to the notice-me-not charm that wore off the moment he revealed his presence to Ron but due to their engrossment with one another. Quietly, Harry made his way around the room and listened and planned.
“He lies…. He lies” Harry heard a voice hiss. Harry watched as neither his brother’s nor professor Quirrell’s lips moved in the reflection while the voice hissed.

Harry continued to watch the two scrabble for a few moments. His brother feigned ignorance about the stone’s whereabouts, and Harry watched as Quirrell shook his brother angrily in frustration. Harry wanted to act, however; he had not come up with a well thought out plan and so he continued to plan to the best of his eleven-year-old inexperienced ability.

“He’s a child you imbecile, just take the stone!” The voice hissed again, and Quirrell reacted quickly. Harry could not stop himself from yelling out when the man performed everte statum so harshly that Nathan was flung back before he could even understand what was happening to him.

Harry heard a harsh crack when his brother’s back was slammed against a wall across the room, Nathan’s body fell to the ground and did not even twitched once he landed. Harry’s attention was returned to Quirrell when the man effectively cast expelliarmus against Harry just as Harry himself had performed the same spell and both of their wands were spelled from their hands and sent towards opposite sides of the room.

Quirrell glared momentarily at Harry and ignored the voice that hissed, “get the stone, the stone, you fool!” as he summoned his wand to his hand once more. Harry, however; had gone to his brother’s side in the meantime and retrieved the stone that had fell from his pocket. What was so damned important about a rock that his brother had to be hurt so awfully over it? Suddenly, Harry remembered that Ron had said that Quirrell wanted the philosopher’s stone in order to bring back you-know-who but that would not work if you-know-who was truly off and dead. Could the man be near? Was the voice he had been hearing hiss belonged to the beast of the man himself?

Harry stood tall with tears stinging his eyes and took the stone into a tightly clenched fist, he did not waver when he saw the man advancing toward him. He would see to it that you-know-who would not be resurrected. He could at least do that much if he could not save his brother’s life.

Harry rose the stone high into the air and yelled, “is this what you want!??” before he slammed it to the ground, and as fragile as it was, it shattered, and lost the slightly glowing hue that it held.

Quirrell screamed sounding as if he were in pure agony. He grabbed Harry by the shoulders and shook him harshly, “you idiot boy! Have you no mercy!? You do not know what you have done! You have killed me! You have killed me!”

Harry attempted to shake the man off but when he could not, he placed his hands on the man’s face and dug his nails in as deeply as he could. Harry’s eyes closed involuntarily as he continued to hear screams of horror and agony emit from the man before him.

However, the screams were not only Quirrell’s own. Behind Harry’s closed eyes, he saw a vision. The haziest one he has yet seen. It was of a boy--a little older than Harry himself--whose flesh was being expertly skinned as he cried and whined and screamed when the man tugged too harshly or quickly. Harry’s own skin began to feel much too tight itself.

Harry wished he was not seeing the things that he saw because it was truly horrific. The older boy’s chest cavity was completely bare of his skin and the rugged man who was skinning him seemed to not care at all as he pulled and sliced away mechanically. The man continued to work on the boy from the tub that he was being held in, and the skin he sliced away was being placed onto a medical tray beside the man. It was as if he were collecting the older boy’s skin?

Harry felt like he was going to vomit and when he realized that the mysterious boy’s face had the same dotted moles that Harry’s own held, Harry could not refrain himself and vomited clear onto
Quirrell’s face which had been much too close to his own.

Quirrell yelled out in disgust and pushed him back harshly. He attempted to remove the vomit that got into his eyes and clouded his vision. At least that’s what Harry had thought until he saw the boils, blisters and pus covering Quirrell’s face and palms. Harry dry heaved at the sight. Harry looked closely and noticed that the blisters and boils formed from the places that he had touched and upon that realization, Harry jumped up and flung himself onto Quirrell and he only let go when he was forced to when Quirrell flung him off and slammed him onto the floor, the impact knocked his breath away.

Harry landed only a few feet away from Nathan who was still unconscious. Harry focused on Nathan’s peaceful face but in the background, Harry could hear Quirrell’s screams and when he closed his eyes, he could see his future himself–barely a few years older than he was now–being skinned alive. Silent tears left Harry’s eyes and he began to sob quietly. The taste and smell of vomit assaulted his senses and if he concentrated hard enough, he could feel that he had wet himself through his robes. Harry coughed and sputtered until he choked and nearly vomited again and when he tried to breathe, he found that he was breathing much too quickly but he could not stop, and he breathed quicker and quicker until his vision began to blink.

“Look at you…” The voice he had heard earlier hissed in disgust.

Harry looked up and saw a grotesque specter of a sunken looking snake-like head of a man. It looked like a more grotesque version of the man that Harry had saw from the centaur’s vision. The head was “watching” him with angry hollowed eyes. “You… as pathetic as you look now, you… A mere child has stumped me thrice, Harrison Potter… First at Godric’s hollow… Then in the forest as I sustained my strength with the blood of unicorns… A predicament I was forced into because of you in the first place… and now you interfere once again. You have stopped me from obtaining the elixir of life….” The specter--you-know-who’s specter--drew closer and with him, he brought the distant screams of Harry’s own future self which assaulted Harry’s mind. “… there will not be a fourth time, Potter. I promise you that… You have proven to me that boy-who-lived or not… You are the one that I must rid myself of…. There are others like Quirrell who serve me, and you have foolishly made an even bigger enemy of me yet Harrison Potter…If you were smart, boy… for the sake of your dear brother… you would help me instead of aiding Dumbledore…. I am where true power lies…” Harry watched as the specter hastily exited and with glazed eyes, Harry watched the door while he continued to gasp desperately for air, the last thing that he saw was the headmaster running into the chamber with a look of true anguish on his face. Harry managed to blink two more times before he lost consciousness.

The next time Harry opened his eyes, he was in his bed in the infirmary with the headmaster and professor Snape by his side.

The headmaster greeted him warmly with a kind smile, “hello Harry.”

“Nathaniel,” Harry said with a scratchy voice. He attempted to sit up but was stopped by professor Snape’s firm hand on his chest. A moment later, a cup of water was placed to his lips by the headmaster. He thanked the man and inquired after Nathan once more.

“Your brother is FINE. He is with your parents in your bloody father’s private quarters along with your mother. He has been there for the past three days. You will be joining him once your parents are informed that you are awake, you foolish, stupid, idiotic boy.” professor Snape hissed.

“Now, Severus, I know that you are worried but there is no need for such harsh language.” The headmaster chastised.
The potions master harrumphed and Harry began to feel a bit less tense. Even when professor Snape was being defensive, he still found the man’s presence comforting.

“Hermione.” Harry said.

Snape growled, “the stupid boy is suffering from a concussion, AGAIN. He can only give one worded responses like an imbecile.”

The headmaster ignored the professor, “miss Granger and mister Boot are in the hall anxiously waiting for permission to visit you. Of course, you had other visitors, but they are your loyal and most trusted friends and have been here every day—nearly all day, since you were placed in the infirmary three days ago. Miss Granger had been quite distressed to find out that you had followed after her, your brother and Ron.”

“I was surprised that when I followed them, my brother was being attacked by a man who should not have even been inside Hogwarts at all.” Harry retorted smartly. The headmaster took the hint and informed Harry that professor Quirrell had returned for the stone. He was able to return because he had not yet been removed from the wards of Hogwarts. The headmaster apologized for that because he understood that that was due to his own negligence. He went on to explain to Harry that he and the other staff attempted to protect the philosopher’s stone from those who may use it for evil by keeping it safely tucked away within Hogwarts’ walls. Harry knew of the stone. It was used to create the Elixir of Life and it was created by Nicholas Flamel. However; until last night, Harry did not know that it had been in the school.

When Harry bluntly informed the old man that he had destroyed the stone. The man kindly explained that that was all well and fine as the Flamel’s were rather “finished” with life and were ready for their next grand adventure in death. The Flamel’s had enough of the elixir of life that they would be able to say goodbye to their loved ones and get the rest of their affairs in order before their departure.

Harry was not bothered by that because if the Flamel’s truly held the stone as an utmost importance in their life then it would not have been at Hogwarts in the first place. “Why did you think someone would go after it?” Harry asked skeptically. “Was it not safe where it was before?”

The headmaster shook his head, “Nicholas had temporarily given it to me specifically because it was not safe with, he or his wife. He and his wife had been attacked multiple times for it this year and the previous year, by a persistent and unknown figure. They wanted to apprehend whoever it was by catching them. Do you read the prophet often, my boy?”

“Of course not.”

The headmaster smiled fondly, “well, if you had and if you listened to any gossip from your peers you would have known that there was a break-in at Gringotts. One of my personal vaults too. Fortunately, the vault had been emptied that day.”

“It had the stone inside…” Harry said with a frown. “It was awfully easily accessible here, headmaster. Nathan and Quirrell—Quirrell!” Harry hissed, he sat up so quickly that Snape did not have time to stop him.

“Quirrell, he was attached to a specter of you-know-who! He—“

“Potter—Harry! Calm down! Now!” Snape demanded and put a vial to the boy’s lips. “It’s a calming draught. Drink it. All of it.”
Harry gulped it down and a moment later, the deep panic that he felt nearly dissipated.

"Forgive me, sirs."

"Harry, do not apologize it, it sounded like you had quite the experience, my boy." The headmaster said. He then leaned back and stroked his beard sagely. Professor Snape finally stopped hovering over Harry and took a seat on the corner of Harry's unoccupied side of the bed.

Harry leaned up, and there was a fire in his eyes that surprised both of the adults within the room. "An experience, I should not have had! Nor Nathan, nor Hermione and nor fame hungry Ronald bloody Weasley. If four children could reach the stone, anyone could! You say that you and the other staff took precautions and I can easily see what you mean; with professor Sprout’s skill in herbology, professor Flitwick’s skill with charms, professor McGonagall’s way with transfiguration, and professor Snape’s mastery of potions, surely you believed their obstacles to be efficient. However; all the professors mentioned could have EASILY made stronger protections. It was as if you WANTED someone to get the stone. Specifically, if that someone was an eleven-year-old boy who felt as if he had to be the hero of the Wizarding world!" Harry wheezed as he spoke and professor Snape snatched the cup of water that the headmaster placed on the nightstand, he handed it to Harry and demanded that he drink all of it. Harry did so gratefully.

For a very long time the headmaster was quiet. He frowned and furrowed his brow multiple times before he spoke.

"It has been quite a few decades since I've met a student as clever as you..." The headmaster murmured under his breath. Harry had barely heard him. The headmaster looked at him with sad eyes and spoke in an even sadder voice, "Harry, the things I want to tell you are things that I feel that I should not tell you—things I cannot tell you currently, but all will be revealed sooner than you think."

Harry frowned and glared slightly but he did not interrupt the man.

"Your brother, whether you like it or not is the-boy-who-lived. He survived the killing curse and has been the only one to do so. He is learning what his title means the harsh way, your brother is and always will be a target, Harry. Slytherins are not as neutral to him as they are to you and I dare say that the boy has a hero’s heart all on his own and that is not young mister Weasley’s fault. Your brother was sorted into Gryffindor, and I do believe that that is for good reason." The headmaster’s eye twinkled. Literally twinkled and Harry’s eye twitched in response.

"Your brother is also smarter and more capable than you realize. It was he who figured out that the stone was here in the first place and it was he who deduced that it was in very real danger by investigating. I had told him multiple times to leave well enough alone. Just as you had but he did not and because I knew that I could not stop him, nor did I want to encourage him to go after the stone, I instead chose to aid him as subtle as I could. The precautions on the stone originally were much harsher but I felt that your brother would pursue in protecting it, and I made it less harsh for his own benefit so that he would not die."

Harry’s glare intensified but he still did not speak. Professor Snape noticed his glare and pinched Harry’s side for his disrespect. Harry immediately schooled his features and continued to listen.

"You were not there when his face brightened with enlightenment when he discovered that the item that was failed to be stolen from Gringotts was indeed the stone. You were not there when he discovered the Mirror of Erised with young Mr. Weasley at his side. You were not there when miss Granger aided him in connecting the dots between sought after immortality using unicorn blood and the stone. Nathan felt that he needed to protect the stone from such evil, even before he
deduced that it was Voldemort who most likely wanted the stone. Nathan wanted to stop him, because he wanted to prevent Voldemort from getting it.”

“Like a true hero,” Harry sneered, and professor Snape sneered alongside him. The headmaster smiled at them both and he looked so fond that professor Snape’s sneer became more severe and Harry cringed in discomfort.

Harry knew that in some ways the headmaster was right. Nathan was as stubborn as a mule and there was no doubt that he felt the pressure and obligation to live up to his title is the boy-who-lived and do something as heroic as preventing the resurrection from you-know-who himself.

“You-know-who--”

“Harry please use his full name, it is only that; a name. Call him Voldemort.” Harry noticed that professor Snape flinched as he always did when that name was used.

“You-know-who threatened me. He said there were others like Quirrell --others who would rid himself of me on his behalf--” Harry is cut off by his own mind as he was once again assaulted by a vision and it is the same as last time. It was just as hazy and Harry felt absolutely terrified as he realized that there was a pattern in his visions. The more vivid imagery and color they had then the easier Harry could remember them and the easier they could be changed. However, little to no color was an indicator that Harry saw things that have already been and the less vivid in imagery they were meant they were things that would surely come. It felt that the haziness was a premonition to how unclear his options were to prevent it, and this vision has been the haziest one yet, it was even devoid of all color.

Harry began to shiver and despite the calming draught he was forced to swallow, he found himself feeling severely panicked once more. He struggled for air and he looked at professor Snape helplessly. Professor Snape’s stern face became one of concern when Harry reached out and clenched his robes between his small fist. The man did not hesitate to grab Harry’s outstretched hand in his own and gently he pulled the boy closer toward his body. However; when Harry turned his face into the man’s robes--unintentionally smothering himself, the man forcibly grabbed his head and turned it sideways. Harry’s head still rested on his chest, but he was no longer suffocating himself against the professor’s robe and his ear laid against the surface of it.

“Breathe. Harry. Breathe with me.”

Harry tried to match his breathing with the professor’s own, but he could not calm down enough to do so successfully.

“They are going to tear away my skin professor. My skin.” Harry mumbled over and over as he sobbed sorrowfully.

The two adults shared a look of deep concern and before they could attempt to comfort Harry any further, the boy’s parents burst in just as Harry tore himself away from professor Snape and threw himself at the headmaster. However; he did not seek comfort from the man. He instead grabbed the older man by his robes and shook him with what little energy he had as he began to yell like a mad man.

“THIS IS NOT A JOKE, THIS IS NOT ABOUT ADVENTURE OR BEING A HERO OR WHAT YOU THINK US CAPABLE OF. THIS IS TOO MUCH FOR US, IT IS GOING TO GET US KILLED. THERE IS A POSSIBILITY THAT NATHAN IS NOT THE BOY-WHO-LIVED. BUT YOU STILL EXPECT HIM TO RISK HIS LIFE FOR A FIGHT HE NEVER EVEN ASKED FOR!? JUST BECAUSE HE WAS CHOSEN WITHOUT HIS CONSENT!? YOU ARE GOING TO HAVE HIM
KILLED. YOU ARE GOING TO GET ME SKINNED ALIVE. HOW COULD YOU? HOW COULD YOU? I TRUSTED YOU!!"

The headmaster paled, and before he could say anything Harry’s father pulled the two apart. Immediately Harry began to swing his arms and legs wildly. His father released him and before he could cast a successful stupefy to immobilize Harry. Professor Snape was quicker and disarmed Harry’s father with a quick expelliarmus.

Professor Snape positioned himself behind Harry and got a strong hold around his shoulders and torso, effectively trapping his arms. The headmaster followed suit and grabbed his legs and held onto them tightly.

Madam Pomfrey who had hurried in the moment Harry had begun to yell came in and forced a sleeping draught down his throat.

Harry grew weaker and drowsier and eventually he was too drowsy to put up a fight.

“Mr. Potter, for what it is worth, I am sorry, and I will do everything that I can to ensure that your brother and yourself will reach your adulthood.” The headmaster said as he gently kneaded Harry’s socked feet in a comforting and soothing manner.

“But will we reach adulthood in one piece? Can you promise that ‘eadmaser’?” Harry slurred as he fell into a deep sleep.

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Idly, Snape rubbed his thumb in a circular rotation on Harry’s shoulder while the boy went under. He had never seen the boy so unhinged and hysterical.

“What the hell just happened!? Release my son, Snape!” James Demanded.

Snape sneered, and placed Harry gently down onto the pillow. Headmaster Dumbledore tucked the boy in and after, he attempted to sooth the tension from both men with placating gestures of the hand. While the men were busy, Lily approached his bed and crouched down beside it. She quickly ran her own diagnostic charms over Harry and left the men to argue.

“James, calm yourself. Severus did nothing but help young Harry,” the headmaster said surprising Snape greatly by taking his side.

“What the hell made him act like that in the first place!? He has NEVER behaved that way.” James seemed livid but he was actually very worried. Harry aggravated, annoyed, displeased and content. Those were moods that James was used to seeing from Harry. Not the panicked, terrified and hysterical boy he had walked in to.

“Well, he has never faced the Dark Lord either.” Snape said snidely through clenched teeth.

James paled. He turned to Dumbledore and gripped the man on the shoulder, “so, he didn’t merely face Quirrell. Nathan was right. He said that Voldemort had attempted to resurrect himself and that he had to stop him... I didn’t believe him... and I wanted to ask Harry myself...”

Madam Pomfrey cleared her throat to gain their attention, all in the room were surprised by the cold sternness of her voice,” gentleman. You worked my patient up into a frenzy with all of this you-know-who talk, and I demand that you leave since you continue to speak of it, and as a healer I recommend that you do not to bring it up with Mr. Potter in the future unless he approaches you about it first.
Now. Out.” She opened the door wandlessly with a wave of her hand and when Hermione and Terry tried to enter, madam Pomfrey put on her best no nonsense face, “miss Granger, mister Boot, Harry is still not allowed visitors at this moment. Please leave.”

The two looked slightly hurt but even they could feel the overwhelming tension in the room. They looked longingly over Harry’s bed. Hermione seemed unwilling to move but Terry wrapped a gentle arm around her shoulders and led her away.

“Madam Pomfrey, may we please use your office? I have something of importance to discuss with the headmaster before I floo home.” Lily asked with the utmost politeness.

Madam Pomfrey frowned but she had always had a soft spot for Lilian who often had accompanied Mr. Snape to her infirmary after the boy—now man—had gotten into a scuff with James Potter.

“Be quick about it and place a noise canceling charm on the room. If Mr. Potter wakes up I will be none too pleased.” Madam Pomfrey turned away from them and went over to = Harry's bed.

The other four adults led themselves to madam Pomfrey’s office that was connected to the infirmary in a separate room.

The moment the door closed behind them, Lily turned to the headmaster and demanded he share anything Harry had told them. They had yet to hear of what happened once Nathan went unconscious and were desperate to know if Quirrell shared any reason for his attack.

The headmaster went into what little Harry told he and Snape before he panicked, and the Potters paled at what their son experienced.

“So, Voldemort isn’t dead.” Lily whispered in open horror. “He is going to target my my children, again.” Lily suffered from harsh post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and often times just the mentioning of the man’s name riled her up. It was all Nathan spoke about when he awoke —‘Voldemort is back! Where is Harrison? Voldemort wanted the philosopher’s stone--is Harrison ok!?’. The boy’s erratic questions had thrown Lily. She wanted to console him and tell him that Harry was ok, but she also wanted to shake him and tell him to stop saying that name.

The headmaster pulled the young woman into a gentle hug, “my girl. I am afraid so, and despite Nathan’s title, Harry has seemed to make himself quite the target, but this does not mean that they are to die. They can be prepared and trained to defend themselves.”

The woman nodded and the headmaster released her. James looked to his wife nervously and spoke with such shame that the headmaster instinctively wanted to give him a detention.

“Harry is already rather advance in defensive magic… due to my paranoia, I insured that he went through several hours of training daily the summer before this school year. His tutor said that he could start offensive training with no problem, and I had already agreed on Harry’s behalf.”

Lily rubbed her forehead so hard that she left behind a temporary indentation when she removed them, “James…” she groaned. Lily had always been against the extensive heir lessons that Harry was forced to take, but she had always truly believed James when he told her that they were nothing more than that; heir lessons. The man had always assured her that Harry's lessons matched that of Nathan, but she should have known that he was not being truthful when he was adamant about the boys taking separate lessons. However; in her heart, she once again believed him when James told her that separate lessons would be better for the two so that they would not distract one another.
She glared at her husband and gave him a look that said that they would be talking about this later, but otherwise she said nothing. She had no right to. She saw how tired and fatigued Harry could be after his lessons, but she never pressed on. She never asked if he was tired or needed her for anything and Harry did not ask, but she knew that that was no excuse because it was not Harry’s job to ask. It was her job to simply provide; as his mother.

Lily shook the regretful thoughts from her head. There was no sense in dwelling on all she did wrong if she did not plan to change for the better.

She turned to the headmaster, “did you tell him about Nathan?”

Snape growled, “why the hell would we give the boy more cause to panic? I am sure the boy did not gain Potter senior’s impeccable levelheadedness, so he surely would have handled the news of his brother being a cripple just fine.” How dare she ask if the first thing they brought up to the traumatized boy was his bloody brother.

James opened his mouth to defend his wife, but he was stopped from doing so by his wife herself as she placed her firm hand on his chest, “no matter what you think of me Severus, I am not as dimwitted and heartless as you believe. It is true that I do not know Harry well, but an undeniable fact is his love and worry for his brother. He is devoted--”

Snape rounded in on her, “this is more than devotion. The Potter heir seems more than willing to die for his brother, to protect him at all cost with no care for his own health. Will you deny that the Potter heir is brainwashed into protecting your son?”

“Harry is my son too, Severus! I admit it. I admit that Harry has a skewed perception in his role as Nathan’s older brother and the Potter heir and we are working on that as a family.” Lily emphasized the word family and lowered her hand from James’ chest. James reclaimed the hand into his own and kissed the back of it.

Snape’s face was devoid of the emotion, he truly felt nothing but irritation at the couple before him.

“Whether you like it or not. Harry is devoted to his brother and he deserves to know that Nathan will not be able to walk properly for an unknown amount of time.” Lily stated. She still choked up just thinking about it. Nathan had been flung into a pillar so viciously that he suffered an incomplete spinal injury in his lower spine. It was unlike anything madam Pomfrey--or even healers from saint Mungo’s--had seen as it only affected the right side of Nathan’s pelvis and leg. He could still walk but it brought him severe pain and discomfort. Madam Pomfrey, the intelligent healer that she is wrapped his leg with a soft dragon-hide leather leg armor that were permanently spelled with a light feather weight charm. This allowed his leg to not have to endure so much weight. It did, however, make his limp a bit more severe but it won’t be so bad once Nathan was used to walking with a cane.

“Why? So that the Potter heir can be prepared to carry the pampered boy-who-lived’s books to class?” Severus retorted nastily.

James was quick with his own retort, “can you shut up for five damned minutes and allow my wife to speak, why are you here any!? Lily why the hell did you want to include him?”

Lily did not respond to her husband who looked to her and demanded an answer. Lily instead, looked toward Snape in open sorrow. She knew that Snape was much closer to her son then he or even Harry had let on.
Snape thought that no one had seen him visiting Harry the last three nights, even before he awoke but Lily did because she too had visited Harry every night. She could feel Snape’s presence every night when she exited the infirmary. Even though he was under a notice-me-not charm. Lily was adept in charms and with years and years of practice one would notice that bewitched items or persons had a certain aura around them. That much practiced skill is how Lily knew of the man’s presence.

“James, there is no need for such hostility, Severus is merely a concerned adult, even if he does not show it as you might like for him to.” The headmaster spoke and looked at the man in disappointment.

James did not reply, Lily turned to the headmaster once more. “Sir, could you go with James and visit Nathan? We left very abruptly. No doubt he will be in a sour mood because he has not gotten to see his brother.”

The headmaster’s eye twinkled and he beamed at Lily. James exchanged a look with Lily that said he did not approve of her being alone with Snape, but Lily was her own woman. She told him as much and then kissed his cheek, and the headmaster wrapped an arm around James’ shoulder in a fatherly manner and led the man out of the office.

When they were alone Lily grabbed Snape’s arm. The arm she knew to be tainted by the dark mark. Quickly, she yanked his sleeve up and was not surprised at all to see the dark mark branding his skin.

Snape snatched his arm away so harshly that he nearly popped it out of its socket.

“Yes… The headmaster mentioned that at the beginning of the year you had been working on a charm to identify followers of the Dark Lord… Are you going to blackmail me, Mrs. Potter?” Snape asked with a smirk on his lips.

Lily shook her head and blinked away the tears that had formed, “no, Severus. Of course not. How could you think that of me?”

Snape’s mouth down turned into a deep frown, he had always hated when Lily cried.

“Oh, Severus. I am just so sorry,” Lily said weakly.

“I beg your pardon?”

“I can’t imagine how alone you must have felt in order to turn to… him. Had I abandoned you so fully that you could not turn to me as a last result at least?”

“Of course, I wouldn’t turn to you, you made it quite clear that you wished to have nothing to do with me during the last of our school years.” Snape answered bluntly. He turned away from her and occupied his hands by picking up a medical book on madam Pomfrey’s desk. He pretended to skim through the pages and proceeded to ignore the choked off sound that Lily had made to his response. Snape had lied, of course he thought about going to her but how could he when she was in hiding with the man Snape loathed more than anyone? Even more than his own abusive father.

“I see…” Lily looked very sad as she spoke.

“For what it’s worth. I am sorry.”

Snape turned a page, “that is not worth much. It would have been worth so much more had you not joined Potter in his ridicule of me. Even if you wanted nothing to do with me.”
Now Lily looked embarrassed, but she nodded her understanding and acceptance. She then proceeded to tell him that she wanted to move on. Not only as teacher and parent but as allies. Lily knew that Snape spied for the headmaster because the headmaster himself had told her as much when she had expressed concern for Snape becoming so close to Harry.

Snape’s interest was piqued. He placed the book back onto the table, turned toward Lily fully and gestured for her to continue speaking with a wave of his hand.

“Nathan is deeply traumatized. He is scared out of his wits and he is scared for Harry, and he is scared for what he feels that he has to do.”

Snape glared at her, but Lily did not stop, “—And Harry. There is so much happening with and to him that I do not know where to begin. He does not talk to me and he does not let me close, but he lets you close.

No. Please don’t deny it.” Lily said. She put her hand up in a silencing manner when Snape tried to speak.

“I’m not demanding that you stop or anything like that. Harry needs someone like you and he tells you things that he has yet to tell us—his parents. I selfishly ask that you continue to do that.”

“Yes, I am here to summarize what you think you know, or will you say something of importance, Mrs. Potter?” Snape asked gruffly. He was annoyed at how she was speaking to him. As if requesting that he care about Harry in a manner that implied that she also cared. Maybe now she was truly beginning to, or perhaps she always had but did not know how to express as much with the socially awkward child. Either way, Lily Potter had no right to speak to Snape this way.

Lily looked sheepish, “what transpired three nights ago, should not have transpired. Even if fate said it a possibility. The adults should have been more involved. There was no reason that four children should have ever faced someone like Voldemort. I had faced and defied Voldemort four times and even I am shaken from such an event. There is no way that Harry is okay. No matter what James thinks just because Harry does not verbalize his emotions with him. I want to work with you Severus, I don’t agree that they should have to prepare for something like this and I swear I did not know of Harry’s defensive training. I believe that they should be little boys—”

“You are rambling, Lily.” Snape said exasperatingly. Lily’s mood lifted tremendously at the man using her first name.

“Sorry, Severus--but you agree, don’t you?”

Snape did agree somewhat. He agreed that it was unfair that such pressure was placed onto the boy’s shoulders and while Snape did not always agree that prophecies were right, that did not mean that they could not come true. The Potter boy was proof enough of that, “I don’t need to agree or disagree, I just need you to get to your point.”

Lily was still getting used to the wall that the man before her had placed around himself and did not flinch of his gruff tone, “right... My point is that I don’t want them to feel like they have some obligation to the Wizarding world to prevent a possible war created from another war that they had no part in. I want to ask that you aid me in ensuring their childhood, both of them—that includes Nathan.”

“Nathan has had plenty of childhood. He’s a childish little boy with ideas of grandure and adventure based from children stories. Harry on the other hand—”
“Severus. I get it.” Was all Lily said. She refused to look at Snape, “but Nathan is a little boy too, Harry’s best friend. His brother. I am not asking that you give him the same liberties as Harry. All I am asking is that you help me protect him--both of them--when I can’t while they’re in school.”

“I will not risk my life for Nathan Potter.” Snape said, and selfishly he meant it. Unless he had definite proof that the boy was the-boy-who-lived then he saw no reason to risk his own skin for the sake of the bullheaded boy.

“I am not asking you too, Severus. I just ask that within reason, you try to steer him away from trials such as the chambers and the stone.”

Snape stared at Lily. In the past he was enamored by her beauty, strength, intelligence and courage and yes, Snape could see those things within her just by staring. Now, what he saw was hardened resilience.

He gripped the arm that Lily had grabbed earlier. Whatever charm she used was no laughing matter, and it must have been awfully hard to create. Lily was no fool, she never had been, however; she was deluded for a time and her lack of interference will affect her son for the rest of his life and in some ways, she was trying to do better. However; she does not realize that even now, she has turned the subject back to Nathan.

“I do not swear, nor do I promise to do so but perhaps I will extend my knowledge and guidance to the boy on the rare occasions I will feel like it. If I feel like it at all and if it does not interfere with my life significantly.”

Lily wanted to protest and selfishly ask for more. She opened her mouth before she closed it tightly. This was as good as she was going to get and she just had to accept that, “I understand. Thank you, Severus. It’s all I ask. If you ever need anything, please do not hesitate to floo or owl.”

Snape nodded, and left the room. Pomfrey was still attending to Harry with her brow furrowed. Pomfrey may have been a no-nonsense woman but Harry had wormed his way into her good graces—and perhaps even her heart—by visiting her often with medical and healer inquiries. Snape was sure it was hard for her to see the boy so distraught and if Snape were honest, he would admit that it was hard for him too.

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It was well into the evening of the next day and Nathan and Harry had spent it all together. Harry had not been allowed any other visitors as the rush for the ending term was a hurried one.

When Nathan had first entered the room, Harry had been overjoyed that he was alive and well but that feeling was quickly replaced with devastation when he saw the harsh limp his brother walked with as he relied heavily on his cane.

Harry had rushed to his brother’s side and helped him sit down. Nathan had tried to assure him that he was fine and did not need any help walking but Harry ignored him and immediately started firing questions at their mother who had brought Nathan in.

He had asked her what the injury was, and if she knew what had caused it specifically. He grilled her on the healing process and he even argued with madam Pomfrey about the actuality of the injury being permanent. When his mother tried to placate Harry, he refused to humor her. When he had gathered all the information that he could, the only thing that he had said in regards to learning what he could of the inquiry for now, “I see.” Which was Harry’s way of saying; “I’ll look into it.” The others in the room did not know it at the time but Harry would see to it that his
brother was healed. He did not know how yet, but he would figure it out even if it killed him.

Their mother left the two be, she knew that there would be no room for her in their conversation and she did not wish to intrude. Nathan barely paid her any mind when she left. He was worried about Harry and where his mind was going. His older brother had a dark and determined look on his face and Nathan knew that he was hyper focused on his spinal injury. Nathan did not want his brother to focus on such things and he forced Harry back into bed and crawled in at his side and talked and talked and talked.

Nathan spoke about his fears and how scared he was and how selfish he felt because he never wanted to go through something like that again, at least not without Harry. Not because he wanted them to seek glory or fame but because Harry knew what to do in those situations and if he didn’t then he’d figure it out. Nathan had no plan for his confrontation with Quirrell, Harry had told him as much when he spoke. Harry had no plan and he was still able to come up with something that prevented Voldemort from obtaining the stone. Nathan had wanted Harry at his side when he ventured with Ron and Hermione down the chamber. Nathan had even confessed that much and when Harry said he should not have ventured down their at all, Nathan agreed but stubbornly stated that he did not regret it. The only thing that Nathan regretted was the fact that Harry had to face the specter alone. Harry had not give him much detail no matter how much Nathan asked but Nathan knew that it had an effect on Harry. Harry had always had a grown up look in his eyes but now he looked truly haunted.

After talking for so long they sat in companionable silence for ten minutes.

Nathan grabbed his brother’s hand and went from laying on his back to resting on his side so that he could view Harry easier. Nathan knew that they were missing the excitement of the farewell feast but he could not be bothered to feel put out. In a mere five days, he had nearly lost his brother--his best friend--and he himself was now a cripple. He couldn’t bother to feel childish disappointment for something such as a feast.

Harry remained laid on his back. He stared at the ceiling while Nathan chose to stare at him.

Nathan had refrained from telling Harry that another important reason that he had gone down into the chamber was because he wanted to do something that would make Harry proud and make him see that Nathan could be independent, he could be a big kid. That he could make big kid decisions like Harry and behave like a big kid and spend time with Harry and his big kid friends. Like Harry, he wanted their dad to trust that he could make adult decisions. Then maybe, Harry would tell him about the specter of Voldemort.

’I want to be just like you.’ Nathan thought to himself. He was too embarrassed to say it aloud.

“Hey, Harrison?” Nathan called with a whisper.

“Hm?”

“Are you mad at me for going after Quirrell to protect the stone?” Nathan tightened his hand around Harry’s own.

Harry closed his eyes, and he did not answer for a long while, and when he did he spoke so slowly that Nathan knew that he was answering with the utmost care.

“No. No, I am not. I am sad that you felt that you could not come to me so that we could have planned better and perhaps gotten an adult involved.”
“But Harrison! There was no time as I’ve told you over an’ over!” Nathan whispered harshly.

“There was time. Quirrell only managed to get the stone because he had you. I could have gotten professor Snape, he would have been able to easily stop Quirrell.”

Nathan was getting frustrated and his eyes were tearing up, “well, we thought that Snape was the one who was trying to steal that stone and we knew that you wouldn’t be able to accept that!”

“I wouldn’t have accepted it because you were not right and you would not have taken my word and that is because you do not trust me enough.” Harry stated.

Nathan gasped. This had been an ongoing argument with them, “Harrison, I trust you most in this world. For once, I just thought I was right. I’m sorry.”

Harry hummed and Nathan knew that his apology did not satisfy him.

“Harrison?” Nathan called again.

“Hm?”

“I’m the boy-who-lived.” Harry unconsciously squeezed his hand harshly while Nathan spoke next.

“I destroyed Voldemort’s body but he isn’t dead. He’s a specter and I’d like him to stay that way if there’s no other option. It’s up to me to make sure that happens.” Nathan said determinedly. He left no room to argue but that did not stop Harry. Harry, who knew how wrong his brother was. Harry, who knew that his brother would not stop thinking himself responsible for the adult’s war unless he found out that he actually wasn’t the prophecy. However; to do that Harry would have to know the bulk of the prophecy himself. He put it on his to-do list.

“Fine, Nathaniel.” Harry spat.

“Fine?” Nathan questioned worriedly.

“Yes. Fine, but you do not have to be thoughtless, brash, unplanned or unassisted in your endeavors. I understand then possibility of not trusting others due to the political tension and the overall danger of your position. However; you cannot do it alone. You cannot even walk properly anymore, Nathaniel and I do not apologize for being harsh but that could have been avoided.”

Nathan sniffled, “I know… it was so scary. I know I’m a coward for saying this but I was actually relieved when he threw me into the pillar and knocked me unconscious. I was quite scared before hand when he kept touching me, shaking me, and threatening me. When the stone had dipped into my pocket, I knew that he was going to kill me!!” By the end of his talk, Nathan cried in earnest.

Harry was relieved that Nathan was crying. He Had been putting on a brave and heroic face and Harry was concerned that he had been numbing himself away from his experience.

Harry for once instigating what Nathan dreadfully called “snuggling,” slunk his arms around the other boy and drew him closer as he cried.

“Exactly, Nathaniel. Remember that fear and let it guide you to better decisions. I know that you have had an unfair fate placed onto your shoulders and it is my job as your elder brother to help you to the best of my abilities. I don’t want you in trouble, when I say we should go to adults, it’s because they should be able to help. If they cannot or refuse to, then and only then should we try for a solution ourselves.”
Nathan nodded and squeezed Harry’s waist harshly. Harry had quite the assortment of bruises there but he did not complain. Nathan thanked him as best as he could between his cries and Harry squeezed his shoulders gently.

"Nathaniel, do you know who we are?"

Nathan sniffled and looked up at his brother from under the other boy's chin, "Potters?" He answered as a question.

Harry nodded, "but we are also more than that. We are brothers. That’s who we really are." ‘I am your brother. That is who I really am and I refuse to let anyone allow me to question that any further. Not the centaurs, not professor Snape, not our parents. No one.' Harry thought to himself.

The two held on to one another well into the night. Thinking about the year that transpired. They were forever changed, and unbeknownst to the other; they each made a silent vow to grow stronger and protect the other so that the other did not have to protect themselves.

Chapter End Notes

This is a VERY long chapter and I honestly hope to avoid writing such chapters in the future, ha ha. There is a lot of back and forth conversation between Lily and Severus that could have been taken out but I loved writing it, so I left it.

By the way, I am in the process of editing past chapters heavily. (Incorporating missing story plots and fixing character dialogue and character-analysis so that it is easier on you--the readers and also so that it makes more sense as the story develops and so that the character development actually makes sense.) This means that some bits have changed in the slightest way. (Nothing too big but you may notice a few things are different if you ever reread this long story, ha ha)

Also, I switched the flames in the chamber for a very good reason (that will be used in way later chapters) and the gore is sadly a part of the story. I will be as appropriate as I can. It is not mindless torture, that I can promise you.

Anyhow, I really have to thank you guys for your support in anyway that you show it. Whether it's by kudos, bookmarking this or commenting. I am very grateful to each and every one of you for being invested in this story.

I do thoroughly read your comments and reply to everyone of them so please do not be shy about leaving one, I genuinely would love to talk with you.
You're a Genius Harry!

Chapter Summary

A child is still a child even if they are a genius.

Chapter Notes

This is short and one of those "skim-through" chapters if you don't care for much world building, ha ha.

This also includes slight Lily and Snape perspective.

I am trying to write Snape in a paternal/Severitus way here. I accidentally made it seem as if there was a prospect of slash between he and Harry but there will not be at all.

Comments are always appreciated! I still cannot thank those of you who read this story enough. Your comments and thoughts are always valued.

“Harrison! Let’s go to Neville’s and play!” Nathan yelled as he hurriedly limped over, barely using his cane. He moved much too quickly in his haste and tripped. Harry caught him, commanded that he slow down and helped him stand up straight.

“Er, right. Sorry. Anyway, put those books down and let’s go to Neville’s!”

Harry glanced down at the two heavy tomes in his hands. He had planned to go to the Potter library for the day and read at least one of them in one sitting. He covered the titles inconspicuously and tried to skirt pass his brother.

“I have no time for to “play,” Nathaniel. I--” Harry was cut off by his brother’s firm hand on his shoulder. “Harrison, seriously, mate, put the books down for a day, and come with me to Neville’s. He’s our friend and frankly you’re acting obsessed with all the studying. What are you studying so hard for anyway? You’re the top of our year and it’s only been two weeks but I know you’ve already finished the homework.” Harry’s eye twitched, Nathan was being annoying. Nathan squeezed Harry’s arm when he saw the twitch. Nathan knew his brother--his twin--and he knew that Harry wanted to be left alone so that he could obsess over whatever it was that he was currently studying but Nathan knew that that wasn’t what he needed, not for Harry’s own health at least.

Nathan tried to take a peek at the books, and Harry knew that the other boy had already been openly bothered by how much he had been studying. If he saw that the titles Harry planned to study were, Essentials of Spinal Cord Injuries, which was written by an assortment of muggle doctors, and The Crippled Witch or Wizards Guide to Being a Cripple, which was written by an assortment of witches and wizards, Nathan would pitch a fit.
The last time Nathan saw Harry studying about his injury, the boy had went on a long frustrated rant of Harry neglecting his own health for the sake of Nathan—who could not even be helped because the doctors at St. Mungo’s said so. Nathan had said that he could tell that Harry was neglecting himself because of the dark circles that had appeared under his eyes in the last few weeks.

Harry did not correct Nathan that studying his spinal injury was a distraction that actually helped him cope with the nightmares that plagued him that began after their encounter with Voldemort. What he could not tell Nathan was the fact that he was also plagued by the vision of being skinned alive and therefore could not sleep, hence the dark circles.

Nathan did not know of the visions and nightmares that plagued Harry’s mind and therefore blamed Harry's studies for his poor health. Nathan has been able to cope better—if not easier with the nurture from their parents, Sirius and Remus. Hell, even the wizarding world as a whole gave the boy their utmost sympathies. Various magical families had sent Nathan; the Boy-Who-Lived, postcards with their condolences, sweets and many other gifts that voiced their sympathy to his plight.

They did not even know how or why he was injured because such information has not been revealed to the public! If Harry did not have friends, and professor Snape, he would have surely gone into despair from his terrifying experience.

Harry once again put the books away from his brother’s view, “they’re just some materials given to me by madam Pomfrey. She says I must read through them before the coming semester or she will not allow me to assist her on the weekends.” Most of what Harry said was true. He had been given materials by madam Pomfrey and she had told him that she would allow Harry to assist her if he read them thoroughly and passed a test that she will create for him. However, the books he currently held were from Joseph. Harry almost felt bad for lying about such a mundane thing.

Nathan beamed at him, despite the feeling in his gut that told him his brother was lying to him, “that’s awesome, Harrison! I’m sure a break won’t kill you though.”

Harry sighed and gave in, “I assume we are going now?” Nathan nodded eagerly, and Harry pinched the bridge of his nose, Nathan laughed and shook him gently before he released his hold on Harry’s shoulders.

“Allow me to put my materials away. I will meet you by the floo.”

“Awesome! See you in a bit!” Nathan exclaimed, he barely used his cane as he limped away hurriedly. His limp had gotten worse, Harry noted. He then turned away and made his way to his own room.

Nathan had not made any outward complaints—at least not in front of Harry—but Harry could tell that his brother’s pain had worsened along with his limp which meant that his injury most likely worsened as well. What made the situation worse was the fact that they still did not understand his wound completely. From the light reading that Harry had already done on spinal cord injuries, he was sure that his brother had irritated his injury further with all the “playing” the other boy has done. If Nathan sat more than he stood then the wound would not have worsened so quickly. Harry knew that it would be impossible to get his brother to sit for more than 30 minutes at a time, so he figured the quicker they could “fix” the injury, then the slower his brother would truly turn into what the wizarding world considers an invalid.

This was all speculation as Harry could not see the wound. The muggle x-ray machines had intrigued him greatly but the possible effect of radiation disturbed him. Especially once he had
found out what radiation exactly was, he could not stand how barbaric muggles were sometimes. He would find a less barbaric way to view his brother’s spine. Perhaps, he could magically incase it, copy it and recreate it in a three dimensional format.... He placed his books on his nightstand, Mousy appeared and told him, “young master Nathan is being most impatient and is wondering if young master Harry is being ready,” she waited for no answer and popped away.

Harry took his time reaching the floo. It was petty but his brother could learn some patience.

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Lily bit her nails as she watched Harry study sluggishly at his desk in the Potter library. He had dark circles under his eyes, he was deathly pale and even skinnier than usual. The boy had been studying, training and learning ever since he returned home. It had gotten to the point that Lily had put her foot down and told James that if Harry became less stressed then she would allow the man to take the boy to Gringotts so that James could proceed to educate him in managing the accounts but for now, all heir lessons and training were done. With Harry’s current behavior the boy could not afford to worry about such a thing.

It had been a month and a half since term let out at Hogwarts, and Harry has displayed a worrisome paranoid, antagonistic and pessimistic attitude upon returning. The boy also snapped at anyone that dared disturb his studies and he had even gotten bold to the point that he dare told his father, “why are you bothering me with familial festivities that have nothing to do with my heir-ship. You have never done this before, so I would appreciate it if you did not suddenly bother.” That was in regards to he and his brother’s birthday party when James had tried to get him to take a break from his studies under the guise of needing help with the party planning.

James had looked rightfully shocked and ashamed at Harry’s words and for a moment, Lily had thought that the man would have yelled with how red his face had became. However, the man simply walked away without saying anything further. It hurt both he and Lily’s heart that the boy was so put out in being involved with his own birthday but Lily supposed that that was their own faults as parents.

Harry’s and Nathan’s birthdays were a few weeks away and Lily and James have tried to get the boy involved in planning for it since it would be the two boy’s first public birthday. Not too public, of course. As the party was mainly for their sake to celebrate with their friends. However, James insisted that it was only proper that other Wizarding families were allowed to come due to Nathan’s title.

Typically, Harry had always been apathetic about being involved in the festivities as he was never very social, and he did not seem to care for such things. At least, that’s how Lily remembered it. (She too often forgot how she herself rarely reached out to the boy when he was young.) However; Harry was down right antagonistic to the idea of a party, especially one so public. He had told his father as much. Or at least James said he had.

Lily thought that perhaps Harry was becoming agitated because of her recent hovering, but the boy even lashed out at Nathan a few times in the last month. A less selfish woman would consider Harry’s trauma from his run-in with Voldemort to play a part in the boy’s anxious demeanor.

Lily had decided to leave the matter of the party be for now and her recent mission has been to get the boy to eat. However, as she watched him read with rapt attention as he quickly scribbled notes, she was hesitant to approach. She physically shook herself, what was she doing!? Harry was a preteen boy, he should not make her so self conscious! She took one slow step forward and jumped along with Harry when the books vanished one after the other with a pop.
Harry shot up from his desk, and reached for his notes frantically before they too vanished with a pop. Harry growled, “Mousy!!” He called out accusingly. Lily hid behind a bookcase, she wanted to watch what happened next because if Harry had called out to Lily that way she most likely would have left him be.

Suddenly, Mousy herself appeared before the boy with a warm bowl of cabbage soup and an unknown cup of liquid in her hands. She turned away from Harry briefly to place them both on the desk and when she faced him once more, her hands were on her hips and her face had the sternest expression that Lily had ever seen on the old house elf.

Harry tugged at his hair and with a snap of her fingers Mousy forced his hands at his side. Harry looked slightly distraught and Lily has never seen him so disheveled from studies. Harry spoke with avid frustration, “Mousy, my work, you—”

“Your work is being FINE. You however, hasn’t eaten since yesterday morning.” Mousy said with a pointed finger towards the desk.

“I don’t have time for this, Mousy! I was coming to a breakthrough in my notes. With an incomplete spinal injury Nathan has a chance at reco—“ Lily cut off her gasp by muffling it with her palm. Is that what Harry had been obsessing over these last few weeks? Lily should have stepped in sooner, his was not Harry’s responsibility!

“Young master. You cannots worry for that. Your father be’s hiring the best healers he cans find and even they sees that the injury is severe and has been lefts for too long. Mousy mays not speak well but shes be understanding some things of healings. She was a healers assistant in the past, you know.” Mousy said after gently cutting Harry off.

Harry shook his head in irritation, his hands went toward his hair once more but he thought better of it when Mousy’s glare intensified. “I can find the things that they cannot! They are thinking primitively. Satisfied that the old methods that they use have provided them with enough answers on Nathan’s condition! I have possibly found a way to get a more concrete view of his spine without the use of barbaric muggle x-rays!” It’s true, he had. Harry had not only studied the qualities of healing magic in his free time. He had also studied magic herself and he was more than surprised to discover that there were very few books that actually went in depth about the natural qualities of magic. Of course, there were an abundance of books on the theory of magic, how she was thought to work in the laws of humans and magical creatures by humans. That was all modern witches and wizards (at least in magical Britain) limited themselves to. Harry had even found books on magic’s apparent limitations in regards to spell work, but Harry was no fool. Magic was limitless, and any limits existing were through her own will, and with that in mind, Harry knew that he could do more with the aid of magic. He could find less dangerous methods of spell creation, in order to create the best spell that could help Nathan. Thus, he had come up with a solution to create the needed spell in order to simply view his brother’s spine in its entirety, yes, Harry thought it best to start off small.

He had already discovered the incantations he could use; he would use, “scrutari” to first scan the area of his brother’s spine that produced the most pain. His wand movements would have to be precise and to insure that precision he’d most likely have to outline Nathan’s spine with his free hand while also visualizing and tracing the shape with his wand. Once he had the magical “scan” of his brother’s spine he could then cast “disculpare-imitor solidus,” which should produce a three dimensional copy made from the scan. Harry thought that he was even more likely to succeed if he had clay of some sort to use to copy onto by using transfiguration. Harry had chosen these words because when he said them aloud while thinking of his intention, he felt a deep magical connection to them. He felt like mother magic was telling him that he was on the right path and now all he
needed was to test his theory. He had been desperately studying wand movement theory before Mousy had interrupted him.

Mousy crossed her arms over her small bony chest, “I believe you. You’s always been very smart and I’s be being very, very proud of young master, but young master will be of use to no ones if he’s cannot be taking care of himself. When Mousy was healer’s assistant, no one wanted healings from the master when he was being ill. Young master is goings to be the greatest healer Wizards ever see, but only if he’s be taking care of himself.”

Harry said nothing, he gaped at the old house elf before him.

“Do I really look sick?”

Mousy nodded, “you do. Mousy has been very worried.” ’And so have I.’ Lily thought to herself from her place behind the bookshelf. Lily had no idea that this was what Harry had been obsessing over, though she should have known. Even if the boy studied often, he was never so feral about it and the fact that James and herself had also been openly tense over Nathan’s injury could not be helping Harry—or even Nathan for that matter—cope with the situation.

Lily resolved herself, she would ask help of Severus once more. She knew that the man would not ignore her if it was Harry who needed him.

Harry sighed and ran a hand through his long hair, and morosely he sat at his desk and began to eat slowly.

“I apologize, Mousy and your words of wisdom will not be forgotten any time soon.” Harry said after a few spoonfuls of soup.

“Your apologies be accepted if young master really improves,” and with that Mousy popped away.

Lily felt very silly and unneeded and left. She could make herself useful to Harry elsewhere. She did not need to be in his face like Mousy and Lily was sure the boy would not appreciate it at all. Lily felt that Harry did not like her at all but that was only because he did not really know her. This was the thought that helped her cope with Hardy’s indifference, because a child’s love is unconditional. Lily did not want to think about how damaged he was to not be able to do something as simple as loving his mother with a child’s care.

Lily did not like thinking about such things. She could not handle the thought of herself being such a bad mother. If she did, she would too soon see that she was nothing like her own mother. Someone she very much emulated with Nathan. If she were honest she would acknowledge the carefree and unconditional love that she gave the younger boy who in turn returned it onto her. With Harry, however, her nervousness of him was still being seen as his fault. He was the cold one, he denied her love on his own free will.

Since he would not allow her close to his heart, Lily decided that she would be subtle in her assistance to him, and for now she would quietly write Severus and see if the man would visit the boy.

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Snape had been most annoyed upon receiving post from Lily Potter a week and a half ago. The letter was not anything more than a request for Snape’s presence and the woman used all the guilt that she could to insure the man came.

So, here he was, guided by Lily on his way to the Potter heir’s bedroom on a day Potter sr. and jr.
were not present, apparently the two were visiting a muggle zoo. Snape watched as Lily bit her nails upon reaching the heir’s room.

“Woman, are you afraid of your own child? Just step aside. I can let myself in.” Snape sneered. Lily glared at him viciously but she stepped aside and rudely gestured to the door with a wave of her hand.

Snape rolled his eyes, approached the door and knocked.

He waited only thirty seconds before he prepared to knock again. However, the door opened and Snape was greeted first, by an annoyed looking Harrison Potter, then the boy’s face morphed into one of surprise when he recognized the professor.

“Professor? What are you doing here?”

‘Something your father should be doing; inquiring on your health.’ Snape thought with a sneer.

“Generously offering my time for a visit and to insure that my generous teachings of potions are not being wasted. Will you not allow me inside the privacy of your rooms? Your mother could surely provide another space for us to speak if you so wished.”

Harry looked to his mother and she smiled at him softly. He acknowledged her presence with a nod before he spoke to the man before him, “no. It is fine, come in, professor. Thank you, mother.”

Lily knew that she was being dismissed and left the two be but not without giving Snape a helpless look that the man internally scoffed at as he entered the boy’s room.

Harry’s room was medium in size and surprisingly unique and not plain. Though the colors were some that most would consider dull and boring; navy blues, grays and black, Snape found himself enjoying the colors used in the decor. His own quarters were similar in color.

The bed was rather small and was displayed in the center of the room. It looked pristine with the sheets tucked in neatly underneath it. On the walls Harry had a few posters hung high and held with sticking charms. Most were charts of Latin, magical theories, and even arithmancy equations but they were still posters nonetheless.

Along the walls were tables, stations, small bookshelves and a desk. One station had various nocturnal herbology plants laid onto them, Snape surmised that that was why the room was so dim and the dark navy blue curtains were firmly shut. He also noted that the majority of the plants were rare. Next to that station was a wall cabinet of potions, most he assumed were made by Harry himself. Snape subtly looked around and was relieved to note that a potions station was absent. He should have known that Harry would hold potion safety in high regards.

One of the tables had a magical globe, various mundane maps of other continents, countries, and towns. Snape noticed with intrigue that many places China, India and Greece are circled. There were also a few language textbooks and a few books in various languages on it.

The table beside it had a pure crystal rock, tea leafs, coffee beans, origami folds, and animal bones. Above that table, a rune chart made of bore hide hung on the wall, Snape was not a master of runes but even he could tell that they were of the more fortune variety. To an outsider, it may look as if the boy had a slight interest in fortune telling but in Harry’s own letters that he had received in the summer; he knew that the boy was attempting to find more direct ways to see into the past, present and future. He had not been successful.

Snape was rather annoyed that Harry always neglected to mention his health in his letters. From the
look of it, the boy had barely slept or eaten since Snape saw him last. He would be sure to demand corrections of such behaviors. Harry usually responded well when Snape displayed his disappointment. Snape knew that Harry understood that unlike his father, Snape was not ashamed of his shortcomings, out of the mistakes he made as a child learning. No, Snape knew that mistakes would be made and he also knew that Harry could do better. It was not that he expected Harry to do better on his own, but knew that the boy could with the right direction and care. Snape felt disgusted with himself for feeling so paternal.

As Snape continued to walk about the room, and observe in interest, he could not help but find intrigue in the station next to the boy’s massive desk. It was covered in textbooks and notes. This station was also covered in various clumps of… clay? Snape peered at each clump intensely, however; he noticed that not all of them were indistinguishable clumps. Without thought, Snape grabbed one of them. It caught his attention because it actually looked like--

“That’s my knee.” Harry said with a bit of pride as he stood next to the professor.

Snape rose an eyebrow at the boy, and Harry remained staring at his creation.

“It took forty-three tries, a bout of magical exhaustion, and abuse of pepper-up potions but I finally replicated the bone structure of my knee perfectly five times. I didn’t expect a spine to be so different but it took nine tries to replicate Nathan’s spine and only the eighth and ninth ones were accurate.” Harry said as he grabbed a nearby sculpture, and sure enough it replicated the spine of a child. Even Snape could tell that much with his basic healer knowledge.

“Explain, yourself, Potter.” Snape demanded as he gently took the sculpture from the boy’s hand and looked it over.

Harry explained himself thoroughly, from his methods, to how he chose the incantations and even his own understanding and theories of magic that lead him to the spell methods that he had chose.

Snape paled, he had created his own spells in his youth and only learned how dangerous that had been in his adulthood when he lost a friend due to spell creating.

“You foolish boy! Spell creation is one of the most dangerous feats. Do you think yourself so powerful that--”

“Professor, with all do respect, I did not fully rely on British wizarding methods.”

Snape wanted to reprimand the boy for interrupting him but once his concern subsided, he actually found himself extremely interested in what the boy had done in order to not only create a new spell, charm--whatever this was--but this…. this was a game changer for healer’s all over the world. Even if the boy before him only created it for the sake of his brother. The boy was abnormal, a genius among his peers. Did the boy even realize it? Most likely not, he was still a child. Sometimes, even Snape forgot that. He was not all knowing just because he was a prodigy who could see into the future.

“I suppose we should get comfortable.” Snape recommended.

Harry nodded and politely called for Mousy who brought them tea. They sat in front of Harry’s study desk. The boy had apologized for the limited space but his room was not one he used for lounging. Nor did Harry actually lounge.

“Do not fret over it, Harry. I am more interested in how you went about creating this charm of yours.”
“It’s actually both a charm and the use of transfiguration. The charm is extremely reliant on the user’s understanding of the item being scanned and or copied. In this instance, one must be EXTREMELY familiar with the bone structure of the human body. Enough to envision what the bone should look like. You do this with your hands—in many places, such as India for example; they use their hands for a majority of their healing magic. I know that European wizards are said to lack the control for such unstable and raw magic but it is what comes natural to humans who have been gifted magic by magic herself.”

“You are messing with olden magic, boy…” Snape whispered as he stared at the boy incredulously.

“But not foolishly and not without purpose.” Harry defended. “What is the difference between magic today and olden magic, professor?”

Snape thought for a minute or two, “our understanding is better for one thing. We know the purpose of various magical categories and we have more control of magic than we had in the past.”

Harry grinned, and to Snape the child looked feral. Especially due to the slightly dark circles under his eyes. It was obvious the boy had not slept much as of late. Harry nodded vigorously as he grinned, he looked manic, “yes, but, that is not a difference in today’s magic versus olden. That is what’s changed about us. Magic does not, nor has she not ever changed, but we have.

In the past, curses were common. Muggles believed curses were created through word and will alone but if you think of curses—well, magic in general—as a prayer, and the witch as a channel and magic as her god, then you begin to understand magic a whole lot differently. In the past, spells were longer because it took longer to focus one’s own magic--that was inside inside themselves but because they did not know that they identified magic as the will of magic herself. In a way they weren’t wrong but they had to make sense of their magic in order to focus onto their person or item that they were casting through. To this day indigenous magical tribes use chanting as a way of channeling magic without things such as wands and it works for them! They output magic just the same—if not stronger than our own when we use wands.”

Snape sat in silence but internally he was stunned. Most days, he and other British wizards were far too focused on class and their man-made traditions to ever remember olden magic. Ina very big way, modern day wizards--at least in magical Britain--were unknowingly restricting their magic with their wands, but it was the easiest way to control it. Most wandless magic was extremely difficult, and wands made them easier to use, with quicker and still powerful results for complex spells.

“I have gone on a tangent I am afraid, forgive me, professor.” No, child, Snape thought. Keep speaking of magic, the ways your eyes alight is powerful. It’s intoxicating. Have you been blessed by magic herself?

“As I was saying, using your hands to channel magic can allow you to feel the physical and magical form of the human body. If your vision is incorrect then you must have the knowledge to recognize that and still create it. Now, the transfiguration comes from the clay—the three dimensional copy and it is harder than the charm and so far, my attempts to transfigure the clay without a wand have left behind grotesque clumps and myself dangerously fatigued. The wand is barely any better for the hand movements have to be extremely precise as you sculpt, it is not a quick process and the quickest transfiguration for me lasted ten minutes. You are constantly performing the spell until it is completed.” Harry made the wand movements as he spoke, they were quick and clean cut but he had to do them over and over again. Snape noticed the makeshift brace on his wrist as he did so. The boy has been working far too hard.
“But, I did it and I’ve sent a replica to the healers at St. Mungo’s and to Joseph Kama’s mother. She is a doctor and has agreed to take a look at it for me and see if there really is nothing that could be done for Nathan’s wound.”

Snape nodded, “very impressive, Harrison Potter. Very impressive indeed. This magic could be most useful to the healer’s at St. Mungo’s—to healer’s all over the world.” He tried to keep the pride out of his voice but he did so horribly.

Harry looked away but Snape could see that his face was beet red. The boy has become rather shy receiving praise from him.

“I had not really thought about that. I was only doing this to figure out if there was not something else that could be done for Nathan but now that you’ve mention, it could help others, could it not?”

Snape nodded.

Harry hummed, “then I may share it with… St. Mungo’s?” His voice was unsure unsurprisingly. The boy was twelve, of course he would not understand how authorship and patenting worked and how he should be credited for such an incredible discovery.

“You should.” Snape insisted.

“I do not want my name tied to such a thing so early on in my education.”

“You could always use a pen name. For example, I know Topy Snare, the creator of the Coughing and Wheezing cure quite well.” Snape said humorously through his classic smile that looked like he was baring his teeth like an animal. Yes, his patent on his other identity’s potions is what allowed him to live so comfortably.

Harry himself smiled slightly, “oh, really?”

“Yes really, and they will be under oath to keep your identity secret as long as you so choose.”

“I’ll think about it. I will research how the process actually works and will approach you with any questions if that is ok.”

“You do that. Now, I was told that this is what you have been obsessing over the last two months. I suppose I am right to assume that you have neglected your other studies?”

With that the two went on to speak about their own summers and the other studies Harry had invested in.

That topic was entertaining only for about five minutes as the boy did not actually neglect the additional material that he had been given. They moved on to more potion related topics and to Snape’s surprise the boy had asked about the births of stillborn babes, and miscarriages.

Apparently, that had been something he had studied personally and Snape answered him as best as he could. He wanted to give Harry as much information as he could provide because it was obvious that once the boy put his mind to something, he could do something as incredible as create new spells in less dangerous methods than other modern wizards. Snape only found it slightly strange to discuss fertility and birth with a preteen but the boy was a genius in his own right and he wasn’t really inquiring for information for the sake of humor. The boy did not seem sexually aware at all. Which was not terribly unsurprising as the boy was barely a preteen. However; even young Draco had begun to discover young women. Snape would not be surprised if the boy before him would be a late bloomer in regards to his own sexuality. Would he need to have the “talk” with the
boy? Merlin knows the boy’s father won’t. He grimaced at the thought as he never enjoyed having the “talk” with his Slytherins. He was much to clinical and it nearly always embarrassed them but perhaps that would be what Harry needed.

As those thoughts left his mind the longer the two talked, Snape realized that he enjoyed speaking with the boy in this manner. In a way he could only speak with healers or other potion masters. Masters who were few and far in between. However; Harry did not know everything, to be blunt; he only knew the surface of potionry but he was serious about his studies and his questions and thoughts were very intelligent. More so than what other students asked, even the older ones.

They also spoke about the boy’s birthday and Snape could relate to Harry’s cold indifference, he was not very social himself but not just due to his enjoyment of solitude but also because he never really learned how to act among his peers until his adulthood. Seeing himself in Harry often concerned him, Harry was so young. Snape was not foolish, nor was he in denial. He knew that he was a cold, abrasive and sometimes even feral man (under the Dark Lord’s "care," he was tortured and forced to torture. How could he come out of such a servitude completely sane?) Minus the feral; Harry was eerily similar. Snape knew that there was still hope for the young man if he could only receive the right pulls and pushes when he needed them. So, Snape pushed and reprimand the boy for not thinking of his friends. The least he could do was personally invite them to the party and Harry had conceded in agreement.

When all was said and done, Snape left with direct orders to the boy to eat regularly and actually study less, now that he reached a major goal of his. Snape was stern and promised Harry that he would not give him extra curriculum if he could not study responsibly. Harry seemed properly put out and apologized with promises of improvement. He made sure to let Harry know that he was not angry at him. He merely wanted the boy to be aware of the dangers of burning out and running himself to exhaustion and Harry seemed to truly take his words into consideration.

Snape left without a goodbye to Lily and told the boy to forward Mungo’s and the reply of Kama’s mother so that he could brainstorm with Harry on what to do with the information he should receive. Harry had actually looked relieved at his professor's offer of assistance. The child really should just learn to reach out and ask for help but Snape knew that it would be up to the adult’s in the boy’s life to actually offer and so, he did the adult thing and offered. If only the boy's simpleton parents could understand that then they would make more progress with Harry but it was not Snape’s place to constantly remind them on how to be parents, and admittedly, he liked the boy’s reliance on him. He felt that he was a real mentor to the child and for once after so many years of solitude and being used, Snape felt very needed and all Harrison Potter wanted from him (no matter how unknowingly) was guidance and care from an adult figure.

It was only another week later that Snape received post from the boy. One a forwarded letter from Jene Smith, another forwarded letter which was sent from St. Mungo’s, and a personal letter from Harry which included an invitation to Harrison and Nathaniel Potter’s birthday party. In the forwarded letter, Doctor Smith apologetically informed Harry that there was nothing muggle medicine could do for Nathan Potter. She went on to explain the injury in depth and even he could understand that it was permanent. The confirmation from St. Mungo’s only solidified it. However, Harry’s resolve did not diminish from the news that should have very well devastated him. No, Snape knew that the boy reluctantly accepted his brother’s fate when he read of the boy’s request for him to speak to Lucius on Harry’s behalf about custom made canes.

The boy would never be uninteresting to Snape, so without a second thought, he wrote to Malfoy and wrote a reply to the birthday invitation. Of course, he would not go but he would send materials such as; protective charms, and runes that the boy could use to make a most satisfactory magical cane for his brother.
Happy birthday Nathan Potter! Oh, and Harry Potter too...

Chapter Summary

Nathan, Nathan, Nathan. It's all about Nathan even when it isn't. Even when it's meant to be about the both of them.

Chapter Notes

Please read the author's note if you don't mind. (^^

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Harry was reluctantly an attendee at his own birthday party.

He had greeted about twenty-five people before he felt emotionally drained and retreated. Now, he was safely tucked away in a corner near the fence by one of the various water fountains that protruded the perimeters of the Potter mansion. No one could see him but he could see them, and when he saw the few he had invited personally; only then would he leave his corner to greet them before he hid away once more. It was bad etiquette but after a while Harry just felt so overwhelmed, but his friends understood. His year mates left him be and mingled with one another. Joseph and the rest of Wart’s understood had no problem spreading themselves out and they used the party as an opportunity to network under the guise of mingling with the other party goers. Of course, they each kept an eye on Harry.

Nathan, to no one's surprise shined as the birthday boy. He smiled and thanked everyone at all the right times, and the party goers who were not family or friends approached only he. Not simply because Harry was hidden away but also because Harry, in many ways was unapproachable. Some would even call him intimidating.

Even Ron had been invited along with his family and Nathan’s avoidant behavior switched, due to much pressure from their father. However; Nathan treated the other boy like any of the other awed hero worshiping individuals instead of a friend and Harry was unsure whether or not Ron actually noticed.

Harry thought Ron and Nathan’s obliviousness complimented each other quite nicely as Nathan was yet to notice a small female Weasley stalking him during the festivities.

Ron’s twin brothers Fred and George had accosted Harry for a small period of time. For some reason the older boy’s were drawn to him and included him in some of their mischief. They called Harry their “potions master” but they made it sound shady and dangerous. Perhaps Harry was a bit shady, some of their more creative pranks had used potions Harry had made for them. They left him alone after a while, but not before each of them gave him wet kisses on both his cheeks but they left all the same. In their absence Percy had approached him and politely wished him a happy birthday. They briefly discussed some ideas for Warts before Percy spotted the other Warts members and left Harry alone.
The older boy was a good addition to their ranks in Harry’s opinion. Percy had his sights on a ministry position and even Harry knew that that would benefit Warts greatly. They were not going to be a club restricted to Hogwarts’ walls. They needed to expand, involve adults and those with power. The ministry was a great place to start. Thankfully, Percy has also adopted their motto; “Building friendships through goodwill and comradery.”

Their moral code differed greatly from British Wizarding culture but they were determined to make it work.

Harry sipped on his watered down butterbeer and was snapped out of his thoughts when he instinctively raised his drink above his head as a bushy haired girl ran toward him.

“Oh, happy birthday, Harry!” Hermione said excitedly as she pounced on Harry and engulfed him into a rather tight hug. Harry had thought that he had gotten stronger over the summer with all of his physical and magical training but Hermione may give him a run for his money. Harry patted her on the back and welcomed her quietly.

She released him a moment later before she forced his attention in the direction of the three adults that had followed behind her. Hermione held a striking resemblance to them too, Harry deduced that they were all blood related.

A beautiful woman with slightly tanned skin and hair as kinky as Hermione’s own, smiled at him before she engulfed him into a hug herself. ‘Ah, this is where Hermione gets it from.’ Harry thought to himself as he allowed the woman to hug him. Hermione introduced her as her mother, Morticia. Morticia stepped back and immediately a man who was not overtly handsome approached Harry and shook his hand. He wasn’t very handsome but he had a nice nose and kind eyes, much like Hermione. His name was Mendall.

Next the small grandmotherly woman approached him. She was clearly of mixed descent. Her skin was a bit darker than Hermione’s mother and she had a wider nose, and slightly bigger lips. Not cartoonishly big, but they were a bit more plump than that of those with European descent. Harry had no idea that Hermione’s family was so diverse, and clearly Hermione was not adopted as she had the woman’s eyes and light brown hair.

She smiled at him gently before she engulfed one of Harry’s hands with her own and kissed the air above their entwined hands.

Hermione stated that the women was her grandmother, Morale Edness. Hermione bounced on the tips of her toes and looked towards Harry in pride, excitement and with a longing gaze for approval. Hermione spoke of her family frequently and before she had entered school, she had said that her grandmother was her first best friend. Harry felt rather honored that she was so excited for him to meet her. Harry said as much and Hermione beamed.

“Likewise.” Ms. Edness said in response with a slight Caribbean accent. The Granger’s nodded enthusiastically. They said that they conceded with Ms. Edness words with their body language. It was so fascinating how similar they all were.

“We placed your presents on the drop off table where everyone else has left their gifts.” The older woman stated.

“I thank you greatly, cake will be served in the next hour.”

Hermione looked at her parents warily, the two looked at her in slight disapproval before they looked to one another in a manner that said that they were not so sure about the food choice.
Harry had already fixed the problem before it even was one. “My cake is sugar-free.” He stated with a nod in Hermione’s direction.

Hermione beamed at Harry and engulfed him into a hug once more. “Oh thank you, Harry!”

“Yes, yes., it would have been rude to be inconsiderate of other’s diets.” Harry muttered while he patted her back firmly.

Harry noticed that her guardians looked slightly overwhelmed and curious as they gaped at the house elves passing by with various food and drinks, the numerous moving portraits and children flying in the yard on brooms.

Noticing their nervousness, Harry politely pointed them in the direction of the Smiths—Joseph’s parents and informed them that the couple were muggles. The three moved toward the two muggle quickly. They were excited at the prospect of meeting other muggles in the know.

Harry and Hermione spoke for a few moments once the three adults were no longer near, and Hermione could see his agitation immediately. Harry was overwhelmed by all of the people, noises and live music from some local orchestra and it showed. Like a good friend Hermione could easily tell. So, when she caught the sight of Ernie, Susan and Terry nearby she excused herself and made her way to them without much fuss. Harry did not know it, his year mates were nearby because they wanted to be as close to him as possible. They knew that being near him at the moment would overload his senses. So they settled for remaining nearby and speaking louder than necessary.

Suddenly, Harry’s father loomed over him. “All of your friends are watching, suppose they want to come over?” His father said as he moved to stand beside Harry.

Harry glanced at the group whose conversations grew quiet as they watched Harry and his father interact with suspicious and distrusting eyes. His father’s lips were pursed and the man’s ears were a slight tinge of red. The end of first year was on everyone’s mind and James Potter had not been a role model father. With a wave of his hand, Harry gestured for the group to mind their business and luckily they all understood as they walked a bit further away.

His year mates that is. Harry did not notice Joseph, Adrian and Penelope; the nearest Warts members, who stayed perched right where they were which was not too far from the father and son. Adrian and Penelope at least pretended as if they were conversing. Joseph however, openly stared at Harry and his father.

Harry knew that Joseph disliked his father but he did not know much and he did not know that his mother was just as disliked by the young man. Yes, Joseph despised both James and Lily Potter, and the longer the party went on, the more he hated them.

The party had been going for two hours, and rarely did James stray far from Nathan. He yelled things like “here comes the birthday boy!” As the boy walked through the crowds of guests, and he also had the boy open his gifts from him in front of everyone and did not give any indication that he had gotten Harry anything. The only time the man had even acknowledged Harry was to brag about the boy’s successes as if he were the reason that they had happened! Joseph had seen the man’s favoritism at Hogwarts but he was absolutely disgusted by what he was learning at the party.

“Loyal group of friends you have there.” James noted. Harry hummed.

They sat in silence, it was not awkward but it was slightly tense. Over the summer, James had tried
to corner Harry into long and random conversations that had nothing to do with his duties or heirship and every time, his efforts were unfruitful as Harry would grow agitated and confused. Sometimes, James acknowledge how much of Harry’s odd behaviors were his fault.

Most times, however, he saw the strategic, intelligent and powerful young boy that protected his youngest—the Boy-Who-Lived—just as fiercely as James ever did. He and Nathan’s survival against a Death Eater and Voldemort himself at the end of their first year was enough proof for that. He also saw that Harry was critical and decisive. He was looked to as a leader among his peers. James also heard the constant praise of his own peers, commending him for what a fine young heir Harry was and most of all, James knew that his own father would be proud of him and proud of Harry.

Harry disliked him, James knew that. Harry was wary of him, and James could take that. James’ own father had been far too diligent with him. He remembered many times that his father allowed him to have and do whatever he wanted simply because he was their one and only; their miracle child and his mother demanded him to. This caused James to become spoiled, he neglected his studies and barely got accepted into the Auror program after Hogwarts and even then he tended to neglect his duties because he was so used to getting his way. He had only recently changed because of his kids. He wanted them to be more, and he wanted to make his father’s dying wish a reality. He would uphold the Potter name and make it greater than ever before since he had failed to do so in his own youth.

Sure, he’d rather Harry like him and hold him in high regard like Nathan did, but James could take the boy’s teenage disinterest. He understood Harry in a way. James did not get on with his father as well, but he had not had as much interaction with his father either. Just as Harry hadn’t with him in the beginning, James had resolved to fix that however, and it has been awfully hard but with Lily’s support, he was managing. Another thought that helped James cope was the fact that when Harry was older he would be able to understand that James only wanted the best for him. James expectations are high for him because James knows that Harry can reach those expectations. He would not have those expectations otherwise.

“My gift for you is in your room. I think that you will find it to suit you well for any mischief you may want to get into.” James said monotonous. The less emotion he inflected in his voice, the more likely Harry was to listen.

Harry’s eye twitched. He was not Nathan, he did not want to get into any such thing.

His father rolled his eyes and ruffled his hair, “at least see what the gift is before you go on thinking that I didn’t actually think about you. Yeesh.”

The man walked off and Harry glared slightly at his back. Now that he thought about it, he really wanted to return to his room. He checked his watched and blew air from his nose in irritation when he saw that they still had three hours left of public festivities. Harry returned his attention to the party. He saw Rita Skeeter and her pen frantically taking notes of any gossip heard. He saw a few students from Hogwarts; all from different houses. It was obvious that they did not really know how to act without house rivalries in the middle of their conversations, but the few students who were becoming active members of Warts were there. They were doing their best to start up conversations and succeeded for the most part. Harry was rather impressed.

Harry’s eyes landed on Nathan and he watched as his brother entertained anyone who would listen with jokes and fun made up stories, and he watched his parents travel and greet the various other adults within the yard.

A year ago, they would have had a quiet and simple dinner, maybe they would have invited
Neville and Luna Lovegood who were both present but glued to the sides of their guardians. Maybe, they wouldn’t have. Either way, they would have had a private and quiet affair as a family but this year, it was this public mess. Harry drank the last of his butterbeer and was prepared to spend the rest of the festivities tucked away into his corner but that was “ruined” by Joseph, who was followed by the other members of Wart’s—which now included Percy Weasley. Joseph forced Harry to sit on the dirty grass as he offered the boy a platter of fruit from the snack bar. Joseph did not make Harry speak as he and the other members of Wart’s began to quietly converse around him. It was relaxing to simply listen to them as they spoke.

Warily, his year mates joined them and when Harry did not protest they relaxed and began to have their own conversations with the upper years. Harry leaned into Joseph as he rested his eyes and listened to his companions as they drawled on about the latest fashions, their marks, their thoughts on the coming year and about the festivities happening around them. It was not long before Harry fell asleep.

Later that evening when the public festivities were over. Only a few of Nathan and Harry’s good friends and their families who could stay remained. For Harry, this left Cedric, Perry, Joseph, Ernie, and Terry. All six boys lounged on the plush carpet in the living room. Joseph and Cedric spoke quietly to each other and Terry and Ernie were using Harry as a mediator in their debate for the most inventive charm created. Perry sat next to Harry and allowed the younger boy to lean on him fully as he mediated the debate. On one of the other sofas in the room sat Nathan, Ron, Neville, and Dean Thomas. Dean and Nathan had gotten closer after Dean had comforted the other boy while he was not getting on as well with Ron. The three were playing a game of exploding snap, but Nathan was obviously distracted as he kept throwing nervous glances Harry’s way. Harry ignored him because he knew that his brother was anxious for a gift from him. Nathan was presumptuous enough to think that Harry had bothered. Well, Harry had but Harry figured the other boy could wait until they had more privacy. Just because Nathan had not done the same did not mean that Harry had to follow suit. He did love his various books, parchment and sweets his brother had gotten him though.

James sat in his recliner near the fire place, and Lily sat on the arm of his chair comfortably as James’ arm around her waist secured her position. Joseph’s parents sat in a similar fashion on a nearby love-seat, while the Weasley’s had chairs from one of the patios brought in for them to sit on. The head Weasley was asking Joseph’s parents various questions in regards to the muggle world. It was all very relaxing and Harry began to close his eyes once more. However, his human pillow; Perry shook him awake.

“You’ve already taken a nap once today, birthday boy. You won’t be able to sleep at all tonight if you sleep right now.”

“Muh.” Harry grunted.

Perry pinched his ear and Harry frowned at him, extreme displeasure displayed on his face. Perry laughed at him and imitated his expression, the others around them laughed as well. Harry found that he really liked Perry. The older boy was funny, kind of loud and unapologetically flamboyant. He was the exact opposite of Harry and Harry found himself drawn to that. Perry was also clever and treated Harry like... a kid—albeit a smart one but a kid nonetheless. Like Joseph and the other older Warts members, Perry would feel like an older sibling to him if Harry knew what that felt like.

Harry’s and Nathan’s parents watched Harry intently as he interacted with his friends. The boy did not notice their rapt attention and awe. The boy—well, looked like a boy instead of the stern young man they always saw him as.
“If you’re so bored, why don’t you give your brother his gift? The boy is practically pissing his pants in anticipation.”

“Perry!” Cedric and Joseph exclaimed in unison, they could not believe the other boy’s mouth sometimes, the two were barely heard as Nathan yelled, “yeah! You should give me my gift!”

Harry scowled at the older boy and Perry shrugged.

Ron looked around the room in confusion before he spoke to Nathan, “why don’t you just use accio to retrieve it?”

“Because, Ron. I don’t know what the item is and I don’t have my wand. I gave it to Harry because he asked to borrow it a few days ago.” Nathan answered.

“You just gave him your wand?” Ron asked incredulously, his mouth agape.

Nathan huffed and spoke defensively, “yeah! He said he’d give it back and I deduced that it had something to do with my gift.” Nathan got up, and did not bother to grab his cane as he limped over to the couch where Harry sat in front of. He sprawled on top of both Harry and Perry, “c’mon Harrison, I’ve been really patient! I didn’t ask about it all day!”

“Until now.” Harry said with a slight disapproving frown. He tried to force Nathan off of he and Perry but did not succeed. The other boy was actually quite heavy, “you’re being quite rude, Nathaniel!” Harry exclaimed indignantly, he felt his cheeks heating up. He could not believe that the boy was acting this way, in front of guests no less!

Perry wrapped his arms around Nathan and helped the boy get comfortable as the younger sprawled his entire upper body on the laps of Perry and Harry. Cedric had grabbed the boy’s legs and stretched them out on top of he and Ernie’s laps as they relaxed their backs onto the couch. Joseph watched on in amusement from his place on the arm chair.

“Oh, Nathan. How do you live with such a stern brother?” Perry exclaimed dramatically as he petted Nathan’s hair with the hand that was attached to the arm that was not wrapped around the boy’s torso.

Nathan smiled mischievously and relaxed his weight onto the bodies below his own. Nathan quite liked hugs and attention and he was getting a lot of both at the moment.

“It’s hard but he’s my big brother, I manage.”

Harry scowled harshly. His cheeks were a bright red and when he saw that the adults were watching them all intently, he scowled even more.

“How can I get your gift if you are laid inappropriately on top of me!?” Harry hissed. He did not enjoy looking so childish in front of anyone. Especially adults.

Nathan stilled immediately, “if I get up, will you give me my gift?”

“You are behaving like a spoiled brat in front of our guests, Nathaniel!” Harry whispered hotly, annoyed that the only thing Nathan had heard was the mentioning of his gift.

Nathan’s mischievous smile turned into a mischievous grin, he shrugged, “I’ll get up if you give me my gift.”

Harry did something extremely childish. He pinched Nathan hard, the other boy yelped and fell
right out of their laps. The adults in the room had to stifle their laughter.

Before Nathan even stood, Harry had quietly accio’d his gift into his hand. It was encased in a rather thin and long box.

“I would have rather you waited until it was just the two of us but here.” Harry stated as he shoved the package into his brother’s hands.

Nathan took the package eagerly and he was ready to tear into its elegant wrappings until he saw Harry’s face. The other boy looked slightly upset, “wait, are you mad at me? It’s our birthday. You can’t be mad at me.”

Harry sighed and sat down on the floor and pulled on his brother’s dress shirt until the other boy sat down with him. All within the room watched with rapt attention. Ernie, Ron and Dean even crawled on the floor and sat around the boy’s and watched them interact in open curiosity. What could Harry have given Nathan that the boy didn’t already have? The amount of gifts that Nathan had received from his parents, the public and friends was shocking and most of the gifts that Harry had received from the public were just copies of what Nathan had gotten. Nathan had even gotten a Nimbus 2000 from he and Harry’s father.

His not so public gifts however; came from his colleagues, members of Warts, Remus, Sirius and surprisingly; Narcissa Malfoy.

His colleagues got him practical gifts, they were smart and knew that Harry only cared for things he could use. Not the material things in life. Many of them incorporated sweets with their gifts as well. Hermione’s gift made him laugh a bit, however. It was a coupon for a dental check up and teeth cleaning from her parents’ practice within dentistry. In her card she had said that he ate far too many sweets and was sure to be riddled with cavities.

Remus and Sirius gave him their gifts personally. Instead of a book, Remus had gotten him muggle children’s games. One was called Candyland and the other was called Operation. He and the rest of the group present only played a bit of Operation. It was an odd game. In the center of the board laid a fat man and on his body there were various holes with tiny white plastic pieces in them. Some were body parts, some were random objects. The game also came with tweezers and the objective was to remove the white pieces with said tweezers without touch the rim of the holes. If you did a loud buzzing noise would occur informing you that you have failed the operation. It was quite fascinating but Harry has begun to wonder why Remus knew so much about the muggle world. Harry was grateful for the game but he was rather spoiled by the books that Remus had randomly gifted him throughout the year. Harry wondered if it would be would to ask after a copy or two.

Sirius had gotten him a rather expensive stethoscope and Harry was extremely surprised that the man knew of his medical interests. Well, perhaps he shouldn’t have been, just like his father, Sirius has made an effort to talk to Harry more in an attempt to get to know him. However, Sirius tries to compare him to his father and Nathan and treats him as such, which leads to him telling far too many jokes and being far too touchy which forces Harry to avoid him.

From Mrs. Malfoy, he received a birthday card which included an apology for her and her family’s absence. Harry had sent something similar on Draco’s own birthday. Neither of their families were close enough to attend one another’s private familial events. No matter how “public” the events were. Along with her card, Mrs. Malfoy sent rather expensive herbal teas to Harry and out of formality, she also sent chocolate frogs for Nathan.

Harry returned his attention back to the present. Nathan was comfortably seated on the ground and
smiled at Harry tentatively.

“Happy birthday, Nathaniel.” Harry said softly.

Nathan beamed at him, thankful that Harry was not mad and opened his present. Harry had always opened his gifts with such attentive care. He never purposefully teared at the wrappings and he would even fold it afterwards and set it aside. Many people at the party considered him strange for it. Nathan was the opposite of him. He always showed his eagerness in his actions, unlike Harry and this moment was no different. Harry was glad that he was so excited.

When Nathan got to the box he was a little more careful. He took off the lid excitedly and when he saw what was inside he froze momentarily.

With shaky hands he took out an item and all could tell that it was a cane. The cane was sleek and polished and it was a dark amber brown in color. The top of the cane was made of a metallic material that took no distinctive shape but was clearly a handle.

“Harrison…” He whispered.

Perry whistled, “that is beautiful work.” he complimented.

“It is.” Nathan agreed earnestly as he stood, eager to test it out.

The moment the cane had touched the ground it extended slightly and Nathan yelped in surprise.

Harry had stood with him, and nudged him forward, “go on. I tested it myself but could not simulate a proper limp.”

Confused, Nathan did as he was told and walked around the room. Each time the cane extended perfectly, and he had little to no limp.

“Ollivander put the wood together, and a skilled cane maker in Italy shaped and polished it, and it was actually Billiam Weasley who carved the various runes onto the piece. It would also be very appropriate for you to write a thank you card to not only Billiam but to Adrian Pucey, and professor Snape as well. They were the ones who helped me find the perfect runes and charms for your cane. It is because of them that the cane caters to your weight perfectly and elongates when you place weight onto it, therefore; it minimizes how much weight you place onto your strongest leg that still experiences rather harsh pain. That is what decreases your limp.”

“THIS IS AMAZING!” Nathan yelled once Harry finished speaking, he walked about the room, “IT’S LIKE I’M NOT WALKING ON MY LEG AT ALL.”

Lily gasped and James stood so that he could get a better look. The two of them had gotten Nathan rather superficial gifts and the amount of thought, care and planning that had gone into Harry’s really put them to shame.

Nathan suddenly stopped mid stepped and changed his destination and marched directly at Harry. Harry was caught off guard, and reflexively took a step back but he didn’t get to move much further before he had his arms full of a sobbing Nathan.

Harry pursed his lips but slowly wrapped his arms around his brother. He despised having an audience and it showed on his face and it was heard in his tone, “this is why I wanted to wait until we had privacy, Nathaniel.”

Nathan sniffled wetly but didn’t say anything as he continued to cry. After a moment, Harry gently
forced the other boy off of him.

He gently took the cane from Nathan’s hand and Nathan immediately placed a hand on Harry’s shoulder for balance.

“Young wand is encased inside, there are two voice commands to summon it but you can also use it while it is inside. Your magic will be slightly weaker however.”

“What are the phrases?” Nathan asked curiously.

“One I’ll teach you later in private. The other is, ‘gryphus,’” Immediately the cane snapped apart. The metal handle and wood that were not apart of the wand snapped onto Harry’s wrist like a bracelet, “to return it to its cane form you say, ‘reverto.’” The cane became one once more, “these two commands only work if you are holding the cane.”

“Easy!” Nathan exclaimed as he took the cane back and practiced summoning and retracting the wand.

Terry had approached and intently watched Nathan as the boy toyed with his wand-cane.

“Harry, mate, this is insane. You’re the smartest eleven year old, I know and you know I admit that reluctantly.” Terry stated as he placed an arm around Harry’s shoulder.

“I’m twelve.” Harry said with a smirk and Terry mocked him by repeating the words back at him.

Ron, Neville and Dean were ‘oo-ing and awe-ing’ with each transformation of the wand. The adults in the room watched as well, while they whispered among one another, they looked awfully impressed. James looked immensely prideful, no doubt he would be boasting about it at work later.

Nathan approached Harry once more and hugged him again fiercely. He was crying yet again. ‘sensitive, just like mother,’ Harry thought to himself. He grimaced from the other boy’s public display of affection. He tentatively returned the hug with one arm (his other was engulfed by his brother’s hold) and patted Nathan’s back awkwardly.

“I was plagued with thoughts of how I would be able to cast magic properly if I had to wield both a cane and a wand, and of course you knew that. I’m just so overwhelmingly happy, I love you. You are the best brother ever.” Nathan squeezed him tighter.

Harry grimaced and looked around the room, thankful that everyone was respectful enough to at least pretend they weren’t listening as they pretended to have conversations with one another.

Harry sighed and said, “I love you too, Nathan,” very quietly, so that only Nathan could hear.

“I know,” Nathan said with a smug grin as he kissed Harry’s cheek wetly.

Harry wiped his face in open disgust and unsheathed his wand from its holster under his jumper and on his upper arm, “if one more individual kisses me, I will hex them bald,” he promised.

All within the room laughed and Nathan looked about ready to pounce on Harry and see if he really would. Harry pointed his wand directly at the other boy, he would very much hex him if he dared tried to invade his personal space yet again.

Lily’s heart swelled. To see Harry so playful and childlike truly overwhelmed her. In a good way. She had no doubt that Harry would hex the next person to kiss him but the fact that he hadn’t withdrawn from the social festivities at all today made her really proud. She had said as much to
him but he had only stared at her blankly. She was a bit put out, because she was trying! Couldn’t he see that?

“Enough you two. Harry, how about you busy your hands and play for us on the piano?” James said as a suggestion but nothing was ever a suggestion from the man if he was speaking to Harry. James had spoken as he gestured to the grand piano in the corner of the room near the fireplace, further cementing that he fully expected Harry to play.

Harry had received piano lessons since he was about seven years old and he was quite the natural. He didn’t practice or have lessons too often as they were on started so that the boy would have the ability to play a musical instrument on his resume. His parents assumed that he enjoyed playing because he still practiced on his own despite his lessons ending due to school. Harry was indifferent and only played because it helped him to clear his mind after some of his more prophetic visions.

Harry watched his brother with distrustful eyes as he hollistered his wand. Nathan just grinned at him toothily, he went further and closed his eyes and puckered his lips as he made kissing noises. Harry sneered slightly at the other boy in disgust before he turned and made his way over to the piano. He began to play Suite Bergamasque by Claude Debussy. His father told the title to the room pompously.

Everyone in the room grew quiet as they listened to Harry play and when the song was over the Weasley’s declared that they needed to get home and the Smiths followed suite. Cedric, Perry, Joseph and Ron and Dean left with the adults. Terry, Neville, Ernie and Harry went to Nathan’s room to spend the night since Harry’s own room was barely habitable for a single individual.

As the other boys slept on the transfigured beds spread throughout Nathan’s room, Harry and Nathan laid on Nathan’s bed, arm length apart as they laid on their backs and stared at the ceiling that was covered in charmed paper mache stars that twinkled by using bits of fairy dust. Nathan had asked Harry what was the other activation charm for his cane and Harry bluntly informed him that they were the same word but in parseltongue. Nathan had only responded with a very quiet, “oh.”

Earlier that Summer Nathan had discovered that he was a parselmouth during a trip to the zoo with their father. Thankfully, Nathan had been alone in the zoo’s snake exhibit when he discovered the talent himself but it had still shocked him tremendously. To say that he was devastated would be an understatement. He had returned home, put on a brave front in front of their parents and promptly ran to Harry’s room where he panicked about his discovery. It was all quite dramatic in Harry’s opinion. Nathan had exclaimed that he would be disowned, that he was a shame to the Potter name and that he could not be the boy who lived because how could a Light wizard have such a dark trait? Voldemort was a parselmouth! Did this mean that he--Nathan--was the next Voldemort!?

Harry had not been able to speak, every attempt to soothe his brother was met with quickened breathing and irrational questions, and irrational fear. The only way that Harry was able to get the boy to stop talking was to slap him and tell him to be quiet.

Then Nathan promptly began to whine about Harry slapping him and promptly slapped Harry back but much more softly than Harry had him. It was petty and Harry almost slapped him again when the other boy continued to whine. His brother’s attention span was shorter than professor Flitwick himself.

Once he had his brother’s attention, he took the boy to the expansive Potter library and promptly made him read two small books. One on Zoolingualism and another on magical heritage which
included a small excerpt on a magical theory that involved “curses” being cast by magical families in order to ensure that certain magical traits would be passed down in their families. For Harry, personally it was quite fascinating, for Nathan however; it was a relief that his new found ability was not simply dark, even if it did come from a darker part of their family. Harry did not tell him that what he read was only theory, it was not anything absolute but the overwhelming relief that Nathan had shown forced Harry to keep quiet.

Harry briefly wondered if he were a parselmouth, but let the thought slip from his mind as he bid his brother a goodnight.

Nathan watched his brother with the help of the moonlight from his enormous window. His brother was so pale and pretty, like Snow White from a muggle fairy tale that Remus had read to him when he was young.

With his brother at his side, Nathan felt secure—as if he would always be taken care of. Especially because his parents and so many other adults in his life took care of him too. However; Harry did so differently. The adults made sure that he was outwardly fine and strong but Harry made sure that he was emotionally strong as well. The adults did not notice how depressed Nathan had became due to his injury and limp, but Harry did. He was frustrated and was either numb or in immense pain in regard to his injury.

During the Summer; Nathan still lightly trained in defense with Remus and it had been awfully hard. He was not “gifted” per se, but usually he was more than adequate. This Summer however; he found it hard to focus—not only because of the pain, but also due to the frustration of having to choose cane over wand. He also had to learn more defensive moves due to the fact that he would likely be unable to dodge spells physically effectively. He was the boy-who-lived and a cripple, he almost thought about giving up but his father had encouraged him all the while. Sometimes, his dad pushed him too far but thankfully, his mother and Harry would be the ones to remind his father to slow down.

Where would Nathan be without Harry? Harry was his twin but he felt more like a big brother, as if he were a year or two older. It was their birthday today but Nathan thought it felt wrong, he did not think it was because he had barely saw Harry during the party but because he was the center of attention. It felt like it was his birthday and his only. He did not like the feeling but it was how he felt because that was how the day was treated. Harry did not seem to mind which didn’t surprise Nathan, that did not mean he understood how Harry was not bothered. If Nathan were in his shoes… quite honestly, he would have been very put out and he would have let his feelings be known. However; Harry had always been the most mature of the two and everyone knew that.

Once again, Nathan was not bothered because that meant he could do things like play, skip lessons, not worry about the extra lessons Harry took due to his heir-ship and his most favorite thing of all; he could tease Harry. He was the only one in their age group that Harry would allow to do something as brazen and childish as kiss him. Sure, the older students got in on their fair share of “Harry Teasing” but Harry let them get away with it due to his deep respect for those older than him. Unlike Nathan, who was Harry’s brother, his favorite person in the world and Harry was Nathan’s.

It was not Nathan’s fault that he was a bit selfish. After all, he was still a child and spoiled greatly and adored by a majority of those around him. Harry may not spoil him but he still did things like getting Nathan his extravagant cane so that Nathan would not have to struggle to walk.

Nathan turned on his side that faced Harry and closed his eyes. Not once thinking about how he did not know whether his father had gotten the other boy a gift or not.
Posting two days earlier than usual because your comments make me want to hurry up and reveal the things you all are thinking about!

I cannot express enough that Harry and Nathan's love will remain pure........................... for the most part. Spoiler; betrayal is in the tag for a reason, but who betrays who? Nathan is really bratty and that won't change too much in his younger years, kids be like that sometimes, ha ha.

Chapter 14 or 15 (I haven't edited them yet, they are a mess but I am so excited to get to fourth year ;) will include much development and change to Nathan's character as I will write more of his true thoughts and feelings; rather than just the surface level emotions that he expresses. Also jealousy will truly be introduced and I will not say too much of what happens but it's been awfully fun to write!

I also plan to have Remus or Sirius perspective soon too since it has been brought up. Most likely only for perspective and not too much story building as this is Harry's (and the youth of Hogwarts in general) story but since it is long I would not mind incorporating it for the sake of those who would enjoy reading it. <3 I appreciate your support for this work after all. <333

As always, your support means a lot to me, and I appreciate you reading my story and experiencing with me and inspiring to write something like this. I've yet to hit a harsh writer's block and when I find myself faced with the slightest one, I read old and new comments and think, outline and force myself to write. So again, thank you!
Harry did receive a gift from their father, but he would not see it until the next evening. He was utterly shocked and confused that his father would give him the invisibility cloak. The invisibility cloak was a current Potter Heirloom and an extremely sought after item by all those magical due to its ability to turn one invisible if they are under it. Harry knew of the fairy tail about the three Deathly Hallows which were rumored to have been created by death and gifted to the Peverell brothers.

Harry never believed in such fairy tail rubbish and he was of the opinion that the brothers were just three powerful geniuses of their time and created the items themselves. It was due to the complexity of said items that many modern wizards cope with their complexities by saying that Death itself created them in order to trick the brothers. Nathan accused Harry of having no imagination because Nathan believed the fairy tail fully while Harry refused to.

Either way, items such as the Invisibility cloak was not an item to be given lightly.

Harry read the plain birthday card that had been strategically placed on top of the cloak, "happy birthday, to my heir. This item has been passed down from generation to generation in our family. I received it from my father upon his death, and he from his and so on and so forth. As per tradition it is to be passed on to the rightful heir and just as it was passed on to me, I pass it on to you, on this day of your twelfth birthday and on the day of your own death, you shall respectfully insure that it will go to your own heir. So mote it be.”

I give it to you earlier than before my death because I feel that you will be able to use it wisely despite being so young. You will not make me regret this decision.

P.s, keep this from your mother.

P.s.s, love you.” Harry snorted upon reading the post scriptum scriptum, his father did not always tell Harry that he loved him but when he did, it was an afterthought. Even in letters Harry mused.

Harry placed the cloak into his school truck. Him receiving it was a formality if anything, it was
his birthright to own the item after all. He supposed that receiving it earlier was a gift in its own right, though he knew that his father would have liked to have given the cloak to Nathan, but he didn’t and Harry thought that that at least should be acknowledged. His father, similar to his mother was slightly changing the way that he approached Harry. He tried to speak with him more, and often about things that were not related to his heir-ship. To put it politely, it was awkward and often it did not end or go well because his father tried to treat him just like Nathan. It was as if he still were not thinking of Harry’s person and that only made Harry feel bad, was he really that bad of a person to get to know?

Harry supposed he was. Anyway, his father got him a gift--a gift that rightfully belonged to him, but a gift all the same--and Harry was surprised that he had gotten him anything at all.

Unlike Nathan, Harry had not given a list of things he had wanted for his birthday to his parents. He simply told them to be practical, which the two were more than thankful for. An invisibility cloak is more practical in more ways than one, and Harry supposed the sweets his mother gave him will be eaten.

Typically, they had gotten Harry whatever they had gotten Nathan when they were younger and would often fuss at Harry when the gifts went “un-played” with. (That is; if they had even noticed, Mousy was Harry’s caretaker and she rarely complained.) While the more thoughtful gifts were nice, it did not change much between the three.

If anyone thought that Harry and his parents were suddenly getting along, then they were a fool who thought that years of neglect (as others like Joseph so called it, to Harry this neglect was just how things were. Nothing more and nothing less,) could be mediated with a few gifts, and a couple of awkward conversations, and stiff “I-love-yous.” They’d be even more foolish to see his parents’ sudden authoritative and controlling behavior as love. Keep in mind, they did love him, they raised him after all. However; they had only just begun to consider Harry’s needs, and his feelings. Just because a child does not complain does not mean that they are happy with the treatment or care that they receive. Especially when they do not know any better and do not trust their parental units enough to speak out.

Harry’s mother had dared tried to give him a bedtime despite never tucking him in or making sure he had such timely structure when he was younger. She dare feigned hurt when he promptly ignored her. She then had gone to his father and complained about his attitude and Harry was berated and forced to write lines about familial respect. It did not endear her to Harry.

Lily had no idea how disliked she was becoming by her son. He was getting older, maturer and becoming more aware of his surroundings. He no longer thought years of neglect (as others like Joseph so called it, to Harry this neglect was just how things were. Nothing more and nothing less,) could be mediated with a few gifts, and a couple of awkward conversations, and stiff “I-love-yous.” They’d be even more foolish to see his parents’ sudden authoritative and controlling behavior as love. Keep in mind, they did love him, they raised him after all. However; they had only just begun to consider Harry’s needs, and his feelings. Just because a child does not complain does not mean that they are happy with the treatment or care that they receive. Especially when they do not know any better and do not trust their parental units enough to speak out.

No, Harry had received answers to such childish thoughts through his parent’s thoughtless replies that were said to him when he was a mere child:

“Harrison, you may not understand this but, your brother is the boy-who-lived. He killed you-know-who who started a very bad war and killed lots of people. He is a hero.” And you are nothing.

“You are the Potter heir, boy! The time for playing is not now, you are an embarrassment to your family name for having such silly desires to ‘play.’ Your father has instructed me to keep you in this room until you remember the entirety of etiquette since your manners are severely lacking.” That mentor said it better than he ever could, he’s an embarrassment and until he learned to stop being one he could not relax. He’s never liked that man, but his parents had to have hired him for
“Harry, sometimes I fear that the war is not over. Your brother—for what he’s done, he will always be a target. There are those who want to hurt him. He will not be allowed to be a child for much longer. Could you be less selfish and allow him such, my heir? You must learn to protect not only yourself, but your brother as well.” You are a shield, an object, a throwaway. This was just how Harry felt, of course. He was no mere throwaway. If he were one then Nathan would actually be forced to learn more heir duties.

Bitterly, Harry remembered each and every comment such as those, and it was times like that that he felt rather hateful toward his parents.

Things really have not changed for the better between Harry and his parents, especially with his father. If anything the man was only just getting started in his grooming of Harry. Harry felt that his father did not care for him as his son, but only as his heir, something that he could polish to shine so that he could show it off to all those around him and say; “you see this? You see his success? It is all because of me.” It angered Harry greatly, it made Harry tired and most of all; it made Harry feel like less of a person. Like he only mattered if he were perfect. It made him want to rebel.

Harry went to bed that night, angry, he tossed and turned and didn’t think about his visions even once. He was far too occupied with thoughts of his own cowardice and failures for not being able to stick up to his father. He did not sleep well, not at all.

When he awoke the next day, he was very tired and irritated. It was his father who woken him up, instead of Mousy as she usually did. The man had shaken him and loudly exclaimed for him to wake up, as Harry had seen him do with Nathan so many times. Well, Harry was not Nathan and he did not appreciate being woken in such a manner. He barely refrained from hexing the man for waking him up in such a way. However, he had no time as the man told him to prepare for departure because they were going to Gringotts.

Later, when Harry found himself in front of a Goblin going over bank statements Harry realized that the responsibilities he is given are sometimes too much. His father had taken him here to Gringotts so that Harry could be placed in charge of he and Nathan’s allowances for the year.

It was tedious and tiring because after much calculation and after a long discussion with the goblins at Gringotts; Harry noticed that his father was giving Nathan far too much. Harry did not even care that he received barely half of Nathan’s yearly allowance. He cared about the fact that Nathan—just as he—received such a large sum all at once at the beginning of the school year. No wonder he was buying so many sweets, games and toys and getting distracted from his school work. He was just as spoiled as Draco and lately it showed; according to Mousy’s complaints that is.

Not only that, Harry’s own tutors often stressed the importance of responsibility, because without it, one can become far too lazy, careless, spoiled and disrespectful. This was why Harry had to do things such as; tune his own piano (his piano tutor), tend to his own miniature garden (his herbology tutor), even his heir-ship mentor made him write check stubs for large purchases made with his allowance instead of using galleons. Hell, it was likely because of his heir-ship mentor that Harry’s own allowance was not as much, the man often told their father that he should not allow Harry to overindulge in fear of him becoming a lazy lord. It was due to that that Harry knew a bit of what responsibility actually was, and honestly, he thinks he is a more mature individual for it. Especially due to the fact that even his father seemed to over indulge as he has heard his mother complain about it multiple times.
After a nasty argument with the man he called father, and mediation for said argument with Griphook—their account(s) manager, they came to an agreement that Nathan’s allowance be halved and he will receive only nine percent of it each month by owl. That would still leave him with a hefty sum. Much more than a twelve year old needed in the first place.

Once they were finished with the allowances, his father excused himself and requested that Griphook take Harry on a tour of the Potter vaults. Griphook sneered at the man and brazenly told him that Harry was his son, and he should come with them to insure that the boy understood. His fathered had sneered at the creature ad rudely told him to do his job and Harry was immensely embarrassed and apologized to the goblin for the man’s behavior once he had left.

The goblin did not acknowledge the apology but he stared at Harry in consideration before he lead the boy to several large vaults. He was promptly informed that three of them were still receiving quite a bit of interest from past investments made by the former head of Potter.

The goblin tried to explain how it worked but all of it went over Harry’s head. Now, no one should misunderstand; Harry was very smart and he had a rather eidetic memory—meaning that he could remember most anything upon seeing it, (in his case he had to see or reread something multiple times but after that it usually stuck with him) which was why his medical and potion studies were rather “easy”--but this did not make him automatically smart in all things. Especially in things such as finance where he had shown no previous interest in it before. Harry wasn’t interested in finance at all and he was only here on his father’s orders and that did not incline his favor to finance even a bit.

Thankfully, the goblin seemed to have noticed Harry’s confusion and he told Harry not to worry about it until he was older and that he would inform he or his father if the vaults ever began to lose any money. When they reached the main Potter vault, Harry was astonished. It had a tremendous amount of gold, jewelry, and other relics. It was nice to know that they were in good standing and would be for the majority of their lives.

The tour continued briefly and Harry paid rapt attention to Griphook and asked questions that the goblin did not automatically find stupid, and he received educated answers for his questions.

His father and many other noble wizards did not respect goblins as they should; that was Harry’s opinion at least and that was created from the brief interactions he had seen between Griphook and his father. The goblins barely tolerated them and in turn, wizards barely tolerated goblins. Harry himself did not want to bite the hand that fed him (or in this case handled his money,) and chose to be as polite as he would to any other wizard. Griphook did not treat him any better, but he did not treat Harry any worse, nor did he disrespect him as he had done his father.

When the tour ended and Harry thanked Griphook, the goblin had taken Harry aside and told him that he was most impressed with his haggling and mathematical understanding. Harry merely thanked him, the goblin grinned viciously with all of his teeth. He then received a rough pat on the back and a farewell that wished him well health and riches. Harry returned a similar farewell and stated that he looked forward to working with the goblins in the future and somehow, the goblin managed to smile even more viciously.

Harry felt as if he had passed some sort of test.

When Harry reached the lobby, he was annoyed to find his father conversing with a common witch. When the man finally saw him, he passively apologized to Harry and told him that he found all of the banking rather boring. The man went on to state that they were rich, he always had been and as a family, they always would be. He only introduced the vaults to Harry because Harry’s Heir mentor told him to. Plus, he left because the goblins were rude and gave him the “jitters.”
Harry’s eye had twitched with each sentence his father had spoken. The man was being very childish and annoying.

When they returned home, Harry had bluntly told Nick his new allowance stipulation. The other boy tried to argue but Harry simply walked away and went to his room.

The trip to Gringotts allowed Harry to reflect on his view of his father. In the past he had not interacted with the man much beyond the discussion of his future duties as heir. If he ever needed to ask a question or learn anything else, it was always from Mousy, or his tutors and Harry only realized just then that he gave the credit of his tutor’s efforts to his father.

His father used to be someone Harry had thought of as unapproachable, intelligent, cold and mature. Sometimes even cool.

Well, during he and Harry’s interactions he was often unapproachable, cold and deceivingly mature, but that was only because he rarely spoke to Harry as a child. Often times, the man had spoken to him like a business partner and that’s how he deceived Harry into viewing him as a cold and calculating man when in reality; he was just abrasive to his own child.

Now Harry knew better. The man was childish and near uneducated in all things he expected Harry to know and that angered Harry to no end. Especially, when Sirius went on tangents about the man and how he was spoiled rotten and always neglected his heir duties in their youth.

Harry did not even entertain the idea of neglecting his studies. He knew he was actually lucky for the education he had received and he refused to waste it. He would not decrease his studies or speak out. No, Harry would excel in a way his father never did, and when James least expected it most, Harry would show him just how much he had learned.

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When they had gone to Diagon alley for their school supplies for the upcoming semester, they had gone as a family. Or so their mother had stressed. Harry just wanted to get his books for the semester, but knew that Nathan would want to go to the Quidditch shop, the small toy store and Florean Fortescue’s ice cream parlour.

Coincidentally, they had run into the Weasley’s and their parents decided that it would be a good idea to shop together. Unbeknownst to them, things were still tense between Ron and Nathan. Nathan was also uncomfortable by Ginny Weasley’s insistent staring and blushing and without Percy or the twins present, Harry was unlikely to get involved with Ron or the youngest Weasley. He would have barely conversed with the Weasley matriarch if not for her insistent mother henning toward his person and conversing with him. She asked him all kinds of questions, most of which included foods that he liked. She also commented on his weight; complaining that he looked like a bird. Harry was only slightly insulted because he was very lean, thank you very much. He had taken the worries of Mousy and professor Snape seriously, and after his dueling coach demanded him to gain weight or take a break from training; Harry gained weight. Which turned into lean muscle due to his grueling workout regime. Not even Nathan could keep up with him.

The women had continued to pester him and it was so natural of the woman that Harry did not fight it much and if he were honest, he would admit that it was not unwelcome.

When they neared the bookstore the photographer’s who were present overwhelmed Harry slightly. It did not look as if they were there because of his brother as they so often were. However, when they did take notice of Nathan, they stopped to take pictures before hastily scurrying into the bookstore, and when Harry and co entered, Harry learned that the infamous Gilderoy Lockhart was
present and signing books.

Harry did not mean infamous in a complementary manner. His mother--like many witches--was rather enamored with the pompous flamboyant man, especially because she knew of him during their Hogwarts years. His tales of heroism, strength and wizarding prowess enamors the easily impressed.

The man had dared knocked Harry over when he approached his brother in haste. Harry nor Nathan appreciated it and let that much be known much to the man’s chagrin who had blushed and sputtered an insincere apology. When he tried to force Nathan into an impromptu photo shoot their father stepped in and respectfully told the man “no soliciting.”

Harry did not really know what that phrase meant but it made Lockhart reluctantly leave him be, so he decided that he rather liked the phrase. Before they walked away Lockhart had informed the photographers and shoppers at large that he would be Hogwarts’ new Defense against the arts teacher. To Harry’s ears, that was awful news.

Harry did his best to finish up his shopping, he refused to buy the books for Lockhart’s curriculum as they were all autobiographies about his “adventures,” and he decided to use his money for more beneficial readings. He was so invested in reading summaries for a few books that by the time he was finished, and ready to pay, he nearly walked into a scuffle between Mr. Weasley and Mr. Malfoy. Narcissa stood to the side and looked awfully embarrassed and once she saw Harry she gestured with her hand for him to come near and away from the scuffle. Harry did so obediently.

Draco quietly cheered his father on but when Mr. Weasley pounced on him, even Draco looked astonished. They were behaving so muggle and had even knocked little Ginerva over in the process.

Narcissa who was nearby, had much more decorum than her husband, she pursed her lips and helped the girl up and even picked up her fallen books and placed them back into her shopping bag. No one else noticed the extra dairy that had joined Ginny’s other purchases.

Mr. Weasley and Mr. Malfoy had ceased their fighting when the shop keep demanded it. The two were embarrassed by the scene they had caused and even more so when the shop keep politely asked that Mr. Weasley leave and for Mr. Malfoy to do the same.

Mr. Malfoy pointedly asked Narcissa to finish up their purchase and left the store, Draco instinctively followed behind him. He nodded at Harry briefly as he passed.

Harry did not see his parents or brother in the shop and bitterly deduced that they had left him, and so he went to pay for his books on his own with his allowance. He was stopped by Narcissa who placed his books on the counter along with Draco’s own hastily. She just wanted to leave the store, and get away from all the cameras that had been clicking away since the brawl began.

A flustered Harry informed her that he could pay for his own books and Narcissa who felt rather maternal informed Harry that he was a child and should use his allowance for child things. Even when Harry tried to explain that some of his books were recreational she ignored him.

She lead him out of the store with a gentle, firm and guiding hand, and Harry could not help but compare it to his mother’s own possessive hold that was meant to control his movements; not guide him. He briefly closed his eyes as a vision overtook him.

\textit{Narcissa sat on a stool in front of someone dressed in healer’s robes. She wept softly as the healer clinically informed her that it was best that she give up on having another child. As soon as that}
Harry almost cried with her, he refrained himself, however. He has begun to realize that he was extremely empathetic to the things he saw. He did not understand why exactly, but they have begun to affect him more and more. Sirius and his father often made fun of him for being “emotionless,” but Harry was very far from such a thing. He took in a deep breath to ground himself, and when he breathed out and opened his eyes, they were outside.

Harry was surprised to find his brother waiting for him with their parents, the elder Weasley’s, along with the youngest Weasley’s outside of the shop. Ron was standing next to Nathan, and he loudly whined that he wanted to go to the Quidditch store and looked rather irritated when Nathan told him to “just go on then.”

Ron wasn’t a bad child. Not at all, he misbehaved occasionally just like any other preteen, and sure, sometimes he told a few fibs to get out of trouble but who hasn’t? Just like Harry and Nathan, Ron was a preteen. He could not help that he had grown up awestruck by the boy-who-lived and he could not help that he idolized a hero and wanted to be said hero’s friend. Ron wanted so badly for Nathan to like him, to befriend him, but Ron in his childish little mind knew that he could not do so with Harry Potter around.

To Ron, Harry was a Slytherin and disguise, and he knew that he was the only one who could see Harry for the slimy git that he was. It was Harry’s fault that Nathan didn’t want to play with him anymore and it was always Harry who tried to convince Nathan to not be the hero that he was. No, it was not Ron’s own selfish and mean immaturity that made Nathan avoid him. It was Harry; it would always be Harry!

Since Ron knew it was Harry’s fault, it made him dislike the other boy even more. Ron was determined to try harder to be Nathan’s friend and help Nathan be the hero that he was meant to be.

Ron knew he could win Nathan over because Ron was used to fighting for affection because he was the youngest male Weasley. For now, he didn’t have any distinguishable trait or talents, and unfortunately for him; he followed in the shoes of his much more successful older brothers. Bill was an infamous Curse Breaker and he worked with goblins. Charlie was on his way to becoming a well-known dragon tamer. Percy--if one was to believe his words--was on his way to becoming minister! Even the twins showed promising grades for classes that interested them and Ginny, well, she was a girl! Ron was just Ron but with Nathan, he could be a hero! The boy-who-lived’s best friend, but even the papers knew that Nathan favored Harry above anyone else and it was aggravating to say the least.

So, Ron would work harder to show Nathan that he was the right sort to be seen with and that they should be best friends. Perhaps when Ron grew up a bit more he would understand that people can have more than one best friend and twins had special bonds that most could not understand. He had his own brother’s for proof but at the moment he was too stubborn to see it.

Nathan had laughed at Harry’s face when he had exited the shop and Nathan had questioned him jokingly, “what? You didn’t think that we would leave you, did you?”

Harry bluntly reminded him that they had in the past and Nathan looked appropriately guilty.

Narcissa had attempted polite conversation with the elder Potters, but their father went to tend to the Weasley patriarch’s pride and Lily tried to make polite conversation. However; she was awfully awkward as the only friends she ever had within the wizarding world had been at Hogwarts. There were only two that she could name off the top of her head; Severus Snape, and
Alice Longbottom (who was now insane. It still hurt for Lily to think of her. Perhaps it always would.) She did not know how to act with other women her age. Especially ones as well bred as Narcissa, who she knew to be blood purist.

The conversation ended just as awkwardly as it had began and with a polite goodbye to Harry, Narcissa left the family and friends be and went to her own family.

By the time they had entered the Quidditch shop Harry was exhausted. After five minutes, he politely informed his father that he wanted some fresh air and exited the store. Almost immediately, he lightly bumped into a younger boy who had stood in the middle of the doorway taking pictures.

Harry helped him up and when the boy saw who he was, he gasped and gaped, “you’re Nathan Potter’s brother!” He quickly brought up his muggle camera and took a picture. The flash nearly blinded Harry.

Harry gently placed his hand on the camera and brought it down from the boy’s face. He politely informed him that he was being very rude and should ask for pictures before taking them. The boy gaped some more, and blushed before he apologized profusely. Harry accepted it easily enough and walked away. Harry had noticed almost immediately that the other boy start to follow him--more like stalk him, really. The boy did his best to hide behind poles, boxes and the walls of buildings as he trailed after Harry.

“It is also very rude to stalk people as well.” Harry said, he had stopped walking and he stared directly at the boy’s current hiding space.

The boy peeked out from behind the wall of a shoe store shyly, and Harry had to admit that he was rather adorable with his youthful chubby red cheeks; light brown eyes and slightly curled blonde hair, but that did not change the fact that the boy had stalked him.

Harry curtly demanded that the boy come out from hiding and ever so slowly the boy did without looking at Harry not even once.

“Who are you?” Harry demanded curiously.

Yes, he was irritated but Joseph had spoken to him many times about being a patient role model to those younger than him and he has been learning to practice it. He did not want other children scared of him.

“Crevey. Colin! Colin Creevey!” Colin said hastily and before Harry could introduce himself, the boy stated that he knew who Harry was already.

“If you already know who I am, then what do you want from me?”

The boy blushed, Harry did not know that Colin thought that he was very very cool. Harry was older than him, calmer than he ever could be and the boy-who-lived’s brother. Colin was not a pureblood, he wasn’t even a halfblood who had grown up with stories of the boy-who-lived. No, Colin was just a curious boy who began to read and research the moment he was told that he was a Wizard by a woman by the name of professor McGonagall a year before he was to attend Hogwarts. He thought that he could be like the heroes in his comics and become the strongest wizard there was but much to his delight, there already was one; Nathan Potter. Defeater of you-know-who, and a hero to the wizarding world, the new world that Colin was apart of. The young boy took this news in stride and with his camera he was prepared to document his life and time in the wizarding world that included living heroes like Nathan Potter, the boy-who-lived and Albus
Dumbledore; headmaster of Hogwarts and defeater of Grindelwald.

However; he was not prepared to meet someone as enigmatic as Harry Potter. The books he had read did not tell him much about the older boy beyond the fact that he was Nathan Potter’s brother and Colin found himself awfully curious and awestruck.

“I’m muggle-born!” The boy shouted as if it wasn’t obvious.

Harry’s mouth twitched and he could not help but tease the other boy by asking him what that meant to him. The boy had blushed and gaped before he dared asked Harry what his experience at Hogwarts was like and if he could take another picture. Harry politely declined the picture but was open to informing Colin about Hogwarts and when the other boy pouted at being told ‘no,’ Harry was quick to reprimand him as he told the boy that he could not get everything he wanted, and so the two began to talk. Colin was a very animated boy who had many questions, Harry had even gone as far as to call him a natural Ravenclaw in fondness. Harry did not know it, but he planted a seed so deep within Colin's young heart. In Colin's mind heroes like the boy-who-lived may go into Gryffindor but kind, impatient, intelligent and mature students like Harry go into Ravenclaw.

It would be another hour before Nathan would go looking for his brother, and he would find him in front of the ice cream parlor with someone he deemed as a little kid, despite the fact that he was only a year older than the boy.

Nathan would see the kid as over animated and much too talkative as he made wild gestures as he spoke with Harry. Harry all the while would actually be smiling slightly and didn’t that make something ugly form in Nathan’s heart? After all, jealousy was never pretty, it was envious and ugly by nature, but Nathan was light, pure and good. He could not display such ugly traits and with fake politeness he interrupted the two and informed Harry that it was time to go home. He wanted to get away from the younger boy who began to pout as quickly as possible.

However; Harry was naturally good, and pure in his own way and did not wish to leave the younger kid alone without an adult and it was at that moment Colin realized that he had not seen his parents or brother in over an hour. The kid had begun to sniffle and cry and outwardly, Nathan played the beloved hero but inwardly he was annoyed in a way that he had never been. This was the first time that Nathan had seen Harry interact with a younger kid and Nathan found that he did not like how naturally brotherly his brother was.

Despite Nathan being the hero, it was Harry who wiped the boy’s eyes and politely demanded that the boy cease his crying, and Colin chose to cling to Harry and held Harry’s hand as they traveled to the various shops in Diagon alley with inquiries after the blonde boy’s muggle parents. Eventually, they found the two and the boy’s younger brother at the Leaky Cauldron, anxiously looking for their son.

Once reunited, Colin would hug Harry tightly, call him his hero and thank him profusely, and those at the Leaky Cauldron would “awe” while they watched. It was then and there that Colin learned that sometimes, heroes went into Ravenclaw too.

When Colin finally released him, he turned to Nathan and Harry and asked if he could take their picture and Nathan had said yes before his brother could say no and when he saw the bright smile aimed at Harry from Colin--whose name he had learned from an annoyed Harry who demanded he mind his manners after he had referred to him as a kid for the fifth time--Nathan wished he had told him no.

When the time came for them to return to Hogwarts, Nathan found himself watching his brother closer than ever before.
On the train he saw Joseph, Cedric, Percy and Penelope showing off their prefects badge to him. He saw Terry, Hermione and Ernie Macmillan congregate around Harry in a train cart; barely leaving any room for him, and that slightly irritated him. The only thing that stopped him from becoming truly jealous was the fact that the three of them were his friends too, and Neville, Dean and Seamus forced their way into the cart and sat with them all.

The welcoming feast was not as exciting this year, but Nathan figured that was because he was not being sorted. For the most part, he was excited about the new first years. Sadly, they were few and far in between, why were there so many in his own year?

Colin Creevey was among the first years, Nathan noted slightly bitter. He had not clapped when the boy was sorted into Ravenclaw and he scowled when the boy eagerly scrambled to Harry--Nathan’s brother--for approval. Oddly enough, Harry allowed the boy to sit next to him and shushed him appropriately during the rest of the sorting. Colin’s sorting was not long, however; it was not short either and Nathan knew all about convincing the hat if where you want to belong, versus where you should belong.

Harry did not see the glare his brother directed at Colin. He would also not hear his brother’s remarks of irritation and excuses when Colin asked for a picture by the boy, throughout that year.

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A few weeks had passed and Harry dutifully remained diligent in his studies.

His classes for the year were not hard, and he figured that he could incorporate some of his more niche studies into his schedule along with the extra study material that he had received from both professor Snape and madam Pomfrey. They had both given him strict instruction to only work on their projects when he has finished his course work. Which Harry agreed to wholeheartedly, especially because Hermione had deemed him somewhat of a rival for the year since he was deemed the top first year in Hogwarts because of his grades last school year.

Initially, Hermione had been very disrespectful about his place. She even went as far as to tell him that it was unfair he placed first because it was due to his head start as a halfblood raised in the wizarding world that he beat her. She conveniently ignored the fact that Nathan placed fifteenth.

She acted as if Harry did not study nearly every single day for hours on end. As if he were not severely demeaned by his tutors for each of his failures. As if he did not work to get to where he was. He had told her as such and when she cried, Harry went even further and told her to not blame her failures onto him.

They didn’t converse for weeks and this time, Harry would not give in. He may have responded to her coldly but her words hurt him most of all because if Hermione had placed first; Harry would have simply congratulated her. He expressed as much to Terry when the boy tried to get him to be the “bigger man” and just apologize so that things could stop being so tense.

Harry was the bigger man for those weeks. He did not attend the study groups that he had started and organized so that Hermione did not feel that she could not attend them. Furthermore, when Warts had their etiquette lessons for muggle raised wizards on the third week of Harry and Hermione’s squaffle; Harry still invited her. Even when Hermione’s birthday came, he still got her a gift.

He did not want their other friends to feel that they had to choose between him or Hermione but Harry had no desire to keep friends who wanted him to fail and he wanted to limit their interactions as much as possible.
Hermione was just as stubborn as he, yes she was hurt. Yes, sometimes she looked toward Harry and would burst into tears, and yes she knew what she had said was wrong. She had been a sore loser but she did not want to admit it. If she wasn’t the smartest one, then who was she? All first year, Harry had made her feel very inferior with his confidence, intellect and overall cool exterior.

When other Ravenclaws got mad at Hermione for trying to upstage them by incessantly raising her hand when teachers asked question, it was Harry who reminded them that she was muggleborn. Hermione appreciated it somewhat, even if she did not like it, her behaviors were rude even in the muggle world and she did not want them thinking that muggles were rude as a whole. Hermione did not want Harry to view her as a disrespectful muggle or tolerate her misgivings just because she was muggle, Hermione did not realize it but all she wanted was to be someone that Harry could look up to. However; unbeknownst to her, before their squaffle, Harry did.

When Harry had left their study groups, Nathan pretty much left with him; the other boy only attended every other week now instead of the two that they had all agreed on and even that was most likely because Harry made him attend. Blaise Zabini and Theodore Nott left completely, but that was ok, Hermione took Harry’s place easily for the remaining few who stayed. Where everyone would typically ask Harry questions they asked her. Eventually however; the other Slytherins who attended left, they apparently did not want to learn from a know-it-all ‘mudblood,’ and that suited Hermione just fine. No, Hermione was not hurt at all, nor did she miss Harry… AT ALL!!!

Life continued on for Harry and one night, completely by chance, he had stumbled upon a disused girl’s bathroom on the second floor while looking for Nathan who had apparently stopped attending the group study sessions that they attended.

On his way, he had been told by the Bloody Baron that the boy and some friends had been invited to Sir Nicholas’ Deathday party, the same one that Harry had been invited to earlier that day. Harry decided that he would return to his dorms and speak to Nathan later, he just wanted to make sure Nathan was doing okay. As exciting as a Deathday party sounded… Harry was not in the mood to smell rotten food. He knew that any celebrations held by a ghost would include it as it was the only food that ghosts could taste. Even the Bloody Baron preened when Harry brought him rotten cheese during some of their conversations.

Harry had taken a shortcut to return to Ravenclaw tower but he made a wrong turn and ended near, the abandoned bathroom. He heard a girl weeping and decided to investigate and was met with a small squeal from a ghost who had bitterly introduced herself as Moaning Myrtle. She moaned and groaned over the fact that Harry--a boy, dared enter a lady’s bathroom and when Harry simply apologized she stopped mid rant, batted her eyes at him and told him that it had been so long since she had met a gentleman such as Harry. Harry did not like the lovey-dovey look he saw in her eyes. Nor did he like the visions of her screaming before her own death that he was assaulted with when she drew nearer.

He could not make out how she died exactly or what had killed her, and Harry thought it be rude to ask, and so he excused himself, exclaiming that he needed to return to his dorm. However; before he escaped, Myrtle guilt tripped him into promising to visit her again. Harry kept his promise. It only helped that the space Myrtle’s bathroom provided allowed Harry to practice wandless magic, he was improving immensely but it still took a lot out of him. So, for now, he mainly practiced increasing his stamina.

The next two weeks, Harry had done rather well in managing his time between his studies, his friends, and visiting Myrtle and practicing his magic. His schedule was interrupted by his brother who had begun to complain of hearing a menacing voice, but every time he had heard it, Harry was
not around. Harry wanted to believe his brother but the other boy had been acting rather strange as of late.

Nathan acted a lot more clingy, irritable, and paranoid, so, Harry was quick to identify his symptoms as stress. It did not help that Nathan was the first to come across the petrified body of Mrs. Norris, the school’s caretaker; Argus Filch’s pet cat.

Along with Mrs. Norris body were the words, “The Chamber of Secrets has been opened. Enemies of the heir, beware.” It only solidified Nathan’s belief that the voice he had been hearing belonged to the heir, for the voice often spoke of death and murder!

This only forced Harry to worry for his brother even further. Harry briefly wondered if Nathan was a seer and was merely seeing visions that he was having trouble differentiating them from reality. Harry would observe him closer before he would indirectly expose himself by trying to help the other boy with visions he may or may not have.

More intrigued than scared–unlike Nathan; Harry, along with Terry, and Ernie immediately began to investigate what the Chamber of Secrets actually was. They were saved on research time thanks to Hermione asking their history teacher; professor Binns about the chamber during class, and surprisingly professor Binns did not disappoint with his answer.

It was no secret that Salazar Slytherin was blood purist, so much so that the other founders open disagreement with his views caused him to leave. However; not without insuring a way for his heir to fulfill his wish of ridding Hogwarts of muggleborns and even halfbloods. They could achieve this by finding the chamber that Salazar had created in secret and unleashing a mighty beast that would kill those with “muddy” blood. If this was more than just a rumor than there was a real and present danger within Hogwarts if the chamber was actually opened.

Who could open it though–was the question. Due to Harry’s heir studies, he knew a bit about family lines and the last line that had been closest to Slytherin was the Gaunt line. However; Morfin Gaunt; the current head of Gaunt was the only living member of that line due to the fact that he murdered his only family. Currently, the man was in Azkaban.

Ernie had told Harry to stop thinking such dark thoughts when he saw the other boy concentrating alone in the library in front of a public wizarding family tapestry in the library later that evening.

“Harry, mate. Bed time. I don’t care which prefect’s power you are abusing to stay here. It’s time to go, you are way to fixated on this, and if you fall asleep during your brother’s game tomorrow, he’ll never forgive you.” Ernie said jokingly. However, the tense lines on his face betrayed him and revealed his worry. Harry could not stand such a look and conceded and allowed Ernie to walk him to his dorms. Ernie had done so with a firm hand to Harry’s lower back. Harry thought nothing of it, and allowed the Hufflepuff to even hug him when they reached the entrance of Ravenclaw tower. He did not question the other boy's touchiness, he had noticed that all of the Hufflepuffs were rather affectionate. Even Cedric idly hugged him from time to time. It helped Harry loosen up, he still did not like being touched too often but his friends were becoming a rather special exception.

Ernie made him promise that he would go straight to bed, and Harry had rolled his eyes but obediently went to bed, Ernie had looked awfully worried.

Who knew that having friends was one way to get Harry to sleep earlier?
The following weekend, Harry found himself in the Quidditch stands once again, supporting his brother as he played.

Nathan of his own validation had tried out for the for the Quidditch team once more, and was unsurprisingly allowed back on as Gryffindor’s seeker. Harry did not wholly approve but he was proud of Nathan for not allowing one folly to ruin his love for the game.

However; that opinion would not last very long when a damn Bludger began to zigzag erratically before targeting his brother. It did not take long for the Bludger to collide into Nathan who did his best to dodge the thing for as long as he could. While he dodged, he obviously still went after the snitch and Harry swore that he could feel his hair turn whiter.

Thankfully, by the time the bludger collided with Nathan, he had been rather close to the ground, and when he fell he seemed to be scraped up but mostly okay. At least, that’s what Harry had thought before he reached him on the pitch and saw the odd angle his brother’s arm was in. Harry knelt at his brother’s side, and told him that he was okay before he began to exam the injury in full.

Nathan smiled at him with a dopey, goofy grin before he slowly opened his hand and revealed that he had caught the snitch. The Gryffindor team members whooped and hollered, and the Gryffindors in the stands cheered. Harry encased his brother’s hand into his own, and appropriately, Nathan winced.

“Yes, yes, at the sake of your safety you caught the snitch, you’ve won, idiot.” Harry said.

“Don’t call me an idiot, big head.” Nathan groused jokingly. Harry rolled his eyes and ignored him, luckily, he knew how to conjure a simple bandage wrap that could be placed around Nathan’s arm until he could get him to madam Pomfrey who was a much more skilled healer than he for now; no matter how gifted Harry was.

However; before he could even utter the needed incantation, he was roughly pushed aside by Gilderoy Lockhart.

“Oh no, not you!” Nathan exclaimed in horror, he turned his face toward his brother who was being helped up by George--or maybe it was Fred, Nathan could never tell. Either way, his brother looked absolutely livid as he glared at the man. “Harrison can fix it! Harrison!” Nathan called out nervously as he looked at Harry with wide pleading eyes.

Despite the agreement from nearly everyone around them, even from the Slytherins, Lockhart ignored Nathan’s wishes.

“Nonsense, Mr. Potter. I can completely heal the break with a spell I have used countless times before this!” Lockhart grabbed Nathan’s arm and ignored the boy as he hissed in pain, “braccium mendo!” the man said louder than necessary.

Harry immediately knew that the man had uttered the incantation wrong and the color drained from his face as his brother’s arm fell like a limp noodle. The horrified gasps from the other students and the clicks of Colin Creevey’s camera did not help matters either.

“Nathan!” Everyone around them jumped, they have never heard Harry speak so loudly, he said Nathan’s name in a near scream. Nathan passed out from the sight of his arm and Harry roughly pushed Lockhart aside and took the younger boy into his arms.

Immediately he turned a heated and hateful glare toward the man, “you pompous, overpaid, glorified celebrity! You did not even run a diagnostic on his arm! What if it was more than a mere
break? What if a tendon had been damaged!? Even if the nonsense you had uttered was a real spell, it would have done nothing for the torn muscle, how could you be so utterly asinine!?”

Adrian hissed from his place behind Marcus Flint, "he's still a teacher, Harry," he said disapprovingly.

Harry nodded, and said nothing more to the professor, he even looked away from the man. Despite the situation, the male students nearby laughed at Harry berating the older man. However; Hermione and a few other girls did not look amused in the slightest; not that Harry cared.

Lockhart’s face had grown awfully red, he cleared his throat, “well, the fact of the matter is that the bones are not broken. A trip to madam Pomfrey’s seems to be in order.” Lockhart reached for Nathan once more and Harry brought his brother’s body even closer to his own. He could not keep the malice and disgust out of his voice when he spoke next, “do not. Touch my brother. Professor.”

“Right, I am sure you can get him there then, Mr. Potter...” Lockhart said while he backed away from Harry, it was with a nervous chuckle and wary eyes.

The Gryffindor Quidditch team walked with Harry as he levitated his brother to madam Pomfrey’s. They didn’t stay long because the moment madam Pomfrey saw Nathan’s condition she ordered them all out. Leaving only Harry as he placed Nathan onto a nearby bed.

She was not amused at all that the boy’s bones had been entirely removed. Mending bones was not hard for a skilled healer such as herself but growing them was an entirely different matter. Nathan would have to ingest a skele-gro potion to grow them back and it would not be a pleasant experience. Nathan was told as such upon waking up, he was not happy and asked why Harry or madam Pomfrey couldn’t just grow them back.

They both ignored him and made him swallow the skele-gro, madam Pomfrey had left in order to go and tear Lockhart a new one. She promptly told Harry that he was in charge and to flew her from the Gilderoy’s office if anyone with a serious injury came.

Harry helped Nathan swallow down some water, he knew that drinking skele-gro was far from pleasant and it really wasn’t his brother’s fault that he had broken his arm. Harry could not help but wonder who jinxed the Bludger; Quirrell was gone, Lockhart was far too inept... Could it have been an upper year Slytherin? Draco Malfoy was the Slytherin’s new seeker, and if anything his way on the team was bought because his father had gotten them all Nimbus 2001s and despite having faster brooms, many of the Slytherins still cheated during the game... It was not unlikely.

Harry would get his answer in the form of a small house elf hours later.

Harry was a night owl with an irregular sleeping pattern and he had yet to go to sleep, opting instead to study from a desk in madam Pomfrey’s infirmary.

He was interrupted by a quiet pop and the sudden presence of a house-elf quietly creeping beside Nathan’s bed, the room was dark and lit only by the moon’s light but even Harry could tell that the creature was a house-elf.

“Oooh, Dobby did not mean for the great Nathaniel Potter to be getting hurt!” The creature said in a grave whisper as he looked over Nathan’s body in concern.

“What do you mean?” Harry asked as he wandlessly closed the curtains around Nathan’s bed, effectively activating the silencing charm placed on them.
It was a good thing that he did too, because the creature yelped in surprise, jumped back and fell to the floor.

“You, you is being Harrison Potter, Nathaniel Potter’s older brother!” The creature exclaimed as it backed away and hid behind another nearby bed.

“Calm yourself… Dobby, was it? You must explain yourself or I will alert your presence to the Hogwarts’ house-elves. I am sure they do not know that you are here, jinxing bludgers and trying to kill students.”

“Dobby does not be trying to kill the great Nathaniel Potter! Dobby would never!” Dobby denied as he gripped and pulled at his ears harshly.

Harry almost felt bad for making the house-elf so distraught but his brother’s safety was more important to him. Harry cast a silent lumos and was met with a rather dirty and sickly looking house elf and was that a pillow case he wore? There was no doubt that this house-elf was being abused but Harry could not worry about that now.

“Oh? You weren’t, were you? If the Bludger had hit Nathan too hard, he could have died, but you were not trying to kill him, hm? Then what was it that you were trying to do, Dobby?”

Dobby bit at his grimy nails and he shook as he spoke, “there is a great danger to Nathaniel Potter—”

“What danger?” Harry interrupted.

Dobby began to weep, “Dobby cannot tell you! He is being bound, but Nathaniel Potter cannot stay here in Hogwarts. It is here that the danger lurks and Nathaniel Potter is in grave danger! House-elves like Dobby owe everything to him, he is our hope!”

Harry slowly approached the elf, and gently took its hands into his own.

When visions of the house elf being viciously kicked by a white haired male appeared, Harry was not surprised. The man held a striking resemblance to Lucius Malfoy, however; he looked much older and his hair was a bit shorter. Lord Malfoy’s father, perhaps?

The Potters did not have many house-elves, however; the few they did have had been bound by other wizards beforehand and most were abused by said wizards. Often, they would abuse themselves and in the beginning—when they were children—he and Nathan thought it was a game, why else would one harm themselves? However; they learned the hard way that the self abuse of the house-elves were no mere game. Newsy; his mother’s personal house-elf had harmed itself so severely that she bled and Harry and Nathan vowed that they would never tease or abuse a house-elf for its odd behavior ever again, for you never knew what a house-elf has been through.

“Master Harrison Potter… Dobby’s hands are being very dirty! That is a bad house-elf! Touching such clean wizards! Bad!” Dobby exclaimed as he tried to remove his hands from Harry’s strong hold. Harry demanded that Dobby look at him and the house-elf did with big sorrowful eyes.

“I can wash my hands later, Dobby. Calm yourself! Can you tell me who is putting Nathaniel in danger?” Harry asked.

Dobby shook his head vehemently, “Dobby cannot. Dobby cannot. Please do not ask that of Dobby, it is being bad enough that he is here already! Please do not tell!”

“Dobby, I want to help! I do not want my brother in any unnecessary danger and that means from
you as well. If you could just tell me--"

Dobby snatched his hands away from Harry, "what more is there to tell? An evil wizard controls Dobby! The chamber! The chamber is only the first step! Oh no, the chamber, Harrison Potter, it has been opened again and Nathaniel Potter is in grave danger!"

“This has to do with the chamber? So you confirm that it is opened but what do you mean by ‘again.’ If that’s the case then muggleborn students are…” Harry was interrupted by his own thoughts, *Hermione* is a muggleborn! No matter how angry he was at the girl, he did not want her dead. Never that.

Harry rounded in on the house-elf, “Dobby, you must tell me everything you know, I have muggleborn friends and--”

Dobby wept even louder and uglier than before, “oh! Dobby should have been knowing that Harrison Potter would be just as noble and kind as his brother, the boy-who-is-living. Oooh, but please realize that you must get Nathaniel Potter away from Hogwarts, if you do not--”

Suddenly Dobby’s ears perked up, he looked absolutely horrified, “Dobby is going now, please heed his warning! Nathaniel Potter is not safe within Hogwarts. Not at all,” and with that the house-elf popped away.

Harry called after him.

“Hm, who is Dobby?” Nathan asked as he rubbed his eye with his uninjured hand. Harry hadn’t even heard him open the curtain.

“An insane house-elf,” Harry stated as he went to his brother’s side. Usually his brother, ever curious would ask more questions of him but the other boy did not seem to be in the mood as he grimaced in pain.

“My arm hurts, Harrison.” Nathan complained.

“Well, you are growing thirty-three bones, Nathaniel. I will grab you a pain relief potion. Wait here.”

Most of madam Pomfrey’s potions were located in a separate room adjacent to that of the infirmary and connected by a simple door. Harry thought that his trip would be quick and therefore he did not shut the door.

It was only a second later that he heard the the rushed footsteps of two individuals and when he peeked into the infirmary he saw headmaster Dumbledore and professor McGonagall in their night clothes, each standing at one end of the levitating body of… Colin Creevey? Harry nearly gasped. Jokingly, Colin had made a name for himself as Harry’s shadow, because if the younger boy was not with Luna Lovegood then he could be found at the foot of Harry’s robes, doing his best to keep up with Harry’s fast pace steps. Initially Harry had been rather annoyed with the boy’s constant presence but sure enough, he got used to him and had even grown somewhat fond of him.

Harry revealed himself and asked with concern lacing his voice, “what happened to Colin?” The boy looked just as stiff as Mrs. Norris had.

“Mr. Potter!” McGonagall exclaimed with a hand over her heart, clearly Harry had surprised her, “you should be in bed!”
“She is right, Mr. Potter, I did not know that you had stayed here for so long.” Madam Pomfrey exclaimed as she hurriedly exited from her own sleeping chambers which resided in her office. She went to his side and rested a hand on his back, “you should not be seeing this, lass.”

“We can’t send him back on his own, this attack is quite serious…” the headmaster stated warily.

“I will take him, tend to the Creevey boy.” McGonagall exclaimed as she swept over to Harry’s side and ushered him out of the room. Before he exited, Harry noticed that his brother was feigning sleep. Good thing too, because Harry was anxious to understand what was happening, the Chamber of Secrets opening was even more serious than Harry and his friends had initially thought. If Nathan was hallucinating due to stress it surely was not without reason.

Chapter End Notes

This chapter only touches a bit on Nathan's perspective. I already have the next two chapters written (but they are a mess) and there is a lot more there, so please bare with me!

I will actually try to post the next chapter by Monday or Wednesday, if not earlier because I really want to get back to my own plot line for the story. The Chamber of Secret segment won't be as long as year one is my hope. Four chapters at the maximum but each will most likely be a bit long.

Your comments make my day honestly, I love how engaged you are and how open you are about the things you want to know, sorry that I like to keep things secret until they are revealed! >:

The most sought after question in regards to chapter 13 was whether Harry was a parselmouth or not in this story, and I'm afraid I have to keep you guessing for a few more chapters!

It was also interesting that people are rather divided in who will be betraying who and that makes me happy because I think I will surprise you greatly but whether that is good or bad depends on how you are reading the characters, their jealousy, their fears, etc. Anyway, I'll be quiet now because I want to hear what YOU think! Please comment if you can and again, thank you for supporting my story. <3
Before Harry could even speak with Nathan the following day, rumors of the heir of Slytherin had overrun the school. Perhaps due to Nathan himself who vehemently told their friends that Draco Malfoy was the heir, and surprisingly they all could envision the blonde boy as the heir.

Even Harry reluctantly could agree with the accusation somewhat, but only due to the fact that he knew that Dobby most likely belonged to a former Malfoy lord and therefore belongs to the current. It was also strange that the house-elf knew something about the chamber and even stated that it had been opened in the past.

Could it have been that a Malfoy of the past opened the chamber and now Draco Malfoy has opened it again and the insane house-elf known as Dobby was honest and was trying to protect Nathan, the boy-who-lived and by proxy improved the treatment for house-elves?

It did not help that the other boy has been calling Hermione and other muggleborns, mudblood and even went as far as to tease them and telling them that they would be the next victims of the heir. That was one of the reasons why Harry was no longer on speaking terms with the boy and nor was the other boy invited to their study sessions.

Thankfully, this did not deter Theodore Nott, Tracey Davis or Blaise Zabini from seeking Harry out to study with since they had not cared for Hermione’s haughtier approach. However, Harry made sure that he kept a close eye on them too, just in case they were spying on him for Malfoy.

Due to his acquaintance with the other second year students and his friendship with Perry and Adrian, Harry knew a bit about the inner workings of Slytherin house.

It was all rather traditional, political, cunning, and of course; ambitious. There was a sort of hierarchy within Slytherin house that none of the other houses could not replicate.

First and foremost, Harry was informed that outside of the Slytherin dorms, Slytherins stuck together. That meant that they did not argue, fight, or bully one another in public and all of their inter house problems were to be handled within their house. This was why they appeared to be such a united front and why most of the school isolated them as well. It was extremely rare for Slytherins to interact with others outside of their house because of their harsh reputation and rules of house unity.

Due to the war, Slytherin students were automatically thought of as evil, mainly because so many of their parents and family were on trial for being followers of Voldemort. This lead to the student body distrusting them as a whole and in Harry’s opinion that left them to trust no one else but one another. That only made Harry want to disregard the separation of the houses even more.

Second, their hierarchy was not decided by who was the richest or whose family was the most influential outside of Hogwarts, but by their power, intellect, resourcefulness and their strength
within Hogwarts. Apparently, Perry along with another fifth year known as Cassius Warrington were the apparent “leaders” and or “princes” of Slytherin. This meant that for the most part, what they said was law within Slytherin and those who broke any of the rules the two created were ostracized and shamed appropriately. Draco Malfoy seemed eager to take their place, but was not making any big moves as both Perry and Cassius were rather popular and any attempts to overthrow him with only his family’s name as reasons to why would not fly well with the other Slytherins who deferred to him for that reason. That was a rather smart choice in Harry’s opinion. Even he could understand that all Draco had to offer was his family name, and his wealth, but if he were a member of Slytherin, Harry would immediately attempt to undermine any power Draco tried to have.

With the knowledge of Slytherin’s house’s hierarchy, Harry’s paranoia became even worse, because maybe this was Draco’s ultimatum. Surely, getting rid of muggleborns would put him at the top of Slytherin house hierarchy.

With ease, Harry allowed Nathan to convince him to sign up to stay at Hogwarts during the winter break just because Draco had signed up too and they wanted to keep an eye on the boy just in case he made any moves.

Nathan wanted to keep an eye out for the heir because he felt like it was his duty as the boy-who-lived. Harry himself was concerned at the accusations his brother was under. So, with finality they decided that they would stay at Hogwarts for the holidays. Not even the disappointed letters from their mother, father and Sirius could change Nathan’s mind. (There was never any hope at changing Harry’s mind at all.)

The rest of Harry’s day had been much too exciting, and in the late afternoon; during their free time before dinner, he decided to relax, and read. He did so in the Ravenclaw common room more often than not upon Joseph’s recommendation. He was warned that if he were to hole himself away in his room to study as Hermione often did then the other Ravenclaws would view him as snobbish, especially because he was often the leader of the younger students. However, a more approachable leader was more likely to be followed and listened to, Joseph taught him that much.

Of course, he would not be able to just sit and read without interruption, and yes, Harry knew that this was what Joseph wanted. For Harry to be easily available for other students by being present in the common room. It still annoyed him to be interrupted, but he supposed that he would get used to it eventually.

“Harry, did you hear, they’re starting up a dueling club!??” Anthony Goldstein asked cheerily as he plopped beside Harry on the sofa in one of the corners of the room. He had sat awfully close to Harry, so close that Harry wanted to scoot away but he did not want to be rude, so he did not move.

Terry and Mandy Brocklehurst looked up from their notes and openly listened to Harry and Goldstein in intrigue from their place on the floor. A few other present Ravenclaws paid attention as well.

Goldstein enjoyed the slight attention he received from his conversation with Harry and continued to speak as if Harry had responded, “yeah, apparently professor Lockhart will be teaching it!”

Harry’s face frowned up so deeply that those who saw it were thrown into fits of laughter. It was a known fact that Harry had no love or respect for the professor because the boy often vocalized his opinions on the man’s narcissistic teaching method that lead to the students learning nothing useful. Harry did not say those things in a gossipy manner, but as his own truth. He firmly believed that the man was wasting the students of Hogwarts’ time, and Harry himself had already gotten Flitwick’s permission to test out of the course for the year. Beyond that, rarely did Harry
express his emotions with his face and right now, he looked as if he had swallowed a vomit flavored Bertie Bott bean.

“What’s so funny?” Goldstein demanded.

“I am curious for the answer to that as well.” Harry stated with a less severe frown as he looked around the room.

“You looked as if you had smelled a rotten diaper most foul when Goldstein said Lockhart’s name is all, Potter.” A prefect by the name of Robert Hilliard said as he wiped tears from his eyes. He had been tutoring Cho Chang when he began to eavesdrop on Harry’s conversation and Harry noticed that Cho Chang was laughing as well.

“I apologize, I will hide my distaste for the man better in the future,” Harry promised. He picked up his book 'Medusa and other Gorgons’ an anonymous journal by that was presumably written Greek wizard from his lap, he was fully prepared to begin his reading once more. He had more important manners to focus on and he was not interested in anything that Lockhart was a part of. Harry was very familiar with defensive and offensive magic, even more so than Nathan because of his harsh training growing up. Honestly, their curriculum of Defense didn’t even focus on defense, and most of what Harry knew was through the training mentioned earlier. If Hogwarts taught actual defense instead of educating them on things the ministry considered dark then Harry would be considered a fourth year for his dueling skills alone. Not that he has ever used them in actual battle, of course. Either way, there was nothing that Lockhart could teach him for the year that Harry did not already know and Harry could learn nothing from the man’s self centered curriculum. The man had dared quizzed them on his own autobiographies! How the board could allow it, Harry would never know.

“Don’t!” Roger Davies begged through his own laughter. Unsurprisingly the older boy had a Quidditch magazine clenched between his hands. He was the captain elect for the Ravenclaw Quidditch team after all.

Goldstein huffed and stood, “well, the first meeting is tonight and I for one will not be victim to the heir.”

Michael Corner huffed from his seat at one of the many desks that surrounded the room along the walls, “the beast of Slytherin is that. A beast, you can’t duel a beast.”

“Well, I for one think the club is a great idea, and professor Lockhart is not getting the due respect that he deserves. I am going,” Padma Patil said huffily as she grabbed a book from the shelf and prepared to return to her dorms. Harry looked at her unimpressed.

He was not the only one who was unimpressed by her. Terry called after her as she ascended the stairs to the girl’s dormitory,“you’re just saying that because you have a big ol’ crush on the fluke! Have fun!”

“Well, anyway, for those who want to come the club is meeting at 8 o’clock!” Goldstein said as he left for his own dorms rather quickly.

“I have to admit, I am rather curious…” Terry said as he glanced toward Harry with big curious eyes.

Harry tutted at him, “if you are curious then go, I will remain here and read.”

Terry pouted, truly pouted, his lip was jutted out and his cheeks were slightly puffed. Harry wanted
to flick him and he probably would have if Terry had been closer to him and had not turned his attention to Mandy and asked if she would like to go with him. Brocklehurst became dreamy eyed at the prospect of being taught by professor Lockhart and quickly agreed. Thankfully, no one interrupted Harry again. He did not learn much however, for the book he was reading told him little of petrification caused by gorgons but only about gorgons in general.

Later that night, Harry was shaken awake, “HARRY! HARRY, WAKE UP!” Terry whispered loudly as he shook Harry awake. Harry had once again fallen asleep at his desk in he and Terry’s shared dormitory. He had been having nightmarish visions of the past and he was actually thankful that Terry had woken him up.

“What is the matter with you, Terry?” Harry asked tiredly as he stood from his desk and faced the other boy.

“Your brother can speak to bloody snakes!” Terry hissed, even in the dimly lit room, his eyes looked crazed.

Harry looked to the ceiling which was spelled to display the stars and their constellations and prayed to Merlin to give him the strength he needed to deal with his brother’s lack of decorum and will power.

“Explain yourself, Terry,” Harry demanded contritely as he pinched the bridge of his nose.

Terry told an expressive story of Lockhart failing multiple times to teach and his being upstage by professor Snape of all people. He also told the story of a practice duel between Nathan and Malfoy that was full of foul play and petty squabble. However; most importantly, he told Harry that Malfoy had conjured a snake, a snake Nathan proceeded to command to attack Justin Finch-Fletchley by speaking to it--in parseltongue. When he finished he shook Harry by the shoulders.

“Can you speak to snakes!?” Terry asked anxiously.

“Not that I know of, but that doesn’t matter, Terry--”

Terry shook Harry with each question and sentence; “It doesn’t matter!? It doesn’t bloody matter!? The heir of Slytherin killed Mrs. Norris and Colin Creevey! If your brother is really the bloody heir--”

Harry smacked Terry’s hands off of his shoulders; “neither Mrs. Norris or Colin Creevey are dead. You and I both know that professor Sprout is working very hard to ensure that the Mandrakes grow well for the Restorative Draught that will return them to their original state. So mind your tongue.

Furthermore, my brother is not the heir. He is my brother and your friend, I figured you of all people would not instantly turn on him like this. You know that he would hurt no one, Terry.”

Harry’s eyes showed his disbelief, he could not believe that Terry would rally against Nathan so quickly. Then again, the other boy was scared. He himself was a halfblood, and therefore impure, once all the muggleborns were disposed of then surely halfbloods will be next.

Terry looked at his own hands in disbelief before he looked into Harry’s eyes, and immediately, Harry saw deep regret within them, “Harry, mate. I’m sorry, it’s just all this heir of Slytherin stuff is driving me mad… You should have seen the way Draco rallied everyone against Nathan. He claimed that Nathan was always short and impolite with Colin, and that he made the beast get him because he was tired of Colin taking so many photos. He even said that Nathan was jealous of him for getting close to you. Then--and then he started telling everyone that Justin was next! I’m just
kind of scared, and unfortunately, Nathan does look rather guilty, mate!”

“Terry, calm yourself. Really.” Harry guided the other boy to his bed with gentle arms, once he was seated, Harry called for the Hogwarts elf known as Tippy and requested a warm cup of tea. The tea came immediately and Harry forced Terry to take a few sips.

“Thanks, Harry and sorry I went off on you like that, mate. Just cause’ your brother is a parselmouth doesn’t make him evil, right? And you’re right. He wouldn’t hurt anyone, cause even though he’s a prankster, he’s one of the nicest guys I know.”

Harry stood, “exactly, now change and get some rest Terry, we will talk tomorrow.”

Before he walked away, Terry had stood abruptly and pulled Harry into a tight hug, “thanks mate. Seriously. I know we aren’t Puffs and hugging isn’t really our thing, but you’re a good friend, mate and I appreciate you.”

The hug was a bit longer than necessary, but Harry hugged his friend back and was eventually released. They both changed into their night clothes and all the while Harry did not notice that Terry had innocently stared a bit as Harry changed. Harry was none the wiser and got into his own bed, and once he laid down he could not get comfortable.

Harry rarely ever had time to dwell on his own insecurities. What if he was a parselmouth? Surely, Terry would panic as he did with Nathan and possibly end their ever growing friendship. In the past, Harry did not have any friends to lose but now he did, and frankly; that terrified him and made him think that perhaps, he was better off alone.

He flopped onto his side, his father would disown him, surely. That presented a new worry to Harry, it would only be a matter of time before his father found out about Nathan and Harry knew that Nathan would not be able to cope with any negative response from the man.

Though, Harry was confident, he knew that his parents would never disown Nathan. He was the boy-who-lived, his father’s and his mother’s favorite afterall. He could be forgiven, and far easier than Harry ever could or would. Harry decided that he would write to them first thing in the morning, he would also include the same book titles that he had made Nathan read over the summer. The Potters were not magically light wizards due to their name, but because of the actions of their recent generations. Their line had quite a few dark wizards in the past. So surely, the trait manifested from somewhere?

As Harry tossed and turned he felt betrayed by his usually appreciatively curious mind, if he were a parseltongue there would be a whole other branch of healing magic that he could study. However; Harry’s fear of truly being estranged from his family even further than he already was killed overpowered the curiosity he held for the language. He did not want to find out if he were a parselmouth. No, not at all and so he consciously forced himself to rid his mind of any thoughts of such a thing.

The next morning, Harry woke to an awful blizzard that forced him to worry for the mandrakes. His worry was overshadowed by the harsh words and whispers of the students around him.

“Did you hear, Nathan is the heir of Slytherin!”

“Did you hear, Nathan is a parselmouth! He made a snake attack Justin Finch-Fletchley.”

“If he’s a parselmouth wouldn’t it make sense for his brother to be one too?”

“Yeah, actually! His brother is more likely the heir than Nathan, he acts more like a pureblood and
As more rumors were spread, Harry’s mood turned even more sour, not even Joseph or Perry could cheer him up at first.

When they saw that they could not cheer him up with their usual teasing, they went about questioning those starting the rumors and easily intimidated them into ending such behaviors for the most part. Harry did not ask them to but he was grateful nonetheless and when he expressed his thanks on his way to the dining hall for lunch as he walked alongside them. Perry scoffed at him, “no thanks needed, sweet boy. Honestly, if you’re the heir of Slytherin then I’m the prince of England.”

“And we all know that that is a lie, because you are the queen,” Adrian said monotonously as he walked past them and into the Great Hall.

“That’s righ--hey! Fuck you, Pucey!” Perry hollered and chased after Adrian.

“Honestly, watch your mouth, Perry.” Penelope said, her head shaking in distaste, she ruffled Harry’s hair and entered behind them. Percy fixed his hair that Penelope had ruffled, before he followed her inside.

Harry prepared to enter himself but he was stopped by Joseph who took him aside and forced him to face him, “Harry. Chin up.” He demanded in a no nonsense tone as he physically lifted Harry’s chin with a gently but firm hand.

Harry looked at him in surprise, and Joseph only smiled shrewdly, “don’t let them get under your skin. Not even for the sake of your brother. They will use it against you. So, chin up. Your brother isn’t the heir? Then act like you truly believe that and eventually they will too and once they see that they are wrong, they will come back grovelling to you. Believe me, I know from experience.”

He adjusted Harry’s tie, “understand? You have to keep setting an example, you’re a Warts board member after all.”

Harry nodded as he stared dumbly, then he really soaked in what Joseph had said to him.

He straightened his back, and physically put his chin up. Joseph smiled and patted his chest fondly, “thatta boy! Now go get’em tiger!”

“Go get who?”

“It’s a figure of speech, smart ass,” Joseph said as he placed a guiding hand to Harry’s lower back and ushered him inside.

Oddly enough, Harry felt a lot better. He was thankful that his friends from Warts weren’t listening to any of this, “Nathan is the heir of Slytherin,” drivel and it made him feel more secure in his own person too.

When they entered the great hall, Joseph immediately departed from him and went to his own place at Ravenclaw table. The whispers had started almost immediately when Harry had entered. Students looked at him before they whispered to one another behind their hands.

Harry ignored them, kept his chin up and approached his brother. The only students sitting next to the boy was Neville Longbottom, Dean Thomas and by proxy Seamus Finnigan. Finnigan was rarely seen without Dean, so it was only normal.
“I have been looking for you all morning, Nathaniel.” Harry said.

“Really? Sorry, I was looking for Justin.” Nathan said absent-mindedly. He then looked away from Harry, shame-faced, “I know you’ve heard all the rumors… I just wanted to find Justin and set the record straight.”

“Oh? And did you find him?”

“No. I only found other Hufflepuffs who told me that Justin was safer away from me… They really think I made the snake attack him.” Nathan grumbled angrily.

“Because you spoke to it in Parseltongue?” Harry inquired, this made everyone nearby listen with intrigue.

“… Yes, but you don’t understand, Harrison! When the Snake was conjured it was angry and confused, it was going to attack anyone nearby. I stopped it from attacking Justin! You have to believe me.” Nathan whispered quietly. This did not stop the students nearby from hearing him, and they began to whisper among one another again. Harry could hear them openly express their doubts in regards to Nathan’s words, as if they all were there and all could speak parseltongue.

“Of course, ickle wittle Nathan is the head of Slytherin!” Fred and George suddenly exclaimed in unison with wide smiles as they slapped their hands on the table.

George stood on the table, “with his red locs of hair--”

Fred stood with him, “--and even redder cheeks.”

George pinched Nathan’s cheeks, “Cheeks as soft as a baby’s.”

Nathan giggled softly and slapped George’s hands off of his face. Nathan’s spirits lifted even if only a little.

“Yes, so all be aware, of Slytherin’s heir!” George and Fred exclaimed in unison once more as they each wrapped a arm around the other’s shoulder as they spoke in rhymes.

Most of the students laughed at their antics and even Harry smiled a bit. Fred and George jumped down from the table and went off to harass their depressed looking sister at the far end of the table.

“I believe you, Nathaniel, so cheer up. If you look guilty then who’s to say you aren’t guilty?” Harry said quietly, he stared at Nathan intently, and even looked the other boy in the eyes. Nathan looked so sad.

Harry continued but spoke a bit louder, “Also, this will show you who your real friends are. Remember those who have stuck by your side but more importantly don’t forget those who have abandoned you,” while Harry spoke he had looked around at the people sitting at Gryffindor table and many looked away as if they had not been listening. Harry noticed that Ron had gotten up and left entirely. Harry physically lifted Nathan’s chin with a gentle hand and told him to “chin up,” just as Joseph had did to him earlier.

“You’re right, Harrison. Thanks! Hey, guys, do you want to go play some exploding snap?” Nathan asked his nearby Gryffindor friends who responded enthusiastically and followed him out of the Great Hall.

Harry released a relieved breath and went to sit at his own table, he was not particularly hungry but he could really go for a cup of tea.
As he walked passed Joseph, the older boy winked and whispered, “good leadership,” and Harry
could not stop the slight blush that crept up his neck and to his ears. He did manage to nod before
he took his place between Hermione and Terry. Hermione openly did her best to ignore his
presence as she continued to study and Harry shook his head in near fondness.

Harry had been fine with their current relationship. If Hermione was so prideful that she would
insult him or belittle him when she felt insecure then Harry did not feel all that hurt with their
current relationship. He had not time for such a thing to be the center of his universe, not when he
had his own studies to focus on, and not while he still experienced his visions that seemed to be
occurring more often than not, especially when he was asleep.

The visions were not about anything specific and most have been of the past, and most relate to
Hogwarts and the students within, and Harry has bounced theories off of Snape that Harry’s
surroundings affected the visions he sees. Just like the current thought and emotion of the person
touching him triggered certain visions about them. Snape thought that with meditation and practice,
Harry could trigger himself into having visions with the right provocations.

They had also researched other well known seers, and the list they had was unsurprisingly short
and almost unreliable. When Harry had spoke of approaching professor Trelawney, professor
Snape would not even entertain the idea, and frankly Harry was grateful because he did not want to
approach the Divination professor. She was infamous for prophesying painful demises for students,
one of which ever came true, Harry surmised that she was most likely a hack.

While the professor was against approaching the Divination professor, he did encourage Harry to
research her great-great-grandmother; Cassandra Trelawney nee Vablatsky, a true celebrated seer
who was alive to this day. She was known for predicting the exact dates the the eccentric wizard
Lorcan McLaird would become Minister of magic and when he would be forced out. She was alive
too, and Harry would make sure to write her.

Harry had also researched the famous seer from ancient Greek, Mophus. He had correctly predicted
that an epic battle would end in great defeat for the court of Amphilocbus. The man had died
young in battle but not without leaving a wife and child behind. This is worth mentioning because
according to professor Snape, a man known as Mattius Mophus had applied for the Divination
position the same year that professor Trelawney had. The only living Mophus was a rather
mysterious seer who no one knew much about, but having a first name helped, now, all Harry had
to do was research and hope that he could discover more about the man.

He knew that both Trelawney's had similar “symptoms from their visions. They did not see events
as Harry did and those who have heard their prophecies describe them as theatrical as the two
seemed as if they were being possessed by fate itself. Furthermore, they rarely remembered the
things they foretold. Harry was their living opposite, and maybe it was because he was not a seer of
prophecy as they seemed to be. Did seers have categories?

These theories were still up in the air, but Harry did not let them distract him from his own studies.
Hermione assumed that every time he studied, he was studying their current curriculum and would
be quick to try and correct him on what she thought he should be learning. However, Harry only
studied the school’s curriculum ten percent of the time. Harry dared not inform the girl that he was
already reading ahead and focusing on more application work rather than theory. He knew that she
would throw a fit

Hermione’s antagonistic attitude was so open that during one of their tea times, he had spoken to
professor Flitwick about the situation because the man had asked him about it in deep concern. The
small man went as far as to say that Harry and Hermione had become very close until the beginning of the year. Harry did not bother lying to the man and when he told his truth, the professor promised to talk to Hermione. Harry did not know if that would do any good but it would not hurt to try. Hermione was just being stubborn because she was embarrassed to have said something so hurtful, that was Harry’s opinion at least.

Despite all of that he was starting to feel a lot better and even the anxiety that came from waiting for his father’s reply to his letter could not sour his mood.

His peace would not last for very long however; as it would only be an hour later that Padma Patil would hunt he, Terry and Ernie down in the library to inform them that Nathan was found alone with the petrified body of Justin Finch-Fletchley and Nearly Headless Nick. Even Harry knew that he could not help his brother out of this one.

The following day, Nathan and Harry were finally able to meet in private, but to be truly alone Natan took Harry to the middle courtyard so that they could talk as they played in the snow. It was Nathan’s suggestion, of course. He was surprised that Harry actually indulged him however, but he was very happy nonetheless.

Nathan was finally able to tell Harry a little more detail about what happened the other night when Harry was forced to leave the infirmary, but nothing he had shared seemed useful to Harry. And with the mentioning of Colin, Harry became rather depressed, his brother really liked the kid apparently.

It was sad what happened to Colin but something ugly in Nathan’s heart felt relieved. Now, there wasn’t a small-fry following him around and taking his pictures. Or more importantly to Nathan; Colin wasn’t able to follow his brother around. It was obvious the stinker had a crush or something on Harry, it was the joke of the school and Harry didn’t even notice or care.

In turn for the information on Colin’s attack, Harry informed Nathan about a barmy house-elf--that most likely belong to the Malfoy’s--called Dobby. Apparently, the barmy elf wanted Nathan to leave Hogwarts because he was in danger because the chamber of Chamber of Secrets really has been opened. Nathan wouldn’t leave Hogwarts of course, but he did want to meet the house-elf so that he could get some dirt on the Malfoy’s if he really did belong to them but was loyal to Nathan because he was the boy-who-lived.

“They almost expelled me, Harrison! If not for dad coming in then surely they would have!” Nathan exclaimed as he walked on his knees and rolled the bottom of the snowman.

Harry dutifully rolled the torso of their snowman, “what did father say?”

“Well at first, I thought he was going to be really mad and even possibly disown me, pah! Are you done with the torso?”

Harry nodded and rolled it on top of the rather large bottom that Nathan had created. Nathan continued, “anyway, dad was more angry over the fact that these rumors were not being dispelled by the headmaster or staff.”

“That’s kind of unfair, there isn’t much they can do to stop the opinions of the public. Father knows that.”

Nathan shrugged, he supposed it was but Nathan was not as humble as Harry. Rarely did Nathan
forget that he was the boy-who-lived and often times when he received special treatment, he thought of it as well deserved. Furthermore; until his entry into Hogwarts—when the public knew little about him—they did not write such negative things about him, but now, those writing for the Daily Prophet were calling him “evil,” and “Slytherin’s heir.” Nathan felt that the wishy-washiness of the paper, and his peers should not even be happening because of how often they glorified him, and without him even asking for it!

The least the public, and the school could do was try to limit how much information left the school’s grounds, if it was only going to be used against him and his family.

“I guess but, I’m just glad dad didn’t disown me. I guess I have you to thank for that.”

Harry paused mid roll and glanced at his brother questioningly.

Nathan grinned, he picked up his cane from nearby and used it as leverage to stand. He then quickly limped over to Harry. He could tell that Harry wanted to dodge him but then Nathan would fall to the ground and he knew that Harry did not want that and so he allowed his brother to jump onto him and was properly tackled into the snow, “Nathaniel, you are being childish yet again.” Harry growled.

Nathan rolled his eyes and rolled off of him, and laid his back on the snow, “I’m twelve and so are you. Anyway, dad had quoted something, from one of those books you had made me read last Summer and I know he would never read anything like that on his own. So thanks, Harrison.”

Their dad still would not have disowned Nathan if he had not read some of the material that Harry told him too. However, Nathan feared that the man still would have been quite wary of him, and would treat him coldly, like he did Harry had Harry not written to the man and recommended those books to him. His father and Harry both treated the other in such a cold way. It was apart of their “schtick,” so to say, in Nathan’s eyes at least. Nathan could not have that sort of relationship with his father. He immensely enjoyed their playful dialogue, his father’s loose rules and standards and especially how his father let him get away with slacking off.

“Think nothing of it, Nathaniel.” Harry said as he stood up and finished the head of the snowman. Nathan himself got up in the search of rocks to transfigure into buttons for the snowman’s eyes.

He idly used his cane to move the small rocks about as he searched for the perfect one. “Oh! Another cool thing that happened; I got to meet Fawkes!” Nathan exclaimed excitingly. Everyone may know that Harry was very studious and hard-working, but no one knew that his brother had an immense interest in beasts, creatures and nonhuman humanoids. Only Nathan knew things like that because he knew Harry best. And Nathan knew that Harry was most interested in vampires and phoenixes.

“Fawkes?”

“Yeah, he belongs to Dumbledore. He’s his phoenix and he likes me!”

“Oh, that’s interesting, actually.”

“I knew you’d be interested Harrison! You’re always mumbling about how having a phoenix could help with your healing magic. Here, use wingardium leviosa and place the head on top, please.”

“I do not mumble,” Harry said, he purposefully enunciated his words, and performed the spell as requested. Nathan noticed that he had done so wandlessly, and admittedly he was a bit jealous. Harry has told him, and him only that he lightly dabbles in simple wandless magic. What Harry
considered simple were things such as; wingardium leviosa and the upper level summoning charm accio. It was another one of their secrets that Nathan did not understand why it was secret. Nathan himself had begun to practice wandless magic but the only thing he has managed to perform successfully with his wand has been a weaker summoning charm, he could only pull things nearby and they could not weigh more than twenty pounds. He and Harry had check. If Nathan could do what Harry did, he’d never shut up about it.

Expertly, Nathan called for his wand from his cane and transfigured the rocks into buttons and even made one look like a carrot for the nose.

“It sounded like you had a very good visit, Nathaniel,” Harry said contently.

“Yeah, I feel a lot better about all this now, especially because dad doesn’t think that I’m the heir whatsoever and neither does Dumbledore for that matter. Dad did say something about looking into our family tree though, he didn’t seem to happy about it but I ‘spose he wasn’t too happy to find out that I’m technically dark.”

Harry rolled his eyes, “dark does not mean evil or bad, Nathaniel,” Harry proceeded to use wingardium leviosa once more to complete their snowman.

“Yeah, you say that but most other people don’t agree and I’m the boy-who-lived, Harrison! That means something whether I want it to or not… He’s missing something… Oh!” Nathan took off his ear muffs and transfigured them into a fancy looking top hat. With a snap of his wrist, Nathan called out “reverto” and retracted his wand back into its cane form. He thumped it onto the ground so that he could lean on it, he then asked Harry to cast a charm that would make sure all of their transformations lasted for the remainder of the week.

Harry cast the charm, and yet again, he did so wandlessly, and then looked at their creation, “not too shabby,” Harry commented.

With his free hand Nathan grabbed ahold of one of Harry’s own, and swung it back and forth, “shabby? It looks awesome!”

Nathan ignored his brother who looked at their hands with a slight frown, Harry had complained that they were becoming much too old to do things like sleep in the same bed and hold hands. He had only began to feel that way when he had overheard some older Gryffindor students accuse he and Harry of “fooling” around because they were so close. Nathan would never do anything like that to Harry, and he knew that Harry would never do anything like that to him, and so he was actually a bit angry that Harry would never do anything like that to him, and so he was made their way inside.

Thankfully, there were no other students out and about, many were much too paranoid due to the petrifications to really venture.

“Can we go to the dining hall, have a snack and relax?” Nathan asked his brother. He knew that no one else would be present because lunch time had already passed and it was still early afternoon.

Harry shrugged and Nathan knew that that was his agreement and hurriedly limped as he rushed them to the dining hall, and as expected, no one else was present.

Nathan sat them down, placed his cane onto his lap and called for Tippy and requested some snacks from Tippy the house-elf. He only said ‘please’ after Harry gave him a rather stern glare.
As of late, Harry has seemed to fuss at Nathan more and more about his manners, and well, really, it wasn’t fussing. Typically, Harry reprimanded him once or gave him stern looks and that was it. However, to Nathan; it may as well be fussing!

Not even their mother fussed at him so much, and she has really started in on them as of late. She even started to enforce bedtimes and how long Nathan could play. Usually, their father let Nathan do whatever he wanted if he complained loud enough but the man has started to defer to their mother when it comes to certain rules and behaviors. Nathan has only fought them about it, a little and that was more out of habit than anything else.

Their snacks appeared a moment later. Tippy had given them an assortment of fruit, cheese, and crackers because they had not requested anything specific.

Nathan yelled out, “thank you,” and then looked towards Harry with a mischievous grin that said, “see, I said thank you, you can’t complain!”

Harry rolled his eyes, and ate some grapes, grapes were his favorite.

Just because Harry could not read Nathan’s mind did not mean that Nathan did not have thoughts that he thunk! If Harry could read his brother’s mind he would hear all the things that Nathan had omitted. Things like speaking to the sorting hat, who had a few things to say about his sorting and his brother; how he and Harry were the same, they both were adaptable.

Nathan was not stupid, he knew exactly what the hat had meant. Harry excelled well in Ravenclaw, he adapted and studies just as hard as the rest of the Ravens. Though if he had ended in Slytherin, he would have navigated their politics just as well.

In regard to Nathan, the hat knew that he was adapting and surviving in the brash headed bravery of the Gryffindors even though he would have been much more content as a badger. However; Nathan knew that as the boy-who-lived he could not have been sorted into Hufflepuff, and not only that, his father probably really would have disowned him!

Instead of talking about what the hat had told him, Nathan said, “so, you know how Ron has been snubbing me and whispering behind my back during all this Slytherin’s heir stuff?” Harry nodded and before responding, Nathan threw a grape into the air and successfully caught it from the air with his mouth as it fell. “Well, he apologized for being a prat earlier today. Went on about how his sister isn’t coping with being away from home well and that he’s been really stressed out.”

Harry rolled his eyes, “surely, you didn’t accept his apology.”

“Well…”

“Nathan. Really?” Harry said incredulously. Nathan knew that the other boy did not care for Ron much, and Nathan only did out of house loyalty and because Ron’s family were as light as they could be. Nathan felt like he was supposed to at least get on with Ron. Frankly, the redder headed boy made it rather hard.

“What was I supposed to do, Harrison!? You’re not in Gryffindor, so you don’t see what I see. We aren’t loyal to each other like Puffs but we are loyal to our house! And Ginny has been having a hard time of it. I think she really misses her mum and besides; wouldn’t you forgive Hermione if she apologized to you?”

Nathan felt bad when his brother grimaced slightly. He knew that he was hitting a sore-spot but he wanted to remind Harry how easily Hermione chose grades over their friendship and not only that
about also how easily she would insult him too. Harry and Hermione had become awfully close until their spat. The girl even dared referred to herself as his brother’s best friend, it was pretty barmy in Nathan’s opinion, and proved that the pushy bushy haired girl didn’t have many friends to begin with.

For some reason, Nathan felt smug satisfaction that Hermione isolated herself from his brother and his brother’s other Ravenclaw friends. She was always unnecessarily clingy and bossy and it was really surprising that Harry had allowed her as close as he did.

“I have already decided that whether I forgive her or not, our relationship will forever change.” Harry answered honestly.

“I don’t think you should forgive her at all.” Nathan said, he forced his tone to sound overly concerned and unsure.

“But you can forgive Weasley for openly bad mouthing you and abandoning you each time others do?” Harry asked bluntly as he stared Nathan down with a raised eyebrow.

“Woah!” Nathan exclaimed as he raised his arms up defensively, “what I mean Harrison is that Ron is my friend as much as Hermione is yours. They’re both our housemates, and they both like us despite being somewhat jealous of us. Hermione is jealous of you because you’re smarter than her--”

“--I am not--” Harry attempted to interrupt but Nathan snatched a grape from the table and placed it in Harry’s open mouth. Harry chewed it angrily (he hated speaking with food in his mouth) and Nathan smirked in triumph.

“Hear me out, Harrison. Seriously, you are smarter than her, you’re smarter than a lot of people and that’s just a fact. Ron is jealous of me because I’m rich, and the boy-who-lived and that’s not me having a big head! Ron says this stuff himself whenever he gets irritated at me or others when they mention me too much..” Nathan said the last few sentences hurriedly when Harry began to glare, Harry has openly told Nathan that he has been acting like a big headed spoiled brat and Nathan has tried to at least act as if he a bit more humble so that Harrison would lay off. “We’re all going to be schoolmates for the next five years, so, there’s no point in making enemies of them but they can’t walk all over us.”

Harry frowned deeply. Perhaps Nathan was laying it on a bit too thick. Besides Terry, Ernie, and Hermione had been Harry’s closest friend in his house--his first friends that weren’t Nathan even. Nathan gently took Harry’s face into his hands, “hey, don’t cry.”

He was met with a dead panned stare that made him guffawed, of course, Harry wouldn’t cry over such a thing. Nathan squished his cheeks and was unsurprisingly met with resistance as Harry smacked his wrist and forced Nathan to remove his hands from his face.

“We can be civil with them but we don’t need them. We have each other in the end, like we always have.” Nathan said earnestly.

“We have our other friends too, Nathaniel.” Harry stated firmly.

“Yeah, but I’m learning that people change like a flip of a coin, but no matter how much we change we can promise to always be there for the other, right? Because we’re going to get older, Harrison and already we’re changing. I can see that, we’re going to be thirteen soon! But-I-I just, no matter what. No matter how many people try to get close on us, try to abandon us--betray us. We can be there for each other, no matter what. Right, Harrison?”
Harry stared at him for a long while, and for a minute, Nathan felt that Harry didn’t feel the same way but eventually Harry sighed and said, “right, Nathaniel.”

And Nathan felt like he had won a million galleons.

Nathan invited Harry to spend the evening with he, Neville, Dean and Seamus, but his brother declined because he had a meeting with professor Snape. No matter how much Nathan pouted his brother refused to cancel his meeting with the nasty professor. Nathan did not care for the potions professor at all. The man often deducted points unfairly (admittedly he did this less so than he had at the beginning of Nathan and Harry’s first year,) and apparently, the man tattled on him to Harry about his apparent talking back. And well, Nathan did talk back. Often too, he even called Snape names like “slimy-git,” “the bat of the dungeons,” and once he had even called the man “Snivellus” as he had so often heard his father refer him as. Harry had not been impressed at all when he heard such a thing and had a long talk with Nathan about maturity and respect. He even had Cedric join in which was unfair because Harry knew how much Nathan liked and admired the older boy and to have the Hufflepuff so disappointed in him did not feel good at all!

Nathan still could not believe that the man had gone as far as to complain about his behaviors to Harry. (To be fair, it was not like he could tell their parents, their mother deferred to their father when it came to things like this and their father would most likely support Nathan’s disrespectful behavior.)

And Nathan could not even lie to Harry because he knew that Harry believed the man’s words and that irritated Nathan to no end.

Reluctantly, Nathan departed from his brother and headed to his dorm. Soon after their departure, Nathan heard the menacing voice once more. He turned in hopes that Harry would still be nearby and Nathan could prove to him once and for all that he was not crazy or “stressed” but the other boy was nowhere in sight.

And when the voice sounded dangerously nearby, Nathan ran to the Gryffindor dorms.

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Snape watched Harry intently as the boy idly stirred his tea with a thoughtful yet distant look on his face. After awhile the boy quietly sighed, moved about in his chair and idly twirled his finger in his hair.

The two did not get to meet as often as they would have liked so far this year due to all of the chaos and petrifications going on. They spoke in passing and typically after class and sometimes Harry even helped him brew basic potions, but they were both very quiet and concentrative brewers, each were always much too focused on their potions to really converse during those times.

“I’ve noticed that you and the Granger girl are no longer glued together.” Snape stated.

The response he received was a grimace of unfamiliar guilt from the boy, “yes, professor Flitwick noticed as well… She was not happy placing second last school year. She even went as far as to say that I only beat her because I had a head start in my schooling, being raised in the magical world and all.”

“But you had to study hard just like anyone else, and from what I understand, you and the granger girl both study very hard. If not equally so,” at first, Snape was immediately annoyed. The Granger child was a thorn in his side as much as the Weasley twins, and Nathaniel Potter were but for different reasons. The girl’s know-it-all attitude aggravated not only Snape’s nerves but the rest of
the staff as well. For awhile she improved immensely but mainly because Harry had obviously
been holding her back but now that the two were no longer on friendly terms, she was back to her
old ways.

Speaking over other students, correcting professors who did not strictly follow the text books of
their class, and the girl even loudly criticized students while correcting them whether they asked
her two or not. How the boy before him tolerated the girl, Snape would never know.

Especially with how easily she would question Harry’s hard work. Snape composed himself, he
knew that he was more annoyed on Harry’s behalf more so than his own. And he was the adult and
should appropriately criticize and think from each student’s perspective. Though really, the only
advantage that Harry truly had was his near eidetic memory, and even then, he needed to read and
or look at something more than once in order to truly remember it. Furthermore; that only served
him well for remembering things like the name of plants, potion ingredients & instructions,
mathematical formulas and so on. Things that did not change, and even then, Harry himself knew
of his this and did not apply his skill as he should. He skimmed through things he was uninterested,
and barely paid any mind to things that bored him. However; his written works were well thought
out, but they were nothing like the writings for his extra curricular studies. But he was still the top
student so Snape and the other professors could not complain.

Harry easily understood theories and remembered what he needed to and somehow came up on top
in his theory and formulated work, however, he absolutely excelled in application. This is possibly
where Granger is his opposite, she works far too hard to remember the theories and formulas but
does not apply herself in the application. If anything the two complement one another in regard to
their studies. Though, Harry was clearly ahead, and Snape’s theory was that the boy was naturally
magical in kind. Unnaturally so, even in Snape’s opinion.

Then again, the Hogwarts’ curriculum had become less and less challenging over the years. In the
past, Hogwarts was considered one of the top four challenging magical schools in the world. They
were always a step behind schools such as Frances’ own Beauxbatons magical academy and
Durmstrang institute of North Eastern. Now, they were even further behind with all of the classes
that the Ministry had removed due to their supposedly “dark” curriculum. They also taught at a
slower place then other magical schools, leaving most Hogwarts’ students who lacked the drive to
study on their own behind. Harry did not feel challenged by Hogwarts’ curriculum and it showed in
his disinterest for many of his classes and his enthusiasm in his private studies.

“That is exactly how I felt, and she came second. I was rather proud of her for that, so it is rather…
hurtful that she could not do the same for me.” Harry said, he interrupted Snape’s thoughts and
brought him back to the matter at hand; the boy’s strife with the Granger girl. He had mentioned it
for Harry’s sake because unfortunately, the boy seemed slightly depressed by it.

“I imagine so. I figured that you would get first.” Snape stated earnestly. The boy was constantly
reading and asking questions. Even if the boy seemed to truly understand a subject he still inquired
for the thoughts of a professor, a master, a professional; someone who had studied the material for
years. This was another difference between he and the Granger girl who typically only answered
questions for the things that she knew, and often thought she knew the material just because she
read a textbooks.

After he said his comment, Snape noted that Harry’s cheeks turned the faintest of red and he nearly
rolled his eyes. The boy needed to become accustomed to praise and to stop making Snape feel so
embarrassed for giving him praise by acting so surprised.

“Really, professor?”
“Really.” Snape said with finality. The boy was truly a prodigy, academically, and he only proved this with his own ignorance and humble attitude. Harry did not tell him so, but Snape knew that he was reading ahead, and practicing spells far too advanced for a second year, and Harry only moved so quickly because he wanted to focus on the extra study material that he and Pomfrey had given him. Not because he was concerned with being the smartest or the most powerful.

Harry loved potions, even more so than Snape or his mother Lily ever did, but he was more so interested in the healing properties of potions. To be honest, the boy was far more interested in healing magic as a whole, and when Harry was not thinking so logically or critically, his magical skill in healing magic could be terrifying. The boy was magically powerful, and Snape was positive that Harry did not even realize it. Intentionally, Snape wanted to push Harry Potter, and force the boy to ignore the magical limitations that he grew up with. Just to see what would happen. The last time he had felt so inclined to be near one due to their magical prowess, Snape became a Death Eater.

And wasn’t that a thought and a testament to the aura that Harry’s magic created that Snape would compare him to the Dark Lord who had the most powerful magical signature that Snape had ever felt in his life.

They went on to speak of the Warts club that the boy was now titled a founder of, now that they were taking students as regular members.

Allegedly, they had quite a few, the last Snape had heard, there were about thirty-eight members, and they all met once a week, and ranged from lower years to upper years, from Ravenclaws to Slytherins.

It was amazing really. Before Harry, the houses did not intermingle so openly as they have been the last two years, and Snape knew that it was due to the boy’s deep indifference in regard to the separation of houses. Of course, some students were against the boy’s indifference, especially his more conservative upper year Slytherins, but their opinion had to go against the vast majority who either supported it or felt indifferent to the new inter house unity that was becoming apart of Hogwarts culture.

Surprisingly, a majority of Warts’ members were purebloods. His unsupportive more conservative uppers years referred to pureblood Warts’ members as idealist blood traitor progressives who cared nothing for the old traditions. However, the club was that, traditional.

Its members greeted one another with polite bows and introduced themselves by their titles if they had any. They also educated halfborns and muggleborns about pureblood terms, politics, holidays and even etiquette. Speaking of which, their etiquette lesson event had seen to more than one hundred students this year. It was such a success that the board members have voted it to become an annual event. Harry also informed him that during Winter break some of the members would go to a squib orphanage and give out gifts that were donated by the students and their families to the orphans that resided there. It was an event that Harry had put together as the Warts’ current programs chair, it was extremely impressive, and immensely progressive and it took well respected leaders to get the regular student body involved. Apparently, they did not have many purebloods volunteering, but that was to be expected, many of them have never seen the less fortunate in a respectable light. Of course, they would not “lower” themselves by helping them or giving them “handouts.”

Harry seemed quite proud of the turn out though. They still had Wart’s board members along with 15 volunteers who pledged to go. However; Harry had told Snape that he would not be attending because he would be staying at Hogwarts during the break. When Snape had asked why, Harry
bluntly informed him that he would be staying behind, and planned to go to the orphanage in the summer.

Harry went on to complain about his peers odd behavior toward his person.

Unlike Snape, Harry did not notice--no, for no matter how observant the boy was, he never and probably would never pay attention to the advances of others, the boy was dense,) but older students, and even some of his year mates have begun to open doors for him, carry some of his books or touch him more than necessary and that brought out odd annoyance (he refused to acknowledge it as a protective flare) out of Snape. The boy was twelve and a boy! There was no reason for his peers to treat him like a young woman that they were courting! It was even more annoying that the female students were doing it too. Harry was far too innocent and naive for such a thing anyway, if the boy was too dense to notice, then he was far too ignorant for any sort of romantic relationship.

Snape refused to acknowledge that he was thinking like an overprotective father.

“No one… has touched you inappropriately have they?” Snape questioned firmly.

Harry gaped at him, his eyes rounding like saucers, “are you asking if I have been molested?”

“If you want to put it that way, then yes,” Snape stated as he crossed his arms over his chest. He was looking--well, attempting to look Harry square in the eye. The boy was getting far too old to continue avoiding eye contact.

“No, no one has done such a thing!” Harry stated, his ears bright red.

“There is no need to be embarrassed. If anyone does touch yo--”

“I will be sure to come to you, professor! May we please move onward and away from this topic!?" The boy whispered harshly.

Snape’s arms remained crossed and he squinted at Harry who did not squirm--Harry rarely ever squirmed--but he still looked uncomfortable in his seat. Snape had to have faith that Harry would come to him if he ever was being violated and he relented. Honestly, the boy’s reaction was rather… cute. Snape was still getting used to him being so expressive. The boy seemed to have receive similar lessons as Draco and sometimes the two children acted far too adult, and it was not due to simple maturity but due to being reprimanded for being childish or doing child things such as shrugging or laughing too loudly.

“I will take your word, and hold you to it,” Snape said, voice stern.

Harry’s response was a jerky nod as he hastily took sips of his tea.

“Have you been well, professor?” Harry asked, obviously changing the subject himself.

Snape raised an eyebrow, Harry was not a careless boy, he easily tired of talking about himself, and often inquired after Snape’s own person. Often times, the boy was far too observant. Snape can recall times where the boy asked if his arm hurt because he had noticed the slight spasms of Snape’s arm. There was also a time where the boy (after much studying) could see the lasting effects of the cruciatus curse in the way that Snape’s back slightly spasmed or the slight droop in his jaw, and even the minor roll of his neck from straining his body under the curse. The boy was much too smart and often asked questions that Snape was not ready to give him an answer to.

Though Harry asked in genuine care or curiousity, Snape did not confide in him as if he were a
friend or an adult. Years of working with children (despite how much he dislikes them,) have helped him learn to maintain the line of mentor, professor, adult, student, teen, and adolescent; without ever crossing boundaries.

While Snape did not view Harry like any other student, he still viewed him as the preteen he was and refused to tell him things that could cause him unnecessary anxiety. Little did Snape know, he was the only adult, along with Remus Lupin, professor Flitwick, and Narcissa Malfoy who often interacted with Harry and treated him this way.

“As always, your inquiry is appreciated. I have been well, but even you notice how tense things are with the attacks. Speaking of the attacks; you did not seem much too surprised that your brother is a Parselmouth. Keeping secrets, Mr. Potter? I daresay that is rather Slytherin of you.”

Harry regarded Snape for a long while, and when he spoke next, he sounded rather guarded, “I’ve known since the Summer, I told him to keep it quiet but does he ever listen? Of course not. My visions did not warn me that he would expose himself so abruptly.”

“Oh? Have your visions warned you of anything as of late? You have not mentioned them much, at least, non-nightmarish ones that is.” Snape inquired in interest, he stood and removed his outer robe and banished it to his private quarters. He then approached the cabinets that hung on the wall behind his desk and removed a medium sized boxed container that had common Asphodel roots inside. He transfigured his office desk into a standard table and placed the box on top of it. He then politely asked Harry to aid him and powdering them and the boy did so enthusiastically. The boy seemed less depressed as of late, and preparing potion ingredients (the less disgusting ones,) often lifted his mood even more.

“Hm? Oh, that is because they have not been revealing.” Harry said absentmindedly, as he used the proper motions to ground the roots with the grinder. How out of character, Snape thought.

“Tch, child, you know that that is of no concern to me. Have they still been violent?” Snape asked as he plucked the stray hairs from the older roots in the container.

“Only a bit.” Harry responded. Again, he did not look at Snape as he spoke and he had a faraway look in his eye.

“Mr. Potter-- Harry, I know, you know it well to at least act as if you are looking someone in the eye when you speak to them.”

Harry blushed slightly, and stood up straight in his seat as he looked at Snape’s nose, Snape would take what he could get he supposed.

“Forgive me, sir. A lot is on my mind.”

“I can tell. Do you plan to tell me what ails your thoughts?”

Harry hesitated. He looked away from Snape once more. He closed his eyes and breathed in deeply before he released a long and quiet breath.

“I don’t understand the uterus.”

Excuse me, Snape thought as he froze mid pluck. “Excuse me?” He asked aloud incredulously. Of all the things he expected the boy to say that was not one of them.

“The uterus. In regards to a human female, it is the organ located after the vagina and cervix--the cervix seperate the two, you see. That I do understand.”
Snape stared at him dumbly as he continued to speak. Of course he remembered their last talk about female reproduction but that was more in regards to stillbirths. Snape did not know that he had graduated his studies.

“I understand fallopian tubes as well. The two narrow tubes that carry eggs from the ovaries to the uterus. Sperm—allows—travels through them to try to fertilize an egg which goes from that to an embryo, and then a fetus and so forth.”

“And I suppose you know the details of conception?” Snape asked as he walked away from the transfigured cabinet and retrieved a bottle of fire-whiskey from his alcohol cabinet. Some potions required alcohol for potency, Snape required it to relax himself for this conversation. He opened a bottle of fire whiskey, poured himself a cup and promptly began sipping on it.

Harry wrinkled his nose, “unfortunately.”

Snape nearly spat out his drink, “well, in my opinion it sounds as if you understand quite a bit.”

“Just about it, but not about any injuries, or damages they can have or develop. The library doesn’t carry any and there are none in our own libraries back home.”

“Pity.” Snape stated bluntly. He ignored Harry’s eyes enlarging slightly, and when they got bigger, Snape reprimanded him for childish tactics.

“Mr. Potter, if you want something you would do well to simply ask for it.”

The boy blushed deeply, “I don’t suppose that you could get me a muggle medical textbook? I have studied from both a magical journal and a muggle textbook in regards to the anatomy of a uterus, and it is clear that the muggle textbook is far more advanced. It had something it called; Hysterosalpingography, which was an x-ray of the uterus. Surely, other medical textbooks in regards to infertility would have more examples.”

Pah, the last Snape had heard from the boy he absolutely detested muggle x-rays. So much so that he created a magical form of x-ray… However; the boy could not exactly ask school girls to allow him to rub his hands over their bare stomachs—no, Snape would not allow it! Thankfully, the boy had some decorum.

“Suppose I could. Remind me why you are so desperate for such material?”

“I want to give Mrs. Malfoy a baby.”

Snape openly groaned, placed his drink down on the table, promptly ignoring Harry’s disapproving look of placing drinking items near potion ingredients and rubbed his temples. He would have to teach the boy to express such things a little less awkwardly and less bluntly too.

“Do you mean that you wish to help Mrs. Malfoy with her pregnancy problems, Harry?” Snape asked as he continued to rub his temples.

Harry nodded.

“How do you even know of such problems?”

Harry began to play with the ends of his long hair—a recurring habit, Snape has noticed. Harry’s hair was even a bit longer than Snape’s own. It suited the boy more though in his opinion and the boy obviously took care of it daily as it was also not as oily as Snape’s own. Snape kept his long for nobility purposes he supposed. Harry most likely did the same as the boy was quite traditional
for one so young.

“I’ve had visions of her bleeding from her vagina and crying. Holding her stomach and crying. Being told that she was not pregnant and crying. Being told that she should stop her attempts of having children--”

“--And let me guess, crying?” Snape interrupted.

“Yes. It makes me feel very distraught myself. I feel for her immensely as if I have lost my own children.” Harry said truthfully. He finished grounding one root and placed the powder in a small vial that he had conjured wandlessly. Snape was immensely impressed in how well his wandless magic was coming along, but he refrained from saying so for the boy would surely become very embarrassed.

Instead he focused on their present conversation and his own present concern. “Yes, you have mentioned the emotions of your visions effecting you a lot more.”

Harry began to ground another root, “hm, that’s what I had thought initially, but I think it is that but also the fact that I just am empathetic for them. I think it is a very sad thing that Mrs. Malfoy seems to want another child so badly but cannot have one, and I was raised pureblood enough to know that she also feels shame for it. That makes me feel bad for her as well.”

Snape hummed as he plucked more strands from roots. He and Harry had discussed the boy’s emotional well-being in passing but Snape has been sure to keep an eye on the boy just incase he had a lack of empathy or showed any sociopathic traits. It was not out of the ordinary for Snape to do so, he often did it with his own Slytherins however, in order to gauge who he suspected to be following in the footsteps of their Death Eater parents a little too eagerly.

Dumbledore had expressed some minor concern in regards to Harry’s personality. One day, over tea, the man had unintentionally told Snape that Harry vaguely reminded him of a student from many years ago who went on to do terrible things, and Snape being rather smart and intuitive deduced that the man was most likely speaking of the Dark Lord, but he could get no details from the headmaster who believed that he had already said too much and changed the subject to Severus’ private potion practices.

Snape could not see Harry doing “terrible” things. No matter how unempathetic Harry portrayed himself, the boy was anything but. In Snape’s observation the boy was actually very caring but never learned how to actually display or identify such emotions due to his cold upbringing. Harry rarely spoke of the details of how he was raised but he has slipped a few times and Snape can safely deduce that he was raised by a house-elf and cold tutors who were there to teach and receive galleons and nothing more.

It seemed that Harry was identifying and empathizing with emotions the more he was exposed to him, and that was not entirely good due to the boy’s often violent visions.

“Yes, the emotions within the visions are becoming a bit harder to cope with and differentiate from my own, but they also help me find the focus of the visions. As in; who’s past, present, and or future, I may be seeing.”

“Interesting theory, but what about the visions like the one of Quirrell when he went after the stone? Or the visions from the centaurs?”

“I think those are more prophetic in regards to fate?” Harry said questioningly. They didn’t exactly have a manual for this.
Harry did not know it but he had triggered a violent memory, one of Snape himself hearing a few lines of a prophecy that would damn the boy before him and his family. Or maybe Harry did know, apparently, in the vision that the centaurs had been forced to see; he had heard his father and the headmaster refer to Nathan as the prophecy child. Harry had innocently asked him if he knew of the prophecy and Snape snapped at him. Smartly, Harry did not bring it up again, but every so often he said little things that Snape could not prove he was doing it purposefully.

“Another interesting theory. Do not think on it too hard, we will come to understand them in time. For now, remember that you have yourself and the headmaster to speak with in regards to them.” Snape said. Harry regarded him with a nod and Snape continued to pluck away, ignoring the boy’s heated stare for a little longer.

“Anyway, in regards to your textbook inquiries, I may be so inclined to get them to you once the semester grades are posted and you are still at the top. However; I do remind you that you are a wizard, Harry.”

Harry vialled more power and looked at Snape questioningly, he patiently waited for the man to elaborate, “what I mean by that, Harry. Is that while muggles are advanced in their understanding of anatomy, their healing leaves much to be desired. We are wizards, we have magic and many times the human body can only be healed or restored with magic.” And you may not know it boy, but you have to have been blessed by magic herself. The power you have is intoxicating. Really, Snape wanted to deter him from textbooks so that he could discover what Harry could do with just pure thought and will.

The moment Snape had uttered the word restored a light shone within Harry’s ember eyes.

“Restore, restorative--restorative drought!” Harry exclaimed, he dropped the vials and rounded the table towards professor Snape.

“Once the Mandrakes are fully grown, we will make the restorative draught, correct, professor?”

“I will make the drought and I have given you permission to watch, but yes, we will.” Snape answered, he knew where this was going and was extremely surprised that he had not thought of it himself.

Harry snorted and began to pace in front of the table, cautiously Snape continued to pluck Asphodel roots while he kept idle eyes on the boy.

“Yes, yes. Thank you again for that by the way, it will be quite the learning experience.” Harry said, he continued to pace and no longer paid Snape any attention as he rambled, “professor Sprout is still tending to them as they have not fully grown yet, most are still in the ‘baby’ stage, they still wail and their petals aren’t grown… Professor, may I look through your private collection on the shelf over there?” Harry asked. He had gestured to the corner of the office where a large bookshelf stood. With a nod of his head, Snape gave his permission and Harry made haste and looked through the titles like a starved man in search of food.

When Harry found the book he had been looking for, Snape was surprised by what he had chosen. “Potion Ingredient Facts, Myths and Legends,” by Zygmunt Budge, one of the rarest books that Snape owned, there were only five copies in existence. It was a more entertaining factual read as it was a book filled with various well known plants, well, potion ingredients in general, and well known myths and stories about them.

One story included that of the Asphodel plant they were handling. Budge wrote that ancient Greek wizards believed it to be the food of the dead in the Land of the Dead. It was because of factoids
such as that that Harry enjoyed the book immensely.

Harry sat with his book on his chair, quickly flipped through the table of contents and turned to page one hundred. He then sat quietly and read for ten minutes.

In that time, Snape put away the Asphodel, and transfigured the table back into his desk before he sat down at his own chair behind and watched Harry as he finished off his fire-whiskey.

Snape never drank in front of students, but Harry was different and Snape was not drinking in order to get drunk but casually. If anything he feels that he is recreating a scene from his own childhood, during one of the rare times his father was not violent and he sat at the man’s feet in front of the fire place while he read and his father drank his own cup of fire-whiskey in his recliner.

“Here. Right here.” Harry stated as he stood from his seat, walked around Snape’s desk and stood at his side as he placed the book in front of him onto the desk. Harry looked at him expectantly, and Snape snorted, but read.

“My neighbor on the Isle of Harris has told me plentiful information in regard to non-magicals on the mainlands. He is most impressed with their art, however; he is enamored with their mundane versions of paintings. If they could even be called such as that. Non-magicals paintings have no personality, or flare as they do not move, nor can they speak. I digress, I must arrive to my point; most of their works are tributes and or depictions of moments from a book that refer to as the Bible (refer to page twenty-five for reference.)

The Bible is one of many proofs which solidifies the evidence that magic should never be exposed to Non-magicals. They see one magical man and label him a God. Despite that, some of their stories have merit in its magic. One being about mandrakes. In the Bible, there is a tale of a man who had supposedly used the plant in order to heal the ailment of his wife’s infertility. The story goes on but I do not care about the many overdrawn and inconsistent details. What is interesting is that upon receiving the grotesque plant the women was distraught that it looked like a mere babe and cried like one too. (As an expert potion master, I identify the plant as not being full grown, this may be important to how it affects those who consume it or use it for brewing.) The women who had told the man that his wife had to ingest the plant must have been magical for she warned the two, to place sheep fat within their ears less the be deafened by the plant. The man’s wife then struggled to eat it raw as instructed, but in the end she did.

Though, it took years after her consumption for the effect of the plant to bear fruit. I believe this to be due to their fault of being muggles and lacking any magical talent ingesting raw potion ingredients. If they had consumed it as a potion with other ingredient to enhance the potions strength then the women may have had a child much sooner. It is unimportant to me whether this is myth or not--” Snape stopped reading and turned to Harry, “I believe I see where you are going with this.”

Harry beamed at him, and at first Snape’s eyes widened ever so slightly in surprise but he found himself baring his teeth back at the boy in his own smile.

“Do you think that you could still get me that book... along with a ripe mandrake, please? I will be sure to receive even better marks than last year.”

Snape tutted at him, “I will see what I can do, Mr. Potter. Now, it is getting late, and you should be on your way to bed.”

Harry thanked the professor and obediently left for his dorm, Snape of course, walked him there,
there was an awful beast about after all.

Chapter End Notes

This one is for all of those inquiring about professor Snape, ha ha! When he's quiet do not worry because he will always come back. Severitus is one of my favorite things to read/write, after all.

I feel that there was a lot of interaction in this chapter which is something I am surprised that many of you have voiced that you enjoy! I truly did not expect support to see more of Nathan, or Joseph so that has been interesting and I will do my best to include a little more of everyone interacting (mainly with Harry of course.) However, I will continue to write faster pace chapters too, especially when the story matches JKR's canon by a lot because we all know how they go and if not, stop reading this because you are going to be "spoiled" something awful if you have not read HP in its entirety!

I want to thank you guys yet again, because I never tire of it and I never stop appreciating you. Perhaps it is annoying that I reply to you all but still thank you incessantly via author's note but that's how thankful I am.

Anyway, in chapter 16 someone discovers the diary, and the diary's magic is a lot more compelling than it is in the book and that is not good for the finder of the diary. AT ALL.

See you next time, and if you can, I'd love for you to leave a comment but if not that is okay too, I just hope you are enjoying this de-stress story I hope to see to the end.
Time Flies By

Chapter Summary

Things are still tense throughout Hogwarts.

Harry continues his studies, practices what he learns and trains out of habit, and he finds a new friend that may not be as friendly as they appear.

Chapter Notes

[CHAPTER MOVES FAST-SEE NOTES AT END]

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Several more weeks came and went with no more attacks from the heir.

During those weeks, Harry accomplished several things.

He continued to be active in Warts which continued to gain popularity among the general population and even the light and neutral purebloods. Adrian would be president the coming year, and he had already made plans to approach the purebloods and halfbloods from prominent dark families. Especially because they could financially support Warts if they so believed in their cause.

Beyond his Warts activities, Harry had begun to meditate and he also continued his studies in magic and his ever increasing practice of wandless magic. Often, it was difficult for him to find the will to practice as it took a lot out of his magical core which often left him rather exhausted, and he also often had to wait for Terry to leave their room so that he could have privacy because he was not prepared to allow Terry in the know of his wordless and wandless magic practice.

Wandless magic was not illegal in magical Britain so to say, but it was not practiced and it was even encouraged for British wizards to train their magical children to refrain from using too much uncontrollable wandless magic. This was due to the fact that uncontrollable magic like what children innocently display could and even has killed parents, other family members, friends and even random passerby due to the babe’s lack of control. So, it was often encouraged for parents to introduce magical conduits early on into their child’s life so that they would not be killed by their own children accidentally.

This typically came in the form of a rattle with a mundane magical core. Something like a ruby or House-elf hairs; anything that would negate explosive magic and allow it to flow easier and to train magical children to use a wand, and thus teaching them control easier.

In Harry’s opinion, controlling a magical baby’s magic was the innocent goal, especially in early wizard life during times such as witch hunts. However, now, the ministry actively placed strict laws in the containment of wandless magic past childhood and that was intentionally so, because it only got harder to learn wandless magic the older one became, especially if most of the magic you used has always been controlled or weakened by a catalyst—a conduit, a wand. And the more you
relied on a wand, the easier it would be for the ministry to control and monitor what kind of magic you used. While Harry did not train himself for nefarious purposes, he did not want to weaken his magic by constantly relying on a conduit either when it has been proven to weaken one’s magical power. Nor did he want the ministry limiting what kind of magic he could use.

This was Harry's theory. In his mind it had not been too difficult for him to learn, since he often performed magic without a wand or conduit since he was very young.

Some good had come out of his parents’ neglect; if he wanted an item from a high place, he had to wandlessly get it to himself. If he fell and Mousy was not nearby, he had to either stop himself from falling entirely or heal himself if he was injured. Even his entertainment came from him wandlessly performing magic to bring things like his stuffed animals “alive” and make them dance. All of Harry’s developmental years was spent this way, and it affected his magic immensely. Positively so. Yes, he had to work hard to perform more difficult spells, but he could still perform them after much practice, and the unintentional practice of his early youth has lead him to “expanding” his magical strength. Currently, he was working on performing the shield charm protego duo without a wand, because he could successfully cast a normal protego wandless with ease now. It took him months of multiple failures and exhaustion, but he did it.

And eventually he needed a place that he could practice alone for when he attempted to perform more difficult spells such as the knockback charm without his wand.

The first time he tried, he nearly broke his back on Terry’s dresser as he was thrown into it from the force of his magic from a wild spell without an actual conduit. Some spells were easier with a conduit, admittedly. However, Harry was determined; he wanted to perform as many spells as he could without one. If the knockback charm proved to be too uncontrollable without a conduit, Harry would move on, but he had to try.

Anyway, Terry had nearly gone mental because he had thought that Harry was attacked. Harry lied to him easily and settled for finding elsewhere to practice and for a long while he had no luck.

That was until something positively brilliant happened one night when Harry had been pacing the halls on the seventh floor, trying to think of places that he could practice more offensive spells, suddenly a door had appeared on the opposite side of the tapestry of Barnabas the Barmy attempting to teach trolls ballet.

Stranger things have appeared within Hogwarts’ walls so with his wand in hand, Harry had bravely opened the door and was met with the sight of what appeared to be a training room. Harry did not look a gift thestral in its bony mouth and he had use the room to his heart's content since discovering it. It appeared the same way each time, and all he had to do was need it.

In that room he learned many things. Such as; that he could in fact perform a knockback charm without a wand, but for spells that conjured things such as water, bandages, flowers, etc, it was best to use a wand, unless he wanted to visit an angry madam Pomfrey after growing strange body parts from his hands, and arms as the magic tried to create and manifest itself from somewhere, anywhere from his body without a proper conduit. He learned the hard way that they may actually be important after all. What Harry had forgotten in his theory was the fact, that some pureblood families thought similar, and many raised their children without the strict use of a catalyst in hopes of expanding their magical core. A majority of the time, it worked, but not tremendously so, because some are born more powerful with others, but Harry would not think or worry himself with such a thought until he was much older.

Also during those weeks, his head of house had called both he and Hermione into his office so that they could discuss their problems in a mature manner with an adult present.
Harry had stated that there wasn’t a problem, and sometimes housemates didn’t get along. He had learned as much from his brother and even Perry and Adrian who often complained about other Slytherins and their politics often.

Hermione had looked extremely hurt at being called a mere “house mate.” Before long though, her face of hurt was replaced with one of haughtiness as she stuck her nose into the air and refused to even look at Harry.

Professor Flitwick had merely smiled at the both of them fondly before he forced them to look at one another.

When Harry looked at Hermione she was crying, and while Harry felt slightly sad for her, though, he did not feel guilty. It was not his fault that Hermione was so upset. She was just upset at herself, not at what she had done.

Professor Flitwick went on to tell them that if they were content to being mere housemates than that was more than fine. He understood that not everyone became or remained good friends, but he encouraged the two to be honest and overcome whatever placed so much tension between them. Just because tension arrived did not mean that they had to cease their friendship.

Hermione had broken the dam and apologized. With teary eyes, she admitted that initially she had been embarrassed that Harry done better than her and came first for their first year marks. She just was not used to coming in second in academics, she had always been the brightest in all of her classes back in her muggle school.

Her anger and embarrassment only increased when their “friends” chose Harry over her. Harry supposed that that would hurt anyone. He didn’t even realize that Terry and Ernie often gravitated toward him and not Hermione. However, they were boys though, of course, they’d choose Harry first.

If Hermione actually made an effort with her roommate, Mandy, or any of the other Ravenclaw girls, perhaps she would have more friends of her own, but she often complained of their own “stuck-up” attitudes despite being just like them while being stuck up for different reasons. She was smarter than them, and she knew it and so did they but they were of the opinion that Hermione had no right to treat them as if they were dumb when they were very far from being such.

After Hermione’s performance, Harry’s response had been that Hermione’s disrespect toward his hard work had offended him immensely but he was over it, and if she could act civil then so could he and he then promptly asked to be excused.

When he had left the office Hermione chased after him and asked if they were still friends and Harry earnestly told her that he did not know, but said that they should all study together as they had in the past, like they used to, because the multiple groups and different study times were bothersome.

Hermione smiled because to her, that was hope. She truly was embarrassed by how she acted, especially because Harry was so patient with her about it. She appreciated him a lot, but was just so frustrated at how easy magic came to him. It came to him easier than most students actually, now that she had thought about it.

Harry had seen her hopeful look, and became resigned to the girl, she would most likely be in his life for a very long time. Whether he wanted her to or not.

Another event worth noting from those busy weeks; Draco Malfoy had made it a point to take him
aside and affirm him that, while he did not care for “muggleborns” and while he even jokingly appreciated what the heir was doing that he was not them; the heir.

Strangely enough, Harry believed Draco’s claim of not being the heir, he just had a gut feeling that the boy was being entirely truthful. Harry had also noted the other boy’s use of the word “muggleborn” instead of mudblood and asked him why he had a sudden change of heart.

“My mother misses your letters,” was all Draco had said before he inquired about the study groups next study session and promptly walked away with a flippant promise that he would be there upon receiving an answer.

And wasn’t the thought oddly heart warming? Harry had stopped writing the other boy’s mother when Draco had begun to utter things such as “mudblood.” Harry had actually been rather petty and even wrote what he thought was a final letter to the woman that had said,

"Dear Mrs. Malfoy,

Had I not appreciated the kindness you displayed in Diagon Alley, I surely would have paid the galleons you spent back, but I would never disrespect your kindness no matter how I feel. However, It would be inappropriate of me to continue to write to you while Draco calls people like my mother, mudblood. I hope that in the future we can speak once again when things are not so muddy between our families."

Sincerely, Harrison Charles Potter, heir to the most ancient and noble house of Potter

Harry did not hear back from her, and he really did not expect to be approached by Draco no less, in response, but Harry too was eager to begin he and Mrs. Malfoy’s exchange of letters once more. Especially because he had gotten rather far in regards to the potion and treatment that could heal the uterus of a witch, regardless of age. He was inspired by her, for her, and others like her. Harry wanted her to be the first to know of it when it was completed. And with how hard he and professor Snape were working, the potion could be completed by mid Summer.

The mandrakes for the restorative potions were coming along fine as they acted as moody and catty as any other teenager within Hogwarts’ walls. Soon, the restorative juice would be complete and those petrified will be petrified no longer.

More good news was; the baby mandrake that he and professor Snape had taken was in a magical cryotonic state and surprisingly remained freshly immature, which was exactly what they needed. A fresh “baby” mandrake.

For the last several weeks; Harry and professor Snape had discussed the possibility of using a potion along with ritualistic magic for Mrs. Malfoy’s “treatment.”

If Mrs. Malfoy consumed the baby mandrake in its entirety, and then drank the potion that Harry and Snape had created by fusing a restorative potion and an untested fertility potion made with; a bezoars stone, one hundred fresh tadpoles, moon dew, and lady’s mantle. It was to be a potion most foul, but each ingredient was chosen for their symbols in healing, youth, the moon and femininity. This potion itself was ritualistic, and would need to be spelled with several dark magic incantations during its brewing that professor Snape refused to teach Harry.

The next step after would be for Mrs. Malfoy to consume an everlasting elixir, to insure that the healing properties of the potion would last. The final step would be for Harry himself to perform a healing “blessing,” because he was the most skilled between he and professor Snape in regards to healing magic. It just came more naturally to Harry. He had discovered the blessing from an
ancient scroll written by a healer from Rome who lived one thousand years ago.

Harry had read about the scroll from a textbook of old healing magic tome that he had received from madam Pomfrey for his studies.

After paying Gringotts a nice sum of money on his behalf; professor Snape bought Harry time with the scroll as it was currently owned by the goblins. In the scroll, he discovered the ritual, it by them it would be used to heal and strengthen the body to the health that it should be, and they would know if it is successfully performed as Mrs. Malfoy should be put to sleep immediately after.

Harry hoped that it worked as he and professor Snape had worked relentlessly on this theory, they read far too many books & scrolls, and they studied far too long on ingredients, their meaning and ancient uses, for their work to be unfruitful, they were exhausted.

Beyond potion creating, things had improved around the school in general.

There hadn’t been anymore attacks from the heir and Nathan complained less about hearing a menacing disembodied voice, and kept a low profile since the dueling club fiasco.

Some of the student body were still suspicious of him, but Nathan kept his chin-up and stuck to his friends and Harry. Things seemed to have returned to what they once were.

Harry even had had more time to visit Myrtle, he rather enjoyed her company. When she was not whining she was quite humorous, even if her humor was rather dark. Terry and Ernie had gone on a few visits with him, but today he was alone.

Harry was down the hall from Myrtle’s bathroom when he heard Myrtle’s wails, and while Myrtle often moaned, rarely had he heard her wail as loudly as she currently was. When Harry took another step forward, he stepped in a small puddle. ‘A flood? What on earth, Harry thought as he raised the hem of his robe slightly, he frowned when his socks became wet as the water became higher the closer he got to the bathroom.

When he reached the bathroom it was completely dark and Myrtle’s bathroom stall was closed tightly shut as she wailed inside.

“Myrtle?” Harry called out quietly.

“Harry, is that you!” Myrtle wailed, her bathroom stall flew open and she flew toward Harry with open arms. She went to hug him but floated right through him of course.

Harry briefly saw the hazy image of the same brown haired student that he saw a year ago in a vision of the Grey Lady. This time however, he was speaking to Myrtle who looked very alive as she blushed and twirled her fingers in her hair flirtatiously. This was the second time that Harry was seeing the boy, who on earth was he?

“Myrtle, what on earth happened?” Harry turned and asked, ignoring the attempted hug.

“Oh nothing,” Myrtle said and disappeared into a sink across the room only to violently emerge from the puddle near Harry’s feet on the floor seconds later, “only little ol’ me had been minding my own business, thinking about death, and someone--!” She flung her arm and pointed to the sink she had disappeared into earlier, “--decided to throw a book at me! For no reason!”

Harry looked toward the little thin black book that Myrtle had pointed at, “that’s awful Myrtle, I’m sorry that happened to you.”
Myrtle sniffed and floated around Harry’s head as he walked over to the journal, “it is of no matter. I know that you would never throw anything at me.”

“Never,” Harry confirmed, he bent down and picked up the book and was overwhelmed by a feeling of nausea. That was not a good sign, not at all, and Harry should take the book to a professor, perhaps he could take it to professor Sn--he should take the book to professor--Harry fought to think straight when he thought of getting rid of the journal. Because he should get rid of it, he should... He knew that he should keep the book, Harry must keep the book. That is what felt right. He looked at the cover, “T.M Riddle…” he mused aloud.

Myrtle hummed, “I knew a Riddle, a Tom Riddle. He was a Slytherin, and he was handsome, and kind, and always told me the time when I asked. Where is he I wonder? I hope he’s dead,” she sighed dreamily.

“Oh really... “ Harry said absentmindedly, he knew a Riddle too. Yes, a T.M Riddle had received an award for special services to the school fifty years ago. He had seen the award in one of the few trophy cases around the school.

On the back cover, the journal had the brand name of a store that Harry didn’t recognize, and with a last name like “Riddle” Harry assumed that Tom had been a muggleborn.

Harry pocketed the journal compulsively and spoke with Myrtle until she calmed down.

Later that evening during dinner Harry had shown the dairy to Terry and by proxy Hermione who had initially inquired if the diary was magic or not. It was a good question and Harry had lied to her for some reason and told her that it wasn’t, despite the magical signature that came from the book.

Harry had quickly placed the journal back into his robes. He did not see the horrified stare he received from little Ginevra Weasley from the Gryffindor table.

When Harry had gone to he and Terry’s room that night, his curiosity about the journal peaked. The light from his desk lamp dimmed and flickered as the flame danced about, and all the while, Harry idly flipped through the journals pages.

Harry had flipped through it multiple times, and the pages always appeared blank to him. In the back of his mind, Harry knew that he needed to stop merely flipping through it and get this journal away from him and perhaps to the more capable hands of professor Snape or professor Flitwick but he couldn’t bring himself to part with the thing. Tom Riddle felt like a long lost friend.

He placed the open book onto his desk, Harry prepared to distract himself with what he considered light reading. He reached for one of his current reads that he left at his desk until completion and of course, he would accidentally knock over his ink and quill. His heart leapt as the black ink covered the open pages of the journal. Immediately, he wandlessly performed a cleaning charm and got rid of the ink on his desk. He snatched the journal in fear that he had ruined it but was amazed to see that the ink was disappearing from the journal’s pages.

“What?” Harry questioned aloud as he hastily placed the open journal back on the desk.

The journal flipped its own pages until it landed on page one, Harry watched in awe as the words, ‘this diary holds the memories of Tom Riddle, who is there?’ appeared in red ink that hastily disappeared just as quickly as it came.

Harry shouldn’t write in this.

"A talking artifact is almost always a cursed artifact.” Harry heard the voice of his heir-ship
mentor say, but he couldn’t resist. He felt………… Compelled, and after; the sorting hat was a talking artifact and it and Harry were on rather good terms.

He conjured more ink and a clean quill, from his trunk nearby. His hands shook as he dipped the quill into the ink, and slowly brought the tip down onto the paper.

"Hello, Tom Riddle’s diary. I am...” Harry paused, “... Michael Croaner.” It was bad enough that Harry could not bring himself to part with it, and even worse; he could not resist writing in the thing. He would not give it his real name. His own writing disappeared just as Riddle’s own seconds later.

"Michael Croaner? I am not familiar with that surname."

“You are a memory, I do not expect you to be.” Harry stated. This was invigorating.

"Ah, a memory I may be but I work much like a portrait. Just as I remember things, I can learn things too."

“That’s rather impressive considering that you were made by a teenager.”

"Oh? How old are you then?"

Harry thought about lying once more but saw no reason to, “I am twelve years old.”

Tom complimented his penmanship and Harry acknowledged it with curt appreciation.

"Michael, how did you come across my dairy?"

“Someone threw it away.”

"My feelings would be hurt had I had any. However; people often fear the truth, so I am not surprised someone tried to get rid of me. The person before you asked about the Chamber."

Harry’s heart skipped a beat and immediately he asked what Tom meant when he said Chamber even though he knew what the diary had meant. It did not help him relax when the diary responded that it knew about the Chamber of Secrets.

And apparently, Tom Riddle had been a fifth year prefect when the chamber had first been opened, and he was the one to help apprehend and expel the perpetrator. When Harry had interrupted his tale to ask who had opened it, Tom slowly wrote to him, “Rubeus Hagrid.”

For a long while, Harry did not write. Hagrid had opened the chamber? Surely he wouldn’t. Harry did not interact with the giant much but he knew that the man was gentle, even if a bit naive.

"You don’t believe me, do you, Michael? I can show you what happened in the year of 1943...”

Again, Harry took his time to answer, more than proof of Hagrid opening the chamber, Harry wanted the knowledge on how to close it, eloquently he wrote, “OK. Show me.”

Immediately, the diary’s pages began to turn like mad, and Harry stared intensely, the pages did not slow down and as Harry watched he found himself drawn in. Quite literally.

One moment Harry was at his desk, the next moment he was stood in the headmaster’s office. However; it lacked headmaster Dumbledore’s many trinkets and when Harry became less disoriented, he saw the wizard that he knew to be Armando Dippet, the former headmaster of Hogwarts, Harry really was in the past.
Harry was in headmaster Dippet’s direct line of sight but the man made no reaction to his presence and Harry deduced that since he was viewing a memory then of course, they would not react as if he had been present.

When a tall figure entered the room and revealed their face, Harry audibly gasped as it was the boy from his visions. The one he had seen comforting the Grey Lady, and talking with a blushing Moaning Myrtle.

Harry watched as the boy who was revealed to be Tom Riddle was denied sanctuary within Hogwarts from his orphanage due to random attacks on students from an unknown beast. During their conversation Harry also learned that the boy was a halfblood, presumably on his mother’s side, not a muggleborn.

And he learned that a student truly had died, and they still did not know what had happened to her (Harry made a mental note that it was a her,) but it seemed that Tom was determined to find out in order to stay within the castle instead of returning to the orphanage.

With intrigue Harry followed after Tom and witnessed a tense and curt conversation between he and a professor Dumbledore who did not look as old as he did in Harry’s current time. He also did not look so hardened from his old age. However; he did look tight faced and rather suspicious. Harry had never seen such a look on the man, but he had noticed the man’s slight slight prejudice toward some Slytherin students. Perhaps, his prejudice was just much more obvious back then.

The two did not speak long at all, and Tom hastily continued his trek to the dungeons before he abruptly stopped, hid and watched a nearby passage intently. Harry was patient and waited with him and it was with great dread that Riddle’s words proved true when he confronted Hagrid who attempted to hide a massive, fuzzy, and multi legged beast with gigantic pincers in Hogwarts’ walls. Tom confronted Hagrid and during their confrontation, the two seemed to scare away the great beast and the memory ended with a powerful spell from Riddle blasting both Hagrid and Harry away.

Just as abruptly as Harry had been pulled in, he was thrown out, he was discombobulated for a few seconds but soon recognized that he was still sat at his desk, the journal still splayed open on its surface.

Terry came in a moment later and commented with worry that Harry looked paler than normal.

“The chamber. Rubeus Hagrid opened the chamber.” Harry stated breathlessly, he ignored Terry’s hands on his forehead as he stood and paced about.

“How on earth would you know that?” Terry asked, the open journal on Harry’s desk caught his attention. It was the same one that Harry had been fascinated with at dinner. He looked toward Harry who gestured toward the journal, “that diary, is actually a memory recording of Tom Marvolo Riddle who attended Hogwarts almost fifty years ago. The chamber had first been opened during his fifth year, and he was the one to apprehend Hagrid, who he caught opening it and also protecting the beast inside that more than petrified a student, but it actually killed a student. I don’t know if you know this, but Hagrid had been expelled from Hogwarts when he was a student, and it was because he was the one who opened the chamber.”

Terry looked from Harry to the dairy multiple times before he said the most intelligent thing he
could think of in that moment, “shite.”

Then he remembered something else, “wait, why did you lie to Hermione then? You said it wasn’t magical.”

“I thought it wasn’t,” Harry said immediately, perhaps too quickly. Terry watched him with worried eyes.

“Well, mate, you should probably get some sleep…”

Harry hummed his agreement and he and Terry changed out of their uniforms and got into their respective beds.

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Harry had quietly relayed his findings once more with Terry, and then Hermione as they made their way to the Great Hall. He did not explain to either of them that after he and Terry laid down, he closed the curtains of his band, cast lumos and proceeded to write to Tom almost reverently.

The memory of Tom was most interesting, while the memory he had first shared with Harry was of his fifth year, the diary was created in the summer of the older boy’s sixth year, and became the main leader in Slytherin house during his time. Much like Warrington and Perry. Harry had said as much to the diary and Tom had revealed that he knew Warrington’s grandfather and that was rather smashing in Harry’s opinion. He has spoken with history! Penny would love to speak with Tom, history was her favorite subject.

Harry asked Tom many questions in regards to himself, and what his school life was like and Tom had told Harry most of what he asked, even down to the curriculum he was taught. The older boy’s curriculum was much the same to the current curriculum taught in Hogwarts, minus, Introduction to Alchemy and Dark Arts & Light Arts history. That surprised Harry greatly, and he had told Tom that now all they had was DADA and Tom was aghast. He had asked Harry a very important question; "how can you fight against something that you do not understand?" And Harry had been thinking about his question ever since.

Because Harry had the very quiet opinion that dark magic was not inherently bad or evil, but how much one delved into the arts could affect them negatively. He did wish that Hogwarts at least taught the theory of the dark arts at least. After all, they did study dark creatures, and it was not like Harry wanted things such as the killing curse to be taught but it would be nice to learn and understand why dark magic was considered dark.

In Harry’s opinion, dark magic just like light magic could be evil depending on intent. More importantly, if one knew to balance themselves by using dark magic and light magic in equal amounts; they could easily live as a grey wizard by technicality. Said grey wizard would also be unlikely to become addicted to the dark arts and grow insane.

Harry asked Tom if he had personally studied dark magic and Harry’s unbiased interest must have shown because Tom revealed that he had used dark magic to create the diary. That was a moment that made Harry want to stop writing in the journal altogether but again, he just could not bring himself to do to.

The conversation moved on and they had discussed dark magic in general, the positives and the negatives and Harry spoke about the best example that he knew of for a negative, Voldemort.

When Harry had mentioned the beast turned man as a bad example because he had gone too far,
Tom was most interested. He asked exactly who the man was and Harry told him that Voldemort was known as an extremely powerful Dark Wizard who was known to have been killed by a mere babe. When Tom had asked if Harry knew who the babe was, Harry had lied and said that he didn’t. Tom had asked why Harry believed that the man had gone too far and Harry had answered that he had seen the man who appeared more beast than human. He was insane, and while he was still feared; he was not anyone who Albus Dumbledore, the Defeater of Grindelwald could not handle. He also stated that the man looked as ugly as a snake and almost sounded like one too. Upon his defeat, only his most insane followers defended his name, his regime was one remembered for its attempted genocide and hatred, in Harry’s eyes, the man was shameful and unintelligent in his insanity, an embarrassment to his own cause.

Harry had also told the events of last year in third person as if he was not actually there or involved, but he got his point across. The fact that Voldemort had been reduced to live off the back of a weak wizard’s head, and drink unicorn blood in order to sustain his pitiful life showed the negative aspects of dark magic.

It took Tom a long while to respond, but once he did he had become rather somber, he had even called Voldemort embarrassing. He went on to defend dark magic such as jinxes, hexes and curses that were either harmless or helpful.

Before long Tom asked questions about Harry—who still went by Michael despite revealing other personal information about himself like his age, his favorite classes and his own opinions about dark magic and the two really bonded over that last part.

After awhile, Tom’s own intelligence caused Harry to open up about his own magical practices and Tom seemed to be genuinely impressed and offered Harry many pointers that could help improve his studies. He even told Harry of a good place to practice when the weather was not abysmal. A secret garden located behind a bookshelf in the rear hall down the corridor from the DAD professor’s office. Tom had even pulled him into another memory and showed him where it was. Harry decided then and there that this Tom Riddle had been an actually rather nice and intelligent fellow. Harry had told him that he thought so.

"I am most certainly happy that you have that opinion of me, Michael. For a long while I thought that you did not like me very much."

“I am just cautious. I have grown up in the magical world and have been taught to be such at things like you. If you were not a recording I would have ceased speaking to long ago.”

"Smart boy. You were raised rather well. I could easily mistake you for a pureblood," Tom had praised, and just like when any other older student Harry respected praised him, he blushed.

“Thank you, I try,” Harry’s Slytherin had showed the moment he decided to lie to the diary about who he was, and despite their growing bond, Harry still felt that he should not expose his true self to it.

"Oh, you do? That reminds me. You have mentioned Slytherin House a few times and your interests in the dark arts have lead me to believe that you are a Slytherin. It must be difficult for someone not of pureblood, I understand," Tom said in support. Harry had been actually rather touched.

"Actually, I am a Ravenclaw student. However; I have good friends in Slytherin. Actually, I have many associates and few friends in other houses. I have never cared for the separation of houses and I am also one of the founders of an organization that is a means to unite magical Britain with camaraderie, starting from within Hogwarts.”
"Color me VERY impressed. Most children your age are not thinking about such things! I wonder, though, you are not in Slytherin house, do you know if their prejudice has improved?

Harry had to think long and hard about that one. While he knew Perry, Adrian and even Warrington rather well, and had spent time with quite a few Slytherins in his year, he did not know any of the others personally. Matter of fact, he did not really know the personal opinions of those he studied with… he would have to rectify this.

He wrote, “I had to think about that question hard. I study with a a group of purebloods from Slytherin and one halfblood. Our study group has a few muggleborns and halfbloods in general and often I catch the Slytherin students pointedly ignoring the muggleborns until I point it out. Due to that I would assume the prejudice is still there. Though, they have not openly disrespected me for my heritage.”

"Ah, young Michael. That is because above all else; Slytherins respect power and influence and you sound rather powerful and rather influential. They would be smart to remain in your good graces. This in turn may mean that they are only respectful to muggleborns and halfbloods in front of you. Rarely does their prejudice behavior leave the common room. You said a halfblood from Slytherin is there with you? How do they treat them?”

“They treat her… coldly, I suppose,”

"that sounds normal. I suppose things never change. Blood is still being used as a stepping stool for respect. And if it’s not blood purity being used by Slytherins and those who study the dark arts; it’s how righteous and light you are, but even then one has to be powerful for influence.”

“Sometimes politics go over my head Tom, could you explain, please?”

"certainly, you polite boy. In Slytherin, at first, I was on the bottom tier. The lowest of the low, a mudblood they had called me.”

Harry winced.

"That is however, until one day, I proved myself with power. I showed them that I was stronger than them, better than them and while I had muddy blood I was still related to a renowned pureblood wizard."

“Oh?” Harry inquired, “may I ask who that was?”

"You may, but I shall not answer, friend. Not yet, at least.”

Harry had stalled his writing, he actually was disappointed to hear that.

"Do not pout, you will learn all that you need in due time. We have time, I feel that we are connected. Meant to be good friends, but lets not reveal all of our cards at once. Anyway, things had changed drastically for me when they realized that I was not the weak mudblood they thought me to be.”

“I see, so if I want to influence the Slytherins, I have to show them that I am more powerful than they are?” Harry asked offhandedly.

"Yes, however; you cannot be too pushy about it, Michael. Especially, since you are a Ravenclaw and a halfblood, I assume your magical heritage is from your mother’s side like myself.”

Harry confirmed.
"That is why you must bide your time. You’re only in second year after all. It was not until my fourth year that I discovered my own heritage and flipped the script, so to say, within Slytherin. If I were you, I would use the Burke boy you had mentioned earlier. He’s from a prominent pureblood family, and rather popular from what you’ve told me. I have that feeling that you aren’t very social.”

Harry blushed and could not bring himself to respond. Even a damned memory—a journal could read how awkward he was.

"I mean no disrespect, my friend. I only mean that you seem to enjoy leading behind the scenes and you don’t mind not receiving credit for many of your efforts. You can use this to your advantage, especially with the Slytherins who love influence above else. Allow them to think that they are important to you, that THEY’RE the ones doing you a favor when you help and or guide them and they will follow your stead easily.”

Harry thanked him for the advice but asked Tom why he wanted to help Harry influence his fellow Slytherins.

It felt like Tom laughed.

"Above all else, Michael, I respect power. And you and I are very different but also the same. You fascinate me and if you were around during my time, I would have done everything to have you follow my own lead.”

That slightly scared Harry, but before he could try to change the topic, Tom wrote more, "anyway, I digress. As I stated earlier, if someone is not blood purist in magical Britain then they are blinded by the light that so leads them. Most purebloods consider those who follow such beings, Blood traitors if you will. Wizards who denounce their own heritage because of their love for muggles.”

Ah, Harry understood where he was going with this, Draco often went on such rants. However, Harry did not want to rant with a memory, one whose views may be a bit outdated so he skillfully changed the subject.

The two had spoken all night, and it was only thanks to Harry’s irregular schedule that he was not currently exhausted as he walked alongside Terry and Hermione. He planned to take it easy for the day.

Hermione was skeptical in regards to Hagrid actually opening the chamber. She inquired why Hagrid would even open it again, especially because the man didn’t seem to have a single bigoted bone in his body, and he himself was half a wizard after all. She did acknowledge the beast that Harry had mentioned, and was more curious about what the beast actually was more than anything else.

Harry reminded her that Hagrid loved beasts first and foremost, and that furthermore, they didn’t actually know how the chamber was accessed, and it was most likely that anyone could open it and set loose the beast inside.

Terry agreed with Harry’s words easily enough, and just like anyone else at the school; Terry knew of Hagrid’s love for strange and or dangerous creatures. It was not impossible for the man to be protecting the beast once more, and someone else was reaping the benefits of the chaos created from the attacks.

This was all speculation and it was due to it being mere speculation that the three decided to not spread any unnecessary rumors without proof and kept what the diary had shown Harry between
them. It had been months since the attacks had begun, and the mandrakes were so close to proving their maturity; they were throwing parties and almost attempting to visit one another’s pots.

When the Eastern Holidays came, and they were given time to think about what classes they would be taking the upcoming year, their study group decided to do so as a whole.

The snow had long ago melted, and so they were able to lay a blanket on the soft grass of the courtyard as they discussed their options. The Slytherin students had not joined them this time. Apparently, it was bad enough that they all studied together, they could not be seen just “hanging out,” with Gryffindors and Hufflepuffs according to Draco. After speaking with Tom, Harry slightly understood why.

“I want to take Divination, I hear it’s easy!” Nathan stated excitedly, he laid on his stomach on top of the blanket as he stared at the third year time table.

Dean was splayed out similarly on his back on Nathan’s right and read his own table. His mouth was turned in a contemplative frown while Ron nodded his agreement from Nathan’s left all the while.

“I was thinking the same thing, mate. I definitely won’t be taking Arithmancy that’s for sure.”

Hermione bossily informed Ron that he should take worthwhile classes, especially if he planned to be an Auror.

Ernie ignored them as he looked at his time table intently from his place between Harry’s knees. The other boy had forced himself in the space in order to rest his back against the bench that Harry was sat on while also leaving space for Terry who sat to his left and leaned on the legs of an annoyed Seamus seated on the bench as well. Ernie had thought that Harry would have surely pushed him away, but the other boy’s face merely frowned up in annoyance for only a few seconds before he decided to use Ernie’s head as a table top and placed his time table atop of Ernie’s golden crown.

“I’m definitely taking Care of Magical Creatures.” Ernie stated.

Susan who was sat next to Harry’s right had forgotten her own time table chart in her dorms and was looking over Harry’s shoulder at his, “hm, yeah, I was thinking of taking that and Muggle Studies,” she said. The girl had become easier to be around since Harry had begun to meditate. He rarely heard the screams of the girl’s family as they were murdered now.

Hannah was sat with her legs folded under her near Susan’s feet on the blanket, she shared a time table with Neville who was sat beside her with his legs crossed. He was so engrossed in his own time table that he did not notice Hannah staring at him with half hooded eyes, thankfully for Hannah, no one else noticed either.

Terry sat quietly and watched Harry, the other boy had barely spoken since Flitwick had given them their sheets. Terry didn’t think that there was anything wrong with Harry, today was most likely just a quiet day and on Quiet days Harry did not speak. Terry couldn’t help but wonder what he was thinking about, but he hoped he wasn’t thinking about that diary that he has been preoccupied with, he looked awfully contrite.

Harry glared at the sheet that he had laid on Ernie’s head. He wanted to take Arithmancy, Ancient Runes and Care of Magical Creatures.

Briefly, Harry had considered Divination and sometimes he still did, but professor Snape was
against it. Even if Harry really did want the class, his schedule for next year already looked awfully full. He would be taking Defence Against the Dark Arts, Potions, Herbology, Transfiguration, Charms, History of Magic, and Astronomy. Not to mention his independent studies in Potions, Healing magic, Warts’ activities and private magic practice took up a majority of his free time. He would most certainly seek his head of house for advice on this matter. Of course, he would not dare mention his private magic activities.

He handed off the sheet to Susan as he was done looking at it for the moment. He rested his eyes, content to listen to his classmates.

Neville had apparently wrote back home to his family, Hannah and Susan had done similar. They were taking this very seriously. Nathan was still insistent on taking the easiest classes possible, and Harry’s eye twitched when he heard Ron supporting him over enthusiastically. Hermione was as bossy as ever, telling them what classes they should be taking and telling them how important it was to choose appropriate electives because it was important to their future. Did the girl ever learn for fun?

But admittedly, she was right, and Harry himself, for the most part, fully expected to go into healing. However, things could always change. Idly he placed his hand in his pocket--something that he’s been doing any time Riddle’s diary has been out of his sight. He relaxed further feeling the physical copy of the, completely unaware of Terry’s disapproving and worried look.

The following day, Harry left the library in preparation to meet his brother in front of the dining hall so that he could walk with him to the pitch for his match against Hufflepuff, Joseph approached Harry with a stern and worried frown.

Harry rose a questioning eyebrow at the the older boy, and it was Joseph who spoke first, “I was told by Terry that you’ve come across a diary. Harry. One that told you of events that happened fifty years ago. Is that true?”

Yes, Harry thought. “No,” he said aloud, rather quickly too. Harry himself was surprised by the lie, it was unlike him and Joseph seemed to think so too, he cautiously approached Harry and placed a firm hand onto his shoulder.

“Yes, Harry. I think it best you give me the diary. Now. I can take it to professor Flitwick and maybe he could even return it to Mr. Riddle, via the post.”

Immediately, Harry wanted to protest, and tell Joseph that the journal was harmless, and Tom was his friend, but even Harry knew that those feelings were too strong and abnormal. Furthermore, if he fought, he would be unlikely to get it back.

Ever so slowly he took out the journal and held it out for Joseph.

“When Joseph reached out, Harry slowly pulled it back to him, “if there is nothing wrong with the journal, may I have it back?”

Joseph pursed his lips, “can you trust me to make that decision? If it is harmful, I will be honest, I will not give it back to you, but that depends on what professor Flitwick says about it after checking it over.”

Harry frowned as Joseph slowly removed the book from Harry’s slightly tight grip.

“Thank you for trusting me with this Harry. That means a lot and I assure you that if it really is harmless and the owner is no longer living, I will give it back,” Joseph promised, and took his
hand away from Harry’s shoulder, “I’ll take it to him after I complete my library errand, alright? You’re going to the Quidditch match, right? Have fun.”

And with that he sent Harry on his way, and as Harry got closer to the dining hall he heard his brother complaining of the voice once more, oh, dear. Harry had thought, immediately after, Harry heard Hermione’s own voice say; “I think, I just figured it out!” Before Nathan could even ask what ‘it’ was, Hermione rounded the corner and nearly bumped into Harry.

She apologized, “oh! Sorry, Harry. Oh, I want to talk with you but I have to make absolutely sure that I am right! I will see you soon,” and with that she hurriedly headed to the direction of the library.

When Harry reached Nathan, he saw that Ron and Neville were present too. Ron and Nathan were idly discussing Hermione’s studious attitude and Harry looked toward Neville with a questioning brow and the other boy shrugged before he began to speak with him about the mandrakes. Apparently, professor Sprout was going to allow Neville to watch her prepare the mandrakes for juice, he was rather excited.

Harry and Neville spoke all the way to the Quidditch stands, and only separated to go to their respective house stands. The teams had just finished warm-ups and Harry had just sat down when professor McGonagall rushed to the center of the field, using a charm to project her voice and announce that the game was cancelled.

Immediately, the teams and students in the stands began to protest but there was a certain urgency in the professor’s voice that made them listen (albeit reluctantly) when she demanded that they all returned to their respective dorms, straight away, ingroups and no short cuts.

Harry exited the stands, and Terry wondered aloud about what was happening, Harry had shrugged and immediately directed for the second and first year Ravenclaw students to follow him to the tower.

He was intercepted by professor McGonagall, however.

“Actually, Mr. Potter, it is best you come with me. Mr. Boot you as well.”

An awful chill went over Harry’s body and quickly, he politely asked Michael Corner and Sue Li if they could get the other Ravenclaw students back to the tower in his stead. They did, but in turn asked Harry to update them later.

Professor McGonagall directed them to the infirmary, and warned them that what they were about to see would be shocking, but they should not over react. The moment Harry saw the light brown bushy hair when he entered the room, he knew Hermione had been petrified.

“Hermione!” Terry practically yelled as he rushed to her side, and took in her petrified features. Harry had been shocked, but he was absolutely horrified when he realized that the boy beside her was Joseph.

“Mr. Potter,” professor McGonagall called out softly. Harry still jumped.

“I don’t suppose you know what this could mean?” She asked, she held a small circular mirror in her hand.

Both Terry and Harry shook their heads no, Harry had asked if Joseph had a book with him and the professor sighed defeated and informed them that he did not before she escorted them back to their
dorms. All the while assuring them that everything would be okay, and the mandrakes would be ready for the restorative juice any day now.

In the Ravenclaw common room, the Ravenclaws were practically stacked on top of one another as they listened to professor Flitwick explain their new curfew (6 o’clock) and that none of them were to be outside of the commons alone. Not only that, but they would all be walked to and from their classes with a professor.

Penelope sat between Harry and Terry and had a protective arm wrapped around each of their shoulders. After Perry, Harry was the closest to Joseph, and she could tell that Harry was in shock as he stared blankly at the space in front of him. While she was not as close to Harry as Joseph was, she was still closer than most other students. Harry was quiet but this current silence from him, physically felt heavy.

The moment that Flitwick ended his talk, most of the other Ravenclaws went to their respective dorms. However, Penelope, her roommate Talula (Tally) Winger, Terry, and Harry stayed in the commons as did a few others in order to just be close with one another while two of their fellow ravens were in the infirmary. Or so Terry had told Harry that was what the should do when Harry had tried to leave in order to be alone.

As they all softly spoke to one another, Harry resigned himself and retrieved the book, ‘Medusa and other Gorgons’ and began to re-read chapter fifty-five which was about everyday gorgon creatures.

In earlier chapters, the book told the legend of Medusa, a woman cursed, and scorned. Unlike her sisters, Stheno and Euryale; Medusa had not actually been born a gorgon but cursed as one by the Goddess (even in magical culture,) Athena for her beauty. She was thus wrongfully slain by a man named Perseus who was sent by his king to kill the woman for reasons the book did not care to explain. If the story was believed to be true, it was a rather sad one.

Professor Snape did not know where he had gotten the journal but he knew that it was rare and that it possibly belonged to an adventurer who had slain his own fair share of Gorgons.

In the journal, the writer went as far as to explain that Medusa had been killed by decapitation, he then explained that it was rumored for Perseus to have taken Medusa’s head and use her deadly gaze as a weapon but more importantly, the book mentioned that Perseus had been gifted a plain mirror that would protect him from Medusa’s gaze if he saw her within it.

There had been a mirror found near Hermione and Joseph’s bodies. Yet they were still petrified. Harry had thought it odd, that the beast he had seen from Riddle’s memory resembled a spider. Not once did it mention gorgons resembling spiders and it mentioned quite a few looking like a variety of creatures and even humans. What was even more odd than that; none of petrifications explained in the journal resembled the petrifications that has happened in Hogwarts. Maybe the spider like beast truly was an undiscovered type of gorgon and mirrors were not enough to protect one from its gaze?

Harry continued to read, and he probably read for thirty minutes and he did not stop. Not even when Tally had grabbed his feet, took off his shoes and promptly began to paint his toe nails.

By the time Tally’s brother Head Boy Talbott Winger came, Tally had finished painting all of Harry’s toes, “Harry, your brother is outside the dorms asking for you. I would have escorted him back to his dorms immediately but it seems rather urgent,” Talbott said.

Immediately Harry slipped on his shoes and went to the Ravenclaw tower entrance, Talbott
followed him and instead of being on the outside, of the tower, Nathan was inside, along with Ron. 

Harry looked toward Talbott gratefully, and the boy’s ears turned the faintest of red, he cleared his throat, “there is a beast about, and I am Head Boy, I could not leave them to stand outside and possibly be attacked in good conscious. You have five minutes while I go and retrieve professor Flitwick so that he may walk them back to their dorms. Talbott left before the three boys could say anything else.

“Harrison! Hagrid has been arrested, and the headmaster has been suspended as-as-as-well!!” Nathan exclaimed.

Harry was actually rather shocked by the news, but he supposed this all made sense.

Surely, Hagrid’s suspension and why from fifty years ago would have gone on his record, and now a squib’s cat, a ghost, and three muggleborns were officially petrified along with a pureblood. His own parents had voiced their displeasure about what was being done (well, not being done) to improve the safety of students.

However, something struck Harry as odd, “how do you know this?”

Nathan blushed, “well, Hermione had told me that you found the journal of a student who went here fifty years ago when the Chamber was first opened and students were attacked, and a girl was even killed!” Nathan flailed his arms, almost hitting Ron with his cane, “and when she said that you said that it was Hagrid who opened it, well, I believed you, but I knew Hagrid wouldn’t do it to actually hurt anyone! So I wanted to ask Hagrid what he knew about the beast at least and stop these crazy attacks! But as soon as we had begun talking, the flippin’ Minister of Magic came in to arrest him, then Malfoy came and suspended the headmaster. Before all of that Ron and I had hidden in a large cabinet, of course, and-and-”

“Breathe, Nathaniel,” Harry said at the same time Ron said, “breathe, mate,” the two glared at one another momentarily before Harry looked at Nathan and then toward Ron with a speculative brow.

Nathan looked toward Ron, “oh, he wanted to come with me.”

Harry sighed, so, Nathan thought of going to see Hagrid all on his own, “with Dumbledore gone, the attacks could worsen,” he said tiredly.

“That’s what we think,” Ron stated, agreeing with Harry for once.

Nathan nodded, “I can’t believe they’re trying to blame the headmaster for all of this!”

“I bet Malfoy really did blackmail the other education board members to sign the suspension like Hagrid said!” Ron stated, Nathan nodded along with him.

Harry rolled his eyes, “Nathaniel, surely, father had told you about the complaints that he himself have made to the board. It’s not about the headmaster but the safety of the students. They are hoping to get someone who will actually prevent things like this from happening in the future. Not to say that the headmaster hasn’t tried, they are just dissatisfied with his hands-off approach.”

Ron huffed and rolled his own eyes, “see, Nathan, mate. I told you that Harry wouldn’t care. He probably wanted the headmaster suspended too! Who knows what he’s been telling your dad about him!”

“Ron. I’ve written to my dad too. If Harry writing our dad got the headmaster suspended then I’m just as at fault, so lay off,” Nathan said sternly with a slight glare at the red head who looked a bit
irritated at his response.

Nathan turned back to Harry, and saw professor Flitwick and the Ravenclaw Head Boy fast approaching, “I guess you’re right, Harrison but that still doesn’t change the fact that without Dumbledore things could really get worse. Remember when he left the grounds last year and the philosopher's stone was almost taken!? While he’s gone what if something similar happens? We need to prevent it, and as long as we believe in the headmaster he will help! He said so, Harry. He said that within Hogwarts; help will always be available to those who need it and believed in him,” Nathan clutched his cane to his chest like his life depended on it. Ron was behind him, and nodded his agreement, he looked rather smug, but Harry did not care that Ron thought Nathan was being heroic out of mere duty. Harry could see his brother’s hands shake, Nathan was scared and for good reason. The last time something strange happened within Hogwarts, Nathan was injured permanently.

“Mr. Potter, Mr. Weasley, I believe you are out much past curfew. Come along!” Flitwick said with forced cheer as he gently swat at the two’s knees with his wand. They jumped and scurried ahead of him to the doors.

Nathan gave one final and pleading look to Harry, and Harry did his best to not look scared or worried himself as he mouthed to the other boy that it would be ok. Harry really hoped that it would be.

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Life continued in Hogwarts walls. The summer holiday fast approached, but the moods of the students had not improved, the absence of the headmaster was noted. It was impossible for the students not to have heard about it. Draco had been gloating to anyone who would listen that his father had finally managed to removed the old man.

In the halls and classes, he had even pompously offered the job to professor Snape, who surprisingly looked rather smug about the boy saying such a thing.

The absence of the familiarity of their groundskeeper was also noticed. Many students felt bad for the giant man, since the term began his roosters had been killed and eaten, and he was in constant mourning, and now he was arrested and imprisoned in Azkaban. A horrid sentence that my have been a bit too harsh on the gentle giant.

Well, at least most of the student body no longer blamed Nathan as the boy had been approached by a number of Hufflepuffs apologizing to him for accusing him of Justin’s petrification. They knew that he would not hurt Hermione Granger, his own friend. Nor would he have hurt Joseph Kama, a boy that his brother openly thought highly of.

While this was good for Nathan, it still did not change the fact that there have been five petrifications by an unknown entity in the school.

The only positive news that they had received had been the fact that the mandrakes were close to ready.

Then two days later they had received news that the headmaster would be returning; that news was received well by many of the students who had written their parents highly concerned and bothered by the headmaster’s suspension. However, they also received news that most had not hoped to hear; exams would continue. It made sense, why else would they still remain within the school, but to receive their education?
Most of Harry’s classes were still going fine, and he was not worried about doing badly on his exams. However, Defense Against the Dark Arts was a class that he felt that he did not learn anything worthwhile.

Furthermore, professor Lockhart had been acting strange and even more brazen than usual. He went on long rants during classes and said things like, “now that Dumbledore is gone, I can safely discover the chamber and close it for you all! The headmaster had not wanted me to, you see, not even the Albus Dumbledore is safe from the bigheadedness that many heroes have. You’d know all about that Mr. Potter, right? Being the boy-who-lived’s brother and all,” Harry had feigned being asleep and he only felt satisfied when Lockhart appeared to be openly offended by his actions.

Typically, he rarely thought of the man outside of his classes but now, he had a rather bad feeling in his gut whenever he thought of him and Harry began watching him a bit closer.

During this time, Harry had begun his own investigation, and despite the paranoia of all within Hogwarts, madam Pomfrey still allowed him inside the infirmary when he earnestly requested to do so. She figured that she owed it to the boy for his hard work in his healer’s studies the past year.

First, Harry had visited Joseph, he spoke of the school schedule and warned him that they all still had exams, but Joseph’s N.E.W.T.s would most likely be postponed. Harry then spoke of Warts and then Penelope who was still doing just fine as the Warts’ President.

Harry had even confessed to Joseph’s petrified body that he missed him so much. And he really did. This year Joseph (and the other Warts founders) had been studying hard for their N.E.W.T.s and had given more responsibility to Ernie, Terry, Harry and Hermione and while it worked out just fine, Harry savored any moment that he could have with the board members, especially Cedric and Joseph.

Both of whom, genuinely tried to teach him life skills from their own experiences. It was odd, while Cedric made sure to reminded him to be genuinely helpful and kind to his peers, Joseph taught him to lead effectively. However, more than that, both young men unintentionally taught Harry to be more of a person, and less of someone who lived for the sake of others. Others being people like his father and even his brother. Harry may have been learning slowly, but he was learning all the same and he had them, along with professor Snape, and professor Flitwick to thank for that.

When he went to Hermione, he made sure to let her know that he was there and would figure out what happened to her because no matter their scuffle, they were still friends. Harry didn’t care about what she said anymore, he just wanted her unpetrified. While he had a captive audience, Harry complained of Lockhart’s odd behaviors. The man has been sneaking about and Harry couldn’t follow him because he was a student and all students were under new strict rules and curfew during this petrification crisis. Harry hoped the man was not actually doing anything inappropriate.

Before long Harry tired of discussing their own coming exams and stood to leave, but for once he paid close attention to Hermione’s petrified body and saw that in her tightly clenched fist above the blanket, a folded piece of paper stuck out of it.

Harry pried open her hands as gently as he could and removed it.

When he read its contents he chuckled ruefully. It all made so much sense now. Nathan was not merely stressed, he really was hearing a voice and it was of a damned basilisk, a serpent king.
Hermione in all of her stubborn brilliance figured it out. Harry noted that the paper stated that the beast’s direct gaze killed. However, it was not mentioned what happened if you looked into the beast’s eyes indirectly. Through things like… puddles-- Mrs. Norris, cameras -- Colin, or through a ghost even, --Justin and nearly headless Nick. However; what about both Hermione and Joseph? Harry concentrated and remembered that Joseph was also in and near the library near the same time as Hermione… That’s when they had looked in Hermione’s mirror together.

Surely, knowing Hermione she would warn the first person she could about surviving the beast upon figuring it out.

Harry’s knees felt weak, and he reread the lines about the Basilisk’s weakness, the crow of a rooster… Every single one of Hagrid’s roosters had been slain or gone missing in the last year…

This also meant that whatever beast Hagrid had been hiding was not the beast of the chamber. In fact, the paper said that spiders cowered before it. Hagrid hadn’t opened the chamber at all. Which would make sense.

Hagrid was a kind man, but he was not a bright one and the chamber was rumored to be much too difficult to find. Hell, even the school’s current professors had no idea where the chamber was. Not only that, but the heir could supposedly control the damn thing too. Someone at Hogwarts besides Nathan was a parselmouth and has been conveniently framing Nathan for the attacks because he was a known parselmouth.

Immediately, Harry had remembered that Nathan had heard the disembodied voice throughout the school, and due to the attacks happening a bit away from each other, Harry deduced that a snake like creature could easily travel through the pipes of the school, but where was it coming from? Typically the rooms with the most pipes in Hogwarts were the… bathrooms.

‘Could Myrtle have seen something?’ The girl may be a ghost but she was as mischievous as Peeves the poltergeist and being dead for so long gave her absolute apathy in regards to death. She’s even openly stated that she hoped someone would die soon because then she’d have someone to share the toilet with, if she liked them enough that is.

Harry made a note to talk to her about it tomorrow. Perhaps he could ask Penelope to escort him there along with Head Boy Talbott.

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“You think that the chamber is in moaning Myrtle's bathroom?” Terry whispered over breakfast the next day after Harry had relayed his discoveries to the other boy.

Harry nodded.

“But why wouldn’t she have said anything?” Terry inquired idly after he took a sip of his chilled tea.

“Because she hoped someone would die.”

Terry frowned, “that sounds like her, but still, suppose you want to ask her about it?”

“I just might...” Harry said idly. He had been rather distracted with the display from Gryffindor table. Ginevra Weasley had uncharacteristically sat beside his brother. It was uncharacteristic because she had been avoiding Nathan ever since she sent him a valentine sung by dwarves that was heard by most of the school confessing her childlike love for him. She was hunched over and looked rather sick from what Harry could see.
Terry began to discuss studying for their exams and Harry only half listened as he watched little Ginerva jump from her seat as Percy approached and promptly ran from the Great Hall. Not without attempts to stop her. However; it was Lockhart who volunteered to retrieve her and the other professors looked apprehensive but obviously did not wish to disrespect the man and allowed him the authority to retrieve her.

A bad feeling appeared in Harry’s gut and only disappeared fifteen minutes later when Ginerva returned; though it was without the professor at her side, odd.

Later in the day, Terry and Harry easily broke away from professor Lockhart who was walking them from their DADA class to their next class with the Slytherins. Harry had not asked Terry to tag along but Terry refused to let Harry go alone, especially if the beast has been using pipes to easily get around the school!

Unlike the other students, Terry and Harry were not scurrying for safety because unlike the other students they did not hear the announcement that all classes were cancelled, because a student had been taken into the chamber, they were much too far and much too occupied with their own trek.

They fully planned to discover the chambers location, leave find the nearest professor to tell and leave.

“Myrtle,” Harry called the moment he and Terry entered the bathroom.

Myrtle floated over to them dreamily, “Terry,” she said curtly, “Harry,” she cooed as she batted her eyes.

Harry ignored Terry as he made gagging noises, they had discussed Myrtle’s growing affection for him but Harry refused to even acknowledge it.

“Myrtle, I must be most rude and inquire when and how you died,” Harry said, he wanted to get straight to the point.

Myrtle wailed and flung herself at him, yet again sending a spine chilling coldness through his person. He received a vision, one without imagery, all he heard was Myrtle’s gasp and gurgle of surprise as she died.

“Oh Harry! I thought you’d never ask!”

Myrtle floated in circles around them forlornly as she spoke, she told a tale of being bullied by another Ravenclaw girl by the name of Olive Hornby. She had retreated here, to this bathroom to cry and had apparently heard the voice of a young man’s speaking another language as she hid away in the stall. When she went to demand that he leave, she died, just like that after gazing into the eyes of a yellow eyed beast.

When Harry demanded to know where exactly she saw the eyes, she pointed to the large rounded sinks in front of her toilet.

She giggled, “the past few days, I’ve heard another man’s voice there. Just today he pushed a girl down inside, he had been following her for weeks, and he always hid in the third stall down from my own. He’s probably a pervert! You’ll know who did it, if you live, but I surely hope you don’t!” With that Myrtle retreated into her toilet and left them alone.

Terry and Harry turned toward the faucet and before Harry could even blink Terry was expertly stupefied and a tip of a wand was on Harry’s nose.
“Professor Lockhart, are you mad!?” Harry exclaimed as he glared hatefully at the pompous man.

“Not as mad as you dear boy. Here all alone, you don’t know, do you? The heir has given their final message, Giverva Weasley’s body will remain in the chamber forever. And I, Gilderoy Lockhart will be the one to supposedly close it and insure that no other victims meet the fate little Ginerva did. Of course, I cannot tell the dear public of the chamber’s location because surely another heir would be inclined to open it. They would accept the loss of a female Weasley out of the dozens of males that they have. They would see that her death was a worthwhile sacrifice because at least the chamber was closed, and could not be opened again,” the man exclaimed with a manic grin.

“YOU? You’re the one who opened the chamber? Surely not,” Harry stated confidently, despite the anxiety he felt, were the man’s words true? Was Ginny down in the chamber? Why would Lockhart attack Harry and Terry for discovering the chamber?

“Of course not, but little Miss Weasley did. And I know exactly how too,” Lockhart turned his head slightly, eyes never leaving Harry and whispered, “open,” but it sounded strange to Harry.

However, what was more important were the hisses, creaks and turns of the sinks as they resceded and revealed a deep hole. Supposedly a pipe, one big enough for a man to fit into.

Lockhart continued his speech, “little Ginerva understands publicity. She was obviously trying to make a hero out of your brother by granting him a beast to fight and save the school.

You see, I have watched her for quite some time, ever since she had approached me after class one evening two weeks ago and asked me if I knew where the Chamber of Secrets was. I told her I did, of course. I am the Gilderoy Lockhart, slayer of vampires, conqueror of werewolves and Yetis, the chamber was just another of my many conquests. However, little Ginerva looked distraught and informed me that she did too, but she did not want to know the information that she knew. She told tales of a diary that she wrote in and how it wrote back. She said that it made her forget hours and even days, and that it forced her to do things that she did not want to do.”

‘A talking diary? Surely not Tom,’ but what other compelling diaries spoke? Harry knew the damned book was off and he was extremely embarrassed to have wrote in it for as long as he did. What if it had started to try and compel him?

Lockhart was still speaking, the man surely loved the sound of his own voice. “--I realized that she had come to me for help, the great Lockhart, and so I offered my services, and she lead me here, but could not open the chamber, and when I asked her why. Well, do you know what she told me, Mr. Potter?” Harry waited, “well? Lockhart prodded.

Harry rolled his eyes, he felt oddly brave, “No. I do not. What did she tell you?” He asked eerily calm. Harry concentrated on the other presence in the room, Terry--stupefied Terry who has been hearing everything. A simple finite could free him from his magical bounds, but it was the spell that Harry did not have the most control over. If he could at least look at Terry or concentrate his magic on the other boy… He could free him and hopefully have the upperhand on the nutty professor before him.

“I can only speak with the dairy and Nathan’s bloody brother has the diary!” Lockhart said as he mocked the voice of a young girl with a flail of his hand that was free of his wand.

“I told her that without it, I must deduce that she was the one causing the attacks, and I somberly told her that I would be forced to turn her in, and she cried and cried, Mr. Potter,” Lockhart kept his wand pointed at Harry’s face and he roughly grabbed Harry and forced him to stand next to him
above the open chamber. Harry could not see the bottom.

“And with renewed desperation, little Ginny eventually got her little journal back, and I followed, watched and waited. I saw her close the chamber last evening and open the chamber for the final time today, I pushed her into it. Knowing that I would have put an end to her attacks, thus saving the school.”

“You’re the Gilderoy Lockhart, slayer of vampires, conqueror of werewolves and Yetis, the chamber was just another of my many conquests,” Harry repeated, “people view you as a hero for the things that you’ve written that you’ve done. Why are you doing this?” Harry suddenly remembered Quirrell, who revealed himself as an adventure of sorts before meeting Voldemort, perhaps, Lockhart was not different, “are you working for Voldemort? Is that why you’re doing this?”

Lockhart through an arm around Harry’s own and jabbed his wand under his chin, Harry squeezed his eyes shut, and a hazy vision overtook him angered him intensely.

It was of professor Lockhart painting the words, ‘her body shall remain in the chamber forever!’ under the heirs original message. The signatures did not match at all so Lockhart had not written the first.

“You still don’t get it do you, Mr. Potter. You said it, I wrote those things but doing them? I needn’t waste my own time. No one would care for the tales of some random, ugly Armenian man saving his village from werewolves, but someone like me? I look great on the cover of books with stories like that under my name.

“So, you just take the credit for small time heroes?” Harry said blandly, he should have known. He was still concentrating his magic all the while and felt his successfully wrap around Terry’s body.

“If only it was that easy. I still had to track these people down, interview them, and put a Memory charm on them for their feats, it was all rather hard work. Similar as to what I will do to you for discovering the chamber’s entrance, can’t have you changing the script now can we?”

Lockhart breathed in and Harry felt his magic snap over Terry’s body and before Lockhart could say obliviate, Terry pulled out his wand performed an expelliarmus so powerful that the force of it threw Harry and Lockhart down the pipe. They slid down quickly and luckily the pipe curved toward the end and leveled them out. Their fall may not be too bad, but they still hit wet ground with a loud thud. Thankfully, Harry’s harsh fall was cushioned as he landed on the man. They had to have fallen miles down.

“Harry!” Terry yelled down the pipe. Meanwhile Harry had jumped up from his place atop of Lockhart’s body. Immediately, he heard the other man snore and knew that the other man was out cold.

“I am okay, Terry, just covered in grime. I need you to go get a professor. Now. I will stay put, please hurry,” Harry said urgently. Terry only hesitated for a moment before he ran off as fast as he could.

Immediately, Harry took out his wand and performed lumos for light as the chamber was awfully dark. Harry then went to Lockhart, and noted that not only was he also covered in grime but he had a small head wound too. And as most head wounds, it bled quite a bit, Harry performed episkey on his wound, successfully stopping the blood. “I should let you bleed out, but I could not, not in good conscious. Not when I have the power to heal,” Harry muttered to himself as he stood and took in his surroundings, he noted that there was no apparent sign of Ginevra Weasley. Perhaps Lockhart
really had lied, but why would he have revealed himself so harshly?

Slowly he walked toward a rounded archway, and he grimaced with each crunch, when he lowered his wand to see better, he saw that the floor was littered with dozens of animal bones. He drew nearer to the archway and saw that it was decorated with giant stone snakes that appeared to be moving. When he pointed his wand forward, he could not see an end to the long dark cave before him.

Harry hoped that Terry would come with help soon. He went to turn around, as he felt uneasy having his back turned to Lockhart, unconscious or not and just as he feared the man had been standing and without hesitation the man yelled, “OBLIVIATE.”

And with well practiced ease, Harry wordlessly created a shield for himself, but he had not needed to because Lockhart’s wand was damaged from his fall and instead of performing the memory charm, it created a small bomb that threw both he and Harry back. Lockhart was thrown directly back under the pipe and Harry was thrown deeper into the cave.

When Harry stood, an avalanche of rocks fell and he was forced to retreat deeper into the cave.

“Shit,” Harry said, repeating the word that Perry often said when something went awry as he ran to the fallen rocks.

“Lockhart, are you all right?” He called out.

“Lockhart… is that me?” Lockhart’s confused voice yelled back, he sounded dazed and utterly confused, “I didn’t know that rocks could talk!”

Harry released an aggravated breath through his nose, the man’s spell worked, but it had backfired… Served him right, honestly, it’s not as if he had actually planned to help. He was going to push Harry down here had it not been for Terry doing it for him.

“I am not a pile of rocks. I am a school boy, at the school you work at. We got stuck in a tunnel miles under the school. Stay there and do not move. Help is coming.”

“Oh! That’s rather nice! It’s quite scary here though. I don’t wish to be alone! Oh, here, I can move some rocks, then you can be here with me!”

Harry heard the man approach and then heard the sound of rocks being moved, “you do that Lockhart,” Harry said. It’s not like Harry could perform something like the knockback charm he had practiced without causing the cave to collapse further and possibly kill them both, this was his next best bet until help arrived.

The sound of crumbling rocks was interrupted by a shrill scream.

‘That must be Givervra…’ Harry thought anxiously as he attempted to peer further into the tunnel, it was just as dark as the first time, and it honestly made him feel rather scared. He felt like something was going to come running at him at any moment.

Harry peered back toward the avalanche of rocks and he could hear that Lockhart was still digging, he hoped help would arrive soon…

Givervra screamed once more, this time much more urgently, Harry wanted so badly to ignore it, if Givervra had not spoken with the diary—with Tom—so much then she would not have been down here in the first place… But Harry spoke with him too, and had Joseph not confiscated the dairy from him, then perhaps Harry would have ended up down there too, running away screaming from
a basilisk.

Against his will, Harry took a step deeper into the tunnel, and then another and another until he walked with ease down the long corridor of the cave. He briskly walked what felt like a full mile, and soon he saw a dimly shining light. *That must be the true Chamber*, Harry thought with absolute dread.

As he continued to walk, he finally approached another archway, similar to the one near the entrance, it looked like a door, however, it was already open. On it were snakes as well, but this time, they appeared much more alive as their emerald eyes glowed and watched Harry as he stood unmoving before them. If he looked through the opened doorway he saw a long narrow walkway that expanded into an extravagant room in the distance.

Harry could turn around. The beast did not know he was here, it would perhaps kill little Ginevra, but by then help would have arrived, and they could close the chamber by force, or close off all of the pipes, or smoke out the damned beast. Anything and everything that could prevent Harry from having to face a basilisk!

However, little Ginevra would likely die from the wait, and Harry could not live with himself if he allowed that, and he marched on with fierce determination.

Chapter End Notes

So, this was a delight to write because year two is one of my favorite years. However, writing it while it was so similar to the true Harry Potter owned not by me, but JKR, of course. I want to move past it as quickly as possible so I could really get into my au.

So, if you love the character interaction from the other chapters, stick with me past year two (which should only be one more chapter long) and I promise, that the summer is FULL of it. Honestly, you may get sick of it by then.

If it's not obvious that I appreciate your comments then I will work harder to show it! Because honestly, I would not have gotten as far in this story without your support. With each chapter, I feel more confident about seeing it to its end, which will most like be about 35 chapters! Yeesh! Most likely longer, but we will see.

Ginny is awake apparently! I wonder if someone is in the chamber with her... (chapter seventeen is already finished, and I will post it next Tuesday, around the same time. But I still want to see if I am predictable in this story so please tell me what you think will happen!) >:)
Harry entered the room, and he knew that this was the true chamber, it was lit well enough that he was able to end the lumos spell on his wand and rely on the light within. He walked down a narrow walkway that was surrounded by pillars entwined by stone snakes who appeared just as alive as the snakes that surrounded the door behind he had just entered through.

Each pillar was surrounded by gaps of water, and had the water not looked so ominous and green, Harry would have thought each one was the perfect size for a personal pool.

When he drew nearer to the end of the room, he was able to see that it was just as extravagant as the pillars that aligned it’s walls.

It was surrounded by larger versions of the snake columns that lined the walkway but it also had various gaping holes along its walls and on the far back wall of the room stood a giant statue of Salazar Slytherin himself, his mouth gaping opened.

Harry knew it was the man, because while professor Snape did not know where the particular founder’s school portrait was, he did have a copy of a novelty portrait with all four of Hogwarts’ founders on it.

The statue itself had to be more than thirty feet tall and as Harry took it all in and continued on his trek, he was tackled by a flame of red hair, that yanked him away from the center and to the side of a nearby pillar. They had almost fell into one of the pools.

“Harry, Harry! There’s a beast here--a giant snake! Before you came, it- it attacked me. It tried to bite me, but I dodged it and it ended up swallowing that piller there,” she pointed a shaky finger toward a demolished pillar near the statue’s feet. “Near the statue, it started choking, and sputtering and while it was distracted, I just ran through the pipes, it followed me so quickly but I’ve managed to lose it, but it’s still there--and I-I-I” the girl whispered feverishly as she latched onto him. Her face was covered in tears and snot.

“Ginevra, you’re okay--” Harry stopped mid-speech just as a massive beast of a snake hastily slithered across the center of the room and into one of the many opened holes. No, not holes… pipes. Ginevra said she had ran through the pipes.
They both watched fearfully as the beast repeated its venture, its head bobbed about and it made garbled hissing noises. It obviously was damaged by inhaling the debris of the pillar. It sniffed in all the wrong directions, it was obviously looking for something—looking for Ginny, and by proxy, Harry too. Luckily, it had not even turned in their direction.

After the beast disappeared into a pipe the third time in its frantic search, Harry pulled Ginevra further behind the pillar she pulled them to. Their robes made the slightest of noises, and Harry in all his paranoia, started to remove her outer robes.

She blushed and sputtered, but Harry cut her off with a harsh whisper, “be quiet! Remove your robe we will be able to move easier without them!”

“Can you swim?”

Ginevra looked at him as if he were mad but nodded.

Once they were stripped to their casual wear, the beast appeared once more and before it could turn their way and notice their presence, Harry bundled their robes and used wandless and wordless magic to chuck it across the room. The moment their robes hit the floor Harry flung them into one of the water holes behind them just as the beast charged after the robes.

On instinct Ginevra held her breath but it was unnecessary because Harry had wandlessly and wordlessly performed an air bubble charm for the both of them. Both had a “helmet” of air over their heads. However, Harry knew that they would not hold long. He had only performed the spell in passing with his wand, and he could never maintain the charm too long because he rarely practiced to do so. He had only practiced it for fun in the first place after reading it in a third year textbook.

He looked around them, his vision was clouded by the green murky water that surrounded his bubble of air but just as he thought, there were pipes connecting each body of water between the pillars.

Harry lead them and pulled Ginevra along, and pointed to the holes that connected each body of water. They would be travelling under them, going backwards from where Harry had came, and then they would return to the entrance near the avalanche of rocks, where the beast would hopefully not follow. They could wait for the professors there. Hopefully the headmaster had returned by now as McGonagall said he would.

Harry hoped that he would come and get them the hell out of here before they died.

They swam hastily, and each breathed shallowly as they could feel the air around their heads become dense with each passing moment, the air bubbles would not last long. They went through several archways underwater before they reached what they assumed to be the end as there were no longer any holes to swim through.

Harry gestured that Ginevra wait as he will go first and make sure the way is clear. She nodded with uncertainty, Gryffindor bravery wholly absent. Harry poked his head out and saw no sign of the beast. He also saw that they were only twenty feet away from the entryway with the emerald eyed snakes.

Quietly, Harry climbed out of the pool, and hurriedly helped Ginevra as she climbed out behind him, Harry saw the beast still slithering about at the center of the room, which put quite a bit of distance between them. It was continuing it’s desperate search for them, but it was confused of their location which Harry deduced as he watched the beast enter and exit pipe after pipe. It moved
terrifyingly fast despite its massive body.

Harry moved and yanked Ginevra out in haste. For once he was grateful for the light physical strength training that he had to endure during the summer for his training. It was easy to lift the girl out and pull her along as they moved in a near sprint.

They were halfway to the exit of the chamber room when Ginevra slipped and yelped loudly in surprise. ‘Did the girl truly have to yelp!’ Harry swore that she did it on purpose.

Harry yanked her up harshly by the arm and ran to the connecting tunnel, hoping the beast had not noticed, but terrifyingly enough, it had and it let out a shrill, and gurgled roar as it pursued them instantly.

Harry saw that there were two pipes on each side of the entryway and pushed Ginevra to the one on his left, “go! Navigate the pipes, avoid the beast, do not look it in the eye, just go!” Harry turned, closed his eyes and pointed his wand at the giant reptile, and canted the verdimillious charm with all of his might as the beast was only half a yard away from him.

A green orb formed from his wand and Harry flung it forward, sending the orb flying at the beast, hitting it right in the center of the eyes, the small explosion of light had to sting and it was bright enough that it even blinded the beast temporarily. In that time, Harry had opened his eyes and ran back into the pool that he and Ginevra had came from.

Thankfully, by the time it recovered it’s senses, it lost sight of Harry and dashed into the pipe on the right, thinking that Harry had gone into it.

Headmaster Dumbledore, hurry up before you are suspended indefinitely for allowing two bloody students to die. Please, please, please, Harry chanted internally. He exited the water, and with a tense clench of his jaw, he waited and hoped that Ginevra would not have gone far, so that they could run the moment they reunited. However, of course she did not wait to see which pipe the beast pursued. Harry wouldn’t have, and if the girl were smart, she would have kept going and find a spot to hide.

Hopefully, she would do so quietly, Harry thought bitterly, still irritated that the girl gave their location away, no matter how unintentional it was.

All too soon he heard the girl yelp once more. And the roar that followed made Harry pale drastically. He looked back to the center of the inner chamber room and saw as Ginevra retreated back into the pipe from which she came, the pipe at the feet of Salazar’s statue. All the way at the end of the room.

Without thinking Harry ran to the center, he could hear the beast travel quickly in the pipes next to him, but he could also hear strange and mystical music from behind him. He hoped it was the headmaster, but he could not wait, not in good conscious, not when the beast would pursue Ginevra Weasley. Georges, Fred and Percy’s sister.

Harry thought about Percy as he ran as fast as he could. Just like the other Warts’ members, Percy had become an important person to Harry. He was someone that Harry could discuss academics and politics with (no matter how much politics actually bored him. Though Percy was passionate and always spoke of topics that intrigued Harry, even if only slight.) It was Percy who talked to professor Flitwick on Harry’s behalf in regard to his third year classes. Apparently, the man was willing to come up with a solution that would allow Harry to take as many classes as he wanted and could as a third year all thanks to Percy’s high recommendation. And that only gave Harry a personal reason to help this particular student in need, especially when she was Percy’s family.
So, Harry continued to run, he ignored the burning in his chest, and the creature in his brain telling him to run and abandon the girl.

Unsurprisingly the beast beat him, it was so fast that Harry could not tell which pipe it appeared from, all he knew was that it was headed directly for the pipe Ginevra ran into. It had good ears, that was for sure. Which was not so good for Harry as the beast noticed the music that was getting nearer and nearer and changed its direction and headed straight for Harry upon seeing him.

By the time he was seen, Harry had already reached the center room but did not dare venture to its middle, he dashed to the side, closed his eyes and braced himself against the wall, and with planted feet to steady himself, he yelled, “alarte ascendare maximum!” Harry was pushed back against the wall harshly, and it was truly a testament to Harry’s magical power and how far he had come in his own training that the beast actually shot thirty feet into the air before it fell down harshly from its own weight.

The beast had not even gathered its senses before a bright red, flaming peacock like bird holding a rolled up piece of cloth in its talons as it flew past Harry’s head and into the chamber with a mighty crow.

Harry saw the beast wither and airily hiss, and he remembered that the crow of a rooster was one of its greatest weaknesses. The bird continued to crow and caw, it flew in circles around the beast before it flew over to Harry and dropped the cloth at his feet, before Harry picked it up, he saw the bird’s long golden beak, and how its feathers moved like fire.

“A phoenix,” Harry breathed breathlessly.

“Don’t just stand there boy, pick me up!” A muffled voice demanded.

Harry recognized that voice though, he had not heard it since first year, “Marvin!?” He exclaimed as he picked the old sorting hat up and ran for cover as the beast began to wither in earnest and swinging its tail, knocking over pillar after pillar while the phoenix pecked out its eyes.

“Aye, boy it’s me. Hurry, reach inside. There may be something inside ter’ even the playin’ field.”

The beast’s tail flew directly over Harry’s head, and crashed into a pillar that was a mere five feet from Harry. A little too late, Harry dashed inside a nearby pipe as he was nicked on the side of his forehead by debris, he ignored the blood he felt run down the side of his face, and reached inside the old hat and immediately his hand gripped the handle of something. It was rather heavy and he had to really work to yank it out, “a long double-edged sword!? You expect me to fight this thing!?”

“Well, you can’t keep flinging the blasted snake about with magic, you’ll tire out your magical core eventually,” Marvin whispered and in that moment, Harry concentrated on his magic and it did feel slightly…. tired. Not weak just tired. He had been putting too much intent into his spells so far.

“And anyway, that be an enchanted sword boy, made by ancient dwarves themselves.”

Harry wanted to cry, he looked at the sword in his tightly clenched fist. It had to be at least 40 inches long (Harry was only 56 inches!) It was heavy but not as heavy as it should be and he deduced that that was apart of its enchantment. It looked awfully sharp as well.

He turned his attention to the beast and watched as it continued to fling madly about, it weaving and flailing its giant head, while the phoenix continued to sing its trill song and peck at its eyes and
any other orifice of the beast’s face. Dark blood spewed everywhere.

Harry glared at Marvin, tears stung his eyes, “and I am getting a sword instead of the presence of a more capable and adult wizard because!?”

“Because! Boy! Everyone has been alerted of the disappearance of Ginevra Weasley, including the Ministry whose laws you humans abide to. They are too distracted by the news and still do not know where this blasted chamber even is. Fawkes and I came as quickly as we could when yer’ Terry Boot friend came in hollerin’ and hoopin’ into the headmasters office when the headmaster has been in the great hall since he was called in by the board and the minister. So, yer, welcome,” Marvin said haughtily, and then more softly he said, “I am sorry lad, this is all I can do for ye, until better help arrives, and I know it’s comin’” in the time the hat had spoken, Ginevra had hastily ran to Harry’s side, from a nearby pipe that she had been tucked away in--she really knew how to navigate those pipes--and the now blinded beast took little notice. Harry could tell it was properly blind as it continued to thrash wildly about, gnawing randomly at the air.

Harry heard the phoenix cry out as the beast successfully caught onto one of its legs. It swung the bird from side to side before it ripped the phoenix’s leg from its body. The phoenix, was thrown into the wall nearby, its blood raining down upon them as it did so. Harry felt some of it fall onto his face but he did not notice it seep into his head wound and when he began to feel slightly tingly, he chalked it up to adrenaline.

The pour bird looked shaken from the ordeal, it flapped its wings determinedly and took flight straight into the mouth of Salazar’s statue.

That was rather gruesome and traumatic to watch, there was something so depressing about seeing the mutilation of a phoenix.

‘Merlin, we really are on our own, Harry thought to himself as he shoved the hat at Ginevra, “get to the center, and once you have clear passage behind you, back away and do not stop until you meet a wall of rocks, do so Quietly.”

The beast continued to struggle to cope with the pain and blindness, it stood tall but was turned the opposite way, wildly sniffing about.

Ginevra gulped, she clutched the hat to her chest and began to back away slowly and when Harry saw that the beast still could not discover their locations, he did the same.

Just because he had a sword did not mean that he wanted to fight this beast, especially if he did not need to. He fully planned to back all the way to the avalanche of rocks he had left from earlier and wait for help which he assumed would arrive soon. He knew Terry, and Terry would not have settled for a hat and a bird to save him.

Before long the beast began to aggressively skulk about, it was obviously sniffing and listening for them with severe attention. Harry who was closest to the beast stopped moving and held his breath. He clutched the sword in his right hand tightly. Gods, he was terrified.

The beast’s head was only a few feet away from Harry. It stared at him with unseeing eyes, and had it not been for Harry’s often gory visions, he surely would have gagged at the sight of the bloody empty eye sockets.

Suddenly a piece of rock fell from above and landed directly at Harry’s feet. Almost as if it was spelled to do so. Either Harry was extremely unlucky or someone wanted him dead. The beast roared and Harry swung the sword with all his strength.
He was sprayed with dark blood as the sharp blade connected and easily sliced cleanly through the beast’s jaw and Harry was flung back into a pillar as the beast wildly retaliated with a mad swing of its tail which connected with Harry almost immediately. A bit of wind was knocked out of him and though his ribs hurt, he stood immediately, and dodged the tail that swung madly at him once again by ducking and weaving behind the various pillars. It seemed that each one he hid behind was ultimately destroyed by the mad beast.

The beast began to lunge with its head, biting the air in mad determination to get to Harry, and Harry managed to only dodge once before he was forced to jab the long sword into the route of the beast’s both with the sword, using shaking hands.

His aim was true and he was sprayed all over with what felt like gallons of blood. He stabbed into the beast’s mouth, and it moved no more. Harry most likely stabbed into its brain. Warm blood continued to drip down Harry’s arms and in his right arm he felt a deep and searing pain that had him wailing and falling to his knees. He stabbed the sword into the ground, and leaned on it’s hilt as he screamed as it felt as if rapid fire spread through his body.

“How!” Ginevra yelled as she rushed to his side, she placed her shoulders under his own for support, and Harry continued to wail, and it was a child’s wail, because in his mind, Harry was still begging for help. Not for just anyone, but for professor Snape, professor Flitwick, even the headmaster himself to appear and end his pain, it was excruciating, unbearable. When Harry struggled to stay up, she helped him lay on the ground.

For a long while he groaned, and moaned, ‘I thought I told you to return to the entrance,’ Harry tried to mutter but it came out a garbled mess. The girl didn’t reply. She just watched him with wide and frightened eyes. Unless Harry was mistaken, he saw awe and fascination there too. Odd.

He used all of his remaining strength and brought his arm into view. A pointed fang jutted out of a long gash that bled harshly. He pulled it out, threw it to the side and more blood gushed out of the wound. He was far too tired and drowsy already to perform episkey—or any magic, for that matter.

From the statue’s mouth, Fawkes flew in once more, the poor bird flew so awkwardly because of its injury and neither Harry nor Ginny noticed the black notebook that it dropped on the chamber’s floor before it flew to Harry’s side. Fawkes landed harshly and from the phoenix’s still bleeding wounds more of his blood dripped into Harry’s own wound as he maneuvered his body to gently rest his head above Harry’s wound.

The bird’s feathers appeared so grey to Harry, and when he looked over toward Ginevra, the girl’s usually bright orange hair was just as grey and as the pain became less, Harry grew numb with no more tears left to cry. He didn’t want to die.

He wanted to be a healer, he wanted to help people like Narcissa Malfoy have more children. He wanted to truly talk with Hermione and end things on a better foot, he wanted to see his friends and play more childish school games like Exploding Snap as Joseph often encourage he do. He wanted to fly and actually enjoy it without being scared that he was wasting his time with childish things. He wanted to be a child. He wanted to make professor Snape proud by becoming an even greater potions master than the man was himself. He wanted to understand magic in its most natural form, perhaps be the most magically powerful wizard of his generation through hard work alone. He wanted so much and even death ignored his desires, just like the many adults in his life.

Just then he felt something wet and warm drop onto his arm. Fawkes was crying and not just a few droplet of tears either.

Ginevra gasped, and Harry distantly heard her speak in a choked up voice, “he’s mourning.”
“No, girl. He’s healin’,” Marvin said from his place on the floor beside them where Ginevra had carelessly thrown him earlier when she rushed to Harry’s side.

Harry let out a sob of relief as he felt the pain slowly leave him, even the pain in his ribs was subsiding.

How had he forgotten that Phoenix tears heal. It was for that reason that he was so fascinated by them.

Ginevra watched him heal with high intensity, her face morphed into one of disbelief, then fascination and awe, “you’ll never die…” she said in a thoughtful manner and only as if remembering herself, did her expression turn to one of simple relief.

As the pain slowly subsided, Harry sat up with the help of Ginevra, “thank you Ginevra.”

Ginevra gave him a forced smile.

Fawkes hopped off of Harry’s chest and glided over the husk of the basilisk, now that the beast was dead, Harry felt no fear in calling it what it was. Beyond the husk of the basilisk, Fawkes continued to trill repeatedly.

“Fawkes wants you to go to him,” Marvin stated.

Harry stood, and grabbed Marvin as he did so. He pulled the sword from the ground, “Ginevra, grab that fang, please. It will be good for potion ingredients.”

Ginevra looked at him, not in confusion but in surprise. However, she did as requested and followed Harry to the center of the room. However, upon seeing the diary she screeched, and ran over to it, Harry did the same on instinct and he saw the words, ‘is anyone there? Hello? Please help, pleas, please, please, I am so scared, I don’t understand—‘ writing themselves nonsensically. Even now, Tom was still trying to manipulate the situation. Had he used appearing weak to draw Ginevra in?

Fawkes hopped out of the way as Ginevra threw herself to the ground and stabbed the journal over and over as she sobbed and screamed.

Harry could have sworn that he heard the diary scream. No, he is certain he did, because the book began to bleed dark ink--ink that could be mistaken for blood--it even groaned. The groans almost sounded like sobbing.

“Ginevra! Ginevra!” Harry said as he rushed to her side and grabbed her arm. She swung free of his reach and continued to stab the journal until it groaned no more and the only noises in the chamber were the flap of Fawkes’ wings, Ginevra’s harsh breathing and the sizzling from the ink of the journal being mixed with the basilisk venom.

Harry leaned his weight on the sword and knelt beside Ginevra who threw herself into his arms and sobbed in earnest. Just as soon as she touched him, Harry saw visions of Ginny breaking the necks of chickens, writing the heir’s first message, and feverishly writing away into Tom Riddle’s journal. All done with a blank and distant look in her eyes that were lightly tinted red.

“It was me! It was me! I couldn’t fight off Riddle! He possessed me! Made me do all those things. I-I couldn’t resist, I can barely remember!”

Ginevra squeezed Harry tightly as she sobbed. Harry pursed his lips and remembered his own time with Tom’s journal. He knew it was not good the moment the thing spoke to him, and he knew it
was worse when he felt compelled to it. Had it not been for Joseph, surely, Harry could have easily been in Ginevra’s place.

And that was just putting it lightly. Harry has learned truly how awkward and abnormal having limited friendly social interaction with others had affected him. Perry even called him awkward teasingly. So, it was unsurprising that awkward little Harry would fall for someone like Tom’s tricks. He unconsciously sought validation that despite being so awkward, people could still talk with him, and approach him. Yes, he thought bitterly; he could have easily been Ginevra.

Harry grabbed the journal from the ground, and felt nothing, not even compulsion.

“It is okay, Ginevra. It was not you. It was all Tom. You… killed him, so to say.”

Ginevra slightly loosened her hold and peered deep into Harry’s eyes, “you believe me?” She asked with a sniffle.

“Lockhart said you knew that I had the journal at some point. I just did not know that you had it before I until tonight.”

She flinched, “I just didn’t want you to get possessed like I did. You’re Nathan’s brother.”

Harry felt slightly bitter at the title, but the bitterness was replaced as little Ginevra blushed, and looked away from Harry’s gaze.

“What I mean is that I’ve watched you--not in a stalker way!” Ginevra said as she yanked her arms from around Harry’s body and slowly wrapped them around her own. “Y-you’re strong, even stronger than Nathan--the boy-who-lived!” She practically hissed. She looked toward him with wide eyes that Harry saw as confused fascination and awe--almost as if he were not human in her eyes, “you saved my life,” an incredulous breath of laughter escaped from her lips, you’ve slain a basilisk with your own two hands.” She looked away from him and toward the basilisk, she bit her nails and tightened her hold around herself, “y-you’re honestly my hero, Harry.”

Harry blushed, and cleared his throat, “think nothing of it,” he stood and offered his hand to Ginevra, she took it with shaky hands of her own, grabbed the sorting hat and notebook with her other and stood just as shakily. She clutched his hand and allowed Harry to lead her to the exit, “come. We must leave.”

Harry swooped Fawkes up into the crook of his elbow and the bird crooned appreciatively.

Without much thought, Harry used some of the strength that was quickly coming back to him to perform a minor episkey on the bird’s bleeding stump. It worked much more quickly than Harry was used to, especially when he had done so wordlessly and wandlessly.

As they walked and drew nearer to the entrance, Harry could hear the sounds of sifting rock. Ginevra continued to cry silently, when she spoke her voice was awfully quiet, “oh, Merlin, I am going to be expelled for sure.”

Lockhart’s face popped up on the other side, “oh! There you are! Oh, you’re covered in dirt and grime. Oh dear that is blood,” the man exclaimed dreamily as he held out a hand for them to grab. Harry sent Ginevra in first, then he handed Fawkes through to Ginevra’s waiting arms, and followed soon after.

Lockhart halfheartedly tried to rub a bit of blood from Harry’s face while Ginevra returned Fawkes to his arms.

“Oh, you have a sword. How dangerous. Oooh, fire bird from earlier, how pretty! Oh, no! It only
has one leg!” He said with a bright and loopy smile as he weaved his head loopily from side to side. It seemed Lockhart lost a lot of his eloquent vocabulary, in Harry’s opinion this was a massive improvement. Before Ginevra could ask, he informed her that Lockhart’s memory was gone due to a memory charm backfired on him and from the girl’s leer, Harry could tell that she too thought this was an improvement.

Harry made everyone grab hands and politely asked Fawkes if he could carry them to the top despite his leg. Luckily, he could. Riding with Fawkes was phenomenal but Harry was much too tired to actually enjoy the experience, but Lockhart’s childish exclamations of the magical journey made his heart feel a bit lighter in an odd way.

“Oh, you lived,” Myrtle said in open disappointment when they landed.

Harry smiled without humor or happiness, “no thanks to you.”

Myrtle grinned and flew into her toilet. Harry found that he could not actually be angry with the ghost girl who had long grown apathetic to death. Hell, in her eyes, if Harry had died, he really would have came back and shared her toilet.

Since landing, Lockhart still looked dazed, and Ginevra did not let go of Harry’s hands as fresh tears poured from her eyes. The shrill of Fawkes caught his attention, and Harry looked at the bird from the crook of his elbow, and agreed that they should get a move on.

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The moment they had entered the headmasters office, Harry felt overwhelmed as everyone had stopped what they were doing and stared at them.

The headmaster’s eyes began to twinkle the moment his eyes landed on them. Ginevra’s parents were there as well and they appeared shocked beyond relief. Professor Flitwick looked as if he had been crying, and he only began to cry harder seeing them covered in grime, slime and blood. Professor McGonagall looked as if she would pass out from relief and professor Snape stood stiffly at the headmaster’s side with his lips in an extremely thin line as he appeared to glare at Harry. Terry was there as well, and when he began to cry, professor Flitwick conjured another hankey and wiped his tears.

Perhaps they were most surprised by Lockhart’s loopy behavior, or they were horrified at Harry’s blood stained clothes and mesmerized by the phoenix who he carried in his arm as he clutched a long-sword in his fist, or maybe they were merely shocked by the fact that Ginevra was alive and well.

Ginevra’s mother had shrieked her daughter’s name and ran to them and yanked the poor girl into her arms, this caused Ginevra to drop the sorting hat & journal and now that Harry’s hand was free from her hold he was able to pick both items up. Before long he was also included into the hug, Fawkes had long ago abandoned his arms and awkwardly flew to the headmaster who had been crying silent tears from his eyes when he saw his magical companion’s state.

Harry had narrowly avoided stabbing Mrs. Weasley on accident as he moved the sword away. He reminded her that he was covered in blood because he was sure she had not noticed.

Mrs. Weasley informed him that she could care less, and peppered his face in grateful kisses while she exclaimed that he had saved her daughter. How had he saved her daughter!?
Professor Snape, practically growled that they would all like to know how and what he had done and once Mrs. Weasley released him, Harry began his tale from the very beginning.

He told the story of how Nathan had been hearing a voice that only he could hear throughout the school and only too late did they realize that it was the beast of the heir. A basilisk, a snake like creature that someone who spoke and understood parseltongue could control. He recounted how the Weasley males of the school had spoken of their worries of little Ginevra’s strange behavior throughout the school year, but assumed it to be from home sickness. He told them of the journal, and how he had been the second to find it, and Ginevra had been the first. His voice shook as he spoke of how compelled he was to write in the journal himself and how open and friendly Tom had been.

When he got to the story of moaning Myrtle, professor McGonagall herself paled, and revealed that she had been in her final year when Myrtle had been killed. She never thought that she had stayed, Olive Hornby had complained of being haunted by the girl but no one had ever actually seen Myrtle’s ghost. They had merely assumed that the guilt from bully the girl was driving Olive mad.

Harry continued and told the story of the hero Lockhart with tired indifference. He had to assure the adults within the room that the man was now harmless when they glared at the man murderously until Harry told the story of Ginevra destroying the diary.

Mrs. Weasley had wailed again, and reprimanded Ginevra for even writing to something that could think for itself but didn’t have a brain that she knew of. Ginevra allowed her mother to reprimand her as she leaned her head heavily onto the woman’s shoulder. She was still crying. Harry wondered how she had not run out of tears by now.

“What I don’t understand, is who is this Tom Riddle boy, and why would his diary posses our daughter to kill, as Harry here claims,” Mr. Weasley asked as he stood from where he had been knelt next to his wife and daughter. He had taken the diary from Harry’s hand and flipped through the ink filled pages in confusion.

The headmaster removed Fawkes from his arms, and he transfigured a book on his desk into a soft looking pillow and placed Fawkes on it gently. He then approached the Weasley patriarch and took the diary from his hands, and looked at it with a sad and regretful eyes as he called it brilliant, and said that it had belonged to one of the most brilliant students Hogwarts has ever known. That is, before Harry had enrolled. The last part was said with a wink toward Harry, and Harry had blushed and looked away.

With a voice that spoke of deep regret the headmaster informed them that Tom Marvolo Riddle, was now known as Lord Voldemort with a wave of his wand, the headmaster had spelled Tom’s name into the air, and then rearranged the spellings so that the letters read, “I AM LORD VOLDEMORT.”

Harry almost passed out right then and there.

Mrs. Weasley had wailed and Ginevra began to cry harder than ever, and sobbed, “I didn’t know, I didn’t know,” she had been writing him all year she went on to confess.

The headmaster assured her that all was well, fore wizards much more experienced than she had fallen for Voldemort’s tricks in the past. He was extremely charming, manipulative and a good actor, and an even better liar. He could make one believe him about most anything.

Furthermore, no lasting damage had been done, and even better news; those petrified were just receiving their mandrake juice which meant that they should be up and about any moment now. He
then recommended that Ginevra visit the hospital wing as it was well deserved and needed. He boldly requested that she and her parents take professor Lockhart as well.

It was Ginevra who answered their consent by quietly taking the confused man’s hand and pulled him along as the older Weasley’s followed their tired and depressed daughter, and an obliviated blond man out the office.

The headmaster then called for a feast and politely requested that professor Flitwick and deputy headmistress McGonagall alert the kitchens and residents of Hogwarts and the stern women left first and the short man followed her merrily, wiping away at his eyes, and giving Harry a few pats on the back, “we will talk later, Mr. Potter!” He said before he left.

This left the headmaster, professor Snape, and Terry.

Terry had finally given into his urge and ran to Harry and held him in a tight embrace and did not let go until professor Snape cleared his throat.

The professor then conjured chairs and gestured for the two boys to sit, they did so obediently.

“It appears that you two have complete disregard to the rules. Your head of house had been entirely distraught when your fellow Ravenclaws informed him that they had not seen you since your last class of DADA.”

Both boys looked down guiltily.

The professor then grabbed the bottom of Harry’s chin and forced him to look into his eyes, and for once Harry did not merely stare at the man’s nose, but his eyes, and before he heard his words, he saw the man’s past and in that past he saw the man before him on the ground at the feet of Voldemort, screaming and writhing in pain.

“And I believe that you and I have personally discussed getting an adult before you go on misadventures such as this,” the professor hissed through clenched teeth. Terry looked absolutely frightened but Harry knew that the man wouldn’t hurt either of them in his anger. It was obvious that he was angry over the fact that Harry technically placed himself in danger yet again. It was immensely touching to Harry.

The headmaster fed Fawkes a grape from a fruit bowl on his desk, “now, now, professor Snape, Harry had confessed that he planned to do as much but was stopped by Lockhart. Such a sad thing, the thirst for fame.”

“I don’t understand it,” Harry confessed earnestly. He was so tired that he allowed some of the weight of the sword to slip from his hand.

This brought the sword to everyone’s attention, especially the headmaster who eyed it in open intrigue, “my boy, I do not believe that I have ever seen that sword before.”

Marvin perked up in Harry’s lap, “because ye never needed to, I got a lot in me that ye don’t know about. That sword belonged to Ravenclaw herself. She had it crafted long before Gryffindor had made his own and she had it made by the ancient dwarves of Greece no less,” Marvin’s ‘face’ twisted to meet Harry’s own.

“The fact that ye pulled it from me at all shows your dedication to Ravenclaw, and you’ll have to deal with the weapon until ye die, boy. I will retrieve it personally upon yer death but don’t go dyin’ anytime soon! Fawkes, if you would.”
Suddenly, Fawkes jumped from his pillow, swooped down, and grabbed Marvin from Harry’s lap. He placed him on the shelf near the headmaster’s desk that was filled with all sorts of trinkets. Harry felt rather happy that despite the bird’s injury, he still flew about with near ease.

The headmaster looked at Harry for a long moment, his stare spoke intrigue.

Harry clutched the sword in his lap, was he really supposed to keep this? Would he be allowed to? He was actually rather pleased that he has made Ravenclaw his home. So much so, that a creation of Ravenclaw himself, had given him its blessing.

“You’re the owner of Ravenclaw’s sword, mate. It only existed in legends, but you have the real deal, wicked! Everyone is going to go mad at the news!” Terry exclaimed in awe.

“Wicked indeed,” hummed the headmaster as he rubbed his beard in deep thought, “well, I do believe that you two have well earned two hundred points each for Ravenclaw, and of course, you must receive an award for special services to the school.”

“WICKED!” Terry hooped, leaning onto Harry and shaking him by the shoulders.

Their celebration was interrupted by Mr. Malfoy who rudely burst into the office, with none other than the house-elf Dobby at his heels. Dobby looked toward Harry with wide fearful eyes, Harry’s own eyes displayed his surprised. Dobby looked away and stood dutifully by his master’s side.

The white haired man looked ready to go on a rant but seemed to stop short when he saw that Harry wielded a sword and was drenched in blood.

“What in the world has happened here? I was sent to check on whether or not allowing you back here was the right decision and there is a student in your office, covered in blood, with a nasty scar on his forehead and arm, and wielding a sword!? Mr. Malfoy exclaimed incredulously as he gestured elegantly toward Harry.

Harry surprised by the man’s statement, looked toward his arm and was surprised to see that there was in fact, a long thin cut on it where the basilisk fang had snagged him. The Basilisk fang, Harry thought mournfully. They had left it behind!

“Now, Lucius, Mr. Potter is fine, he actually went through so much in order to give this to me, should I return it to you?” The headmaster held up the journal and Mr. Malfoy paled slightly.

Harry frowned as Mr. Malfoy denied the item as his. Why would the headmaster accuse him in the first place? Harry concentrated, and remembered that last Yule, at the Malfoy’s own ball he had seen a vision of the man torturing muggles, and because of his father he knew that the man was an accused Death Eater who pleaded not guilty due to being under the imperius curse. A curse that was illegal to use because it allowed the caster to control those of weaker will to do their bidding.

But how would Mr. Malfoy had gotten it into the school and into Ginevra’s hands--the bookstore, better yet the scuffle at the bookstore, but it had been… Mrs. Malfoy who assisted Ginny in retrieving her books. Harry felt nauseous.

Terry watched on intently, Harry knew that he did not like the Malfoy’s and that he barely tolerated Draco’s presence during their study group time.

However, Terry also respected Harry’s opinion immensely, and that’s why he was not openly display his dislike for the family. Terry kept looking toward Harry for some direction on how to feel, and when he could not get a read on Harry’s emotion he chose to silently stew in his dislike for the Malfoy’s.
Harry listened intently as the headmaster chose his words carefully. Purposefully laying out all the important pieces in front of Harry and Terry.

If a prominent light pureblood family like the Weasley’s had a blood purist daughter who killed muggleborns, then surely that would ruin the reputation of Arthur Weasley--head of the Ministry's Misuse of Muggle Artifacts Office; known light order wizard.

Harry honestly felt as if he and Terry did not need to be hearing this. Professor Snape must have thought so too as he urgently hissed the headmaster’s name.

“I surely hope that nothing like this happens again, headmaster. Surely, your next suspension may be permanent,” Mr. Malfoy threatened and left with a swoop of his robes, he completely disregarded the fact that he knocked Dobby over. Harry noted that Snape did not appear disgruntled by the man’s threat, he was sure that he even saw the man nod in agreement.

Terry had watched, extremely displeased by the action and the moment Mr. Malfoy left, Terry asked the headmaster if he could return the man’s journal to him while he indiscreetly took a sock off.

The headmaster smiled and handed the journal off to the boy easily, and told him that he should go to the feast upon completing his errand.

Terry did so happily, and the headmaster suggested that Harry go to the feast as well, after being looked over, of course.

Harry thought on it, perhaps all those petrified may have the energy to join and while he would love to see them. He was drained. Physically, emotionally, and magically. He stretched and looked toward professor Snape, “actually, if possible I’d like to go and rest away from the festivities.”

“Understandable, my boy. Professor Snape, would you mind looking after Mr. Potter?”

“I suppose I could so generous,” the potions master said stiffly as he stood next to Harry who walked toward the door sluggishly.

They walked briskly, and to Harry’s surprise they walked right by his office in the dungeons, they even went past the Slytherin dungeon doors.

Soon after, they rounded a corner nearby and straight to a giant portrait that hung on the wall at the end of the hall.

It was even taller than professor Snape, and the man was rather tall. The portrait was a plain painting of what looked like mermaids looking into a glass and watching students walk by, students whose robes adorned Slytherin colors. Various students passed, and none of them looked the same. The mermaids oooed and awed with each passing student. It was a rather fun portrait and Harry briefly remembered Draco explaining that the dungeons were under the lake and from their common rooms, Slytherins saw all of the water creatures who lived in the lake from a giant window in their common room.

The professor spoke, the students in the portrait paid him no mind but the mermaids looked at him curiously, “Imagine an imaginary menagerie manager managing an imaginary menagerie,” when the professors finished, the mermaids gaped at him impressed, and clapped as quickly as they could in the water and the door swung open.

The two did not have idle conversation, the professor knew that more than anything an overwhelmed Harry needed silence and time to cope with what he saw--well, in this case, what he
had been through. Snape had taken him to his private quarters. Not his office, but his quarters! Where he lived, where he slept, and relaxed. Harry could not believe it.

The professor took the sword from Harry’s hand and quickly leaned it against the wall near the door as if it burned, he hovered his wand up and down the length of Harry’s body and ran a simple diagnostic charm. The diagnostic charm was not meant to be relied on for a full physical. It could not tell one things such as sex, height, or weight.

No, you had to do such a thing manually, but the charm could tell one if a body had any abnormalities if the caster knew what to look for. Though, the diagnostic one received would be based on what you knew of the human body, if one was not educated in the medical fields than the diagnosis they would receive would not make any sense to them.

For example; if one was only educated in outer injuries then they would receive reading for outer injuries such as bruises, cuts and bumps. A more educated person could diagnose muscle tears, breaks in the bones, and even pregnancies. Luckily, professor Snape was one of those more educated individuals, he had even served residency in St. Mungos for healer qualifications.

Most healers used the spell flagate--the spell the headmaster had used to write out Tom’s name--or they use a self writing quill to document the diagnostic charm’s findings. into the air The professor performed exemplum, copying what his wand recorded. He then performed trafero imprimeo in order to transfer the recording onto a piece of parchment he had nearby. It was much easier for him this way.

Unbeknownst to Harry, Snape felt immense relief that there was no indication of tainted blood; which would indicate poison. Ever since the boy had said that he was poisoned by a basilisk in the headmaster’s office, Snape had felt actual anxiety. Harry was the only known human survivor of basilisk venom. It was that deadly. So perhaps it was an understatement that Snape felt relieved that there was no diagnosis of blood toxicity.

However, Harry’s current temperature was abnormally high apparently, and his magical core was unreadable. He then asked Harry generic medical questions; did you hit your head? are you in pain? Where does it hurt? Etc. Harry’s answers received suspicious glares. For the most part; Harry felt fine, just exhausted and a little warm.

The professor curtly demanded that Harry get into the shower and soak in a cool bath. When Harry inquired about his clothing, professor Snape sneered and informed him that a house-elf would take care of it, of course.

Harry soaked for a long while after rinsing off, and the cool water felt nice on his overly warm skin. He must have been thirty minutes into his soak when he heard the pop of an house-elf and the urgent call of his name.

"Mr. Harrison Potter, sir. It is Dobby!" The giddy elf explained as he placed a pile of clean clothing on top of the closed toilet stool lid.

"You did it! You did it! You stopped you-know-who! You be’s as great as your brother, the great Nathaniel Potter, the boy-who-is-living!"

Harry hummed, and smiled politely, he really was not in the mood to talk but the house-elf didn’t seem to mind as it continued to speak happily, "and because of Mr. Harrison Potter’s dear friend, Dobby is free! Free! FREE!"

‘Ah, so Terry managed to trick Mr. Malfoy into giving Dobby his sock. Good for them.’ Harry
thought. Out loud, he merely hummed once more.

“Dobby will never be forgetting this, Mr. Harrison Potter, the Slayer of Basilisks!”

‘Hm, the Slayer of Basilisks, sounds like a book the old Lockhart would have wrote,’ Harry thought with a grimace.

He soaked for a little while longer before cleaning himself once more. He got out and found the professor sitting in a recliner near the fire. He was unused to seeing the man in such a… domestic setting. Harry felt like this single moment has changed their relationship tremendously. Harry did not doubt that he may be the only student to ever see the professor so relaxed.

“If you are going to look around, hurry and get it over with, and then lie down,” the man said irritably.

Harry could tell that there was a lot his professor was refraining himself from saying and honestly, Harry appreciated it immensely. He was absolutely done with speaking for the night.

He slowly walked around the room, he had not had the chance to appreciate it when he first entered, so he planned to take as much as he could in and learn about the man he called a professor and a confidant.

The room was just as plain in color as his own back at Potter manor, but for all the black that decorated the room, the dark shade of green and silver evened it out. There were no pictures, but on the wall above him, a single painting hung. It was of the mediocre potioneer, Baruffio who had died from mispronouncing an unknown spell which caused a bull to appear from nowhere and crush his chest. In his portrait Baruffio was brewing from a cauldron. Or so professor Flitwick said during their first class of charms.

Baruffio briefly stopped mid stir and nodded at Harry before he went back to brewing.

As Harry walked passed the portrait he saw a short corridor with a single door at the end. That must be the professor’s room, I better not become too adventurous, Harry thought smartly as he continued to feed his curiosity with other parts of the living quarters.

The only other thing unique was the snake tank in front of him, in a back corner of the living room, next to the hallway that lead to the professor's bedroom.

Inside the tank were two medium bunny snakes. They were fuzzy snakes whose bite made those bitten extremely hairy. Their venom was used in most hair strengthening, growing and cleaning potions.

“I am surprised that you have not gained a fear for the creatures, from what you have experienced. If you plan to stare at them, at least feed them. In the cabinet under the cage are petrified mice and live crickets.”

The man had not even turned to see what he was doing, and Harry had been behind him, how did he do that?

Harry retrieved the frozen mice from the cabinet and opened the lid of the cage, he realized the cage had been spelled with a silencing charm because the moment he opened it he was met with a small voice that hissed, ”oh, oh! Early feedings. Small non-hatchling has furry snack for us! Aw, had furry snack last time. I wish it were the chirpy crunchies, stupid non-hatchling.

Harry went numb, and left the lid open as he went to replace the mice with the crickets.
"Hey! Hey! We will take furry snack, no need to take! Hey, we are starving! So hungry. So hungry!" The second snake complained.

Harry said nothing and dropped the crickets into the cage.

"Oh!? Oh!? What’s this!? Chirpy crunch! Non-hatchling not so stupid after all!"

Harry closed the lid as the snakes began to chomp away.

Harry’s legs felt heavy as they carried him to the sofa, the professor’s recliner faced away from it, so he did not see Harry sit down mechanically, and stare off into space before he slowly took the blanket that was set out for him and curled under it.

How the hell had he managed to not hear a single snake all year?

Well, if he thought about it, every time Nathan complained about hearing the basilisk in the pipes, Harry was never around. And even down in the tunnel, Ginevra said that it had swallowed a pillar and it made gurgling noises for proof, it couldn’t talk and if its vocabulary matched the snakes in the tank then it wasn’t much of a conversationalist.

Merlin. He really was a parslemouth and if he hadn’t been so frightened by the idea of being one, then perhaps he could have used it to his advantage. Well, too late now but not too late to use it in the future.

“Oh, by the way, exams are cancelled, Harry,” the professor said quietly.

‘That’s good,’ Harry thought to himself as he burrowed deeper under his blanket and went into a deep slumber.

**********************************

“Mr. Potter. Mr. Potter! Harry! Wake up, child!” Professor Snape’s voice demanded urgently.

Slowly the boy roused and Snape relented his shaking.

“‘M up, sir,” Harry mumbled, wiping at his eyes. Harry turned to face Snape and looked surprised that he did not have to catch himself in order to do so. Of course, Snape transfigured the couch into a bed and the boy seemed to appreciate that immensely. As he should, Snape thought.

The boy gaped at him and Snape looked down at himself, and saw that he was in his own pajamas. Snape rolled his eyes.

“What on earth were you dreaming about, boy!?”

Harry sat up fully, “it was odd, I can’t tell if it was a vision or not, however, I was someone called Fowler, and I was being burned at the stake. There were many people around me, all dressed in medieval clothing. There were even knights present. I called out to a women, I called her Estoria. I had no control over myself as Fowler, but I was him, I am sure of it. I felt his anguish, his anger, his determination and I vaguely remembered moments with the girl; Estoria who sobbed and screamed as I was set ablaze. In my final breath, I swore that I would rise from the ashes that they would create from my bones and those words felt magical and definite.”

A thoughtful hum left Snape’s lips, “I will look into the names later.” Snape hoped that the boy
would not have occurring dreams or possibly visions where he is someone else entirely. It would not be good for his already fragile psyche…

From his place on the bed, Harry shook as he held himself protectively.

Slowly, Snape knelt before the boy and laid a supportive hand on the boy’s shoulder, “it was not real, Harry.”

“But it felt real! It felt so real. I was Fowler and I was set on fire. By the time you had woken me, the flames had reached my neck. I felt my eyes melt.”

Snape placed his other hand on the boy’s other shoulder and looked him firmly in the eyes, “you are Harris Charles Potter.” He removed one of his hands and grabbed Harry’s own, “does this skin look burnt to you?” He asked firmly.

Harry feverishly shook his head, beads of sweat dripped down his face, “it doesn’t sir.”

“Who are you?” Snape asked expectantly.

“Harrison Charles Potter. I am Harry.” Harry said determinedly.

Snape smiled a rare smile that scared the other students, a smile that the other professors referred to as feral; his proud smile. And Snape knew that Harry understood when he returned a shaky smile of his own.

“Well, if you are still tired, you should sleep more. It is 5 am and I only woke you because you were screaming.” Snape said as he stood up slowly.

“I don’t think I could go back to sleep if I am to be honest, sir,” Harry said earnestly. The boy’s hands were still shaking.

“Hmph, up then, you’ve sweat through your pajamas—no, be quiet, don’t apologize so pointlessly, just listen. You will shower then we will run a diagnostic on you. How are you feeling right now?”

Harry grimaced as he sat up slowly, “sweaty and strangely, only a bit achy, not as bad as I should be. I think Fawkes’ tears helped with a lot more than just poison,” the boy rubbed at his arm, and Snape himself grimaced at the long jagged scar that ran from the boy’s wrist to his mid-inner arm.

Snape nodded, “clever deduction, no pain at all? What about the tingling you complained of last night?”

Harry shook his head, “nothing. I’m still warm but not as hot as I was last night.”

“And your arm?”

“No pain at all, sir.”

Snape nodded his satisfaction and pointedly instructed that Harry go shower and then join him for an early breakfast. When the boy disappeared into the bathroom Snape transfigured the couch to its original state, called in two house-elves. One he tasked to get Harry clothing from his personal wardrobe in Ravenclaw tower and the other he instructed to provide them a plain breakfast. He then went to his own bedroom to change into the day’s clothing.

As he changed, Snape thought about how natural it was; having the boy in a space of his that he thought private. The only other to ever enter his private quarters was the headmaster. Not even
Draco has been welcomed.

It did not take too long for Snape to dress, and he went to the kitchen, made Harry and himself a cup of tea and began to read his news subscription, ‘brewing & spittle’ a less known newspaper for potion brewers written and edited by Laureate de Montmorency, the great grand daughter of Laverne de Montmorency. While Snape did not care for Laureate’s infamous ancestor’s works in love potions; he did enjoy her writing and he appreciated that she wrote about the potioneering world.

Harry entered the kitchens slowly, only fifteen minutes later and sat only when Snape told him to. Good, the boy was aware that he was in Snape’s personal space.

Snape stood and went to stand beside him, he performed a diagnostic charm just as the one last night. It read the same as last night, and Harry’s temperature was the same. Thirty-eight point five degrees celsius.

“Potter, do not lie to me; are you feeling slightly off kilter?”

Harry frowned at Snape’s biting tone, “I do not sir.”

“No nausea, headache, tingling sensations—nothing—are you absolutely certain?”

“I’m certain sir,” Harry said nervously. It wouldn’t do to make the boy question his own health so with a harrumph, Snape returned to his seat just as plates piled with food appeared atop of the table. One with bacon, eggs, and sausages and another with whole wheat bagels. One of Harry’s favorite breakfast meals; the house-elves really favored the child.

Harry watched as the boy cut his food meticulously and eat in small bites. Snape frowned. He has never appreciated the boy’s small appetite and when the boy finished, only having eaten half of an egg, sausage and a bagel Snape authoritatively commanded him to eat a bit more.

The boy had frowned and pointedly looked at the empty place of where Snape’s plate should have been and Snape softly growled and grabbed a plate of his own, piled up with a sausage, egg and one bagel and ate in earnest and pointedly demanded once more that Harry do the same.

Albus would be having a field day if he were here. A little boy--a Potter no less--got him to sit down and eat a singular meal. Snape knew that he was much too thin, but often he was far too busy, or fat too… depressed to do so. He has found himself eating more than ever before though, and he knew it was only because of Harry.

Snape allowed the boy to eat before he began to question him. The most important question on his mind involved the journal—Tom Riddle’s journal—the Dark Lord’s journal that he had written in his youth, but seemed to have a mind of its own. Snape was familiar with many aspects of dark magic, even the taboo spells and rituals. If the dairy actually possessed Ginny--and Merlin forbid, Harry--then there was more than a difficult curse involved. Snape was sure that it was soul magic, but he could not determine what kind or method.

“You said that you had also written in the journal, Mr. Potter,” Harry flinched but Snape did not stop, “did you tell it anything incriminating?”

Harry took a sip of tea from his cup, “not really, sir. I just felt compelled to write in it but not compelled to tell any truth. The diary knew me as Michael Croaner.” Harry sighed, and looked away from Snape and occupied his eyes and stared forlornly at nothing in particular. “We actually had rather nice conversations, he complimented me. Made me feel special, yet, he treated me like
an equal, it was… Odd.” The boy sounded disappointed, and betrayed if Snape read his emotions right, and Snape was rather skilled at reading into such things.

If Snape closed his eyes, he could envision himself, being called personally before the Dark Lord and the man marveling at his potion mastery at such a young age. Yes, he made Snape feel quite special too. Every day, Snape saw more and more of himself in this boy.

“As the headmaster said, Harry. Wizards much older and wiser than you have fallen for the Dark Lord’s tricks. He was quite charismatic that way. Drink your tea.”

Harry did as he was told and Snape could see some of the tension leave his shoulders. Snape took a sip of his own tea, and mulled over the boy’s earlier words. It was rather smart for a child to conceal their identity from a magical artifact such as a talking Diary. He may have been disappointed that Harry wrote in the thing in the first place, but he understood compulsions. Harry was still a child, and compulsion magic was rather effective on those who had not been exposed to it, he was impressed, with the boys sharp wit and quick thinking, he confessed as much to the boy and was not surprised when a fierce blush spread throughout the child’s lower neck.

Snape rolled his eyes and continued, “I suppose it would not have mattered if you did tell it anything. It’s ‘dead’ so to say. Killed by a basilisk fang or so you told.” Which was a lie. It would matter greatly if the diary told him about taboo dark arts, or if it had done something such as; attempting the boy to join his older counterpart. However, Snape actually trusted Harry to tell him if something like that were to happen.

Harry uncharacteristically choked on his tea the moment Snape said basilisk. He then tried to speak before he completely cleared his throat and began to choke once more.

“Anapneo,” Snape performed the spell with a quick wave of his wand, effectively clearing the boy’s air passages, and demanded that Harry slow down in his excitement.

“I apologize sir, but I just remembered the basilisk fang, and well, its carcass!” Harry wiped his mouth with a nearby napkin, “it’s still down there, in the chamber which I don’t think has closed, and if it has, I can open it! There is enough rare ingredients on the carcass alone. The possibilities are endless.”

The boy’s eyes were alight with excitement at the aspect of rare ingredients. Snape felt self-righteously proud in that moment. Had it not been for their constant lessons, Harry’s interests would have surely been dedicated to his healing studies exclusively.

Harry honestly gave Snape quite the big head. The boy often referred to him as a master during their sessions and that amount of respect made the self-hating man feel as if he had the right to feel as prideful as he once did in regards to his mastery.

“The ministry will most likely want to see the beast and the chamber, for historical purposes…” Snape mused, his voice was laced with disappointed bitterness.

“Well,” Harry looked at the clock that hung on the wall behind Snape, “it’s 6 am, surely the ministry won’t be here yet, and when they arrive they’ll need either myself, Ginevra or Terry to teach them of the chamber’s location.”

Snape’s lips curled, he could never quite smile appropriately, “Mr. Potter, are you suggesting that we go down to the chamber, scavenge the basilisk for parts before the ministry can do anything of the sort?”
“Perhaps, but you said it, not me.”

“Brat,” Snape stood, conjured multiple extraction tools and then stood near the door that separated his living quarters from Hogwarts, and to his satisfaction, Harry followed immediately and in haste the two went straight for the abandoned bathroom on the second floor.

When they arrived, Snape saw that the bathroom was a standard bathroom, with nothing extraordinary about it.

“Huh. Either someone closed it, or the chamber closes after a period of time on its own. Hey Myrtle!” Harry called out after his observation.

Snape had taken it upon himself to look around, he had hid in this bathroom once many years ago. Even then he knew the legend of Moaning Myrtle but she did not reveal herself to him and he had never ventured here again. Snape stood in front of the third stall in the bathroom and barely even flinched when the ghost of a young girl appeared from the toilet, Snape knew immediately that she was the infamous moaning Myrtle.

“Yes, Harry?” The ghost girl cooed as she floated around the boy.

Harry took out his wand and held it defensively pointed to the ground, “did someone return and close the chamber or did it close on its own?”

“Oh, Harry. Are you still mad at me for nearly allowing you to die? I wouldn’t do that again,” The ghost girl said with a pout as she looked at Harry’s armed hand.

Harry remained quiet and did not respond.

Myrtle sniffled, and floated to a set of large rounded sinks that were positioned in front of the toilet she appeared from. Myrtle crossed her arms and her pout became more severe, “no one has been here, it closed not too long ago actually.”

Harry raised a questionable brow at her, Myrtle seethed and gritted her teeth in anger, “I am telling the truth!” She stated fiercely.

A moment later, her expression did a complete 180, she floated around Harry, and twirled her hair with her fingers, “I promise,” before either of them could reply, she blew Harry a kiss and disappeared back into the toilet from whence she came.

“Charming,” Snape commented.

“Quite. I guess we have no choice but to take her word. Last time she hadn’t exactly lied to me last time after all…” Harry approached the rounded sink, and said, “open.”

However, nothing happened. He tried again, and then once more before he began to mutter quietly to himself.

Snape could barely hear him but he heard the word “snake” repeated several times before Harry spoke once more and Snape felt his blood go cold.

“You’re a parselmouth!?” Snape asked in a whisper.

Harry froze, and looked unsure of himself. He looked scared, “yes, sir. I found out just last night when I fed your snakes…”
“I thought you were just keeping things from me. Which is your right to do so, I was just of the mind that you could trust me with something such as this. Being a parslemouth opens many doors to you, Mr. Potter.”

Harry looked openly relieved, and then a moment later he began to giggle, his giggle turned into a hearty chuckle and his chuckle turned into full open mouth laughter that had the boy holding his sides. Snape had never heard anything like it from the child and in that moment, Harry absolutely looked like the twelve year old boy that he was. It was--dare Snape say--Marvelous...

“What is so funny, child?” Snape tried to ask seriously, but he himself chuckled a bit as he spoke.

“You--” Harry wiped his eyes, and went into more fits of laughter, “--did that on purpose! ‘Opens many doors to you, Mr. Potter’” Harry said with a voice that mocked Snape’s own, it was a rather good impersonation.

“It was completely unintentional, I assure you, you silly boy,” Snape said and he truly could not prevent the fondness that crept into his tone. And wasn’t that a thought; he was truly fond of the little boy before him. James Potter’s son--Lily’s son. However, it was not his past feelings for the woman that endeared him so to little Harry Potter. No, it was entirely the boy’s own “fault” that Snape enjoyed his presence, and to hear the boy’s childish laughter loosened something in Snape’s chest. He even felt the need to do something as childish as tickle the boy in order to keep hearing his laughter.

Perhaps what loosened inside him was a relief from great stress that the boy was far too emotionally damaged to do something such as laugh so openly and childishly at Snape’s unintentional pun. And perhaps Snape was selfish because he knew that Harry was still severely guarded around most adults thanks to James Potter who was all to similar to Lucius Malfoy in regards to raising their heirs. They raised their boys as heirs first and children second. Had Snape been Harry’s father, the boy would have had a right and proper childhood. Snape felt himself thinking that he was not too late, but then firmly reminded himself that he truly was not the boy’s father and perhaps he was stepping over proper boundaries. Merlin knows, all hell would break loose if James Potter thought that he was corrupting his heir.

It took a few minutes for the boy to truly compose himself, meanwhile Snape had peered down into the deep dark pipe that lead down into the chamber.

“I don’t suppose there are any stairs?” Snape asked sarcastically.

“I fell down last time, but I wonder…”

Before Snape could inquire how the boy could survive such a fall, Harry walked and stood beside him and spoke parseltongue once more, and the sound of sifting rock echoed throughout the bathroom and a set of stairs began to protrude along the walls of the pipe.

“I will go first,” Snape said immediately. The boy may have killed a basilisk but it wouldn’t do to have him fall down the stairs and break his neck.

Harry nodded, obedient to Snape as ever and followed the man as they slowly and carefully made their way down. Harry remained awfully close to Snape even as they reached the inner chamber and when they reached the body, Snape could not believe what he was saw with his own two eyes.

The giant carcass of the basilisk rested to the right of the inner chamber entrance. It had a long deep gash under its chin and in its opened mouth, he could see the stab wound that killed the beast.
“Let us not waste time, you will work alongside me, and I will teach you the proper incisions and extractions. I alone will extract the venom but you may watch.” Snape instructed sternly.

Harry never argued when it came to Snape’s potion instruction so it was rather surprising when the boy spoke with urgency and said, “the venom is really dangerous, sir. It honestly was the worst pain I have ever experienced personally.”

Instead of being insulted that the boy questioned his competency, Snape was rather touched that the boy openly feared for his safety. To have this unconditional care was almost overwhelming. He had not experienced it since he and Lily’s childhood friendship ended, and even that had been conditional apparently.

Even his relationship with the headmaster was rather conditional. The man had always chose Potter snr. over Snape and he had not really involved himself with Snape until he had proved himself useful to the man as a spy for the dark lord. And here was Harry Potter, who had no reason to care about the irritable and mean potion master at all. Sure, he has generously educated Harry in the ways of potion brewing but that did not warrant the boy’s care and sure, he offered himself as a confident for the boy since he was one of two people who knew of the boy’s seer status, but again, the boy could have always turned to the headmaster who would be more than happy to listen. Especially, if it got him details of the future. However, a conversation Snape had with the headmaster had revealed that the boy hasn’t gone to him at all.

It appears that Snape may be Harry’s most trusted adult, and he did not plan on taking advantage of that. In fact, Snape wanted to nurture those feelings into something positive, by teaching the boy his own philosophies in life, and partially creating a legacy of his own through the boy.

“I know how dangerous the venom is, Mr. Potter, I will be careful,” Snape soothed as he used his wand to enlarge a medium sized box that was charmed to have multiple and spacious compartments inside. He then took out a rolled up tool belt that was inside and laid it on the floor in front of the carcass, and got to work.

Harry sagged in relief and asked where they should start and Snape decided to extract the venom first so that the boy could relax. They were down in the tunnel for two hours before they realized that breakfast would be started in a mere thirty minutes. They packed up despite Harry’s open disappointed. The child seemed to have really enjoyed watching Snape work, and he had enthusiastically listened while the man meticulously explained everything he did and why.

They packed up quickly and left in haste. During their entire journey back to the entrance, Harry’s face had been frowned in deep thought, and when they climbed the stairs and reached the top, Harry tugged on Snape’s sleeve.

“Speak your mind, boy.” Snape urged.

“I think we should close the tunnel. Permanently, for now, at least until the basilisk completely decomposes.”

Snape hummed thoughtfully, “very clever, it is obvious that we expertly tampered with it.”

Harry nodded, “there is that, and there is also no reason to open it to the ministry. They most likely will not allow historians or archaeologists inside anyway. It’s not like they can open it without a parslemouth and though Nathan is a parslemouth, he does not know where the chamber lies. Most of all however, they would not know that parseltongue is needed to open the chamber.”

How absolutely Slytherin, Snape thought proudly. He agreed with Harry, and watched as the boy
closed the chamber, perhaps for the last and final time. After all, the chamber had only been created for the basilisk if legends were to be believed.

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Harry and professor Snape had gone their separate ways once leaving Myrtle’s bathroom, and Harry went straight to the dining hall; despite the fact that he had eaten already.

It would be his last meal at Hogwarts until next semester after all, and he hoped to see those petrified, unpetrified with his own two eyes. He expected to enter with ease, but was immediately engulfed by two redheads the moment he had entered. He was even picked up and placed on their shoulders much to his dismay.

“IT’S HARRY POTTER, THE SLAYER OF BASILISK!”

And as Fred and George strutted about with Harry perched on their shoulders many of the other students applauded and cheered.

Harry was openly uncomfortable and had a bright blush coloring his face, “put me down, this instant, you two!” He demanded with a hiss.

Fred and George laughed and Fred pushed him off their shoulders and into George’s awaiting arms. Harry wiggled urgently out of George’s arms, and was put down but immediately had an armful of Hermione who engulfed him into a hug.

“Oh, you did it! You did it! You figured it out! You figured it out! I also heard what you said, when you visited me and I am so happy! I don’t care if you get better marks than me, I don’t care!” She exclaimed with joy. Surprisingly, Harry hugged her back as well, but quickly let go, and Hermione did the same. Justin and Ernie hurriedly approached him from the Hufflepuff table. And despite all the excitement, Harry saw that Colin was smart and did not try to push through the crowd, but he was taking as many pictures as he could, and for once, Harry was glad that the boy was around and unpetrified and able to take his pictures. Justin shook his hand vigorously, thanked him and apologized for being a git to his brother. Speaking of his brother… Where--Ernie interrupted his thoughts however, and engulfed Harry into a tearful hug and thanked him just as earnestly as Justin had. Justin is a good friend of Ernie just as Harry was and he had been an emotional wreck with the petrification of his dear Hufflepuff friend. Just as Ernie and Justin back away and finally gave him space, Harry was grabbed from behind by Hagrid who openly wailed his thanks, the man must have been waiting for him to turn up. Once he was put down, he was abruptly and roughly pulled from the crowd and out of the dining hall, much to the disappointment of those who wanted to speak with Harry about his misadventures.

When Harry realized that the person who saved him was Joseph, Harry felt overwhelming relief and that relief only increased when the older boy did not quickly engulf him into a hug. Joseph tucked them into a corner a few feet to the dining hall entry’s right. The doors were so massive that they would be effectively hidden if anyone were to come out.

Joseph smiled blithely, “gather yourself, I am in no rush.” The older boy stated as he stood beside Harry sportively. He made sure not to touch the boy as Harry had received quite enough touch in the dining hall, surely, he felt overwhelmed.

It only took Harry a minute or two to take deep breaths and center himself.

“You have improved,” Joseph remarked. Harry awkwardly thanked him for the compliment. He had been meditating more often and found himself coping much better with sudden touches.
“It is very nice to see you unpetrified, Joseph,” Harry stated earnestly.

Joseph grinned, “it is very nice to be unpetrified.” Joseph’s smile grew wider when Harry lightly laughed at the exclamation.

“I have you to thank for that,” Joseph said. The moment Harry looked away, Joseph gently bumped shoulders with him and on reflex Harry looked up at him. He grimaced slightly, he still had to look up at the older boy. Harry was rather short and it was something he never appreciated. He hoped he’d hit a growth spurt soon as Joseph obviously had. The older boy had to at least be 5’8, and that was rather tall for a 16 year old.

“Think nothing of it—”

“I think everything of it, Harry,” Joseph said firmly interrupting Harry. “I also thank you for visiting me in the infirmary and keeping me up to date. I even heard you speak with the other patients. Madam Pomfrey did not think we could hear and did not speak with us much. You are very caring and considerate.”

Again, Harry looked away and this time Joseph allowed him to. In the past, Harry would not have allowed Joseph to say as much, it was improvement and a testament to Harry’s emotional growth that he could hear compliments or nice things said about him without tensing up, or becoming agitated.

“Thank you, Joseph.”

“You are welcome Harry. Here,” Joseph said as he removed a yellow envelope from his pocket and handed it to Harry. “That is from Cedric, it is for you and your parents to read. It is an invitation for you to visit and stay with his family for a week. He has also invited, Ernest Macmillan, Neville Longbottom, Adrian, and one of his roommates; Hector Fawley the third. He will be celebrating his birthday early and wanted his best guys there. Ernie was mainly invited for your sake, but Cedric has taken the younger boy under his wing. Neville was invited as a family friend but I know that the two of you bond greatly over herbology. Be sure to include him in any play that you and Ernest may have away from Cedric and his group.”

Harry opened the envelope carefully and read it’s contents.

'Dear Mr. Potter, Mrs. Potter and Harry,

I will be turning 16 on October 1st, but I will be at Hogwarts during that time and this year I wanted to celebrate it in America at a place called Spisneyland. Spisneyland is a muggle amusement park full of rides, games and entertainment based on movies (Mrs. Potter may be able to explain what movies are,) from the Spisney studios. My mother has always taken me to see new features produced by Spisney studios and I grew to love it, and going to Spisneyland has been a dream of mine since I learned of it seven years ago in a muggle book from my mother’s shelf. My parents will finally take me this summer and they informed me that I can take four friends and I hope dearly that Harry will be allowed to attend. We will leave for America August 20th, a week and a half before the next term begins. It will only last for seven days, his tickets, hotel, and food will all be paid for, of course. I hope this is amenable to you all. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Cedric Diggory
Harry was honored for the invitation, he enjoyed Cedric’s presence immensely and respected the older boy just as much as he respected Joseph. For different reasons, of course, but he respected him all the same. Cedric often spoke to him as if he were a younger brother of sorts. When Harry spoke far too bluntly, Cedric gently chastised him, politely told him why or how what he said was wrong and went on with Harry how he could have said it differently. Though, most older students knew how volatile he was, and avoided touching him beyond correcting his uniform or moving a strand hair from his eyes; Cedric refused to be intimidated by Harry’s glares and would always ask if Harry minded if he hugged him, leaned on him, or touch him in general. It made Harry feel not only normal, but respected. Cedric also taught Harry how to play a Japanese variant of chess called Shougi or as Cedric like to call it; *A Game of Generals*. During those times, they would chat idly, while they played. Typically, they played it in the campaign room that was typically used by the prefects, and the Head Boys & Head Girls of the school for meetings. It was a time that Harry enjoyed quite a lot because Cedric enjoyed muggle books and stories just as him, so they could easily talk for hours.

“Will you not be there? Cedric is one of your best friends,” Harry inquired.

Joseph smiled indulgently, he reached for Harry’s collar, “do you mind?”

“I do not, I am sure my appearance is rather disheveled from all the grouping I experienced earlier.”

Joseph nodded and began to correct and adjust Harry’s clothing, “I will be absent because I will be visiting some distant relatives in France. You remember how I told you that my parents and I discovered my heritage with goblin magic years ago?” He adjusted Harry’s collar and attempted to fix his hair. It was quite long now.

“Yes.”

“Good,” Joseph removed a pen from his dress shirt under his school robes, he then transfigured it into a brush. “Turn, please. Your hair is quite tangled, and as I have told you again and again--”

“As a founder of Warts, I must be presentable,” Harry huffed as he turned.

“Indeed,” Joseph agreed, ignoring Harry’s tone while he began to brush the younger boy’s hair. “Anyway, you know of Penny’s and Perry’s love of history. Whenever I have a historical inquiry, I go to them, and they informed me that Gringotts bank was opened in 1474, and Goblins--knowing that they would be in charge of legacy accounts--offered, and continue to offer to record family genealogy or keep secondary copies of families. Most wizards in Europe have used this to their advantage for centuries. Using blood magic, Gringotts can easily trace a family’s genealogy, how else would all these pure-bloods tell they were any different from other witches and wizards?” Joseph finished brushing Harry’s hair and turned him around to critique his work.

“That’s much better, do not let anyone mess up my hard work,” Joseph said in mock authority, he re-transfigured his pen, placed it back into his pocket, and leaned on the wall. Harry thanked him and chose to lean on the wall as well.

“I digress, I told you that because I know of your curiosity, but what I merely am leading to the fact that I will not join you all because I will be in France visiting Kama family members. Just distant cousins or those who have the family name due to marriage. I also must check my family account at magical France’s bank; Banque Courtois. It’s also their oldest muggle bank and I am excited to see how they mix. They also work with Gringotts in documenting family genealogy, it’s how I found my relatives there. As I said; I am excited but Perry is even more excited than I am.”
“Oh, Perry will go with you?” Harry asked in open relief.

“Yes, and my parents as well. I believe that my parents have also set up something with the Granger’s as I have been told that we plan to meet them in Dijon city.”

Harry perked up, “that sounds quite fun, actually. May I request a souvenir?”

Joseph rose a curious brow and gestured for Harry to speak.

“France has a rather loose band on inter-species relationships unlike magical Britain. While ‘half-beings’ are still often looked down on, there are no laws forbidding the practice from ‘creatures’ considered humanoid. There is a book written by a half-veela I would like. I cannot find the name or the author but I know that it was written between 1952 and 1976. If you cannot find it due to the limited information given, I would like any book on ancient french healing practices if you could find one. If both of these items are too difficult then sweets would be nice.”

Joseph laughed softly, not mockingly, he could not help it, the younger boy either wanted rare text or sweets. They had quite a difference, “I will see what I can do, Harry.”

They are interrupted by the awkward foot-steps of Nathan hurrying toward them much too quickly despite his disability.

“Harrison!” He called out as he rushed toward his brother.

“We will talk later, be sure to write, I will teach you the address of the Kama manor in France.” Joseph said quietly. He pushed himself from the wall when Harry acknowledged what he said and he went back into the dining hall.

Distantly, Harry heard someone say, “where’s Harry?” When Joseph had opened the dining hall doors but he did not care about that. He cared about his brother, who winced in pain with eyes wet with fresh tears as he limped to Harry much too quickly.

Harry met Nathan half-way and Nathan engulfed him into a fierce hug.

“What the hell, Harrison!? I’ve been looking for you all morning! I have to hear about how you went down into the chamber and fought a damn basilisk from Ron, who heard it from Seamus, who heard it from Neville, who heard it from Terry, just this morning!” When Nathan had said ‘just’ he somehow squeezed Harry even tighter.

Before Harry could respond, Nathan ended their hug, grabbed Harry’s right arm and yanked up his sleeves.

“Merlin,” Nathan whispered as he rubbed a finger over the long scar.

“Yes, it did not heal completely, despite the phoenix tears. We do not know why.”

Nathan nodded, his eyes then traveled to Harry’s forehead, there was a smaller and thinner scar there, one that may disappear over time. Almost unconsciously, Nathan brought his head up to the scar and rubbed at it gently.

“Ron was called down to the infirmary and I’m sure the other Weasley’s were too. When he got back to the dorms, he said that Ginny had told them that she had been possessed by Tom Riddle, who the headmaster revealed to be Voldemort. She said that you had spoken to Tom too. Are you okay?”
Merlin, was Harry okay? He was so quickly captivated by Tom and he is sure that he will never get over such an embarrassment. However, what affected him more was fighting the basilisk. Every second he had spent in the inner chamber felt like his last, and he could still remember the flames that engulfed his inner body when the venom entered him. He could also still feel the eager bites and licks of the flames that engulfed his outer body when he was Fowler. No, Harry was a bit not okay, and the fact that his brother inquired such a thing instead of congratulating him like the other students, made Harry quite happy. He did not want to be a hero, he just wanted to do what was right, and heal those he could.

“No. No, I am not okay. Thank you for helping me realize that, Nathaniel.” Harry said earnestly. His brother looked a bit confused at first, but Harry was always rather awkward at expressing himself, and honestly, Nathan was just elated that Harry seemed to be physically okay. He may have scars but he could still walk properly and that was something to be grateful for.

Nathan’s expression remained astonished, and he nodded vigorously several times, “yes, think nothing of it, Harrison, you will be okay eventually,” Nathan hugged him once more.

And Harry hugged him back, and nodded. He believed in Nathan and therefore he believed in his words.

The rest of the term passed slowly for Harry.

He found himself going to professor Snape more and more. His nightmares were just as vivid as ever. If not more so.

His recurring nightmare of being skinned alive was back with a vengeance ever since he dreamed himself as the man Fowler who was burnt alive. It helped tremendously to just speak with the professor and when he became too overwhelmed to talk about his visions, the professor would skillfully changed the subject to the topic of the ritual and potion. This method always worked because Harry would become hyper focused on what they would need to do as they would be administer the treatment this mid Summer.

On Harry’s behalf, the professor had written to Mrs. Malfoy, fore he had long known of the woman’s infertility and had informed her that there were no known potions that could help her when she had come to him in the past.

However, now the circumstances were different. The professor had slightly fibbed to her that Harry had found the professor’s medical potion journals and saw that the woman had been struggling to conceive. He then explained that Harry was a healing prodigy with the knack for brewing and went on in great detail of the ritual and potion that the two had created together. (Snape would later give nearly all credit to Harry behind the boy’s back.) The professor had even given her copies of all of their notes and works cited. It only took a mere two weeks for the woman to reply with hopeful and desperate consent to try it. Harry hoped it worked because if it did then wizarding women everywhere who struggled with infertility, and miscarriages could conceive and the wizarding populations would stop dwindling down.

When he could focus on other things, Harry felt fine, and so he busied himself whenever he could and counted down the days until he returned to Potter manor. Beyond his visits with professor Snape, he attended Warts meetings and wrapped up their end of the year activities. He continued his studies and magical training--which now including sword training since he possessed such a thing. He was mainly learning from a book from the library. And his strategy to busy himself
worked.

Just like that it was time to go home. The train ride had been uneventful; just promises to write and possible plans for the summer were made between friends. Harry just listened and nodded along when he was included, and it was somber when he departed from them all. Terry, and Hermione especially as both would be away for the entire summer and they would not have the chance to meet up. They all departed reluctantly.

Nathan, upon seeing their parents, limped over into his mother’s awaiting arms, before Harry got to them however, a gentle hand grabbed his shoulder.

Harry could tell immediately that it was Percy. It was the older boy’s method of approach.

When Harry turned to face him, he was surprised to see Ginevra at his side looking down at the ground.


Percy looked startled and gave a worried look toward Ginevra who had merely smiled shyly with a slight blush on her cheeks and waved at Harry and wished him an enjoyable Summer before she hurriedly left to go to her parents side.

“She allowed you to call her Ginevra…” Percy said aloud, but it seemed that he was speaking to himself as his eyes were locked on his sister who was being engulfed in her mother’s arms.

“It is her name…” Harry stated with a curious tilt of his head.

“Yes, but--our uncle used to call her that, right up until the day he died five years ago… Then whenever anyone called her by it instead of Ginny, she would become extremely angry, or cry depending on her mood. Even our parent don’t dare to call her that… it’s like she's forgotten how much it hurt her to hear that name…” Percy said, the entire time his eyes never left his sister, he was transfixed, “she… has not been like herself at all...” He said as an afterthought. His frown looked more frightened than concerned.

Harry frowned, “I do not think anyone would be the same after what she went through, Percy,” Harry felt rather defensive, his face was in a deep grimace. He did not like think about Tom. Not at all.

“Right! Er- Sorry, Harry,” Percy apologized, his gaze was now on Harry and he looked awfully apologetic, “I didn’t even mean to insult you. I just wanted to thank you once more on behalf of my family. Ginny would have been dead if not for you and fine, she is very different but trauma does that to one, and the rest of us have a lot to learn in order to get her through this trauma, I suppose. So anyway, thank you, thank you.”

“Percy. Think nothing of it.” Harry said stiffly. Percy squeezed his shoulder gently before he hurriedly walked over to his family who caught Harry’s gaze and waved enthusiastically at the boy. Harry waved back, less enthusiastically but friendly all the same. All of the Weasley’s had thanked him, even Ron, but he hoped their thanking was done. Harry did not save the girl for acknowledgement.

“Harry? Come along.” his mother commanded kindly from her place beside his father who had a hand on Nathan’s shoulder. Nathan smiled at Harry brightly and gestured for him to approach, and his mother had a loving arm draped around Nathan’s shoulder. Her other arm was extended to Harry, her palm was open in offering, and Harry grimaced, worried that she would pull Harry into a
similar hold as she had Nathan in, but he moved toward them nonetheless.

Surprisingly, his mother merely placed a hand on his back, and rubbed it in circles. Immediately, his parents inquired what exactly happened at school, his father seemed much too proud--that is until Harry got to the part where he almost died--his pride turned to anger, and he began to mutter to himself about writing the board and the headmaster. His mother looked absolutely horrified the entire time. She kept sharing nervous glances with his father when she thought Harry was not looking.

As Harry spoke, he could not help but realize how different their departure from the Hogwarts express felt compared to last year, it was much more familial and this was something Harry had thought he craved, but as they prepared to apparate, Harry could not help but think about professor Snape. He did not feel relief of finally experiencing his parents attention because he had already received such things from his professor. And perhaps it was inappropriate and perhaps the professor would not appreciate Harry viewing him as a parental figure, but it could be Harry’s little secret. He anticipated the time they would spend together this Summer.

Chapter End Notes

FORTY PAGES IN GOOGLE DOCS, all inspired by you all!

I think I deserve a trip to "Spisneyland" after all of this. ; ) Ha ha. Perhaps Ginny does too...

Speaking of Ginny, she was so loud in the chamber! It really was like she just wanted the basilisk to get them... And then that rock fell so conveniently at Harry's feet! It is all so odd, but I sure am glad that they both made it out ok!

Anyway, this chapter took a lot out of me but I wanted to make it long since I will not be updating for at least two weeks. Three weeks at the most. (I have many tests coming up to prepare for the summer, wish me luck!)

Your feedback has really helped me so very much with this story and for that I thank you as I am so grateful that you would take the time to read my story and even comment! It is very kind and always appreciated and always wanted. (You can probably tell that much by my annoying habit of replying to every one, ha ha.)

I am very excited to write out Harry's summer as a lot will happen. I hope you all will like an adventure ark for him, not too long but it will last for three chapters at least. Another seer will be revealed, Harry might meet a vampire and perhaps he will be pushed to limits that he is completely unprepared for. However, he will still get to spend time with his favorite professor and a few of his friends. I am very excited to write the dynamic I have chosen for him this Summer as it will expand his relationships even more to prepare for something big!

Anyway, I can talk your ears off in the comments, I can't wait to write the Summer chapters! (P.s I am cleaning up past chapters for spelling and grammar and holes, so if you reread this and it seems the slightest bit different, it is intentional. It will not change tremendously!)
Lily has a brain, a heart and a conundrum

Chapter Summary

And Harry meets another possible seer.

Chapter Notes

[WARNING] THIS CHAPTER IS MUCH LIKE CHAPTER 14, MUCH OF IT IS INTROSPECTIVE (HALF OF LILY'S PERSPECTIVE IN REGARDS TO HARRY,) AND IT IS ALSO RATHER QUICKLY PACED. PLEASE BARE WITH ME, BECAUSE THE NEXT CHAPTERS WILL BE RICH IN INTERACTION FOR BOTH HARRY AND NATHAN. :) (REMEMBER HOW I FOLLOWED THROUGH ON MY PROMISE LAST TIME? <3) This is really important for Harry's own development. I also want you all to not feel so distant towards Lily or James. (And honestly, I debated ways on how I could skip this or even shorten it and not include it because of how lengthy it was but I could not do so without it being confusing.)

I have really thought this through and I am following a story board I have made. I THINK you are fine to skip this chapter if you are really adverse to extensive world building (as I sometimes am,) but if you hadn't guessed it, that specific country I have written about a bit is most likely where Harry's adventure will take place and the man introduced will be the one to take him there. (Thankfully the story will be a lot more fun again after this "lore" chapter.) Anyway I am going to speak too much in the end notes so I will end this here.

Summer had only begun three days ago and Harry had already been avoiding them. The first two mornings the boy spent practicing the piano after complaints of becoming rusty. He then mentioned beginning more advanced piano lessons before he locked himself in the Potter music room, not even Nathan was allowed to bother him.

Harry was most interested in his housemate Pamela Alton’s squib aunt Patricia Alton, who was considered a musical genius in both the muggle world and the wizarding world (though her work was not very popular amongst wizards due to her status as a squib.) She has since retired from performing live in concert, and sometimes taught the children of prominent and or wealthy muggle families.

Since Harry had never liked his current instructor, Emma Carter, he hastily wrote to Patricia Alton, requesting her as a paid instructor. James had initially picked Emma Carter because Harry’s etiquette instructor Gabriel Gad Perks’ wife, Mary-Anne Perks—the pureblood mother of Sally-Anne Perks, a Slytherin in Harry’s year—recommended her.

Mr. and Mrs. Perks themselves were as polite as society suspected pureblood British wizards to be,
but they weren’t really pleasant as people, and the instructor they agreed on was no different from
themselves. Someone who was also catty but overly pretentious and stern. It was unsurprising that
Harry never took to Mr. Perks, a recommended instructor from the man would be just as well
received as himself.

While he waited for a reply from Patricia Alton, Harry was content to practice what he knew or
attempt to learn new pieces suitable for his level—which was actually rather high—on the piano.

Lily thought she would find him in the music room, because of how serious he had been about
practicing and improving. However, when she got there, there was no sound of music, nor did she
see the boy in the room at all. She had been looking for Harry for about thirty minutes by then. She
had planned a picnic for just herself, Harry and Nathan and it was because of that that she currently
searched for Harry so earnestly, but the boy had not been where she expected him to be and now he
was nowhere to be found.

It could be seen that in all of Lily’s guilt for neglecting and ignoring the boy for years was her
motivation to spend time with him—and while that was partially true, it was not her only
motivation.

It was her opinion that Harry did not need to be alone because the boy had been through so much
during his stay at Hogwarts.

Ever since he had told she and James exactly what had transpired in his second year at the school,
Lily had grown more worried for the boy and his solitary behavior. Especially, with what
happened in his first year as well.

Lily felt guilty; she knew that in the past she had been far too open with the child about Nathan’s
title as the boy-who-lived. She voiced her worries over Nathan’s fate with the boy—the child. It
was no wonder that Harry—an empathetic and caring boy in his own right—became protective
instead of jealous. Lily basically gaslighted him into being so.

Perhaps, if she also had not pressured him so strongly to protect Nathan—even at the risk of his own
life—then perhaps Harry would not have had to face Voldemort alone that fateful night.

She thought that one attack was it and that school would get better, but was worse. Not only was
Harry nearly killed by basilisk venom, but he had also faced Voldemort once again, and he had
even spoken with the memory of the monster-turned-man. He had not given them all the details but
Lily could see the feeling of betrayal in his eyes. She had seen it in Severus’ own eyes once, many
years ago.

Those experiences—even without all of the proper details—were absolutely traumatic, and for
Harry to present himself as if he was unaffected by these events was not a good sign, though James
felt that it was. Lily knew her husband well, and knew that he was not completely and intentionally
dismissing Harry’s feelings. James was pure Gryffindor, he did not have the cunning of a Slytherin,
the logic of a Ravenclaw or the kindness of a Hufflepuff. No, James was brash, courageous, and
full-hearted. He wore his heart on his sleeve, expected everyone else to do the same, and he saw
everything at face value. Thus, when the man looked at Harry, who rarely displayed his emotions,
he thought that Harry was just fine because that was how the boy presented.

That angered Lily, because she wanted James to use common sense. She and James both had been
traumatized from their few and short battles with Death Eaters during the rise of Voldemort. They
had been especially traumatized from the night the man-turned-monster attacked them outright in
order to kill both Nathan and Harry.
They had to work rather hard to not let their paranoia get the best of them since then. Though, it was extremely difficult. Their home was still warded—much more than it needed to be—and their involvement with society was minimal, because they just did not know who they could really trust. Even the instructors for Nathan and Harry were under a rather strict contract that prevented them from discussing anything about their time in the manor while working. Lily was rather proud of that because she had come up with it herself.

Beyond that, James did his duties in the wizengamot and recently continued his job as an auror, but he did not try to befriend those who were not Gryffindors or those who did not try to befriend him first.

Lily was no better in regards to her own solitude. After the attack, Lily rarely left the house. She had not made many friends that had not been James’ own; upon losing Severus due to a public debacle and eventually Alice, who was a permanent resident at St. Mungo’s after being tortured into insanity by Death Eaters. She also did not get along with her remaining immediate family in the muggle world.

Her parents were dead; targeted and killed by Death Eaters, and her sister Petunia blamed her for it and cut off all contact with her. Lily still wrote Petunia on her birthday, Christmas and the day their parents died. However, Petunia never responded and Lily could not blame her.

Besides that irreparable relationship, Lily had improved. Lately, she had begun to leave the house more for tea with Mrs. Longbottom or for her mastery lessons, however, that was it.

She wanted so desperately to continue her work as an auror however; the head of the department herself informed Lily that she was much more needed as a charms expert. She still hasn’t had much luck with her “Death Eater Indicator” charm. One’s wand could be used as a detector but so far, she has only created a detector for dark magic which did not indicate one being a Death Eater despite common belief.

Lost in her thoughts as she searched, Lily was startled to find Harry in one of the living rooms meant to be used only when they had visitors, on the floo with a very animated young man that Lily knew as Terry. One of Harry’s closest friends.

Lily knew it was wrong to eavesdrop but she wanted to know what they were talking about. So, she hid behind the doorway, thankfully, Harry’s back was to her and he did not seem to notice her.

Harry was so private, he was unlike Nathan who would always tell her and James about anything and everything involving his life—hell, Nathan has even introduced most of his close friends to them by inviting them over. Harry has not even once personally requested for his friends to visit.

“You should have seen Mr. Malfoy’s face, Harry!” Terry exclaimed, his bright smile evident through the flames, “and gosh, the feast! You weren’t there!” He exclaimed incredulous with his hands on the side of his head, “Draco was called out by Mr. Malfoy and they left that night! Draco was so confused and contrite and Mr. Malfoy himself was SO sour, I hate that you missed it.”

Lily could hear Harry’s smile as he hummed contently in response to the other boy as he spoke. He didn’t respond much though, he merely nodded along and hummed his responses.

Lily was amazed when the other boy seemed unfazed by the behavior that she had always took as disinterest from Harry. Terry spoke easily as if Harry had replied. Lily herself nearly always attempted to fill awkward silences with questions that rarely received full answers or meager hums from Harry. Perhaps, she should talk in “statements” with the preteen.
"Oh! Dobby visited me briefly too! Scared the crap out of me because I was in the bath when he popped in," Terry said as he chuckled at the memory.

Harry perked up ever so slightly, "he visited me when I was in the bath too."

Terry burst into laughter and Harry himself smiled brightly, and Lily swore that she heard the boy chuckle.

Terry wiped at his eyes, he was laughing so hard that he was bringing himself to tears, "he probably saw your pale arse! It blinded him for sure!"

"Terry," Harry chided with a kiss of his teeth, "how crude."

"I'm not wrong though, Mate. I've walked in on you in the shower, and your bum is the pastiest bum I have seen!"

"Oh, so you've seen a lot of bare bottoms have you?" Harry asked plainly and immediately, Terry ceased his laughter but not for long as Harry's response had thrown him into a worse fit than before. It took the other boy a few minutes to calm down and when he did, the look he gave Harry was so fond and **loving** that even Lily blushed.

"I thought you would be mad at me for sure! I know you get on with the Malfoy's," he said sheepishly as he looked away from Harry.

By the tense of Harry’s shoulders, Lily could tell that the boy grimaced slightly.

“Draco and I… Have an understanding. Nr. Malfoy is not one I’d seek company with, however, I do get on with Mrs. Malfoy. She is eloquent, and naturally charming,” he stated, his tone could almost be taken as blunt or emotionless but Lily swore that she could hear **fondness** in Harry’s tone.

Upon hearing that, Lily could not help but feel sorry for herself. Her son never complimented her so bluntly or respectfully and from his tone, Harry sounded completely enamored with the older women. Whereas, he always seemed unsure or annoyed by Lily’s presence. To be fair, she hadn’t been a constant presence for the young preteen until recently. In her own way, she was trying to make up for lost time, and her only folly was that she did not wish to consider the fact that perhaps Harry did not want the same because it was almost too late.

“--And she’s easy on the eyes,” Terry continued for him teasingly and immediately received a disapproving reprimand from Harry.

The two boys continued to speak, Terry more so, but Harry contributed when he felt like it and he spoke in a dull tone of the excitement he felt over the prospect of celebrating Cedric Diggory’s birthday with the older boy and his family in America. He however, had concerns about whether or not James would approve of him going. Harry was still a minor and could be denied such things if his parents so wished.

Terry inquired whether or not James was still being “strict” on Harry with open worry, Lily could not help but wince.

She knew how much of a disaster James brief post at Hogwarts as a defense professor had been. Well, that is untrue and unfair to James, he taught the subject fairly well, he was an experienced auror after all.

However, many of the populous fond of Harry, apparently found James’ approach toward the boy
to be less than ideal and much too strict.

Lily had not been there, but Nathan had been cross with James about his behavior toward Harry while he taught at the school. From what Nathan had shared with her, James had been openly harsh and judgmental of Harry and his actions. Belittling him every chance he got in order to inspire Harry to work harder and it worked because Harry was young and even if he denied it or did not voice it, he wants approval from those he views as a parental unit.

Harry was a smart boy, probably the most intelligent of his generation along with his little friend Hermione who was just as intelligent but in different ways. However, it has only been within the last few years that Harry has been exposed to other children and adults, he did not have the “training” that Nathan had when dealing with negative emotions because he had not been allowed to actually have any… And wasn’t that just cruel?

Until recent Lily had been so far removed from Harry’s life that she did not notice that James was too.

Though, not as much as Lily had been, of course. James always made sure that Harry had the proper tutors and Mousy always made sure that the boy was dressed and fed, and his tutors made sure that his clothing fit his breeding. However, Harry was never allowed to voice his opinions on the choice of his tutors, or even his studies until recently.

Nor, did Mousy have the human emotional capacity and or authority to actually help Harry develop emotionally as a human boy should in his early developmental years of life which are the most crucial in a baby’s early life.

Perhaps, if Lily held him more often or spoke to him more often until he was at least three; Harry would be more emotionally developed.

However, Lily hadn’t, she could not bring herself too, and he was technically raised with Mousy’s own near childish care and tutors who did not care for his well-being. They only cared if he could speak right, stand right, fight well, play an instrument well, read well and rarely did they compliment or praise him. James and Lily should have. Just as they should have been the ones to teach him all of those things. As they did with… Nathan.

Nathan had the same tutors for things such as charms, maths, potions, etc, but due to his title, they treated him with more tender hands than they did the heir.

Nathan also received most of his defense lessons, and etiquette lessons from James himself, who was probably far too easy going during those times for Nathan to actually learn what it was that he needed to know, but that was just fine because they knew that unlike Harry, Nathan would not have been able to handle the stern and strict attitude of people like Mr. Perks and Mrs. Perks.

Lily validated herself in regard to her absence in Harry’s life with the excuse that she had been so busy with Nathan, her duties as a lord’s wife, and her own training to defend her family and herself if they were ever attacked again.

Any excuse that one could make for neglecting a child under their care, Lily had. Though, Lily reluctantly began to realize that her behavior wasn’t right, no matter the excuse thanks to her therapist.

She had been speaking with a squib therapist who practiced in both the wizarding world and the muggle one, on how best to handle her transgressions in the past. She was encouraged to slowly open up to the boy until he was old enough to understand so that she could explain her actions.
toward him, and though she knew that her actions were not right, they were not meaningless or random acts of hatred.

Lily had tried to encourage James to see the therapist as well. About growing up during Voldemort’s rise, fighting Death Eaters, even the worry for his sons. Anything. It was obvious that the man needed therapy and that he knew that something was different, odd, not right with Harry, and it was due to how they raised him, but he did not know how to properly acknowledge it so that he could begin fixing it. It was also terribly difficult for the man to swallow his pride and admit when he was wrong.

“Oh, by the way, I got my dad to hire a private dueling instructor,” Terry said seriously with a somber smile.

“Oh?” Harry inquired.

“Yeah, we put an ad out in the paper. I just—I felt so helpless when you fell in that hole and it got me thinking that if I could have just defended myself from that stupefy, then you would not have fallen and nearly died. The celebration was nice and the talk of you being a hero is cool but the fact of the matter is; you almost died. Down in a deep and grimy chamber. Alone.”

“Terry…” It seemed that Harry did not know what to say, perhaps he was unused to the other boy speaking in such a manner.

Terry wiped at his eyes, “no. I mean, we aren’t at war but so far, every year there’s been some kind of attack that has much to do with you-know-who and adults won’t listen to us and they won’t prepare us for the worst-case scenario.”

Merlin, these kids were just as paranoid as the adults around them, however, unlike the adults they weren’t willing to skirt around, or argue under the guise of politics about what was happening. Lily was impressed but she was also the adult, so she could not fully agree with their paranoia but if it was ever brought up to her by Harry or Nathan she would be sure to speak with them and steer them right. While Voldemort has tried to return, he still hasn’t and that is what should be focused on.

“The adults at school think we are telling tales and I never understood how you felt when the adults in your life ignore you. I mean—until professor Flitwick and Snape, what adult actually listened to you?” Lily winced.

“Professor Snape,” Harry corrected weakly instead of answering the question.

Terry rolled his eyes, "professor Snape--anyway. I’m right, you know I am, that’s why you’ve allowed me to speak for so long. I may not be able to relate to you completely because honestly? Besides you and Hermione, my ma is my best friend. I can’t remember a time that she wasn’t in my life and she’s always been there for me. But she is a squib, and her mom was a squid and her mom before that was a squib and because if that she was raised muggle and most talks of magic fly over her head. I still call her for almost everything though and my da as well is great. He plays with me, listens to me, helps me with homework, all the things that you say your dad does with Nathan.”

Harry flinched and so did Lily.

“However, my da still doesn’t listen to any talks about you-know-who, he says there is nothing to worry about because your brother—Nathan—defeated him for good, but even I don’t believe him. Why else would he have left the wizarding world almost entirely. He’s frightened and frankly, so am I!”
For a long while Harry did not say anything and when he did he looked around. Lily ducked further into her hiding space and it seems that Harry still did not notice her.

“I support you, Terry. However, do not overwork yourself or push yourself beyond your limits.”

“I won’t, Harry,” Terry responded. His tone sounded as if he was not only speaking with a friend but his superior, perhaps an older brother even. “Aren’t you training this Summer?” The boy went on to inquire.

“I always do in the Summer. Thankfully, I am receiving a new instructor. My former instructor Cecil Rosier has been relieved by my father who is under the impression that the man is either a Death Eater or supporter of Voldemort’s cause. Or so I am told.”

Both Terry and even Lily flinched. Lily more so at the news that James had told Harry such a thing!

“Good, honestly, from what you told me, the Rosier guy was much too harsh anyway, I cannot believe your parents even allowed him to train you—” Terry looked away and the voice of a stern woman was heard before her face appeared in the fire. The woman had a slightly squared jaw and soft round eyes, she looked rather masculine but handsomely so.

“Oh! Little Harry!” The woman’s voice was extremely high pitched and feminine; however, she spoke extremely fast with an American accent,” ever since you taught him of this floo thingy, he waits on your calls nonstop. I ‘spose it’s more than fine that Terence has been speaking with you —” the woman continued before she was interrupted by her son who attempted to take back the floo.

“MAMA! Please don’t call me Terence! You know I hate when you do that in front of Harry!” Terry whined.

“Oh, hush, boy, I made you, and I can call you whatever I want, Terence!” Terry’s mother said sternly but humor colored her eyes. Lily could tell that Harry has interacted with the woman before and she was so very jealous of the familiarity she had with him. She longed to have that kind of relationship with Harry, and perhaps if she would have tried to have such a thing with the boy earlier, she could have.

“I am sorry, Harry dear. Terence must finish packing for our trip—are you still unable to tag along?” By the time his mother finished speaking, Terry had whispered a rushed goodbye and apology to which Harry acknowledged with a nod before he gave his undivided attention to the woman before him.

“I am afraid I cannot, Mrs. Boot. I have prior obligations. I thank you generously for your invitation, however.”

Mrs. Boot squealed, “oh! You are just so sweet! You remind me of my daddy back home. There’s always next time, hon,”’ the woman said earnestly with a wink.

“I thank you, goodbye,” and with one final goodbye from Mrs. Boot, Harry ended the floo call and stood. He did not turn toward the door however but he did speak, “what do you need mother?”

Lily gasped audibly, had Harry known she was there the entire time!? She knew that she was caught and revealed herself, she was also learning to not use so many words with the younger boy and decided to get right to the point.
“I have planned a picnic for you, myself and Nathan today. Nathan is already outside in the northern garden waiting for us,” Lily said in a hopeful tone.

Harry sighed, turned and walked out the door and into the corridor.

“I suppose we should not keep Nathaniel waiting, lest he throws a tantrum,” and without even waiting for her, Harry began to walk away, on his way to the garden.

Lily followed hurriedly, and tried to make conversation. She asked what he and Terry spoke about and the boy bluntly informed her that she had listened to a lot of their conversation already. Initially, Lily would have taken this as the boy being rude, or that he was mouthing off. However, just then, all he did was merely state a fact as blunt and callous as it was, he had not said anything wrong. Lily was learning that a majority of the time she was over sensitive and reacted to her feelings of being disrespected by someone much younger than her under her care. It was due to those sensitive feelings that her first reaction was to reprimand Harry or complain to James about Harry’s behavior because he obviously had more authority over the boy. Lily has learned that those actions and behaviors had not helped Harry desire a closer relationship with her. It was a testament to Lily’s growth and growing understanding of Harry that she knew that she should take what the boy says for face value. She knew that she needed to stop taking the boy’s blunt and abrasive personality so personally, because Harry treated most people the way he did her. So, when that topic didn’t successfully begin a conversation, she asked if he was worried about his new dueling instructor. She was already caught as Harry has pointed out, there was no point in acting like she hadn’t heard that part of Terry and Harry’s conversation.

Harry actually looked impressed by her audacity to ask such a thing that she had her from eavesdropping and Lily could not contain her sheepish grin because she felt like she had said the right thing because he actually replied to her question and told her that as long as the teacher was competent he would not complain, it was why he never complained about Rosier despite the man being verbally abusive and overly critical of Harry’s dueling skill. The man was competent, and taught Harry well. Lily did not like his response at all. Had Rosier mistreated Harry in his own home?

She went on to say that if this new instructor acted that way that Harry could come to her and she would make sure that they were not abusive or abrasive as Rosier had apparently been. Harry merely side eyed her with a thoughtful expression and hummed. Harry did not need to say it because Lily already knew what he was thinking, “you never cared before, why now? I won’t take your word and I will bare my own problems alone as I always have.” And that made Lily feel very critical of herself yet again. She also felt ashamed, but her therapist has firmly told her, over and over again that she should not give up just because Harry was not suddenly taken with her or respected the authority that she tried to practice over him.

An hour later and the picnic was going great in Lily’s opinion. At first Harry seemed wary and awkward and Lily had actually felt the same but Nathan was a good buffer for the two of them.

Lily learned so much about Harry in the past hour. Rarely did she stay in his space so long without the presence of his father or another adult, and rarely did Harry himself allow himself to be alone with Lily and that was rightfully so, Even James had made more of an effort in the last two years to become a bit closer with Harry in his own strange little way. Lily herself had taken much longer and she felt that this hour alone had tremendously changed she and Harry’s relationship and the way they viewed one another.

Harry wasn’t much of a talker, at least not in the presence of two talkers like Lily and Nathan. Harry did not seem bothered or offended, he merely adapted to the two’s more hyperactive
personalities and seemed to be more inclined to just listen.

She also learned that it was her own opinion of Harry that lead her to think that he was merely blunt, abrasive and rude.

The boy was awfully, awkward and yes--blunt, but he was extremely textbook polite just as he was taught to be by Mr. Perks. Harry literally learned how to behave from a textbook and a man who only saw him as an heir to an Ancient and Most Noble House and not an individual.

Etiquette wise, Harry was near perfect. He did things such as excuse himself politely. Hell, the boy even interrupted others with extreme curt politeness if he felt that they deserved such a thing. And though he preferred to answer in hums, he answered questions verbally when he felt that they warranted a complete answer. Table manners wise, he ate just as well as any other pureblood adult, even at home. The boy even spoke in an extremely articulate manner that most children his age were still learning to do, but Lily remembered shamefully that a majority of the boy’s tutors harshly reprimanded him for “baby talk.” They would even force him to repeat difficult words until he got them absolutely right. Lily would have never allowed Nathan to be treated that way, she thought shamefully.

Though, Harry’s etiquette left little to be desired, his social prowess was far behind his peers. He was extremely awkward and thought in a strictly logical manner that usually was unappreciated by some, but tolerated by many.

And for a long while, Lily was one of those who was unappreciative because she was unwilling to understand Harry. Now, she could see and understand why Harry had the loyal friends he did have. He made one feel special without even trying by merely allowing them into his life with little things such as the little expressions Harry gives when he listens to one tell a story or the slight hums that escape his throat that show he was engrossed into a story.

Yes, Harry was a very special boy, and Lily is ashamed to have realized it so late.

------------------------------------------------------

For Harry, it has only been five days since Summer has started. Things have been rather tense. His mother won’t stop pestering him whenever she could and often, Harry caught her looking at him in contemplation and worry. Any time his father looked at him, his lips were thin and his brow furrowed in what Harry assumed to be frustration. He could tell that the man had a lot to say to him, but they were obviously things he could not say in front of his mother—as they often were. Harry decided to use his father’s childishness against him and planned to avoid being alone with him as long as he could.

On the brighter side; Professor Snape had already sent he and his mother a letter that requested Harry’s time and services from July 8th through July 13th—that was a whole week he would get to spend with the professor and it would happen in less than ten days!

Harry knew that two of those days would be spent at Malfoy manor, because they would be administering a “treatment.” Treatments typically lasted hours, days, months and sometimes years even. Thankfully, this treatment should only take a day or two. Apparently, professor Snape and Harry would spend an additional five days together, and Harry did not know what they would be doing those five days but he was rather excited, especially because his mother had already granted him permission to go despite his father’s initial vocal disapproval.

His mother vaguely knew of Harry’s impromptu apprenticeship with the potion master and she seemed to improve. She convinced his father with the truth; that Harry was lucky to be learning
from a potion *master* like professor Snape. Potioneers were not too hard to come by but potion masters were. There were over fifty potions that only potion masters could legally create and distribute privately. While potioneers had to gain permission to brew certain potions from the ministry’s residential potion master, and even then, how much they could create or distribute was limited and even then, they could only distribute said potions through ministry sellers. Lily argued that Harry would be in capable hands, and his father who did not want to hear anything more of professor Snape--or Sev as his mother called him--relented.

Also, during this time Joseph had written him a short letter that told him the Kama manor’s address in France, but also reminded him to visit the squib orphanage on the isle of Wrye since he had missed the opportunity to do so and work on his project during the semester with Warts. Harry made the mental note to do so and wondered if he should invite Nathan, the other boy often helped with their projects yet, he was not as enthusiastic of their cause. The other boy liked the aspect of helping muggleborns and squibs but he was not too enthusiastic about the club preserving and teaching pureblood culture. Even though that was not the intention. The intention of the club was to preserve old magic, and the better parts of olden tradition. It just so happened that those wishing to preserve such things were purebloods. Hogwarts had a “muggle” course which often talked about muggles, their history and traditions and the only class that matched it in the magical since was professor Binn’s history class. That class in itself is a waste of time as the man rarely leaves the topic of the Goblin wars.

Nathan also only interacted with the students that both he and Harry knew, and the few Gryffindor students who were members. He was much like their father in that regard.

“Harry, you seemed lost in thought. Are you not hungry?” His mother asked, concern evident on her face.

‘Ah, yes, *I am currently at a mandatory dinner with the family*, Harry reminded himself. He had been rather absorbed in his thoughts and plans for the Summer. “Sorry, I was just thinking about the rest of my plans for the Summer. Have you and father discussed the Diggory’s invitation? I would really like to go.”

His father looked up from his plate with a frown, “I am still concerned that Nathan had not been invited--”

Nathan coughed and sputtered as he interrupted the man before his very angry looking mother could.

“Leave me out of it! You didn’t say anything when Ron invited me over for the Summer and not Harry,” Nathan demanded angrily.

His father raised his eyebrows so high in surprise that they retreated into his hairline. He could not understand why Nathan would respond so aggressively, “yes, but you know that your brother and Ron don’t get along… It’s different.”

“No, it isn’t!” Brazenly, Nathan raised his voice as he spoke, “I barely get on with Ron. In fact, if he hadn’t invited Dean as well, I wouldn’t even go. Not only that but I don’t really know Cedric that well, honestly. I really only interact with the other houses if they’re close to Harry or apart of Warts, which I am apart of--through Harry--mind you! Harry and Warts is the only connection I have with Cedric and I only see him once a week. **BECAUSE of Warts,**” Nathan emphasized, “—it’d be weird for him to invite me to his birthday party that’s meant for his closest friends!” Nathan said in a rush, he glared at their father along with their mother, and it was almost comical how much the two looked alike just then.
“Well, Neville is a good friend of your right? He’s going and I thought that you would—“

“Neville is a good friend of Harry’s too! Good friends don’t need to do everything with one another, they can have other friends too!” Nathan was so angry that he did not even realize that he was being a hypocrite. He had only recently begun “sharing” Harry and often reminded everyone around that it was him who was Harry’s closest friend.

“He’s going,” their mother said suddenly but firmly.

Their father looked at her in surprise and seemed ready to dispute her exclamation but their mother slowly placed her fork down, wiped her mouth and spoke so angrily that Nathan flinched.

“He. Is. Going.” She turned to Harry and when she spoke next, her voice was much softer but still just as firm, “you’re going, it sounds like a wonderful time. I myself have always wanted to go to Spisneyland when I was young.”

Harry nodded, but did not speak, his eyes darted from her to their father, the man did not look happy and he had his “lord Potter” face on.

“Lily, you do not understand, Harry and I will speak tonight. He has prior obligations anyway, he understands.”

No, Harry did not understand and his face must have said as much, or perhaps the brim of his eyes were red and they displayed his surprise and displeasure. They stung and he felt rather choked up.

“Boys. To your room,” their mother demanded, her eyes never left their father.

Immediately, Nathan clumsily grabbed his cane, stood and limped over to Harry’s side and lead them out of the dining room.

Their father’s eyes never left their mother’s own and he curtly demanded that Harry meet him in his study in an hour before Harry and Nathan exited completely.

In Nathan’s room, Nathan paced aggressively, each step produced a harsh thump from his cane.

“I cannot believe him! What the-the-the hell!”

Harry who was sat on the floor with his back against Nathan’s bed, merely hummed quietly before he told Nathan that using such language was barbaric but said nothing more.

“Does this not bother you!?” Nathan asked him through gritted teeth. He limped over to Harry and knelt at his side and glared at him.

“It does. However, I am used to this behavior from father,” Harry stated.

Nathan gaped, he was now on his hands and knees and his face was only a foot away from Harry’s own. “Harrison! Dad has always been strict with you, but he never outright denied any fun we wanted to have!”

Harry stared at his brother contemplatively, and he saw the earnestness in his eyes, “Nathaniel. It was any fun you wanted to have and not only that; it has only been recently that I have begun to request things like this at all. Father has always been this way, but things are changing with myself and that is the problem.”

“What are you trying to say, Harrison!? That dad would have no problem with this if I wanted to
“That is exactly what I am saying Nathaniel. Father revealed as much himself when he voiced his displeasure that you had not being involved at all.”

None of this was said accusingly. It was merely factual, and Nathan himself knew it. Slowly, Nathan sat beside Harry and mirrored his seating position. For a long while, Nathan did not speak and neither did Harry.

It felt like twenty minutes had passed before Nathan spoke next, “when we first went to Diagon Alley, dad had said that you told him that you didn’t want to go, but when I asked you, you said that you couldn’t go because you had etiquette lessons with Perks. And I begged and begged you to change your mind and I even demanded dad to reschedule the lesson. You agreed with ease and dad reluctantly agreed as well,” Nathan paused and when Harry looked over, his brother stared at him with furrowed brows. “Did dad even give you an option to go?”

“He did not.”

Nathan nodded, “we’ve always had different dueling instructors, well, I’ve always had dad and you’ve always had Rosier because dad said you preferred him. Is that true? Did he even offer to instruct you?”

“If he did, I would not have accepted his instruction. You know how he behaved toward me last year,” Harry reminded him bluntly.

Nathan cringed because he did know, and he did notice how Harry had avoided their father like the plague that school year, but Nathan’s twelve-year-old mind couldn’t make sense of Harry’s relationship—or lack of—with their father. To Nathan, their dad was a hero! The epitome of good, and he was always so kind, fun and funny toward Nathan. Understandably so, Nathan could not and did not want to make sense of how his father could treat Harry so harshly and Nathan so well. However, for the sake of his brother and due to his maturing mind, Nathan knew that he would have to acknowledge the differences in he and Harry’s treatment. But it was so very hard!

“But Rosier was not any better, I think he was even more strict and mean than father would have been!” Nathan said desperately.

Harry hummed, and looked away from Nathan and toward the ceiling. The ceiling suited the other boy immensely. It was a mural of the original Chudley Cannons Quidditch team win in 1892.

“I suppose so, but Rosier is not my father. I have no familial connection with the man and it was his job to instruct me and nothing more. A majority of his criticism was welcomed because I wished to improve. However, with father, no matter what I did, I would not have been good enough because he would not look at me as a student but as his son who can never meet his standard. So, actually Rosier was better because he treated me as he should have; a student and nothing more.”

“Gods, look at you. You really mean it. You really feel that Rosier treated you better than father would have.”

“Do not misconstrue my words, Nathaniel. I said that Rosier taught me as he should have. No favoritism, no unjust expectations.”

“Oh.” Nathan croaked as he sat on his knees that were folded under his behind.

Nathan must have felt rather overwhelmed because he began to play with his bottom lip. Harry hated when he did that, it was unsanitary but he supposed it was better than Nathan sucking his
thumb as he used to when they were toddlers.

A pop startled the two out of their thoughts, “Your father be wanting you, master Harry, he’s being in his study,” Mousy said and just as soon as she popped in, she popped out without waiting for Harry to follow.

“I’ll go with you!” Nathan said hurriedly. He attempted to stand but moved much too quickly, and fell back to his knees. He released a harsh hiss as pain quickly spread through his lower back.

Harry forced his brother to lay down. He then grabbed two pillows from Nathan’s bed and placed one under his head and the other under his lower back, “do your stretch exercises and do not get up until the pain subsides,” Harry demanded sternly and walked to the door.

“Don’t boss me around like this, Harrison! I am fully capable of--” Nathan called out, but stopped mid-sentence when he attempted to sit up but was stopped by the pain in his back as it worsened significantly. Through gritted teeth, Nathan growled in frustration but openly relented and relaxed onto the pillows, “just-just tell me how it goes, alright?”

Harry nodded, “I always do, Nathaniel, do your exercises,” and with those parting words. Harry left and begrudgingly made his way to his father’s study.

Upon reaching the man’s study, Harry knocked softly and cracked open the door, “you called for me?” Harry inquired.

From his seat behind his desk, his father grumbled and gestured for Harry to enter and take his usual seat in front of the opposing furniture. Harry entered and was surprised to see a man sitting on a conjured chair that was next to the chair Harry often sat in when he was in his father’s study.

Slowly, Harry made his way to his seat and subtly took in the man’s features. The man was handsome, despite the fact that he looked to be at least fifteen years older than his father, but Harry felt that the man’s well-groomed beard and mustache made him looked older than he actually was. The man’s hair was short, slicked back, slightly shaved at the sides and speckled with the occasional grey strand of hair which was an indicator of his age. He also had deep crows’ feet at the ends of his eyes, and with the gentle smile he currently gave Harry; Harry could tell that he smiled a lot.

“Your mother and I have come to an… agreement of sorts,” his father began warily. Harry, slightly startled and blushed for having stared at the man so intently. He turned and faced his father and did not move an inch as he waited and listened while the man spoke.

“I only wanted Nathan to go with you because neither of you have had such trips before. I also thought Nathan was being purposefully excluded because Neville had been invited. However, I learned from your mother that Cedric and Neville are actually close in their own right. You will of course go to Spisneyland. I expect reports of your time with Snape and nothing but good words from your other tutors for such generosity.”

Harry gaped at the man before him, he acknowledged that he was wrong? What was happening here!?

His father looked embarrassed, he cleared his throat and looked away from him and to the man beside Harry, “beside you is Matthias Mopsus. He will be your dueling instructor starting July 19th, when you return from your apprenticeship with… professor Snape.”

Now, Harry felt that he could fully face the man without angering his father for disrespect and so
he did so, he was once again met with the slight gentle smile from the man. Briefly, he wondered if
this was the same man who applied for the divination position that professor Snape had told him
about even though the names were slightly different. Harry had even attempted to owl the man, but
each time Hedwig returned with the letter still attached to her claws. Initially, Harry thought that
perhaps Mopsus was too far, however, now he considered that perhaps he had told her the wrong
now.

The slight name differences could be blamed on professor Dumbledore merely reading and saying
the name wrong. Harry longed to ask but refused to do so in the presence of his father.

With a slight bow of his head, Harry introduced himself, “it is a pleasure, I am Harrison Charles
Potter, heir to the most Ancient and Noble House of Potter. I look forward to your tutelage, sir.”

The man stuck out his hand and when he spoke, Harry was taken aback by how deep and relaxing
the man’s tone of voice was despite the heavy pitched accent he spoke with. Harry had never heard
anything like it. The man was extremely intriguing and Harry longed to know where his father
found him.

“Where I’m from, we only bow to those we are about to duel.”

Despite the man’s friendly tone, Harry knew a slight admonishment when he heard one and
without hesitation, Harry shook the man’s hand and upon contact he saw a vision of the man before
him in the headmaster’s office, politely being declined the divination teaching position by
headmaster Dumbledore. This man was the man that he initially knew as Mattius Mophus. Oh, he
owed Hedwig a thousand mice.

Harry’s hand was released and Harry took deep calming breaths to steady himself and ground him
to his current reality.

“I have received this position from your father due to responding to an ad he had placed in the
paper. To repeat him; my name is Matthias Mopsus. I hale from Hakale, a deme of Attica. It is
near Marathon if that means anything to you.”

“It does,” Harry said with slight excitement pitching his tone. He felt that he was perhaps a bit too
over excited as the man laughed briefly when his voice cracked when he spoke. Harry cleared his
throat and continued, “however, the books I have read indicate that the magical city of Hakale
disappeared.” Harry sat on the edge of his seat out of instinct. The man before him, exuded
authority and intelligence which demanded respect from someone as young and inexperienced as
Harry.

The man’s eyes crinkled, “my, we magical Greeks surely are talented if even you magicals here in
Britain think us non-existent. Magicals in Greece are extremely far removed from non-magical
society, and each of our magical cities are under wards that work as types of…” Mopsus paused.

Unbeknownst to both Potters, Mopsus watched their reactions to his prolonged silence subtly.
Purposefully, he paused much longer than he needed to before he continued to speak, “...Fidelius
charms. Not only that but each citizen within said cities must swear under a magical oath—or life
oath of they are born from a magical family but lack magic themselves—that they will not reveal
the locations of the cities that they reside in to those who have been born outside of magical
society.”
“Absolutely phenomenal,” Harry breathed. He looked away in deep thought and did not see his father prepare to reprimand him for his inattentiveness, nor did he see the man raise his hand in a silencing manner effectively stopping James from speaking who looked at him in disbelief.

Harry returned his attention to the man just as he lowered his hand, “what of the non-magicals born outside of these cities and their families? They are called muggleborns here.”

The man rubbed his beard thoughtfully, “very good question,” he praised Harry with a pleased smile.

This made Harry feel rather good and confident, and the warmth in his neck embarrassingly stated how pleased he was with the man’s response.

“First, you must understand that there are not many of these so called, ‘muggleborns’ throughout the non-magical cities of Greek,” muggleborns was said with the slightest bit of distaste which could be mistaken for prejudice, but Harry felt that the man just thought the word ‘muggleborn’ was distasteful itself, since the man himself used the word, ‘non-magical’ to describe those without magic.

Harry had the intrusive thought to gather paper and a pen, but he did not wish to interrupt the man’s train of thought, so he decided to rely on his typically reliable memory while he hung on to the man’s every word as he spoke.

“Our magical cities are ancient. Even older than magical Britain, we thought the most powerful magicals as super humans, or Gods if you must, and our ancestors worshiped them, nearly similar to how you all view people such as Merlin, but more spiritually in a sense.

Our magical and non-magical ancestors aligned ourselves as servants of these so-called Gods, and those gifted as magicals were considered ‘blessed’ said Gods at the time. It is only through modernization that we call ourselves magicals. Either way, these cities and societies still exist to this day, and generations of families have been raised within them and today those families who remained in Greece still say, even if they have left and traveled to other magical societies. In the past, humans that lacked magic would still be considered apart of magical society due to their knowledge of magic or if they were born into a magical family in the cities or had migrated on their own to the magical cities as serfs under a lord who received their title under a basileus. This is how non-magicals intermingled with magical society.

In these times, the migration of non-magicals have since been banned in a majority of magical cities and though it is rare, magicals or those born into magical families but lack magic has been known to leave the cities and live amongst non-magical society, they have done so for centuries.

Few started small families, which sometimes passed on magic to those after them and it is due to that—though as rare as it may be—that some born outside of our magical cities live among the non-magicals. There have been four thousand documented cases of these ‘muggleborns’ as you call them in the region of Attica alone in the last five centuries. However, each case that had traceable family had proven them to be related—no matter how distant—to a magical family or non-magicals families of magical Greece. Naturally it is assumed that even those with undocumented family had similar circumstances. Moving on, when they are discovered, they and their closest immediate family are offered to move to a nearby magical city in one of the small homes owned by the basileus or lord of the area. If they accept, they take the same oath as any other resident of the city, if they refuse they must still go under oath to not reveal any details of magic to the non-magical members of society or non-immediate family.”

Harry sat silent in complete awe as he took in the man’s words. The Greeks were completely
removed from muggle society? Harry wanted to make sure, “sir, here in magical Britain, our ministers interact with the muggle minister--muggle means non-magical--of Britain, we go as far as to inform them of magic in order to help one another. Do the Greeks do something similar?”

Mr. Mopsus smiled indulgently, “no. There is no need to. However, many lords of magical Greece may work as congress members on behalf of the high ranking basileus they serve. This type of work is typically to monitor the non-magicals closer and ensure that our societies stay separate. Similar to your aurors, we have forces to wipe memories if we suspect that non-magicals are close to discovering magic or our magical societies.”

“How do you not want peace with non-magicals?” His father asked incredulously from his desk.

“Our ‘peace,’” Mr. Mopsus smile was cruel, “with the non-magicals is not decimating them for living, Mr. Potter. Unlike you all, we have learned from our ‘witch’ trials.”

His father blanched, and looked ready to argue but was effectively cut off as Mr. Mopsus returned his attention to Harry and spoke in kind authority.

“I am sure you will have more questions, and I will indulge you more so when we are not training,” he paused and made sure Harry was listening.

“I look forward to it, you explain large difficult pieces of information amazingly well,” Harry said earnestly, he was still working on comprehending what he had heard. The Greeks have discovered that a majority of their “muggleborns” were actually related to magical families, even if that relation was distant? Could this not be assumed of muggleborns in magical Britain? Penny and Perry would have a field day with such information and Harry could not wait to tell them. Harry also wondered if purebloods were an important part of magical Greek culture. He would have to ask Mr. Mopsus such a thing in the near future. It was also so very fascinating that magical Greeks still had things such as Basileus, but they weren’t exactly kings as Harry had thought, they sounded like slightly more powerful lords, this was another thing that fascinated Harry greatly.

“I have mentored others for many decades, Mr. Potter,” the man said in a stern voice, though amusement lined his eyes.

“As I said; I am here because your father put out an ad for a dueling instructor, and as I am an expert dueler, I have been hired for the job. You wield a sword, correct?”

“Yes, sir,” Harry answered in surprise as he peaked a glance toward his father who stared at Mr. Mopsus in confused suspicion.

“How do you know of the sword…?” His father questioned quietly as he stared at the man in near horror, skin pale.

“There are many things that I know,” Mr. Mopsus said as he tapped his temple which drew attention to his slightly pale green eyes. When he saw Harry looking into them, he winked which caused Harry to look away quickly.

“Anyway, in my youth I had been a knight amongst other things for the second born despot of one of the Basileus of Hakale for fifteen years. I am acknowledged as an expert swordsman and I had been in duty for thirty years before retiring only five years ago. If you have not put two and two together, allow me to do so for you; I will also be educating you in the ways of the sword.”

At this, his father jumped slightly in surprise, it appeared that his did not know that the man would be training him in the way of the sword as well.
His father had bought another vault at Gringotts on Harry’s behalf and forced him to place Ravenclaw’s sword inside and Harry had assumed that he would not be allowed to use it until he was of age. He was hopeful over the prospect of being allowed to use a sword once more but was sure to not show his enthusiasm and upset his father.

A cough interrupted his thoughts and he instinctively turned his reluctant attention to his father, “Harry, this was merely an introductory meeting,” his father said as he eyed Mr. Mopsus pointedly. Mr. Mopsus stared at his father with a blank expression and his expression did not change even when his father shied away.

“Anyway, the two of you will have more time to speak after July 19th.”

Mr. Mopsus nodded and stood, “do not be so passive aggressive, boy. I know a dismissal when I hear one.”

His father visibly gulped but did not apologize. He called out to the house-elf called Burgundy to show the man out. Harry also walked with the man to the door and once again thanked him or his time.

With the demand that Harry engage in physical exercise--preferably running--Mopsus left, leaving Harry and his father alone.

“Sit down,” his father demanded, his voice was not cruel, but his shoulders were tense.

Harry sat and he heard his father mumble, “if the arse wasn’t a renowned dueler, I swear…”

His father spoke louder, “how do you feel about him.”

Knowing that his father preferred to be answered quickly, Harry said the second thing that came to his mind, “he is intriguing and explains things well. The fact that he is willing to explain things so thoroughly is something I am immensely pleased with as Rosier became irritated with a majority of my questions. Thank you for finding him.”

With slightly red cheeks his father said, “think nothing of it, now onto more pressing matters,” quickly he placed several documents on the desk.

He refused to meet Harry’s eyes, even as he gestured for Harry to take one. Harry did so apprehensively. He could only handle two at a time and when he read the first, he blanched;

"Dear Lord of the Most Ancient and Noble House of Potter,

In good will, and good faith, I suggest that we meet for lunch in the near future and discuss the possibility of marriage between your heir, Harrison Charles Potter, and my youngest, Lavender Brown who will be starting Hogwarts this coming semester. I have attached a picture of Lavender, and I do so to show that she is a beautiful young lady, fore she has thankfully received a majority of her mother’s genes. Though she is young, she has shown a prowess for transfiguration and is remarkable in ballet.

While the brown family are not most ancient, we are of pureblood, and own a manor here in Britain that could nearly rival the Malfoy’s own. We also own small cottages and villas that members under our family name live under. It is also worth to note that we are not at all related to you, the Potters as it was only a mere three centuries ago that our family migrated from America to great Britain. I remember our discussion at the Wizengamot respectively and I was pleased to learn that you are also against inbreeding and understand that it may cause defects to the children born of ill bred inbred witches and wizards. With the talent your son has shown, they would sire
remarkable children and make both of our family names even greater than they already are.

I do so hope that this letter reaches you well, and that I receive an answer as quickly as possible.

With sincerity and good intentions,

Carlius Brown

Harry’s eye twitched. ‘ill bred, sire!? Were they breeding dogs for their parents!?’ Briefly, Harry reviewed the picture attached and noted that the girl was rather pretty, but it made him ill that she was only eleven. Hell, Harry was barely thirteen!

Without looking toward his father, Harry briefly reviewed the rest of the documents, there were eight in total. All with the same primacy. Harry’s eye would twitch involuntarily as he read name after name.

Harry tensed as he recognized the names Sue Li, Hestia Carrow, Ismelda Murk and Corey Oda, they were all current students at Hogwarts. He continued to read and read, Lila Bletchley--she was actually older than Harry by two years--she is a current student at Beauxbatons and an apparent cousin of current Slytherin students; Kevin and Miles Bletchley. When Harry read through the letter for Tharece Higgs, his eyebrows rose through his hair line when he read that she was nineteen and the elder sister of Terence Higgs, an eighth year prefect of Slytherin. Harry vaguely recognized the last name of Sheray Cole. If he thought hard enough, he could remember that there was a past student of Hogwarts with that last name who was rumored to have dated a boy by the name of Jacob Max that was rumored to have left Hogwarts in his fifth year just to serve Voldemort. Sheray Cole earned her spot as the youngest of the girls, she was only five years old. Surprisingly, Sally Anne-Perks was also listed.

“You will politely decline all of them, I assume,” Harry said tersely, his mouth was in a firm line and he had the last file of Sally Anne-Perks gripped harshly in his palms.

“Do none of them interest you?” His father said with a frown, “ah, are you into other boys then?” There was no disapproval in his tone, he just sounded thoughtful.

“I am interested in no one. I am twelve.”

His father stood, and walked over to the fire place, “you’ll be thirteen soon, and you’re just a late bloomer like Remus was. Perhaps, you will be interested in one of these girls in a few years?” It was said questioningly, and Harry was grateful that his father’s back was to him as the man lit the fire. Harry was livid, and while it would not show in his expression, he could feel that by the heat of his neck and ears that they were red.

“I will not. Nathaniel and I have decided long ago that his first born, no matter boy or girl, will be the Potter heir or heiress. You do not have to worry, the line will continue,” maybe Harry was speaking a bit too soon because he and Nathan had had that conversation when they were very young after Rosier drilled it into Harry’s head that he would have an arranged marriage so that he could sire a desirable heir or heiress to the Potter line.

The fire roared and when the man faced Harry he could see the slight surprise in his father’s features. For a long while the man was silent, and even as he walked back to his seat he did not speak for a long while. When he did speak it was in a tone of disappointment and petulance, “this isn’t just about continuing the line, Harry. A majority of your classmates from affluent families have been offered marriage contracts by this point in their lives. Even Neville Longbottom has, and the real issue here is that I cannot trust you to find someone on your own. Honestly, without a
contract you may never find someone willing to marry you. Your mother worries for you, and so do I. You are a… different kind of boy.”

Harry sneered, and in that moment his father was caught off guard by how similar the sneer was to a notoriously grumpy, and irritable potions master. Even as Harry spoke, he spoke with politely veiled rage that clearly mimicked the manners of the well trained potions master, “that is just fine. Perhaps, I am incapable of finding someone to deal with my strangeness. I do not need a romantic companion, do not… worry father.”

In his irritation, his father slammed his hand on the desk, “do not misconstrue my words, Harry!”

Harry stood, his fists were clenched at his sides. How dare this man insult him and then act as if Harry misunderstood his words, “I am not misconstruing anything. You have just told me that I would not be able to find a willing marriage partner on my own and I earnestly informed you that that was just fine. Nathaniel is the-boy-who-lived and I know for a fact that he has received more marriage contracts than myself if we are receiving them at all. Have you demanded that he consider marriage to any of his potential suitors?” Harry did not yell, he was never one to yell in his anger, and during he and his father’s talks, he never felt that he could. Though, Nathan often did when they were younger. Harry had always been intimidated by his father and his father knew that and that was how he controlled Harry, but what would happen when Harry had enough and was no longer intimidated? It appeared that they both were about to find out because the contracts seemed to be a breaking point for Harry.

“That is not the point--”

“The point is, father--” Harry hissed the title, “--is that you would never force Nathaniel into a marriage contract, even if he was the Potter heir. You yourself married for love, I know that for a fact because even grandfather’s marriage was arranged and you’ve gloated over the fact that his death allowed you to marry mother.”

Harry walked away, prepared to exit, “so, no, I will not consider any of the contracts and you will just have to accept tha--” Harry’s hand was on the doorknob when he was harshly snatched back by his arm. When he was forced to turn, he had been prepared to tell his father off further, however, the man slapped him hard before Harry could even speak.

Chapter End Notes

The response to the last chapter actually had my eyes quite watery. Not merely because you all expressed your thoughts in regards to that particular chapter but because many of you had wished me well for my exams as well. I appreciated that so very much and I did okay. The first thing I did upon completing was correct this chapter and finish it up as much as I could so that I can move forward with the story.

I thank you all and I promise I will have an update very soon, now that school is ending. I have the next chapter written out, it's mainly (if not all of it) will be Harry and Snape, but the sequences don't make too much sense and there are so many grammar and spelling errors, even more so than usual! **EDIT: I am out of town until the 18th, sorry. I will post asap though. <3**

I am curious do you all still hate Lily? Am I doing an OK job at garnering a little
sympathy for her, ha ha. Just think, in only a few more chapters we will really understand her feelings, this is only a glimpse and honestly, I do not think Harry will be able to take it.

Also, are there things you guys would like to see? Sometimes I include them no matter how small. Ie; a really cool and awesome person briefly mentioned having Terry talk a bit with Harry about what he did for Dobby and I included it to the best of my ability so that it would fit with the flow of the story. Do not be afraid to mention what you may like to see in the comments, you never know what could happen! <3
Chapter Summary

A short and long overdue chapter. PLEASE PLEASE READ AUTHOR'S NOTE AT THE END.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Both Harry’s eyes and his father’s were opened wide in surprise and their mouths were agape in shock, but neither spoke.

His father’s hand hovered above the place that he had slapped Harry and the man continued to open and close his mouth.

James could not believe that he had just slapped Harry, his heir, his son. Harry stood before him, his mouth parted slightly and his eyes wide with disbelief and perhaps even anger if James read into them right.

“Harry—“ but he was unable to say much more because he was flung back harshly by an unseen force.

Harry himself knew that it was not his own magic that flung the man back, he had actually been much too shocked by the blow to have even considered defending himself or retaliating against his father as quick as that. He hadn’t been prepared for his father to strike him.

Harry looked down, and did not expect to see the top of Mousy’s head as she stood in front of him with one shaky hand gripping his pants and the other shaking just as much but was outstretched toward his father. She popped them out of the room before Harry could even comprehend that she had just attacked the Potter lord—her master—on his behalf.

Uncharacteristically, Harry fell to the floor as he was apparated into a room. It took him a moment to orientate himself and stand, but when he did, he saw that he was in the elf’s quarters, in the basement of Potter manor.

House-elves traditionally chose their own quarters. They often chose spaces such as cupboards, sheds, or closets of disused rooms, and rarely did they magically change these places to be more accommodating to their person. However, centuries ago, a Potter lord demanded that the elves use the cellar of the manor and make rooms out of the empty wine barrels. He had even gone further and charmed each barrel with a Capacious extremis Charm and permanently expanded the interior to be the size of a small cottage. The House-elves owned by the Potters lived rather lavish in comparison to other House-elves.

“Mousy, what you be’s doing dragging one of the young masters here! We’s hasn’t cleaned, his feets be being dirty!” Coffee, the youngest house-elf screeched as he approached Harry, and magically removed some dust from his clothes. Coffee has always been their most twitchy and hyperactive house-elf, and perhaps that was because he was the youngest at a mere sixty years old.
Slightly over his shock, Harry had slowly grown rather angry, he could not believe that his father actually slapped him, and for what reason?! Defending his right not to marry?! Only when he clenched his shaking fist did he realize that his other hand was still on his face, the sting was still there and only eased when Mousy stopped her pacing momentarily to cast a cooling charm at Harry’s cheek.

“Oh, oh,” Mousy bemoaned as wrung her big ears in her hands, “Mousy’s head is gone! Gone! The lord will surely be being angry for what Mousy has done,” Mousy wailed as she continued to pace. Harry was now slightly distracted from his dark thoughts, he had never seen Mousy so distraught and he immediately felt the need to protect and assure her that he was fine despite his horrific anger that still quivered deep within him. He had never been so angry in his life, it was hard to focus on much else.

His reaction was not quick enough and Coffee had the time to approach Mousy and roughly shake her by the shoulders, “What’s been being done by you, Mousy!?”

“Nothing! It was me. I accidentally used magic and threw my father across his study, Coffee. Mousy has not done anything. However, she was nearby, so she is worried that my father will think she attacked him,” Harry said firmly but not cruelly as he tried to push his anger to the back of his mind. He was not the most skillful liar unprompted but he has learned that he works best under pressure.

Mousy looked at him with big wet eyes before she looked away and released a mournful wail, “Oh, please be being quiet, young master! You’s did not fling your father. I had been doing that, I would never let you be being self blaming, so please, just hush!” Again she wailed and sought comfort, she clung onto Coffee who patted her back with an extremely confused look on his face.

“Mousy!” The voice of Burgundy boomed as he popped into the cellar. Burgundy was one of the oldest House-elves, he was legally “owned” under the Potter name, but it was Burgundy himself who said that he worked for the Potters and he wasn’t wrong. Burgundy actually got a monthly stipend to spend for necessities around the manor and for the other House-elves. He originally belonged to a Potter who had migrated to the Americas and he was the most articulate house-elf that Harry had ever met.

“Have you lost your damned head!?” The old elf screeched just inches away from Mousy’s face with his arms thrown in the air.

“No, I has not! The lord, slapped the young masters!” Mousy wailed and the reactions of the other two present house-elves were immediate. Coffee, who had been holding Mousy at arms length ever since Burgundy entered, pulled her closer into his arms defensively and Burgundy rounded in on Harry.

“Is this true, young master!? Did the Lord strike you?”

“You’re all making it sound so… abusive,” Harry said with a forced sigh and a slight roll of his eyes. He almost looked playful.

“This is no laughing matter, boy!” Burgundy said loudly and sternly and smartly, Harry pursed his lips and said nothing.

Burgundy sighed, and quickly but gently tugged on Harry’s pants leg while he pointedly gestured toward the ground. Harry kneeled so that he was face to face with the old elf.

“Did the lord strike you, b--young master. Yes or No answer only… please,” amusingly the
‘please’ was said as an afterthought.

“Yes, after an argument—” Harry did not get to finish his sentence because Burgundy grabbed his arm, and popped him into the family room, Mousy jumped from Coffee’s arms to follow, and refused to let Harry’s pants leg go.

In the room, his father sat slumped in his recliner with a dark hand print marring on his own face while his wife stood before the man yelling.

It was almost amusing how her hair frizzed and expanded in her ire. It made Harry intrusively think about the fact that he rather missed Busybody Hermione as he and Terry liked to call her. She so pretended to loath the nickname but could not dispute it and so it stayed.

“How dare you strike Harry, James Potter!? How does it feel when you’re struck and can’t do anything about it!? This better not have been because I told you that he was going with the Diggory’s no matter what heir responsibilities he had!” Lily yelled viciously, her hands were firmly at her side and it appeared as if she barely refrained herself from striking the man again. James did not agree to allow Harry to go with the Diggory’s but Lily gave him no choice, she knew that James typically thought his final say was word. Especially in regards to Harry, and it was because of that Lily had not wasted her time trying to convince James why Harry should be allowed to visit with his friends. She just informed James that he would be doing so, and she did not relent until he reluctantly accepted. Though, she was not expecting such a strong reaction from her husband… He never raised an angry hand towards anyone and Lily can’t help but feel that she was the one to force his hand.

James said nothing as he stared blankly at Lily’s feet. That is; until he noticed Harry’s presence. He stood and rushed toward his son/ Harry surprised him when he took an immediate and instinctive step back and Mousy immediately shoved Burgundy away and stood defensively in front of Harry. Harry saw that his father looked incredibly hurt but he could not bring himself to care.

“Mousy! Will you seriously attack the lord once more!” Burgundy asked incredulously.

“I woulds if the lord hits the young masters again!” The smaller elf stated hysterically with her hand outstretched toward the man as snot and dribble of spit left her nose and mouth, Gods, she was so upset and hysterical. But she technically raised the boy behind her. Not even her master or threats of her death could make her stand down from protecting him and wasn’t that her orders? They gave her the assignment of being Harry’s personal house elf, and told her to make sure that Harry was well taken care of, and she has, more than dutifully so. She has loved the little boy behind her since she changed his first nappy.

Burgundy pinched the bridge of his nose, “EVERYONE, QUIET. NOW!” The old elf demanded in a booming voice. Immediately, everyone did as instructed and they watched the old elf with bated breath.

The elf turned to Harry’s father and with deep disappointed eyes and he said, “you need to speak with the portrait of the late Lord for advisement. When you removed it, he and I conceded because you had matured so much, my… Lord.”

Burgundy seemed to struggle with the title and with how he typically chose to address Nathan and Harry both as “boy” authoritatively, it would not be surprising to learn that he had referred to their father in a similar manner in private and as he grew up in the manor. “You have gravely gone astray,” Burgundy stated as he looked away from his lord to his young master.
The portrait that Burgundy spoke of typically hung in the main foyer of the Potter manor, rarely did it smile and rarely did it speak. Sometimes it hummed thoughtfully, or gave a brief commentary about current events if it had heard of any in passing from the occupants of Potter manor.

Portraits were mere echoes of those they portrayed. Often those who could afford commissioned pieces like Harry’s grandfather obviously could, placed their portraits in places they frequented most so that the portrait could better “record” them and mimic their personality and behaviors.

“Burgundy. That’s unnecessary, Harry and I can talk through this on our own,” with those words the man glanced at Harry and Harry did not know that the expression on his face spoke of calm rage and near hatred. James flinched and Burgundy sighed and popped out of the room and returned a second later with the large portrait held clumsily in his hands.

They watched quietly with great interest as Burgundy used a charm that magically kept the portrait upright. Once it stood, the portrait peered down at the family curiously.

“Grandson,” the portrait of Fleamont Potter said with a nod when he caught sight of Harry.

Harry schooled his features into something more neutral and turned to face the painting, “grandfather,” he said respectfully as he mirrored the actions of his grandfather’s portrait.

If Mousy was the one to raise Harry maternally, it was the portrait of Fleamont Potter and Harry’s male tutors who “raised” him paternally. While Harry respected his tutors—as he was demanded to—he never took to their personalities. In fact, he seemed devoid of one until he met the portrait of his grandfather while wondering the castle alone when he was a mere four years old. The man had been the one to introduce himself as his grandfather and they spoke for well over two hours before Mousy appeared looking for Harry and taking him away for lunch.

In that short interaction alone, Harry clung to a paternal figure who claimed to be blood and had shown kindness by showing interest in his person and emulated the bit of personality that he had been exposed to. Unfortunately, in the past, he and the portrait did not interact enough for Harry to actually grow while being nurtured.

His grandfather’s portrait hummed approvingly and Lily looked as if she had just discovered the secret of the universe as her eyes darted from Harry to the portrait. Though, she did not look joyous of her discovery at all; as a matter of fact she cringed in guilt that Harry gained personality traits from a portrait.

“Why have you brought me here, Burgundy?”

“I believe your son can tell you,” Burgundy responded while he looked towards Harry’s father expectantly.

Slowly but surely, his father approached the portrait, but the portrait did not speak, it merely waited.

“During an argument… I…” Harry waited for his father to make some excuse, or defend what he did but to his utter astonishment the man properly confessed, “—I slapped him. I was just so angry with him over the things he said about myself in regards to your death. And to make matters worse—you remember Snivellus”—his father was rambling and his mother’s lips thinned in distaste over the name that the man insisted on calling professor Snape from time to time.

“—Harry has been receiving… tutelage;” he spat the word as if it were poison, “—from the coward turned man, and father, I swear. Ever since starting said tutelage, Harry has become more
disrespectful towards his mother and I. I didn't mean to strike him, I didn’t want to strike him, and I —"

“Enough,” the portrait demanded firmly. Harry audibly heard the clack of his father’s teeth collide as he closed his mouth. Even as a portrait, Fleamont Potter was an imposing man and his frame towered over his son, making him appear even bigger.

“I was painted a mere year after you were born, I was there as the me with a soul raised you, and I cannot recall ever a time of striking you for any reason, and I had many reasons to have your hide, mind you. Do you remember when you made little Mary-Anne Perks cry because you cut off one of her pigtails? I had to pay her parents a hefty sum in compensation… Or the time when you were indefinitely suspended from one of the local mother’s homeschoolings before your years at Hogwarts, because you lifted her skirt during class… Even your time at Hogwarts had been dreadful, I received letter after letter from the Slytherin head of house due to your deplorable behavior to one Se—”

“I get it! I understand, father, you had many reasons to have my arse!” His father said hurriedly with a wave of his arms, cutting his own father off. He looked back at Harry worriedly, but his eyes were firmly planted on his grandfather’s portrait. Never had he heard the thing speak so much. The man was known to be rather quiet, and his portrait was a reminder of that, so it was fascinating to watch as it lectured with his grandfather’s voice, expression and even some of his memories. The painter must have been rather powerful, and if Harry ever had his portrait painted he’d want it done by the same artist if they were living.

Even though his grandfather came off intensely stoic, he had successfully spoiled Harry’s father, according to confessions from the man himself; Harry’s grandfather had doted on him greatly, sometimes even too much and that was why he tried to not do the same for Nathan and Harry because it made it difficult for him to grow up and mature as an adult. However, he failed spectacularly—or depending on how one looked at it, he half succeeded. Harry was a rather mature adolescent, and as he grew—and even now—he rarely acted out. Not that he was ever truly allowed to; furthermore, his maturity derived from the lack of paternal love in his critical developmental years (ages 0-3.) If one looked at Nathan however, they would perhaps consider him a part of his parents parental success in comparison to their father's over indulgent own. Nathan was almost perfectly immature for his age, because though his parents dotted on him immensely, he had Harry to balance him out, and even Remus as well. Maybe that was why Nathan was not as much of a bully as their father had supposedly been, according to passive remarks from their mother and statements from professor Snape.

Yes, in comparison, Nathan and Harry’s grandparents had severely spoiled their father and it showed.

“Exactly, I had many reasons to truly discipline you, and I never did. Not even once. Not even when you really deserved it, but you mean to tell me that you struck your son— MY grandson—because he childishly reminds you of someone you did not get on with years ago? Or under this excuse of him becoming more “disrespectful” and or ‘argumentative’ as most teenagers typically do? Do you remember the ‘arguments’” the portrait makes air quotations with its fingers which showed the sarcastic side of grandfather, “you had with me when I dare told you no? How you yelled disrespectfully and threw tantrums?”

“Dad, please. Not in front of Harry—” James hissed as he looked back toward Harry who still paid him no mind.

“Even now, you disrespect me by interrupting me. It is no wonder you removed my portrait from
your study, effectively ignoring my guidance which was the reason I was painted for in the first place. You must already know that your behavior towards the current Potter heir is shameful. The last you spoke to me, you said—you promised to make an heir worthy of the Potter name, and you are. DO NOT ruin him. I need not say anything more. Burgundy, return me to my mantel. I do not wish to look at such a hypocrite any longer,” while James looked down at his feet shame-faced; Burgundy undid the charm, and cast a feather light charm and picked up the portrait.

“Yes, sir,” Burgundy said as he popped out of the room and returned a moment later.

“Harry, I would like to hear what happened from you,” Lily said. Mousy respectfully moved to the side but kept a hand on Harry’s pants leg. His mother placed two gentle hands on his shoulders, and attempted to force eye contact.

“Father merely shared a few prospects for me in regards to possible future marriage contracts and I became upset and expressed my… disinterest for them,” Harry said bluntly. He did not expect for his mother to make a choking noise or for her face to become bright red from the neck up. When Harry looked back at his father, the man’s face was pale and his eyes were wide. Did he not expect Harry to mention what their argument was about?

No. That was not it. He did expect for his mother to even ask because until recently, she trusted and pushed his father to handle all disciplinary manners in regards to Harry.

His mother did not look at the man, but Harry felt her hands begin to shake and when she spoke next, it sounded as if she was doing her best to suppress either rage or tears. Harry could not tell.

“He… was angry because you are uninterested in... marriage contracts?” She asked, she shook with pure rage, and Harry felt that she did not actually want an answer and remained silent.

In Lily’s mind, she thought James would try to manipulate Harry into agreeing to cancel his trip with the Diggory’s. Whether James approved or not, Harry would be going, that is what she had discussed with him when she made Harry and Nathan go to their rooms. However, this was so much worse.

Behind him, his father approached and placed a hand on Harry’s shoulder that Harry shook off roughly before he took two big steps away from the man.

“Do not touch me,” Harry snarled. It shocked both himself and his parents, but he did not relent. This man had slapped him. When all Harry did was assert himself and Harry felt rage, and in another universe, Harry would yell. Perhaps he’d even destroy the room around him, but this Harry would not give his father the satisfaction of witnessing Harry lose control. Though, Harry vowed to himself right then and there, that the man would get his. Someway somehow, Harry would repay him for slapping him.

“Never touch me. Again,” Harry demanded through harsh breaths. His father struggled at where to place his attention. On one hand, Harry had never spoken to him in such a manner, but then again, James had never struck him. So, he decided to go with the easier of the two and faced his wife, “Lils, I--” James wanted to say; I didn’t mean to. I didn’t mean to. He’s my son! I love him, they were words that he meant to his very core. There was never a time in his life where he didn’t love Harry. In the beginning, right after his birth, there were many things that forced James to feel reluctant of his care of his child, but those were things that James did not allow himself to think about anymore. In the end, he really learned to love Harry, even if he thought the boy was utterly weird, he was still his heir, his son, his boy and anyone who dared thought he did not love Harry just because he was strict and stern with the boys were fools whose opinions didn’t matter. Harry and Lily had to know that! He had to tell them, however, the deep anguish he saw on his wife’s
face caused him to remain silent.

Harry watched the scene before him intensely. Why was his mother so upset? It was not as if Harry would be forced to marry one of the prospects tomorrow, there has to be a deeper reason that he is not seeing that his mother was currently so disgusted with his father.

He watched as his mother closed her eyes as if in pain and turned away from his father. Her hands hovered above her hair, but she gripped them closed before they could enclose around her hair. Harry briefly wondered if he had the habit of playing with his hair because of the woman before him whose voice was wet with tears as she spoke, “James. James. Just. Be quiet, I cannot even begin to express how upset I am with you,” she turned and gently moved Harry aside. Mousy stood next to him and wrung the em of her clothing between her hands. “You know how damaging those contracts can be—you of all people!” His mother hissed with while she jabbed a harsh pointed finger into his father’s chest.

His father attempted to grab the hand and hold it tenderly, but his mother snatched her hand away.

“Lily! C’mon! This is different,” different from what? Harry thought briefly as his father continued to ramble; “Harry is borderline emotionless, he doesn’t understand what he wants! Anyway—he’s twelve! It’s not weird for him to think that he doesn’t want a relationship right now, the contracts would only be fulfilled once he becomes of age anyway. You know I’d never forced him or Nathan to marry while so young. I just want what’s best for them. Besides, you were the one who’s been worried that he may not ever get a girlfriend, a contract is the best way to ensure it happens. He’s immature, and odd, you know that he will not find someone who will tolerate him otherwise!” James wanted to shut up, everything he was saying was coming out wrong but he was just so frustrated and anxious. Did they think he treated Harry the way he did out of hate? Of course, not. He wanted Harry to have a good life, and sometimes he felt like the boy could not do so himself.

Harry’s fists clenched, and he felt that familiar all consuming rage creep into him the more his father spoke.

“Do you know how bloody frustrated I am!? I’m at my wits end. Tensions are rising between light and dark wizards yet again, and this time it sounds like even grey wizards may get involved. This has made work hell! Beyond that; I have other purebloods at my throat, inquiring after Harry, more than they do Nathan—the-boy-who-lived—because in their opinion; and I quote;” James childishly busied one hand with twirling his hair with the other on splayed open on his chest in mock feminine elegance, “your boy is so handsome James, my daughter attends school with him and calls him a ‘mannequin’ because he is so emotionless. I admonished her because it was so uncouth of her to say.” The words were said with a shrill voice, but then he changed his stance to that of a pompous pureblood with his hands behind his back. His voice was just as snooty as his pose; ‘Harrison is an odd, awkward and rather; barmy young man, don’t you think, Lord Potter? Surely, he and young Nathaniel were not raised in the same home. James relaxed and then stood face to face with his arms in the air. He looked positively manic, “—and you bloody know what, Lily!? it’s hard to disagree with them!” His father immediately regretted saying the last part aloud and looked to Harry with wide eyes and a hand over his mouth.

Someone had made a choking noise and as Harry’s face heated with embarrassment he knew that the noise came from himself.

“Harry, baby—” his mother said and took a timid step closer to he and Mousy. The pet name was unappreciated and Harry raised a hand in a manner that said; ‘stop, do not approach me.’ The women had been awfully clingy as of late and it was beginning to aggravate Harry how she tried to
intrude on his daily life in ways she had not bothered to in the past.

“I’ll have you know that I am perfectly fine with being alone. I don’t want things like a girlfriend, or a wife—” Lily opened her mouth but Harry cut her off knowing what she wanted to say. She was predictable that way, “--or a boyfriend, or husband. You do not need to desperately search for one that will tolerate my oddities, my awkwardness and my ‘barmy-ness’, Lord Potter,” Harry spun on his heel and left with Mousy close behind.

He did not see Lily glare menacingly at James while she informed him that she would be sleeping in one of the guest rooms, nor did Harry see the deep regret in his father’s eyes. Even James knew what he said was beyond cruel and they were things he would not have said had he not been so stressed and pressed because they were things he did not actually believe. While he agreed that Harry was an odd boy, he was immensely proud of him and the things he has accomplished so far in school and his private tutors--while critical--always had positive things to say about his hard work and perseverance. These were things he would say in retort to those who criticized his child. While James himself could be overly critical of Harry he did not actually tolerate others doing the same. These were all things Harry had no idea about because James never actually expressed these things to the boy. In James’s defense, he was a childish man who has always been catered and listened to. Childishly, he expected Harry to know of his pride and love for him without actually expressing so.

James had not missed how Harry referred to him as lord Potter, and with the use of that title alone, James knew that it would take Harry a long while to forgive him for what has transpired on this day.

However, the one thing that never crossed James’ mind was the very strong possibility that Harry may never forgive him.

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When Harry still had a few days to prepare for his excursion with Professor Snape, he had not wished to spend that time at Potter manor. Thus, he did anything and everything to leave the manor when he could.

Things between he and his father were still tense and his mother had begun to hover even more—Harry had thought it impossible for her to do so.

Nathan still did not know of what transpired between the three but the day after the event, though; he knew that things changed dramatically, and not for the better, but he could not understand why. Harry worried that Nathan would find out, he knew that his brother would not react calmly. He could easily envision Nathan throwing the tantrum of all tantrums and slapping their father in retaliation. Harry would get back at their father, there was no doubt about that. However; he did not wish to get even with the man and retaliate with equal actions. No, Harry has learned that he was a very petty boy and wanted his father to immensely regret striking him and that would take patience. It would also take Harry carefully planning his course of retribution which did not involve Nathan’s loving dramatics.

Thankfully for Harry, Nathan was not around to question or pester Harry for answers for long, because he was sent off to the Weasley’s the night after the event and there he would most likely remain there for a majority of the Summer. Both Nathan and Harry have never been separated for so long, so it truly felt like a test of their characters.

To distract himself from his anger, Nathan’s absence and to avoid his parents; the following day Harry had busied himself with the decision to visit the squib orphanage as he promised Joseph he
Initially, Harry had chosen for Warts members to go to the orphanage in order to learn more about squib children and by proxy squibs in general, but a majority of the members who had gone had returned rather humbled, and became more curious than Harry expected them to become. He had deeply regretted that he had missed out on such a development to his character and was thankful that Joseph had also been so deeply moved that he wanted to insure that Harry went as well.

When Harry had finally visited Nibley’s orphanage on the isle of Wrye himself; he was met with a sight that matched the reports of what the other Warts’ board members shared from the tales of their visit.

The orphanage resided within a mundane home that was a mere two stories tall. It had only one kitchen, five bedrooms (well six, if you counted the small storage room turned bedroom), and three bathrooms for its fifteen occupants. Twelve of those occupants were orphaned squibs, ages five through seventeen! The other three were all squib adults; the matron Justine Rottenberry, Mrs. Rottenberry’s assistant Tanisha Nibley and the groundskeeper & Mrs. Rottenberry’s husband, Andy Rottenberry.

Mrs. Rottenberry and Mr. Rottenberry were around the same age and looked well into their sixties. Mrs. Rottenberry spoke with authority and knowledge of her years. She and her husband had supposedly came from an orphanage by the name of Rottenberry. Ms. Nibley on the other hand, barely looked her thirties and came from Nibley’s orphanage itself. For Harry, it was fascinating that the orphans took on the last name of the facility they resided in, he wondered if it was a common occurrence in orphanages as he did not know much about them. Though, he did know that this type of behavior mimicked olden house structure, when lord’s allowed commoners to live in their lands in exchange for a fee, loyalty, work, etc. In those times, the people could choose to add onto their name, the name of their lord. Perhaps Harry was wrong, he did not pretend to know everything, and he planned to question professor Snape with all the things he did not know.

Coincidentally, he had met a rather gifted young black boy. Despite the boy’s albino features, Harry could tell his heritage by his kinky hair that was as round as it was long, it looked similar to Hermione’s but the curls were a bit tighter and the color was dirty blonde, he also had a round nose as she did as well. Harry was fascinated that the younger boy’s skin was rather light with a slightly tanned hue. He was not pale like Harry but he was not as dark as Dean Thomas either, but his features matched his year mate’s quite well.

It was only after the other boy showed Harry a few of his art pieces (which were rather well done for a child his age of eight years old) that moved on their own—no, moved with magic—that he introduced himself properly.

The boy’s name was Donovan Dolten Nibley, and even though all he could do (that he knew of) was make paintings move; he was not a squib and because of that he deserved to go to Hogwarts like Harry and the other members of Warts that he had met previously.

After his statement, Harry had stared at him, impressed with his confidence. While he stared; entranced, Harry forgot how unintentionally blank his face could be and Donovan had squirmed under his gaze until he became teary eyed and questioned Harry in frustration. The things he asked still ran through Harry’s mind.

Through tears of frustration Donovan interrogated Harry with questions meant for an adult; Donovan was left at the orphanage under the pretense of being a squib which he obviously was not because he could so some form of magic, so why couldn’t he go to Hogwarts? Was it because he could not cast with a wand? Which he had apparently tried to do with a wand that he had stolen off
of a Warts member when they visited previously. Was it because he had no money? Was there no scholarship that he could have?

Harry was overwhelmed, he had no answers for the questions that Donovan demanded to be answered. Harry was privileged, as young as he was; even he knew that much. He and Nathan’s mother often reminded them how lucky they were because even in her own upbringing she did not have much and without her own scholarship to Hogwarts, she would not have been able to attend. Harry knew that not everyone was as privileged as he, or as smart and lucky as his mother. Some people were Donovan Dolten Nibley; an orphaned boy in borrowed hand me down clothing; nearly underweight, and slightly bitter from the unfair circumstance that he was born into.

It was in that moment; that Harry decided to actually learn a bit more about olden households and what he could do for someone like Donovan. With this in mind, Harry had ended up promising that if the boy could perform two more types of magic, then he would seriously ask his parents, the staff or the headmaster about his chances of attending despite having limited magic.

Surprisingly the matron of the home volunteered to help Donovan as much as she could because he was so young and could not learn much on his own. Especially because he struggled with reading. Harry, young, overwhelmed but stern informed Donovan that he had three years to prove he can do these simple branches of magic, improving his reading & writing and he was to write Harry with his progress as it occurred.

Harry was also sure to affirm that he was not promising him a spot within Hogwarts, as he can do no such thing but perhaps people with limited magic like Donovan could be allowed into the school to study the magic they can do, no matter how simple or weak it may be. Harry was in full support of that but he did not know how to go about making it happen. He was a child after all, but he had time to learn. Perhaps, even Joseph could help him with his new self appointed problem.

Later, Donoven would receive a standard owl, a standard book on Potions, and Herbology. Harry had even included a book on magical theory, all bought with allowances that he had saved up. He had felt rather adult in doing so and in taking charge of said matter, however; he did not truly know if he could get Donoven to Hogwarts, but he could help him with his education within reason. After all; Harry valued education immensely and believed that anyone and everyone deserves to receive some form of education.

Harry now stood before the floo with floo powder clenched in his fists and he watched the fire roar invitingly as it blazed. Harry did not wish to do so, but he would take the weight of Duane’s wish, and his stress from home to his visit with his professor.

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“Hello, professor,” Harry greeted as he stepped through the floo. Immediately, Snape closed off the network from the Potter manor to his home and stared at Harry as the boy morosely looked around the living room of his home. Even in his low moods, the child was as curious as ever.

Snape was a skilled observer. He had to be, he was a spy in the war for two skilled strategics who thrived on manipulation. Not only was he a spy for such men, he was each of their best spy, and that’s why in his observation of Harrison Potter, Snape knew that something was wrong.

Harry enlarged his bag with a muttered incantation, he had not used his wand, but he moved his hand about as if he held it.

“What is the matter with you, child? You’re awfully absent-minded,” Snape asked as he took Harry’s knapsack and travel trunk from his hands and placed them next to the nearby sofa.
When Harry did not immediately answer, Snape did not grow impatient because he knew the boy before him had a care with his words. Especially, if his mind was occupied by troublesome thoughts, or thoughts beyond his years.

Though, he thought they were improving in eye contact, Harry did not meet Snape’s eyes at all when he finally decided to speak: “There are powerful witches and wizards with powerful magic, and there are weak witches and wizards, and we know of weak squibs who can feel that they perhaps should have magic and then there are squibs that feel none at all. Correct?”

’He’s rambling, he must be really stressed,’ Snape thought to himself, “right,” he stated aloud. Harry had a three day study binge one week in regard to his curiosity to squibs but he seemed satisfied in his research and asked Snape few questions. Snape wondered what had changed.

“What of powerful squibs? Squibs who make art that moves, squibs who can make potions using the little magic tucked inside them, squibs who can become skilled in herbology like anyone else. Are there no options for them or their children? Are they truly just left behind and abandoned by the Wizarding world?” Harry looked to Snape, and he was looking for answers, because he did not know these things. Perhaps, they were things he did not really think about until now.

“... The short answer is yes, there are little rights, educational venues and accommodations for squibs here in magical Britain. I cannot speak for anywhere else in the world,” and in all honesty: Snape himself had never seen the need to make an effort to integrate squibs into regular magical society if they could not do so themselves. They were not wizards, they were as good as muggles and should live as such but clearly, Harry did not feel that way. No, the boy was far too empathetic despite what others may believe from his somewhat cold and extremely awkward exterior. Snape himself was not as empathetic as Harry, nor would he ever be but he would support Harry within reason.

“Don’t you think that that is unfair?”

Snape thought very hard on how to respond, he really did not care much for squibs--well, he didn’t care much for others in general--but squids were below even him. Though, if they could perform magic as Harry thought they could then maybe they could be allow certain privileges and jobs if they put forth the effort to do so. “Perhaps… it is unfair to squibs, but I am more curious as to what brought this on. You have not gotten so anxious over squibs in the past.”

Harry proceeded to inform Snape about a squib boy named Donoven.

“Ah, I see… you feel obligated to the boy because of a promise. Perhaps you have bitten off more than you can chew,” Snape said with a voice blank of emotion.

Harry did not reply, he merely turned his forlorn gaze to his feet and remained silent for a long while. Snape did not want to assure him too quickly, nor did he want to give Harry a solution to his problem without allowing the boy to think of one for himself. He was surprised that a mere child such as Harry himself created a stipulation to help the squib child in the first place, but what if Donoven did the things Harry asked but Harry himself had no real solution? Harry told the boy he would do his best to find one, and Snape supposed that a wizarding house could take the orphan as a ward and allow him in school, but what house would and could afford to do so? If the boy’s parents weren’t all talk in their support of squibs then the squib child could easily become a ward of the House of Potter. Otherwise there was no other solution, the orphanage could not afford to send the child. Hogwarts’ tuition was not cheap and a scholarship was not possible because Hogwarts’ scholarships only went to fully fledged wizards; not magically inclined squibs.

After a few more moments of silence, Harry returned his gaze to Snape’s nose and spoke with
conviction; “I have put some thought into it, you know. I don’t expect you to have all the answers,” Snape’s raised eyebrows exclaimed his surprise at Harry’s statement and the boy quickly looked away.

“I researched it—just yesterday, so forgive me if my memory is not wholly accurate—nearly always, squibs from magical orphanage take on the names of the orphanages’ founders. It is rather similar to olden house structure. For example; Sirius Black—” Snape grimaced at hearing the man’s name, Harry did not notice and continued, “—was a ward of the Potter family after being disowned by the house of Black. He was not adopted as their son as my grandfather did not wish to step on any toes of the black family by adopting Sirius fully, but making Sirius his ward under the house of Potter made him responsible for Sirius’ education and health for an undetermined period of time.”

“And how did you discover this?” Snape asked impressed, it was like the boy had read his mind.

Harry grinned, “I asked my grandfather’s portrait. He gave lord Potter quite the dressing down the other day, and I’ve promised myself to speak with his portrait more often than I have.”

“Lord Potter?” Snape asked with a raised brow. He did not wish to encourage Harry to disrespect his parents—not that addressing his father as his formal title was disrespectful… if anything it was immensely respectful if not cold—perhaps, if he did not care for Harry as much as he did he would turn the boy against them but he did not view Harry as a weapon and thus he refrained himself from saying anything more as he awaited a response.

With a grimace and fire in his eyes, Harry informed him that James Potter struck him for lack of compliance in regards to a marriage contract.

Snape could not help his snarl, he loathed James Potter and—perhaps inappropriately—viewed Harry as more than a student or apprentice which made him feel a bit over-protective. Similar to his snakes back at Hogwarts--no, more so, “he what!?”

“He erm… struck me…?” It was spoken with childish uncharacteristic uncertainty, and if this were any other circumstances, Snape would have taunted him in good nature.

“Please refrain from responding with statements formed as questions!” Snape snarled as he began to pace in front of the fireplace. In response, Harry put his hands up as if he were being put under arrest. It was uncharacteristically childish of him and Snape could not help but relax in response to the gesture. Harry was innocent--he was the victim, in fact--he did not deserve Snape snapping at him.

“I… regret snapping at you. It is merely… aggravating that he would actually strike you in such a manner. Corporal punishment for true wrongdoings is one thing…” Snape’s voice trailed off, he himself was often struck out of frustration among other things by his father during his childhood. Harry experiencing similar, if only once brought bad memories to the forefront of his mind.

Harry scrunched his nose up at that, “even if I deserved it, I would rather not be struck as punishment… professor can we actually move on from this topic? I am uncomfortable.”

With a sigh Snape informed him that the discussion may be paused but it was not over, not at all and the boy seemed grateful, thus Snape knew that he had made the best choice. He forced himself to occlude his mind, due to his own trauma and also because of his disbelief that Lily would allow such a thing to happen to her child. He was not surprised over Potter Senior’s behavior. The man had been a psychopathic brute since his youth! Honestly, the man was a menace to society and should not be allowed to breed Snape thought to himself nastily. Oh, how he loathed James Potter.
He lead them to the guest quarters where Harry would sleep during his stay. Not that it would be long because the two would be put up within Malfoy manor during Narcissa’s treatment.

Snape opened the door and watched Harry intently as the boy stepped in and took in the room with big curious eyes.

Snape’s personal home resided in the town of Cokeworth on a street known as Spinner’s end. It was a dreary street stricken with poverty, and it had not changed much since Snape’s youth. However, he did transform his parents’ bedroom into a small library, and he used his former childhood bedroom as a guest room; though, he rarely ever allowed guests into his home. His childhood room was not as large or as extravagant as the boy’s own room within Potter manor but Snape expected Harry to show some grace and be grateful that he didn’t put him in a cupboard.

“Thank you, professor, the room is lovely,” Harry said earnestly as he placed his belongings in a corner near an old desk near the window.

Snape hummed and curtly demanded that Harry get comfortable later and prepare to leave by floo in fifteen minutes.

“Where are we going sir?” Harry asked curiously.

“Due to your marks you were the top student among second year students this year,” Snape said it dully, and kept his pride to himself.

For the last few years, the majority of the top ten students of each year were dominated by Ravenclaw, and Slytherin; with the occasional Hufflepuff and possibly the occasional lone but rare Gryffindor student who would probably have done just as well within Ravenclaw or perhaps even Hufflepuff. That pattern could still be seen among the upper year students. However; the current first and second year top students varied among the houses. Especially those who were involved with Warts and by proxy; Harry and his… above average cohorts.

Snape wondered if the boy truly realized what an impact he was making within Hogwarts’ walls.

“It is due to that before we go to work this week, I will generously give you a treat of sorts,” Snape drawled. Harry perked up ever so slightly. Others would not have noticed the slight change in the boy’s posture. Small things such as; the boy’s eyes becoming slightly wider or a twitch of his brow for a fraction of a second, could be missed by those who were not Snape.

“Oh?” Harry said, his poor attempt at sounding casual further endured him to Snape.

“‘Oh,’ indeed, Mr. Potter, our activities reside in muggle London, do not bother dressing. We will go to a muggle store run by a squib for clothing, I will purchase your outfit for the day. You are welcome,” Snape was rather pleased with himself. He planned their trip with the knowledge of Harry’s current curiosities.

First; they would be going to muggle London for an opera concert. He knew of Harry’s deep fascination with muggles, especially with their medicine and as of late; their music. Snape also knew that while Lily was unashamed of her heritage; he could tell that she did not bring it up much in her current settings, and Snape didn’t blame her. However; it has left her children wholly ignorant of their own heritage. Which left someone like Harry overly curious, and it was better for him to learn about muggles with another wizard than from random muggles or even his classmate’s muggle parents who may be overly biased toward wizards and the Wizarding World.

Second, Snape has a squib associate who practices as a muggle doctor and upon request will allow
Snape and his “apprentice” access to his hospital’s operation theater as he performs an operation himself! Snape felt extremely smug, and he developed a large head from his ego when he relayed their plans to Harry and the boy grinned goofily. At him. At Snape.

Never did Snape ever give students that were not the children of fellow Death Eaters “gifts.” Nor would he start, but Harry was not a mere exception. He was just… different, to Snape and meant something to the man.

“Thanks Professor. You’re the best,” Harry stated in a melodic voice that mimicked a gentle hum. 'You’re the best. You’re the best. You’re the best,’ the boy’s words played on a loop within Snape’s head.

Lily had been the only one--and the last one to refer to Snape as “the best,” out of gratefulness. The only other times Snape has been called the best was in regards to his profession. And never has he been called such a thing from a student who was not a Ravenclaw or a Slytherin sucking up to him in hopes of favored treatment.

No, Harry knew that Snape was not one for sucking up, nor was the boy over expressive in his emotions. So, Snape knew that his words were not empty.

Harry peered at him curiously, Snape knew that his face was morphed into a grimace and his cheeks were red.

Through gritted teeth Snape said, “be sure to do just as well next year and you may call us even, Mr. Potter. Now, prepare for departure. With that Snape turned, his robe bellowing behind him in his haste to get away.

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“Seeing all of this in person is rather phenomenal, Hermione, Terry and Joseph often talk about things like the telly, television programs they have seen and movies,” Harry said aloud he walked through the television isle of a high-end department store with Snape close behind.

Harry was dressed in a loose fitted navy blue athletic sweater, athletic shorts, long socks that stopped a bit below the knee and sneakers. Snape had seen an older boy (not much older than Harry) dressed similar and in comparison to Harry who looked rather cute; the other boy looked like a full grown man.

Snape would have preferred to dress Harry a bit smarter, however; when they went to the clothing store, the boy had immediately asked the cashier what the latest style in Britain was for someone Harry’s age. He had not shied away when the cashier looked at him strangely.

The cashier had been a young squib girl, probably as young as eighteen and Harry was adamant that she help him dress appropriately to “fit in.”

He had been surprisingly forceful yet, polite and in the end the girl in her awe did her best to fit Harry with the fashion he so desired. She was careful in her selection and chose pieces that suited him. Most pieces made Harry look rather androgynous which was not hard since the boy was already rather handsomely pretty.

The cashier had done such a good job that Harry requested and paid for a full wardrobe, Snape had been curious as to why the boy would need a full wardrobe and he barely withheld a snort when the boy bluntly informed him that he found the clothes extremely comfortable. Not only that; but he would return to the muggle world before school began and thought it best to get clothes for the
venture now. How practical.

“Oh, a vinyl player, Sally-Anne Perks has one, however; she only plays classical records,” Harry said as he hurriedly stepped over to cabinet with a record player on top. The closer they got the easier it was to hear the song playing and Harry immediately started tapping in tune with the song.

“Oh, are you and Ms. Perks acquainted?” Snape asked curious.

“Of sorts, I have requested her aunt instruct me in music. Her parents are also interested in a marriage contract between the two of us,” Harry said idly and reached for the colorful empty record case. In Harry’s own thoughts, he could not refrain from thinking that Nathan would like this band.

“Does she know of the contract?”

Harry read the record label carefully, “hm, a band named Queen, I like this song a lot. I think I will purchase a record player. Also, I figure she does, it was quite… kind of her as a Slytherin to inform me about her aunt for nothing in return, now that I think about it,” the frown on Harry’s face was a deep one. It appeared he did not calculate that Miss Perks’ intentions were motivated for personal gain. Well, more than likely; familial as it would not be abnormal for the girl’s parents to have pushed her to do so. Children are smart, clever and often times naturally manipulative but they are not naturally exploitative.

Not wanting to rub the boy’s nose in his own ignorance Snape returned to the topic at hand; “did you bring any muggle money with you?”

Instead of pouting, Harry tilted his head slightly in thought, “if I may be so bold and request that you purchase it on my behalf with the promise of paying you back, would you? I could give you the galleons for it now, even.” Internally, Snape was impressed with how quickly the boy thought of such a request.

With a sneer Snape spoke sternly, “as if I so desperately need a child’s allowance.”

Harry’s muttered an apology and his shoulders slumped ever so slightly and if Snape were anyone else he would not have noticed. Was Harry always so easy to displease? Then again, Snape had only just begun dealing with Harry in such personal settings such as an excursion to muggle London. Perhaps, in a setting such as this--on that lacked the boundaries of teacher and student--Harry was… comfortable and less mindful of Snape’s position as his professor. The child was rather used to Snape and his abrasive personality and it was most likely due to that that he felt safe to display his displeasure even if it was with the slightest of movement.

Idly Snape thought about reasons as to why he should buy the boy the record and player. After all, Snape had only purchased the boy’s attire for the day and allowed him to spend some galleons on a separate wardrobe which was not much. It had been fairly reasonable, five each of long trousers, short trousers, short sleeved T shirts & long sleeved ones; and of course he got the same in dress shirts. He also purchased a few sweaters, cardigans, socks and only four pair of shoes; two of which were dress and the other two were sneakers. Snape knew that the boy was diligent in his spending due to his heir lessons. Snape was honestly surprised that Potter senior would choose a responsible and strict mentor that has taught him to not spend so whimsically.

Yes, Snape knew that the Perks patriarch was extremely strict, and aristocratic to a fault, Snape has had the displeasure of meeting with the man on multiple random occasions in public places. The man was almost as bad as Lucius, they were the types to always make a stink if something was not to their standard.
With his focused returned to Harry, Snape felt that he couldn’t purchase the items for nothing. Especially not when he was already spoiling the child so much today, so he came up with a compromise; “when you venture to America this Summer, I would appreciate it if you would reach out to a certain tribe and commission an authentic dream catcher for me. Specifically from the Navajo tribe--if you do not know who they are, a book from the Hogwarts library would be more than happy to assist you. The prices can vary and will be a bit more expensive than your player but not by much. Of course, I also expect you to keep doing well in school. It is with these terms that I will buy your record and player today.”

Snape was not sorted into Slytherin for nothing, and he knew the law of equivalent exchange, but by asking more, Harry could truly ponder on whether or not the record and player was worth the extra effort.

And ponder Harry did, he thought on the offer for all of five minutes before he questioned, “and if they cannot make one? I assume the dream catcher is of the magical variety and possibly hard to come by. I would like to agree to your terms but the what ifs cause me to be apprehensive.”

To put it in childish terms; what Harry really meant was, ‘I really really want it but what you want in return sounds hard to get!’ The phrase being disguised with big words was most likely what causes other adults to treat Harry so... adult, but Snape knew better. He watched Harry hold the record to his chest with lips pursed ever so slightly in firm concentration, but there was a slight squint to his eyes that showed his apprehension.

“Hm, you will not be punished, nor would I take the record back but it would be up to you to find something else of equal value,” Snape stated with finality. He ignored the thought that he was being inappropriately fatherly with this challenge. However, he wanted Harry to try to get the things he wanted within reason, and he also wanted the boy to get used to the fact that people will more than likely always ask for something in return.

Five more minutes passed and Harry agreed to the terms with the newly added conditions and after they made the purchase Snape could tell that he was extremely pleased. With a guiding hand on Harry’s shoulder they travelled to their next destination; the theater.

Chapter End Notes

HELLO!

Yes, this isn't the righteous retribution chapter so many of you hungered for! It just wouldn't fit with Harry's actions and personality in this story specifically but believe me, it's coming!

I have more written and actually wanted to do a massive update but I have just become too busy, with work, school, volunteer and depression (I'm doing a lot better!!!!!!!)

Your comments were so kind and some even expressed worry of my person. I cannot get over how sweet you all are! I really appreciate you which is why I feel that I must post something, no matter how incomplete I feel that the chapter is. So, really thank you. I probably would not have pushed myself hard otherwise.

I will slowly be replying to all of your older comments before any of your new ones so bear with me with the strangeness and lateness of my replies. I won't bore you with
anything else ha ha, if you have any questions feel free to message me here. I am making a tumblr for my fanfictions specifically and will release that information next chapter. I work on it as much as I can, but try to go over it and correct as many mistakes as I can before posting so it takes a bit of time. Again, thank you all and I look forward to speaking with you.

Just an FYI, I'm black. I'm not overly poetic about it. I won't compare people of color whose skin is on the darker side to food. I usually just refer to myself and other black people who do not truly have African descent as black. We use terms like "light skinned, dark skinned, brown etc. So, I won't write things such as, "his cocoa like skin reminded Harry of brown Autumn leaves in the fall. His hair was coiled in tight curls (I may use this hair descriptor if it actually rings true for the person's who hair I am describing)... yadda yadda etc," when I can just be blunt in my writing, ha ha. I have also called my hair things like kinky, nappy, curly, thick, round, etc my whole life. Not in a derogatory sense but just as a descriptor.

Also, what are some things you are excited/want to read next? A lot of Snape is happening in the coming chapters so, I'd love to hear other things whether it's just more Harry or any others. :) <3
Snape and Harry's day out

Chapter Summary

Snape and Harry learn about surgery, go to the opera, meet a Death Eater and Snape's meets a giant glowing manifestation of magic that takes on the appearance of a woman. All in that order.

Chapter Notes

Is anyone still there!? Please read the notes at the end!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Snape watched Harry intently and was satisfied when he saw that Harry’s focus laid intently on the proceeds happening before him. Harry watched like a hawk as the surgeon worked and only took his eyes off the scene when he wrote into a muggle journal that was placed on his lap. Snape assumed he had already written several questions that he would ask later.

Surgery was quite a jump from the internal medicine that Harry was interested in. However; Snape believed that Harry needed to see and understand that there were other forms of healing. That way, he could decide which branch of medicine he would like to work in the future--if he were to continue his medical studies. Snape thought that Harry should be quite humbled due to his attentive consideration.

Perhaps Harry would discover a new interest thanks to Snape.

Harry intently watched a man be cut open and dug into, his face was contorted in concentration but he did not appear uncomfortable or squeamish. Had he been, it could mean that medical surgery would not be a possible career for him. However; Harry seemed just fine—and though his face displayed his slight disgust--it was overshadowed by intrigue.

Snape turned his attention to the surgery. Doctor Greggory Harding and two assistants flaked the sides of a patient who was displayed in the center of the room and was in deep induced sleep on an operating table. Snape thought the patient rather lucky to be in such a deep state of unconsciousness because Dr. Harding had two hands deep into the man’s abdomen.

Dr. Harding worked meticulously. He cut with a decade’s worth of experience and expertise and was able to speak with ease as he worked and occasionally educated both Snape and Harry as to why he did the things that he did.

Before the surgery began Dr. Harding had explained that though the patient was muggle, he would be undergoing an Appendectomy surgery due to magical inflammation on his appendix.

Allegedly; the man accidentally came across a drunk Clurichaun a mere three days ago. Clurichauns were meddlesome creatures who are related to leprechauns, and could typically be found in or near breweries, wine cellars and pubs. So, it was surprising that the Clurichaun the man
encountered was indeed; drunk, and with their deep love for drinking

It spoke with the man, not caring that he was non-magical and utterly muggle and challenged him to a drinking contest.

The man—being quite drunk himself—agreed to the challenge but unbeknownst to the muggle the drink of choice had been mead with Mountain Lettuce. The mead alone would not have been bad, however; Mountain Lettuce is a plant often used in potions to treat magically induced bloating that caused one to be as light as air. It is typically found on mountains in warmer climate areas and resemble small boulders in shape & color but had layers and peeled apart like lettuce.

In Snape’s opinion as a potions master, the mead must have included something more besides mere Mountain Lettuce. The plant alone was harmless in small doses.

Perhaps ground Nettle was included as well, it is commonly used by magical creatures to increase the potency of their alcohol. It would explain the massive inflammation to the patient’s appendix.

Upon hearing of the patient’s predicament from the doctor Snape was flabbergasted with the stupidity of Muggles, but Harry had been fascinated that there were doctors and nurses who were apart of the magical world and yet they existed within muggle settings such as muggle hospitals. The boy did not mock or belittle doctor Harding or the nurse for being squibs, and that only further gained their favor.

Harry did not understand how they expected him to belittle them, it was not difficult to understand the benefits of having those in the know of the magical world working in the muggle in order to catch things like this and avoid exposure. To Harry, it was truly phenomenal how hard magical societies worked in order to keep muggles ignorant of magic.

Dr. Harding—like most who met Harry—fell for his awkward charm and was delighted and impressed with the questions he had asked while he worked. By the end of the proceeds he told Harry all he could about his job as a squib surgeon and his practice. Harry had listened with open admiration and the good doctor blushed the entire time—Snape would have to work with Harry on his staring.

The doctor gifted Harry with a real stethoscope and stated that if the boy were to ever become a doctor—whether for muggles or for magicals—that he should come to doctor Harding for part of his residency. Snape reluctantly explained what a residency was as he glared at his associate for attempting to steal his protege, but Harry would only benefit from both men’s mentor-ship should he choose to do so. Thankfully for Snape’s peace of mind, that problem was currently neither here nor there, so Snape left matters be and thanked his acquaintance before he led he and Harry to their next stop; the opera.

Snape had acquired the tickets before he extended an invitation to Harry, not that the boy needed to know. It was only something that Snape’s closest acquaintances knew; Snape deeply enjoyed the opera on the rare occasions he allowed himself such a kindness. Only Lucius knew of such a thing and gifted Snape the tickets as an additional payment to him for he and Harry’s continued studies regarding Narcissa’s fertility.

Snape could have easily afforded the tickets himself. It wasn’t that he was filthy rich, mind you but he truly was—by no exaggeration—one of the best potion brewers of his time. That brought along certain privileges and clientele that were willing to spend quite a bit of money for his services. Even more so to have Snape brew for them. He was not a big spender, often, the money he acquired outside of his Hogwarts’ salary went straight into a muggle savings account and due to his solitude, he rarely got to do something as interesting as going to the opera.
“Professor,” Harry began softly, “I am worried. I have not studied Italian and I fear that I may miss most of the opera’s meaning and story. I quite enjoy storytelling and would hate to not understand the tale told due to my Italian incomprehension.”

Snape hummed. This particular opera was one of his favorites and he knew it quite well, “Aida tells the tale of Egyptians who capture and enslave Aida, an Ethiopian princess. An Egyptian military commander by the name of Radames struggles between loyalty for his king, his duty to his people and his returned love for Aida as conflict rises. Matters become even more complicated when Radames unknowingly captures Aida’s father—the Ethiopian king—” Harry gasped quietly and whispered a solemn “oh no.” Snape smirked, “oh, yes—it gets worse. Despite her own returned love for Radames, Aida’s loyalty lies with her country and her father and she tricks Radames into revealing the Egyptian army’s tactics to her. She relays the information he gives back to her father and—well, you will just have to listen and watch to learn the rest of the tale.

Harry’s shoulders slumped and Snape gently flicked his ear that hid behind his long hair, “pout not, child. With the information given you should be able to keep up with the rest of the story with relative ease. You are much more empathetic than you give yourself credit for and that is all what one needs to enjoy the opera.”

“I see. Thank you for summarizing the story for me. It sounds awfully tragic,” Harry said quietly as he rubbed at his ear.

“A tragic love story,” Snape said in agreement, the lights blinked on and off and he placed a guiding hand onto Harry’s upper back, “come the show is about to begin.”

Harry had been completely immersed in the story of Aida and during halftime he spoke animatedly about his thoughts on the performers. The boy blatantly and repeatedly reminded Snape that he was growing into a young man with his constant praise of the looks of the two leads. Aida was performed by the diva of the opera house who—according to Harry “has a firm and powerful voice that did not match her elegance. Even the way her hair coils and bounces in powerful movements, and oh—the performer for Radames is oh so debonair and striking.”

Snape would have teased him had he not spoken so open, honest and without caution of Snape’s judgement. Snape rationalized with himself that it was only natural that Harry had begun to notice and appreciate others as a young man should, but still, he hoped that Harry would be too focused on his studies for the next ten years to get into any sort of real trouble.

By the second half, Harry was completely engrossed in the opera and when it ended Harry had been the first to stand and give a standing ovation. With great surprise, Snape noted that he was even crying.

After the show when questioned about his response Harry merely replied; “it was near overwhelming, I believed the actors and actress’s love and anguish and that only intensified as they sung. The end truly surprised me. Despite their strife and conflict; Aida still loved Ramames and chose to stay with him, where she undoubtedly would die…” Harry’s eyes looked into Snape’s own, “I feel that despite everything, they could only be with one another in the end, and I guess in some ways, that is a deep form of love…”

Harry closed his eyes. He saw deep red eyes looking into his own with possessive desperation, uncertain hate, and fiery passion. It felt like a twisted form of love. Impure and tainted. Harry shivered and the image went away. When he next opened his eyes, they peered into Snape’s own and he actually felt rather relieved to be met with the man’s own blank and emotionless stare.

“I genuinely enjoyed the performance—loved it even—” a pause, “thank you, sir,” it was said with
such gratitude that Snape became lightheaded.

“It must be nice to have a child like yours who appreciates the arts so intimately,” a feminine voice said from behind them before Snape could properly respond to Harry. Instead of snapping at the intruder, Snape breathed in deeply through his nose, thinned his lips, drew his face into a neutral expression and slowly breathed out and turned to face the aggravating voice that assaulted his ears.

It was an older woman, Snape would garner that she was in her early forties from the prominent crow’s feet at the corner of her eyes. The woman was not overtly beautiful but was pretty in her own right. Her hair was blonde and her skin was as pink as Harry was pale and as plump as Snape was thin; this was not to say she was fat, but merely plump.

The expensive Jade that hung from her ears and around her neck identified her as a woman from a refined and rich background. It also showed in the way she stood with her head held high, shoulders back and back straight while dressed to the nines, in an emerald clad bespoked gown.

Before Snape could correct her assumption the woman inquired after Harry’s age.

“I am twelve, madam,” Harry answered politely with an inclination of his head.

“My and so well mannered too, manners I seem to lack myself as I have not even introduced myself. I am Mrs. Genji—” before she could speak further, an older looking Asian man approached them, with two drinks in hand. He was followed by two children, who looked more like their mother than their father.

One of the children Snape knew for certain. He even had the child in his classes. The boy was doing a dreadful job in his attempts to hide behind his father’s pants leg.

“Alaine, are you harassing these two—oh, Professor Snape? How pleasant to see you here. I did not think you would be interested in the opera,” the accented voice said with familiarity as he joined them in conversation.

Snape’s lips pursed. While he could act as if he was not socially inept for the sake of his job or for the sake of spying, he preferred solitude and interacting with others as little as possible. Especially if those “others” were moronic students and or the asinine parents of said moronic students. Harry was an exception, of course. However, the elder Genjis and their dunderheaded children were not.

“How rude! I am not harassing anyone, Teddy! I am getting acquainted with the other patrons, but how fortunate that you know this fine gentleman and his son. Professor Snape, was it? This is my Husband, Tadatsugu Genji and our two—” she had to drag the boy forward, while the young girl voluntarily and happily stood before them, “—children; Tadatomo Genji—we call him Tomo and Airi Genji, also known as; Ai. They both attend Ireland’s School for the Gifted,” she said with pride.

“How rude! I am not harassing anyone, Teddy! I am getting acquainted with the other patrons, but how fortunate that you know this fine gentleman and his son. Professor Snape, was it? This is my Husband, Tadatsugu Genji and our two—” she had to drag the boy forward, while the young girl voluntarily and happily stood before them, “—children; Tadatomo Genji—we call him Tomo and Airi Genji, also known as; Ai. They both attend Ireland’s School for the Gifted,” she said with pride.

“Potter!?” The elder Genji child said in surprise. The boy ceased his attempts to remove himself from his mother’s hold and instead chose to gape at Harry in surprise.

Harry inclined his head, “Genji.” He said neutrally in greeting then he looked away with a slight blush. One could mistake the action to be shy in nature but Snape noticed that the taller boy rubbed at the back of his neck in open nervousness as he avoided Harry’s piercing gaze. There was a story there, Snape could tell that much.

“You know professor Snape and his son, Tomo?” Mrs. Genji asked in delighted surprise. Clearly, she did not feel the tension eroding from the two teens.
Mrs. Genji’s son nodded solemnly but then turned wide terrified eyes to Snape who looked down at him with little to no emotion. He watched the teen turn to his mother and listened as he spoke in hurried and hushed tones. Not that the volume of his voice would matter because the boy chose to speak in Japanese.

With brightened cheeks, Mrs. Genji turned to Snape and with natural ease, bowed slightly with a gentle clasp of her hands, “my goodness, I have embarrassed myself more than I thought! You are my son’s professor! How did I not know!” she turned to Harry, and though she stood straighter and only bowed slightly, her body still displayed her apologetic tone, “and you are the Harry Potter! Not to excuse my rudeness but I am muggleborn you see, and until two years ago, my family and I lived in Japan for over two decades now. My husband is Japanese, you see. He is only here for the next few years to work. I myself had been raised in the Americas. None of us are truly familiar with magical Britain. I do apologize.”

Ever so slightly, Harry relaxed and Snape had to physically restrain himself from rolling his eyes, the boy was too easily soothed by women.

“It is fine, Mrs. Genji,” Snape said. Internally Snape sneered. It was not fine. These imbeciles have interrupted a perfectly agreeable evening with Snape and his… pupil. Snape was prepared to leave but Harry was pulled into a conversation by the youngest Genji much to the delight of the girl’s mother who took the opportunity to force Snape into further conversation along with her husband who seemed politely interested in speaking with his children’s professor.

His conversation with the elder Genjis was mundane. They were a nosy bunch but so far, they kept the discussion to that of the children’s schooling.

To Snape’s annoyance, he was forced to speak with the elder Genjis for all of ten minutes before their attention was drawn to the youth that they brought with them.

The girl giggled behind her hands while Harry attempted to say words that Snape presumed to be Japanese. He sounded awkward, uncertain, but determined.

It wasn’t odd how easily Harry took to younger children and they to him. Most children--while judgemental--were unassuming. They did not try to make sense of Harry’s oddities and instead took them for face value, which allowed them to see Harry in a different light than his peers and adults who judged Harry for what they believed he lacked since they expected to see different of him.

It only helped younger children to like him further when Harry did not talk down to them. Having someone else give you such positive and respectful attention typically enamored children and teens who are so often overlooked due to their age and immaturity.

Snape understood those kinds of feelings well, it was what had initially drawn him to Lucius Malfoy after all...

Snape’s attention was forcibly returned to Mrs. Genji when she loudly sighed, “that’s the first time, Ai has laughed all day,” Mrs.Genji said dreamily, “she dislikes the theater, you know. We have to bribe her just to get her to come and behave.”

’Then why bring her at all?’ Snape thought snidely. Harry really was a different kind of child, and Snape was truly grateful for that.

“If you don’t mind me asking,” Mr. Genji began. He passed the second drink to his wife and sipped on the glass that remained, “why are you with the Potter heir in a setting like this? I thought
you were close acquaintances with Lucius Malfoy and Alekzander Avery…”

Snape sipped his own drink and understood the question for what it really was; ‘why are you—an acquaintance of well known former Death Eaters—with Harry Potter—the brother of the Boy-Who-Lived and supposed defeater of the Dark Lord?’ From the look on Mrs. Genji’s face, she did not understand her husband’s implication. Obviously, unlike his wife, Mr. Genji made a point to be aware of the current events within the environment he lived in. However, his question was a bit too spot on for meager curiosity or cautiousness.

The man likely did not attend Hogwarts fore if he had, he would have surely been sorted into Slytherin where he could have honed his potential as a conversational strategist to get the answers he wanted from his opponent.

Snape has mastered such skills.

He knew that the elder Genji was nervous because he had held his wife’s drink for an awkward length of time. Not only that but he repeatedly tapped rhythmically tap on his leg while he attempted to subtly catch glances of Harry each time he thought Snape to be occupied with his wife. Such glances exposed that the implication Genji has thrown into the metaphorical ring was one that had been on his mind since he saw Snape and Harry together.

Now, it was Snape’s turn to attack and discover whether or not Mr. Genji questioned Snape’s loyalty worried for Harry’s safety as a supporter of the light, or because he viewed Snape as a potential enemy to the dark for such traitorous relations.

Snape knew that having such a public relation with Harry—a Potter—would eventually lead to a circumstance such as this. However, Snape had no plans in ending his mentorship with the boy and knew that eventually; someone would question their relationship. Though, he thought such a thing would not occur until much further in the future, and by someone he knew to be a supporter of the light or a Death Eater.

Mr. Genji was an anomaly, a foreigner, someone Snape had never worked with and therefore he knew little of the man and his motivation and loyalties.

“Mr. Potter,” with the mention of his name, Harry tensed ever so slightly. Not enough so that the Genji children or their mother noticed but enough that Snape and Mr. Genji could tell that he was listening.

“Is currently, the most promising potion student within Hogwarts. It would be remiss of me to allow such a talent to go to waste. Lord Malfoy, and Lord Avery both agree and they believe my actions wise. After all, connecting the boy with the right kind of people would be beneficial, don’t you think Mr. Genji? Lucius has even gone as far as to jokingly promised that if he were to acquire a daughter then surely marriage contracts would be woven.”

Mr. Genji glanced briefly at his own daughter and took another slow sip of his drink, “yes, best to take charge of the boy’s… education early…” he paused and stole one more glance at Harry, “Lord Malfoy truly knows all of the right people, it seems…”

It was said with such a wry smile that Snape nearly curled his lips into a snarl in response. Genji leaned into Snape’s space, the next he spoke his voice was so low that only Snape could hear.

“Between you and I professor, I have been offered a permanent job here within the ministry and I too, would like to know the right people. Lord Malfoy has been one of them, along with Lord Avery and… Theodus Nott, of course.”
Snape inhaled slowly through his nose. Theodus Nott was a Death Eater who was not tried due to lack of evidence. He never proclaimed his loyalty to the Dark Lord himself. Especially after the Dark Lord’s fall like extremists such as Bellatrix Lestrange and the Lestrange brothers had. However, the man had never denounced the Dark Lord or spoke against views of his followers either.

To this day, Theodus Nott openly opposed all things light and was extremely vocal about it. All who were in support of the light and even those who were neutral knew not to affiliate with the man lest they sully their name and be branded as supporters of the Dark Lord.

With the proclamation of his affiliation with such a man, Mr. Genji has stated that if he stayed within Britain then he would be on the side of Death Eaters and by proxy, the Dark Lord.

Well, Snape felt no need to expose himself and smartly said, “you would do well to do so.”

Mr. Genji practically beamed at Snape, the man presumed that he had found an ally within the gloomy potion master and Snape will allow him to think so until it became inconvenient for him personally.

“What are you two whispering about!?” Mrs. Genji asked with a pout. Her hands rested on Harry’s shoulders and Snape could tell by how tense the preteen held himself that he was unappreciative of the physical contact and was fighting to not shake the woman’s hands off.

Snape politely replaced her hands with his own and pulled Harry closer to his side and said, “marriage contracts, I will be sure to inform the Potters of your interest Mr. Genji. Good day.”

Mrs. Genji gasped and rounded on her husband and Snape felt vindictively satisfied when she began to publicly berate the man.

“Please excuse us, Mr. Potter and I must leave,” Snape said in one final dismissal, but before they could leave the eldest Genji child separated from his parents to speak with Harry.

“So, I’ll see you in school then, Potter?”

The smile on Harry’s face mimicked Snape’s smile when he felt particularly cruel, it was feral and lacked kindness when directed at anyone who was someone not favored, “perhaps, Genji. Though, do you really wish to be seen with someone as barmy as I?”

The Genji child paled and his sister watched in confusion. Snape deduced that her comprehension of English was rather limited as she began to question her brother in Japanese. Most likely inquiring after the meaning of the words being said.

The older boy shrugged her off and spoke to Harry once more, “look. You’re not barmy, Potter. Fine, you’re… different, but not barmy…” Genji ran a hand through his medium length hair and released an aggravated breath, “I didn’t even know you heard us that night… No wonder you’ve always glared at me since first year…”

“I assure you, I have paid you little mind. My attention only returns to you when you call me barmy or--what was the other word? Ah, yes, retarded. Was that right, Genji?”

Snape nearly snarled at the other preteen on Harry’s behalf. How dare he call Harry such things!? Within the wizarding world, barmy was just the same as that disgusting muggle term, yet softer. Harry should not be called either! How long has this been occurring and why had Harry not come to him so that he could end such treatment!?
Genji stretched a hand out toward Harry, “I amSORRY. Potter, alright!? Can’t we just move past it? I’ve been wanting to join Warts but our animosity has made me apprehensive.”

Though Harry looked unimpressed, he still took the other’s hand, “animosity YOU caused by calling me things such as; barmy and retarded with your friends, Genji. All are welcome at Warts. Not all of us are friends but we are all club members brought together by a common cause, and that is enough.”

They shake once, firm but not painful. Genji frowned--honestly, it was more of a, “colleagues then?” He questioned ruefully.

“School mates,” Harry returned bluntly.

“Fine, Potter, see you around school and Warts then. Oh, and Potter? Do me a favor--not as friends--” Genji assured when Harry’s brow furrowed skeptically.

“Just-at school could you call me Tommy? It’s my English name and I’m trying to fit in and…”

“I will call you Tommy, I do not need an explanation in order to call you your preferred name. It will be awkward if you refer to me as ‘Potter’ during Warts proceeds so in return, call me Harry,” Harry said curtly. His face was hard to read but it was clear he was not very comfortable with the situation. However, it was obvious how important it was for the elder Genji to be referred to as such. Most of the other professors called him as such.

Snape thought Harry much too kind to go as far and allow Genji to use his name in order to avoid an increase in their already existing tension.

Genji grimaced, “thanks… Harry, and for what it’s worth, I am really sorry about calling you retarded and barmy--and I won’t do it again, I swear on the honor of my family,” Genji bowed slightly, then returned to his family’s side as his sister already had the moment he and Harry shook hands.

That apology and promise felt significant and had Snape and Harry been Japanese, perhaps they could truly understand the severity of Genji’s actions and words.

They could not worry for that now, Snape sneered at the backs of the Genji family and hurriedly ushered he and Harry out the opera house and into the streets. Snape easily weaved them through the crowds of people. Harry’s short legs struggled to keep up with Snape’s own but Snape’s firm grip on Harry’s shoulder forced him to maintain a quick pace.

Harry was suddenly thankful that his tutors made him run and spar, otherwise he would have been out of breath in his attempts to keep up with the man.

Snape’s eyes glanced down at Harry who peered up at him curiously every so often.

“Speak your mind, child!” Snape said with an aggravated hiss, he did not slow down as he continued to weave through the crowds.

“It can wait if you are not in the mood,” Harry muttered with a frown.

He was irritated. Snape could tell that much from the twitch of his eye.

Snape faltered in his steps and looked at Harry. Truly looked at him. Harry was being… moody of all things--to Snape! To be fair, Snape had been moody first but still it would not do to allow the teen to be spiteful towards him; “tone, Harry,” Snape reprimanded curtly.
He received a muttered apology from Harry who refused to glance at him any longer. Snape did not dignify the actions with a response. Instead he directed them to a nearby muggle looking office building. The offices inside actually held floo networks that one could pay by the hour to use for the day, he and Harry wasted no time in flooing back to Snape’s home.

Once inside the living room, Snape towered over Harry who did not cower. Harry never did but Snape knew that he still made an imposing figure. “it is unlikely to happen but until stated otherwise you are not to be alone with Mr. Genji or his brood. Understood?”

Instead of agreeing without question as the man expected him to, Harry looked thoughtful before he spoke next; “if I may ask; why am I not to be alone with them? It seems that Tommy would like to connect with me… Does this have to do with the whispered conversation you and Mr. Genji had?”

“You ask too many questions,” Snape hissed. “It is imperative that for now, you stay away from them, and trust my advisement to do so.”

Harry’s lips pursed, no, actually; he frowned. “I trust your advisement, sir. I just want to be informed. The man had acted strange at the mention of Lord Malfoy… is it because Lord Malfoy is a Death Eater? Does Mr. Genji wish to be a Death Eater?”

Snape flinched violently. He grabbed Harry by the shoulder rougher than he intended and forced the boy to sit down on the loveseat in the living room. He knelt before Harry and placed a firm hand on the boy’s knee, his nails were digging painfully into the teen’s knee.

“How do you know that word!??”

’What have you seen from your visions of Lucius? What have you seen of ME?’ were the questions that a less composed man would have asked, but Snape refrained even though they were questions he was desperate to know the answers to.

“In the past, my father made little attempt to hide the results from you-know-who’s rise and fall. That includes those who followed him or believed in his ideals. Even if my father had kept such things from me, I was bound to find out. Death Eaters are no secret, sir,” Harry sounded nervous and he looked at Snape with wide and startled eyes.

Snape did not relent, he knew he looked crazed, and the slight mania that colored his tone did nothing to help that, “you are correct. They are not, but why would you assume that Malfoy is one of them? That is a hefty accusation.”

“Last year… During Yule, I received a vision of him torturing muggles. I knew they were Muggles because of their clothing…and-and-he was so… bored of their torture, of their screams. Only a Death Eater could feel that way about torturing muggles… I still hear their screams….” Harry stated, his voice became more airy and distant as he spoke.

With worry, Snape noted that Harry’s eyes had become slightly glossy as well and though his gaze was pointed in the direction of Snape’s own, he was focused on him and no matter how many times Snape hissed his name, Harry paid no true mind. It was as if the boy was catatonic.

“Harry..” Snape said once more with urgency and again he received no response. Harry was trapped in a memory, Snape could tell that much from his own experiences with shock. He himself was still haunted by the things he had done and the things he had done unto him during his time as a Death Eater.
However, he had been a grown man by the time he experienced and saw things truly heinous. Dare Snape admit that he was afraid that the boy would become completely catatonic?

With uncharacteristically gentle hands on the teen’s cheeks, Snape forced Harry’s blank and vacant gaze into his own firm & piercing one.

“Harry, I am going to use Legilimency on you in order to pull you out of that head of yours. Do your best not to fight the intrusion, I am doing this to help you and promise to not go looking for anything you do not wish for me to see,” Snape said gently out of courtesy.

Legilimency is a form of mind magic that the magically inept disdainfully called “Mind Reading,” due to their ignorance. The way that Legilimency actually worked was fairly easy to understand if one puts in the effort; it is a form of magic that allows a Legilimens to navigate one’s mind. Though, this does not mean that a Legilimens would be able to see one’s immediate thoughts at that current moment in time. Really, how much a Legilimens may access was dependent on the skill of said Legilimens and whether or not the person they are using Legilimency on was a skilled Occlumens or not.

Even if one was not dunderheaded, mastering said branch of magic was nearly impossible if one was either a) not born with the natural skill to learn, b) willfully weak, or c) inept at reading other individuals even without the aid of mind magic. None of those things applied to Snape and he was one of the few--if not one of the best--Legilimens masters in Britain.

It was with that in mind and the confidence in his own abilities that Snape risked traversing into Harry’s mind in order to… well, pull him out of it.

Snape should have been met with little to no resistance and should have had little to no problem in traversing any obstacles that would have appeared in Harry’s mind. Yet, the moment, “legilimens” had left Snape’s mouth, he was pulled into Harry’s mind and was immediately assaulted by an assortment of painfully bright colors and he appeared to be floating! He kicked out and attempted to create imagery of some form of ground to stand on but he continued to float in no general direction.

The lack of physical space was far too discombobulating and Snape was too overwhelmed from the severe pain forming behind his eyes due to the vibrant bright lights. The pain was so distracting that he nearly did not notice the hundreds of voices varying in volume assaulting his ears from every direction.

He closed his eyes and took slow and measured breaths. He could not fully calm himself because of the voices. They were so loud and there were so many of them speaking over one another attempting to capture his attention.

When he opened his eyes, all he saw was white and despite the sensory overload, Snape could hear a distinct murmur of a feminine voice among the boisterous ambiguous ones. A chill ran down Snape’s spine and he felt great dread as he looked toward the direction where the feminin voice came from.

At first he could see nothing but white until a distinct slightly orange dot of light emerged yards away in the distance.

Slowly it floated toward him and the closer it got, the colder Snape became. He began to tremor. It was getting closer and he could make out the distinct figure of a woman.

Snape attempted to focus on the voice which became easier to do the closer it got because it got
louder and clearer as the figure drew nearer, “y……--.- belong....-----.--.-.-___.” Was what Snape
heard. It sounded as if it was speaking through static.

“You…..__----__...__-- LONG,” it was louder. It was closer too.

The figure resembled that of a woman yet it had no face. The hair a top it’s head whipped
aggressively in various directions.

There was no wind blowing.

Suddenly the figure was in his face, and with great horror, Snape discovered that it had a face! One
with a mouth, nose and eyes as well, but each of the figure’s orifices shone even brighter than the
rest of it. The figure’s eye holes were alight with fury and disgust, and the pressure behind Snape’s
skull increased ten fold. He could not refrain himself from unleashing the pain scream that escaped
him.

“YOU. DO. NOT. BELONG!” The figure screeched with a thousand voices and Snape continued
to scream even when an invisible force threw him beyond to whereabouts he did not know. It was
with a harsh thud that Snape fell to the floor of his home. It knocked the wind out of him,
effectively cutting off his screams.

“P-professor!?” Harry called out. He ran to Snape’s side and stumbled along the way. Clearly, he
had not completely regained his bearings from his earlier episode.

If Snape were not in so much pain he would have snorted at the boy’s stutter. Harrison Potter did
not stutter.

“What happened, are you all right!?" Harry’s voice was clearer and he was knelt at Snape’s side
and was leaned over the older man’s form with gentle hands on each side of Snape’s temples.
When Snape was able to put his vision into focus, he could see that Harry’s brows were furrowed
in deep concern.

'Do I look alright!?’ Snape meant to snarl but it came out a garbled mess.

With lips severely pursed Harry asked, “should I floo St. Mungo’s?”

Snape groaned and shook his head ‘no.’ Harry asked nothing more and took it upon himself to take
care of Snape’s health.

“I am going to levitate you onto the couch. Relax,” seconds later, Snape was being lifted oh so
slowly onto the couch without a single spell being uttered.

“Accio 12 inch parchment,” Harry said with an open palm held in the air. The paper arrived with a
quiet ‘whoosh’ and from his coat pocket Harry brandished his favored muggle pen. With ease
Harry performed a simple diagnostic spell.

Harry sighed, “Headache and a slight bruise on the ribs. Nothing too severe but I must impose onto
your personal supply of potions. I am merely retrieving a potion for headaches, wait here.”

'As if I could go anywhere with a headache like this,' Snape thought snidely. Aloud he groaned.

Whatever pushed him out of Harry’s mind was NOT a form of Occlumency. Occlumency took the
form of walls or distractions from certain thoughts or memories and while a skilled Legilimens
such as Snape’s self could be pushed out or forced to leave one’s mind. Rarely could one be
thrown out so violently as Snape unfortunately had and by what seemed to be a third party no-less.
For some odd reason the being seemed oh-so familiar… If Snape’s memory served him right, Harry had described such a figure as “the Woman of Light” and said Woman of Light had been present at Godric’s Hollow the night the Dark Lord first attacked the Potters. The being who he thought was a manifestation of Lily’s protective magic in corporeal form was not apart of Lily at all. It had been completely cloaked in a magical signature that resembled Harry’s own, but was not his own. It was odd, and confusing and to be honest, Snape could not make much sense of it. The only thing Snape could make sense of was the raw power he had felt inside Harry.

Harry returned and Snape stared at him. He stared so intently and for so long that Harry could not refrain from displaying his discomfort with a deep and agitated frown as he continued to administer first aid to Snape’s person.

“Professor. You are staring,” the boy pointed out sternly after he could ignore it no longer. Now, he was knelt at Snape’s side with a potion in hand. Though, Harry could have used magic to spell the liquid into Snape’s body, he chose to lift the man’s head with tender hands and carefully tilted the potion bottle to the man’s lips.

Such a gesture from anyone else would have had Snape snarling and snapping at them like a rabid dog, but it was Harry, and Snape was far too distracted with his thoughts.

‘Who are you--WHAT are you?’ He was uncertain whether he thought such a question with awe or fear. Perhaps fear was the truer emotion. Perhaps Snape was entirely wrong and he confused those emotions with uncertain curious confusion that longed for answers he felt undeserving of. Snape could not properly discern his emotions, but he did remember the last time he felt this way.

_During the Summer of 1976 after Snape completed his potion mastery thus becoming the youngest potion master in Britain history. One day, while working in his mentor’s shop he was approached by a man who had introduced himself as Thomas Gaunt. Allegedly the man had sought Snape out for his expertise on the recommendation of Lucius Malfoy._

_Snape could still remember the man’s graying skin and monstrous face that resembled that of a snake rather than a human. The older man’s blood red eyes had frightened Snape and initially he had mistook Gaunt for a vampire._

_Snape was so young at the time, and no longer had the friendship of Lily Potter. Snape had no one but Lucius Malfoy to turn to--and Lucius was no longer even at Hogwarts with him. However, Lucius visited him whenever he could and wrote him more often than not._

_Snape trusted Lucius’ judgement and when Gaunt informed him of his association with the blond, Snape was immediate in his appreciation that Lucius acquired clients on his behalf._

_Gaunt’s inquiry had been nothing nefarious--it was mundane actually--the man merely inquired as to whether or not it would be possible to create an everlasting potion. A potion that could be spelled to never end or emptied from something such as a flask or basin. The drink also needed to be spelled to be unable to spill and able to hold a small item such as a large coin within it._

_While desire of such information was not nefarious, it was still dark in nature and Snape easily but discreetly flaunted his knowledge of the dark magic and potions that could make such a thing possible. If the man actually went through such a process then he would have to do so as discreetly as possible, he and Snape both knew that but neither said such a thing aloud._

_By the end, Snape had given the man more direction and resources than he originally had and for that alone, Gaunt had paid Snape generously for his work._
The man had paid so much that Snape was able to buy better clothing, school supplies, brewing material and ingredients for the coming school year. Snape had been immediately suspicious, and sought to make the transaction truly equal in payment and labor so that he would not owe the man later, “Mr. Gaunt, for such a generous payment I could create and brew the potion for you. Creating a potion of never ending drink should not be hard for me…”

With a chuckle, the man placed a gentle but firm hand onto Snape’s shoulder and it would have felt fatherly if Snape had not been able to feel Gaunt’s magical signature.

It felt… raw. It was… powerful, grotesquely beautiful--it was… monstrous--all things that Lucius had used to describe the Dark Lord.

“If your offer is serious potion master, where would you do so?” Gaunt gestured to the room around them, “Horace Slughorn is a scholar in his own right and would not hesitate to take the credit of your success if you were to brew it here, within his laboratory. And surely, you cannot freely create such a thing within Hogwarts where you are still a student,” Snape’s lip curled downward at being reminded of his adolescence.

“I mean no disrespect, young master,” Gaunt said and with an affirming squeeze he released his hold and the wonderful, monstrous feeling of the man’s magic left with his touch and Snape could barely refrain from chasing after it.

The man knew what he had done and gave a smile that displayed his pointed teeth. He asked Snape if Lucius had ever spoke of him and Snape knew that his intuition had been right. Gaunt was in fact, none other than the Dark Lord himself.

Lucius had spoke of a man so powerful that he was monstrous and Lily--the last time the two had the chance to speak--spoke of the Dark Lord as if he were akin to a power hungry fascist.

Maybe neither of them were wrong and perhaps Snape’s greed for power blinded him because despite the man’s monstrous features and magical signature, Snape saw absolution. It was as if the Dark Lord could read his mind because when he spoke next, he said; “Potion master, you are intelligent, attentive, subtle, precise and your skill is unrivaled. I see now that the Malfoy heir’s high opinion of you is not clouded by his friendship with you as I had thought. Lord Malfoy as well has remarked on your person. If your offer earlier was a serious one, I would of course provide the space and material for you to do so. More than that, however…” the Dark Lord paused and stood before Snape. The look he gave him was one that said, ‘I am more powerful than you, I could kill you but I choose not to. I am kind, I am gracious, I am merciful, I am… the Dark Lord.’

Snape gulped and a drop of sweat fell from his brow, “however?” He meant to ask firm, but his voice was barely above a whisper.

The Dark Lord smiled and Snape allowed himself to be foolish and think of it as kind, “however,” the older man purred, “I’d like to have someone like you on my side. This Sunday, Lord Malfoy, his heir, the Black heir and select others shall meet with me at Malfoy manor. I invite you there--if, and only if you are ready for a revolution that allows a creative mind such as yours create and flourish without judgment or punishment.”

Despite his nerves, Snape knew that he could not miss the opportunity to meet the man once more. Not only that but there was the potential to be apart of something so secretive and elite with the possibility to study and create what he pleased.

Snape went to the meeting, even with the apprehension he felt towards those who also attended. While he was friends with Malfoy, he had been friends with no others before the meeting. Lily no
longer wished to be in his company and those of his house barely tolerated him because they saw him as a mudblood.

However, at the meeting, Snape gained allies and a new found fear and respect for the Dark Lord as the man casually displayed his power various times throughout the meeting by using wandless and nonverbal magic while his magical signature enveloped the room.

Because of such a display, Snape chose to devote himself to such a beast. Just by being near him Snape himself felt powerful. He felt like someone to be respected and feared just from his association with the Dark Wizard.

And with the things that he knew of Harrison Potter, perhaps it was wrong of him but he could not help but feel the same even if most others not yet knew of the boy’s power and once the public learned, Harry would never be left alone.

“What will you become, Harrison Potter?” Snape said aloud.

Harry frowned from his place on the recliner where he moved after he nursed Snape. It seemed that the teen took it upon himself to stay nearby and monitor Snape who refused to be moved from the sofa.

“You are delirious professor, I fear you may have a concussion. We shall keep you up for a few hours before we head off to bed,” Harry said and returned his attention to a book from one of Snape’s shelves. It was a book on grey magic, one of Snape’s favorites.

Chapter End Notes

So, I had to scratch the promised huge updates because it is quite a lot to clean up for me and I just do not have the time, but just so you know the next chapter will feature a lot of Narcissa, and Draco and we will also finally get through the ritual. Following that, Harry's training with his new mentor will begin!

This chapter was fun because it is sort of a filler but not really because it has such important information that will lead to future chapters revealing how important the events of this chapter is. Or at least it will justify my writing of Snape's relationships with the Malfoys and how I am writing his involvement with the Dark Lord. The whole "desperation" thing is great but I do not wish that to be his main inspiration for joining the Dark Lord. I also do not wish for the Dark Lord and his followers to be too easy of villains, this is fanfic and I want to go in depth with this world, and the possibilities I have already created.

And as many of you have noticed, I do not have a beta. There are tons and tons of mistakes, point them out but avoid being overly rude if you can. Also, if you do not like this work that is fine but I do not need to nor do I want to hear about it, please! I write this for fun, not critique. Of course, I’d love to hear overall feedback of what you wish to see, what has surprised you and yes if you are unhappy with certain events please do not feel as if I do not want you to express those things! Just have fun with this is all I ask.

I noticed that many of you are wary about Harry's new mentor... well, I call that good intuition. ;)
For those waiting for Luna, if you remain patient you will be rewarded in ways you cannot expect! (I have many plans for her, she will NOT be a seer but what else do you guys expect/want?)

And surprisingly, not many of you have mentioned Harry and Draco but I really didn't give you a reason to, I wonder how you will feel about the next chapter?

Anyway, your comments are always appreciated because I love talking with you! And the kudos? I cannot believe it! I am very happy and honored that you are enjoying my story and I cannot wait to speak with you.

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!