Harry and Harley

by Rihaan

Summary

As he stared into the eyes of a grinning, insane, albeit very attractive jester, hoisting a comically intimidating mallet across her shoulders, he realized that he wasn't in the Department of Mysteries, or even London, anymore. But he didn't care.

Harry checks into the Madhouse, and makes himself at home.
Harry stumbled and slipped on the cobblestone ground below him and, not even pausing to wince at the pain, scrambled to his knees. His eyes glanced wildly at the strangeness surrounding him.

There wasn’t really anything strange, per se, but it was quite… odd.

He was outside, now. Moreover, it was nighttime. He had only arrived at the ministry an hour earlier, and it was fairly late in the afternoon, but the summer sun usually set at around nine.

Harry glanced at his broken, but useable, wristwatch. 6:39. He held his wand tightly in his hand, his breath staggering.

This wasn’t where the ministry was. In fact, he wasn’t sure he was in London anymore.

Sirens sounded in the distance. Harry, having grown up in London, knew immediately that something was off about the siren. It was unlike anything he had ever heard before.

He didn’t have time to think. Mere seconds ago, he had been chasing his Godfather, and now, he was nowhere in sight.

The green-eyed wizard furrowed his brow at his surroundings. In the distance, his keen eyes spotted a large ‘W’ on a skyscraper, and an even larger, oddly shaped tower. It was unlike anything he had heard of or seen in his lifetime.

He sighed to himself, frustrated. “Bloody hell, Sirius. What’ve you gotten yourself into?” He stood up and checked his surroundings once more. Nothing was coming to him.

One thing was for certain, as he looked up at the streetlights and the bright neon glows – he was certainly nowhere near any wizards. He slid his wand up his sleeve, more thankful than ever for the holster Moody gave him the past Christmas, and ran his hand through his dirty, sweat-soaked hair.

He looked like he had just gone through a war, and he did. It all happened so quickly – it took him a moment for the memories of the battle that just took place to come to him.

By the time the Order had arrived, everything was relatively under control. There were a few small panics – from Harry smashing the prophecy orb into the side of Crabbe’s head when he made a lewd comment about Luna, to a still brain-addled Ron sending a badly-aimed cutting curse at Lucius’s wand, instead hitting his throat.

It was just them versus Bellatrix, Goyle, Rockwood, Dolohov, Nott and Macnair. The best of Voldemort’s Death Eaters vs. the entire Order. For all intents and purposes, the odds were on the
side of the light.

Then Sirius began taunting her. And then she struck him through the veil.

Harry shook his head. He had to be around here somewhere.

The sirens were getting louder, and Harry thought quickly. He shouldn’t be out here in the middle of the street, looking as out-of-place as he did. He had no form of identification on him, and he didn’t want to answer any questions, if he looked suspicious enough to pull over and talk to.

He ran into a local alleyway behind the mart, and pressed his back against the shadows as the sirens got closer.

He was surprised to see five police-cars speed down the street, all wailing annoyingly loud; so much so, he covered his ears until it passed.

He took note of the ‘GPD Police’ on the side of the patrol cars, and leaned heavily against the wall.

This just wasn’t a good day for him. He uncovered his ears and breathed a sigh of relief.

His ears twitched, and on pure instinct, he unholstered his wand and jabbed into an empty space next to him.

Or, what should have been an empty space.

“Ouch! Hey, watch it, Busta!”

“Who are you?” Harry growled, the darkness impairing his vision, along with the sweat from his fringe dripping onto his nose. He didn’t dare try to shake the sweat away, not while he had them at wandpoint. She sounded very much like a girl, but… “Why were you hiding?”

He felt his hand smacked away, and he quickly jabbed it back. “Ouch I’m warning ya!”


The girl with the strange accent gulped audibly. “Wow, heh. You pull that off as well as Bats could. Who are ya, anyways?” Something scraped along the bricks of the wall beside them.

His wand flashed, and in a moment, he had her tightly wrapped in ropes before she even knew it. Harry raised an eyebrow at what he just saw, when the flash of light allowed him to see her for a sliver of a second.

“Hey! What are ya – HEY! Let me GO, ya CREEP!”

“You sure you want the police to hear you?” he asked her, glancing over at the instrument that she had grabbed while she was talking to him. He could not see it all that well, and at this point, he didn’t care. ‘Lumos,’ he thought, and a soft white glow emitted from his wand. He inspected the girl he had captured and whistled lowly. “I’ve never been called a creep by a jester before…”

The ropes were wrapped around her form pretty tightly, so he could see that her curves were not what he was expecting from a woman who had five police cars chasing after her. The ropes had gone as far as her knees to her mouth, and she kicked as best she could and screamed as best as she could – which wasn’t much.

Harry slid down alongside the wall, before placing the wand in his lap, the glowing tip facing the mysterious woman dressed as a jester. “I have to admit, you’re probably a step up from Bellatrix in
crazy. And looks.”

Despite the fact that the jester was tied down and gagged, he could see a faint blush on her cheeks. Harry cocked his head at her rather unusual response.

She muffled something, and it didn’t sound very nice. He stood up, looked out from the corner, and seeing no one around, walked away from her.

He didn’t get very far before her screams became frantic. With a wordless spell, the ropes around her mouth loosened.

“HARLEY QUINN! COME BACK HERE! IT’S – ! Oh.” She looked up at him as best she could, her black painted lips in a frown. “You gonna let me go now?”

Harry frowned. “What kind of name is that? A stage name?”

She smirked. “You could say that. Now can you let me go already? I have ta meet up with a friend.”

Harry approached her and squatted on his haunches. “Any reason you were running from the police?”

She frowned. “Shouldn’t I be asking you that question? You’re the one that’s holding me hostage.”

He shined his wand over to the wall to properly investigate the sound that made him shoot first. He raised an eyebrow. “Yes, but… I don’t have a sledgehammer.”

She looked indignant at his words. “It’s a mallet, bonehead. Wanna see the difference?”

Harry shrugged. “Not really. Though I am interested in where you hide the sledgehammer.”

Another reason to berate Sirius when he found him; he had learned far too much.

She growled with impatience. “I’d be happy to show you if you let me go.” After a few seconds, she narrowed her eyes. “How’d you not know who I am? Where are you from?”

“Not around here,” he said testily, still eyeing the comically oversized mallet. It did not look like a weapon such a small girl like her could be comfortable handling. “Does ‘Britain’ sound familiar to you?”

“Don’t have to be such a smartass,” she muttered, rolling around in the ropes, desperate to find some leverage to get up. With a spell (Wingardium Leviosa), her body moved upwards until she was leaning against the brick wall. Thinking quickly, he wrapped her legs in ropes as well. After getting over her immediate shock, she glared at him as he stood. “Ya know, you coulda just let me go.”

Harry nodded. “I also coulda just left you here. Or summon the police back.”

She grinned maliciously. “And then what? Leave me to tell them about your powers?”

“Because I’m sure you have a reputation for being trustworthy and honest.” He went back to her old question. “Well? Tell me. What makes you think that I should know you?”

Her look towards him soured, since he pointed out that she was a criminal and no one would ever believe her story. She shuffled her feet forward with minimum effort before she pushed herself away from the wall.

She now stood perpendicular to him, and he got a good look at her nicely wrapped figure. With no hint of sarcasm or humor, she bunny-hopped to him, half-grunting as she did so, her boots making a
slight clop. Harry did nothing but watch on with barely hidden amusement. With one final, fantastic leap, she stood her ground near inches from the green-eyed wizard, who was her exact height, and smirked evilly into his bright green eyes.

“Because, kid; I’m your worst nightmare. And if you don’t let me go right now, and I mean right now, then I will show you what my mallet can do against your little stick.”

Harry considered his options here. On the one hand, she was surely a force to be reckoned with, and he had caught her unprepared. That was very clear by the large, intimidating weapon behind her and the numerous police cars chasing her. She was more than a criminal, he realized; she was a villain.

He had enough of those to deal with as it was.

On the other hand…

“Yours may be bigger, but I know how to use mine.” He leaned forward and pressed his lips to hers. She squeaked loudly, and tried to lean back away from him, and he kept up flawlessly, leaning forward, adding just the right amount of pressure. She began scuttling back, and he paced with her, his lips in tandem with hers. He reached up to her right pigtail (the red one) and twirled it around his finger.

Harley’s knees wobbled, and if they weren’t held together so tightly, she would have collapsed. She had, of course, been kissed a few times, but she would be ashamed to say that this was the best kiss she’d ever gotten, and he hadn’t even gotten past her lips yet!

Wait, What?

Her eyes opened in disbelief – she didn’t even remember closing them – and struggled anew. What did she mean by ‘yet’? Was she anticipating his tongue or something? She had a fascination with psychology before she got into crime, and while she consistently tried to defend her actions, she was sure she was tipping the scales towards insanity at this very moment.

Harry licked her lips encouragingly and, almost by instinct, as if she actually wanted this to happen, she opened her mouth, allowing his tongue to nip at her teeth, before mingling with her own.

She half noticed that she had stopped struggling once again, and that her eyes were closed, once again.

Fuck it. She was going to kill the kid anyway. Might as well give him a last kiss from the hottest girl he’d ever meet.

Last kiss…

Her eyes popped open, and she jumped backwards, finally out of his grasp. She stumbled backwards when she landed, and before she could fall flat on her back, the perceptively fast boy caught her around her waist.

“Not enjoying yourself?” He inquired, grinning at her flushed cheeks and heaving breath. She probably hadn’t noticed, but her ropes had been loosened considerably around her stomach and heaving bosom. You needed to breath well in able to truly enjoy a kiss, after all.

Her blue eyes locked onto his green eyes with shock. “You should be dead,” she muttered, licking her lips. She scanned his face. There were no veins pulsing, no discoloration, no extreme paleness on his character. She never had the chance to use this particular lipstick, but Ivy had told her how it should work. Was this a faulty batch? Ivy didn’t make many mistakes, and this was her favorite
She narrowed her eyes. Apparently, his powers went beyond what he could do with that stick. “What are you?”

He stood her up properly before spelling the binds to disappear. She shook on her feet, trying to regain function of her body, and he was counting on that. “I’m just a bloke that wanted a kiss from a pretty girl before she tried to smash my head in.”

She stumbled around, trying to get feeling back into her legs, before her hand found something for leverage. She grinned dangerously at the object. “Sorry, kid. But I don’t try anything!” She gripped around the handle of the mallet, and with one smooth move, flung the large tool in a perfect ark, and slammed it in the side of the brick wall. It cracked massively from the force, but the foundation held still.

She blinked. She expected his head to be there.

She stared cautiously around, hefting her mallet up to her shoulder, before scowling. “I swear, if I wasn’t almost convinced he was Zatanna’s sidekick, I’d say he belonged to Bats himself.”

She turned on the spot and walked away, making sure to add a little sway in her ass with each step. Just in case he was watching. “Ya just made my list, kid. And that’s not a good list to be on.”

Harry, hidden under the Potter family cloak, tilted his head at the beautiful villain the tight jester’s outfit showcased, memorizing her curves as she sashayed out of the alley and into the open night.

He had no idea where he was, and he had no idea how to get back. And, right now, enjoying the view, he could safely say that he was okay with that.

Chapter End Notes

Inspired by request from Anonymous reviewer. He/She wanted a mostly smut story starring Harry and Harley, with a bit of Ivy mixed in.

Challenge Accepted. I’m really trying to work on smut writing, as you may have noticed with my later stories.
Harry has a bit of a Saving-People-Thing. For once, it turns in his favor.

Pamela’s fingers tapped against the table. “I see.” She lifted her now cold cup of tea to her lips, and took a refreshing drink.

Harleen chuckled nervously, sitting across from the small round table in their kitchen. “So you’re not mad at me?”

She lowered her mug, and for the second time in the past hour, Harley was paralyzed by the green eyes piercing through her. “I didn’t say that. I said ‘I see.’”

Harley shrunk under her gaze, and she rubbed her thighs together. Her body didn’t know the difference when Ivy was legitimately pissed, or when she felt her girlfriend needed to be... punished.

So did her mind, sometimes. Considering the vines in the rest of the expansive greenhouse haven’t approached her to hold her arms, she correctly assumed that her lover was, at the moment, anything but.

“What... what was I supposed to do, Red? He had me tied up!” She pleaded with her girlfriend, trying to get her to see logic.

“And he kissed you. With tongue.”

Her heated face told Ivy everything, including a few things she didn’t want to know.

“So you didn’t consider biting it, then?”

Harley’s mouth opened, then shut. Then opened again. Then shut. She sighed. “I didn’t think about that.”

Her hands pulsed against the clay mug, before she stopped herself. She had broken far too many mugs in this situation. She held the mug out, and a vine reached her from another room to loop around the handle, where the vine promptly delivered it to the sink. “No, you didn’t. I wonder why.”

Harley shrugged helplessly, her eyes lowering and looking away.

‘Down and to the right,’ Pamela thought to herself, recalling what Harleen had said to her a month ago, about something new she learned in school. ‘Hold on... up and to the right.’ She saw Harley’s eyes hadn’t lowered like her head had.

“You can picture it clearly, can’t you?”

Harleen focused back on her, biting her lip. “Huh?”
“Him. Kissing you. You enjoyed it. That’s why you didn’t bite him. For someone who threatened a guard to have Juliet bite off his privates just last week, I don’t think you should have any reservations about biting someone’s tongue, at least to the point where he takes his tongue out of your goddamn mouth!” She slammed her hands to the table for emphasis, but she didn’t stand up yet. It got the desired effect, anyways. Harley flinched and looked even guiltier. Usually, when it got to where she towered over the girl, the natural blonde would cry, and she never wanted to do that to her Harleen again.

Now, she wasn’t so sure.

“I was tied up,” she whispered meekly, glancing into her Red’s conflicted, piercing eyes. “I wouldn’t be able to run away if I did that. Who’s to say he wouldn’t have killed me? Or worse?”

She nodded. “I’d believe you, if you didn’t just think of it now. You weren’t thinking about it then. You just told me you didn’t even consider biting his tongue.”

Pamela began tapping the table, again. She needed more tea to calm her down. Before she could finish the thought, the vine set the mug down beside her fingers, the smoke rising from the mug with a single green leaf floating on the surface.

She held it gingerly in her hands and took a delicate sip.

“I got it! I mean, er...” Harleen fidgeted. “What I mean is, maybe it was the magic?”

Ivy rested the precipice of the mug at her black painted lips and raised an eyebrow. “Magic?” She had told her how he used it, but what did that have anything to do with how she responded to his advances?

“Um, well, his powers. Or something. He should have died when he kissed me. I’m wearing the lipstick you gave me. I applied it before I went out, so it’s plenty potent. His lips were smudged black for crap’s sake! He should have been dead long before he stuck his tongue down my throat!”

She tapped the mug aggressively, not wanting to hear that last bit of information. “So you’re blaming me for a messed up batch, so you just had to continue kissing him?”

“No!” Harley almost shouted, placatingly putting up her hands. “It works! I’m sure it does! But it had to have been his powers that stopped it from working! Maybe his powers affected me to respond that way to him!”

Pamela placed the tea on the table and crossed her arms under her generous breasts, hefting them up a bit. She noted that Harley was so nervous she didn’t so much as glance down. In this case, it was hurting her not to look – to look at her as she always did. “Are they affecting you now?”

She shook her head swiftly, her eyes steadfastly on the redhead’s.

Ivy leaned back. “Remember when you came home from school last month? When you told me about eye movements?”

Harley blinked a couple of times. “Uh, yeah...” A sign of recognition ran across her face, before it morphed quickly.

Fear.

And that, above everything, was the final proof for Pamela Isley.
“When I asked you why you couldn’t bite his tongue, you looked up and to the right. Tell me what that means, Harleen.”

She gulped nervously, her lip quivering. At this point, Ivy knew that this was the point to stop. She pressed on. “What was in your mind when you bit your lip, when you were quivering in your seat like a little slut, Harley?”

She winced at her own wording. True, Harley was her slut, and it was her favorite word to hear, but outside of sex, it was damn near a taboo word.

Harleen’s eyes began watering. “To visually recall something. A clear picture. Please, Red...”

She pushed herself away from the table. She glanced away from the green/redhead as she stood on slightly shaky legs. It was a testament to how hurt she was from Harley’s actions, as her movements lost its grace. “Get out, Harleen.”

Her black-sheened lips opened in a large ‘O’ as the first tear fell. “Red?” She asked, her whisper broken.

“Figure out what you want, Harls. We’re not doing this because we’re business partners and fuck buddies. You mean a lot to me. I thought you’d feel the same.”

“But, Red... Pammy, I do...”

She leaned against the table, her head still facing away from Harley’s. “I know. And that’s why it hurts what you did.” She moved away from the table towards her room. “Leave. Before my babies make you.”

The door slammed.

Harry Potter frowned at the scene that played out in front of him, silently leaning beside the sink. While it was technically rude for him to spy on people like this, they honestly should’ve thought of that before he got an Invisibility Cloak for Christmas. He almost grinned at the adventures he had gone through with the family heirloom.

The only thing that kept him from remembering the Quidditch Girls locker room was the girl in front of him and the tears that hit the table.

Harry sighed to himself – he was always uncomfortable being around crying girls, but he had gotten much more experience dealing with them in the past year than he really wanted to. Attempting to smash his head in with a sledgehammer/mallet/whatever aside, he felt that while she had escalated the situation, he had started this, so he resolved to find some way to help her.

And, as Hermione said, he had a bit of a saving-people-thing. It was how he got to... wherever he was, in the first place. After casting a few spells, he sheathed his wand and removed his cloak, pocketing it in the oversized compartment in his cargo pants.

It took a number of minutes for her to notice him, her head having been in her hands for a long time. And Harry could see the internal war going on in her head of whether he existed or not, refusing to look directly at him, for fear that it might be a hallucination. He may not have taken psychology class, but he read once in the muggle library about eye patterns. He found it ironic that she had to look up and to the right to see his face. When she had recalled them kissing earlier, she unknowingly stared into his eyes.
Now, he found himself under her attention again, her eyes wavering, as if she wasn’t sure what she was looking at for a good, long moment. Then she spoke.

“I have to kill you.”

Hermione also mentioned that his saving-people-thing would one day kill him. She was the smartest of their generation for a reason. He blew a short breath through his nose. “Can I get another kiss, then?”

Her brow furrowed, and now, she was looking at him directly. Then, smoothly, she scooped up Pamela’s discarded mug and slung it at him.

It shattered against his shield, its hot liquid steaming off the side of the small dome surrounding him, but before he could relax, like the grace of a professional acrobat, she pushed back her chair and in one smooth motion, flipped towards him.

Pamela slid down against the door, her head in her hands.

Ten minutes. That’s all she needed.

Harley had nowhere to go. She wasn’t old enough to find anywhere to live. And, above all, she was a widely wanted criminal that just pulled off a heist. She wasn’t going to let her leave the greenhouse. Her babies, the vines that surrounded them, weren’t going to let her. Sometimes her babies knew her better than herself.

But she was still pissed. She desperately needed to cool down and find it in her to forgive Harleen.

She could forgive Harleen for the small stuff easily. She didn’t allow herself to be captured, especially by someone with powers. She didn’t force herself on him. Harley had never been kissed by a boy, so it was probably a strange and new feeling for her to be touched by another.

She could forgive all of that. When taking a teenager for a lover and crime partner in training, it was obvious that she had to deal with teenage moments, even though she wasn’t that far removed from it, being nineteen years old herself.

No, it was two things. One, she lied about it, coming home with reapplied lipstick, and kissing her goodnight before she went to bed.

And she tasted him on the girl’s tongue.

If she had kissed a guard to poison him, she’d understand. She had done that a few times, and had given Harley her own tube in case she ever needed to.

But there was no poison on Harley’s tongue.

Her own tongue was very sensitive, hyperaware of other scents and tastes. It was as useful as a snake’s, but since she wasn’t a snake, it wasn’t very useful very often.

Now, however, she wished she didn’t have it.

She hated men. She just hated them. There was no deep, dark story of abuse that scarred her for life. No drunk father or uncle that gave her a permanent perception of men (No father at all, actually). Just the idea that every day, they kill more of her babies, set her off. There were no lumberjills around that warranted her hate. There were no female business tycoons desperately looking for expansion.
And, of course, a man turned her into what she was today. But she was thankful for that. Even as she pushed him into a lethal pit of thorns of her creation, she blew him a kiss and thanked him.

Over time, that hatred led to a pure disgust. The few times she had resolved to seduce a guard to kiss him, to mainly show off to her partner-in-training how it’s done, she washed out her mouth. It was never really needed, but they tended to try to force their tongues before they realized their breaths were wearing thin, and she always felt a bit unsettled.

She was neutral to women. Some were just as disgusting as men when it came to the environment. If not, then they were doing next to nothing to stop it. Harley was the only one who managed to get to her, her personality and looks just intoxicating. If anything, Pamela was asexual. The irony didn’t escape her.

She blew a breath into the air, something that always relaxed her. Maybe it reminded her of when her mother smoked cigarettes and felt calm immediately afterwards, but it always helped.

Now... it was helping. Probably.

At least at this point, she could see that she was blowing this out of proportion, and she certainly couldn’t kick Harley out for this indiscretion.

She stood up, her bare feet sliding against the bare floor as she slid away from the door, and swiftly opened it.

“Fuck,” she breathed, her hands clasped against his. “You’re real?”

Harry grinned cheekily. “As real as your love for me.”

She snarled and pushed harder, but he wouldn’t budge. She lifted her knee and brought it up to his groin as hard as she could.

“Ah!” Her eyes bulged in pain, and she fell over, Harry letting go of her hands for her to grab her knee.

“I don’t know who Juliet is” he muttered, somewhat enjoying her writhing along the floor, “but I made precautions to make sure she doesn’t go for my bits.”

“F-fuck... you...”

Harry just hmm’ed to himself. Much like allusions to his name, Sirius once told him that sometimes a joke was simply too easy to make. “So, what’s all this about killing me?”

She grunted something, and his wand slid back down his sleeve into his open palm. “Do I have to tie you up again?”

“Pammy!” she screamed, her tears coming back.

Harry shook his head. “Silencing ward. Shield charm. No one can hear you.” He blinked, listening to himself. “That sounds more menacing than I wanted it.”

“Get the fuck out of our house!” She screamed at him, and struggled to get back to her feet.

He shook his head, again. “You’re just going to hunt me down after this. I can’t risk that. I’m going to have to erase the memories of the both of you.” He was very aware that the Ministry Owls hadn’t sent him any letters yet, and he was using that to his full advantage. Whether they still had their own
problems to deal with (Bellatrix and Co.) or, just maybe, where he was, there was only one magic
user on earth right now, and he didn’t need that information spreading.

She grabbed onto the waist of his pants, and again showing her strength, she launched herself up and
kissed him on the lips.

It didn’t take long for Harry to try to figure out what she was doing with the wild kiss that came out
of nowhere, and while he probably should have admitted to her that he was immune to not only
many poisons, but many diseases and sicknesses – perks of being the head of his family – he still
returned the kiss. And he licked at her lips once again.

She pushed him away, exerting more effort than was necessary. In Harry’s opinion, she looked like
she had forced herself to separate from him. “Why – why aren’t you dead? Why can’t you just die?!”
She looked almost pleading at this point.

His fingers twitched, and he dropped the wand. Before she could do anything, he grabbed her by her
waist and put his other hand behind her neck.

She stared breathless into his green eyes, intense and focused. Her own eyes glanced around his face,
a little scared of what he had planned next. He leaned down and kissed her again, and sought
immediate entrance into her mouth.

She brought her hands up to his chest, prepared to beat him away, before her fists tightened. After a
second, however, her fingers fell limp against his chest and she opened her mouth a little, allowing
his tongue entry once again.

Fuck it. If she was going to go down like this – to have her Pammy mad at her for something out of
her control, at least go down in a way that made her feel like she deserved it.

She felt him lift her knee and rub the kneecap with his thumb, and she winced at the pain. She
usually wore kneepads and elbow pads for combat, but she had taken them off shortly after she got
home. She never even had the opportunity to use them until he came along. Perfect fucking timing.

The pain in her knee numbed, and soon, went away. She moaned in pleasure when it began to feel
better, and then it began to feel good.

Minutes after her first lover broke up with her, and she found her first real pleasure point outside her
erogenous zones.

Again; timing. Maybe she was a slut. A whore. A technical virgin of a scarlet Harlot.

Harley the Harlot. Thank God that wasn’t the nickname she carried through junior high school. She
was as chaste as they came until she was seduced by Pammy. If anything, she’d have been Virgin
Quinzel... Virginzel...

Heh heh, she cracked herself up.

“Something funny?”

He had stopped kissing her long ago, the moment she became unresponsive. He had taken the time
to observe her – he didn’t bother to look at her eye patterns, for he didn’t memorize the chart – and
he realized that ‘Pammy’ was the luckiest woman in the world.

He knew that she had every intention of keeping Harley here. He saw it in her expression. She
looked pissed. Not sad, or resolved. It was a ten to twenty minute rage period, one that he was very
familiar with, and she just wanted time to cool off. Not to mention, the vines haven’t touched Harley yet. Though it was curious why they hadn’t attacked him since he followed her into the greenhouse, he’d rather not count his blessings. Still, the shield charm held strong, in case they decided to attack.

Still; Pammy was a lucky girl. Granted, Harley was very lucky as well – the woman oozed sensuality and was beautiful all around. Her single button up dress shirt covering her braless DD-cup bust and green leaf panties helped, as well, but what he found himself staring at more than he would ever care to admit to was the long flowing red hair that fell to the middle of her back. It was brighter than any Weasley’s hair, and sleeker than Fleur’s hair at her most beautiful. Her eyes were simply, a reflection of his own emerald irises. Not brighter, not duller. Not a different shade. Just... pure.

He doubted the purity of her character in comparison to her eyes, but it was nevertheless intoxicating. However, as he gazed into the sky blue eyes of Harley Quinn, he felt a pulse to his loins that almost shattered the shield he formed around it. Granted, he had been sporting a semi since he had first kissed Harley, and it had been fluctuating ever since, peaking at the moment he saw the green-skinned beauty for the first time.

But as he gazed at her cosmetically flushed cheeks, her mascara-covered eyes, and her smudged lips -

He frowned. She giggled. And then he asked if something was funny. She looked at him in surprise, as if just shocked at how close he was to her. He pulled his hand from behind her head and held her chin still. Her makeup began to disappear from her face, her true beauty utterly exposed to him. After a few quiet, tenseless moments, he kissed her again.

_Much_ better, he decided.

Harley’s eyes furrowed in confusion as he kissed her again. It felt... weird. Different from the other times she had kissed him, even from the time she kissed Pammy, that got her in this situation to begin with.

When he stood back and his fingers slid along the lycra suit she wore, she giggled again, nervously. Harry grinned, not unlike a villain would. He was keeping her attention, now.

Harry’s hands, which until this point had been out of play, lax at her sides, suddenly rose to grip his waist. She squeezed him at periodic moments when he touched the back of her knee, or when he trailed his fingers across her ribs, tantalizingly close to her rapidly maturing breasts.

Harry’s wandering fingers moved up her back, and found the hidden catch where her zipper was. He fumbled with it – not out of nervousness, but of indecision. There was probably a limit, and this was most definitely close to it.

His fingers nimbly unbuttoned the backs to the catch, before pulling down the zipper.

He had gone through too many death-defying adventures to run away from the _obvious_ conclusion to his life. It, quite literally, _couldn’t_ get better than this. When she got back to her senses, he was likely going to die by her hand. He needed to see how high the peak was before he fell.

She felt a tickle as her suit was unzipped. Just earlier today, she had shivered in excitement when Ivy zipped her up, but not before kissing the nape of her neck. It had become tradition for them, and the one that broke it was now the one who unzipped her.

She finished her assessment of herself. After more than a year of indecisions and avoiding what she truly was, she finally had a diagnosis.

Huh. That wasn’t as difficult as she thought it would be.

She gasped as his hand slipped into the back of her lycra suit and gripped onto a smooth, well-formed cheek, before his other hand joined. He held firmly to the cheeks that she had put on display to him earlier, swayed in front of him as a joke, as a dare to him to come out again and try to catch her prepared and ready.

He released her smooth, panty-clad ass to slide along her smooth back and grasp the sides of her separated zipper clasps, and pulling it off her shoulders.

She stepped back and shrugged it off, much to his shock. Grinning a little bit, she pulled the suit down and stepped out of it.

Her green heel struck the floor as her red heel kicked the costume back, before stepping with the other. She put her hands at her side and smirked.

“Fine, then. You wanna play? Come ride the Harley.”

Having been a lesbian for her entire sexual life, the natural blonde felt a sort of pride that she finally got to say that line.

Though, in the next second, she lost her pride, and gained a new feeling when the boy’s clothes disappeared from his body into thin air; lust.

Harry Potter was a scrawny kid. Keyword – was. Having spent the previous summer at Hermione’s, he was given a crash-course in health safety by her parents when they noticed his overly slim form. For dentists, they had a lot of knowledge on physical health.

Now, Harry Potter was proud to say that he was in shape. And as Harley stared lustfully at his wiry form, his defined muscles and toned physique, he knew that it was all worth it.

However, he would have to refer to a pensieve – assuming he’d make it past tonight – to see Harley’s reaction, because he was too busy ogling her near-naked form.

She was absolutely perfect. Her handful-a-plenty breasts stood high on her chest, above her taut, flat stomach, and while the red sports bra stood in the way, he had no intention of letting that stop him from admiring the treasures he knew to be within.

The hair on her head added a certain kink to the whole thing – one side of her hair red, the other green, and tied up into two pigtails. The color scheme continued for the little clothing she had left, with her red bra and green panties, to her matching in all but color, red and green boots. She was obviously paying homage to her lover.

Former lover.

He couldn’t bring himself to feel sad that he had broken up a relationship right now. If he survived, he would talk to them both and try to reunite them.

But goddammit if he was going to get back to his saving-people-thing before he got to enjoy himself.

He smirked, and she stepped back, just a little bit, at his exuberance. Then, faster than she could follow, he approached her and crushed her lips to his, his hands firmly printed into the back of her asscheeks, squeezing and kneading them with abandon, his...
His pole planted firmly between her legs.

That was the last thing she had noticed; ironic, considering how far it stood out to her. His powers had him stripped down to his boxers, and the massive tool was pointed at her.

Now it was between her. Mere millimeters from her wanting, weeping center. They being the same height, his dick had found a place to rest, at the apex of her thighs, and had found a snug home, between her slightly separated legs.

By the cheeks of her ass, he pulled her forward, and she squeaked, feeling his large cock slide along her green cotton panties, rubbing firmly against her already distended clit through the visibly soaked material.

She shuddered as she was dragged along his tool, and now they were firmly pressed together, stomach to stomach, her breasts pushing him away slightly from her, but she didn’t let that bother her, craning her neck forward to kiss him again.

He let his hands roam her ass for a few more seconds, before skimming up towards the back of her bra. With a thought, the bra unsnapped, and with another, it disappeared.

Had her mind been capable of processing thought, she would have noted the loss of her favorite bra. At the moment, she was too busy tracing the lines on the scars on his back, forcing herself not to grind relentlessly on his now slickened member, her orgasm approaching. Had her mouth not been full with his tongue, she would be biting her lip in distress. No matter how beautiful he was, or how well-equipped, he was still a kid with a likely hair-trigger.

Well... she had assumed he was a kid. Now, she had no idea what age he was.

Or what his name was, for that matter.

She pushed her head away a little, and they parted tongues. They were connected by a thin string of saliva, which quickly dissipated. Her eyes opened again, and they focused onto the bright green orbs looking curiously at her sky blues.

“Who are you,” she whispered quietly for the last time, needing to know the name of the Adonis, the demigod that was wrapped around her, taking her like Pam never did, and likely never will. She didn’t ask it as a question. She didn’t command it. Right now, all she wanted were words. Anything.

And she would give him everything she had.

His right hand rested on her hip, while the other wrapped around her waist. He dropped eye contact with her, and instead moved to the green side of her hair, to kiss her earlobe. She moaned.

“I’m Harry James Potter,” he whispered. His fingers roamed the front of her panties, before pressing at the junction where his penis was firmly lodged against her green cotton undergarments. She gasped out loud, spasming on his straining cock, her girlcum wetting his dick further. “Your best wetdream,” he continued, remembering the words she first spoke to him when she thought she had control over him, sliding his dick slowly out of the confines of her firmly pressed together legs, distributing her juices evenly along the length of his tool. He held her still, feeling her shudder along the way, feeling every pulsing vein throb against her. His middle finger slipped into her panties; the absolute lack of pubic hair was a turn-on he didn’t expect. He had never felt that before, and now, he was quite certain he never wanted to live without again.

“And while you may be thinking I’m doing all this,” he whispered, taking a second to nip at her ear, “Using my powers, as you put it, I’m not. I don’t even know how to do that. I’m just a random bloke
with powers, and you can’t get enough of it. I’ve read about this. Domination turns you on, doesn’t it? I’ve met a few girls like you, but they haven’t embraced it quite like you have.” His head bowed lower to suck at the side of her neck, and she gasped, leaning her head to the side, her fingers tensing together, her black-painted nails scratching along his back.

For some reason, she liked to think that all those scars that crisscrossed his body were a result of his more excited lovers. Her nails weren’t particularly sharp, but she had been known to claw at the headboard, that they had specifically gotten because she kept clawing at the wall.

She gasped as her most private part was exposed to the air, and now, her no-longer mystery lover’s eyes. She glanced down, and gasped at the view; her shiny, sleek cunt dripped freely on his cock, his head now positioned towards her entrance, looking as intimidating as the biggest of Ivy’s vines, though she had never used them on her. She whimpered with want, and when Harry slid his cockhead against her lips, she moaned with need.

He still held the crotch of her panties between his fingers, having only pushed them aside instead of removing her underwear completely. He slid the oily wetness of the material between his fingers as he used his other hand to pull at the cheek of her bum. She was dripping wet for him, and his highly sensitive nose flared at the smell of sex – the smell of her lust for him. With a wet snap, the garment disappeared from her body.

His cockhead stretched the lips of her hungry, but far underused cunt, and they both groaned with passion. “Say it,” he grunted, looking into her shining eyes the moment she opened them in surprise. “Give Pammy a reason to hate you, Harleen! Prove her right! Show me why she thinks you’re a little slut!”

Her body perspired with want as she writhed on the tip of his dick, her lithe, strong body struggling to lower herself further, but Harry held firm to her ass with resolve. She stared back at him, her eyes watery, her tenacity broken. “Please,” she whispered, her lips quivering as much as her sex, her breath coming out in gasps, “please... please fuck me.”

Harry released her ass with one hand, and before she could force herself down, he quickly reached down and picked up her left leg, then held it in his arm as his hand took its rightful place on her ass.

She gasped in pleasure – his shaft now rubbed her open lips and peeking clit at once, his precum leaking from his head and sliding against the dried up cum at the nub. She kicked outwards with the foot she had in the air, her body jerking to the hypersensitivity of her sex.

Harry thrust, hard, and his mushroom head popped into Harley’s quim with an audible suction sound. He was almost distracted by the look of pure bliss and pain on the girl’s face, her mouth in a wide ‘O’ shape as she was penetrated for the first time by something larger than Poison Ivy’s long, slim fingers, as just the tip proved that her limits were going to be pushed harder than they ever had in length and width.

“Fuuuuuuuck,” She breathed a shallow breath, her chest heaving as her nipples rubbed against his bare chest. She couldn’t see between them, and to be honest, she didn’t want to. She wasn’t a masochist – her and Pammy were experimental, but she wasn’t a masochist – and she didn’t want to see how much she had left until he entered her.

Harry wiggled the head of his cock in her with a groan – Sweet Merlin, she was tight! His eyes unfocused for a second at the sensitive head being swallowed by her constricting velvet hole. He released her ass, with the hand that wasn’t holding her leg as well, and held his arm around her waist.

He braced his legs, and he began to push.
Harley let out a soundless scream as her near-virgin pussy was defiled and stretched. She felt every vein slip along her lubricated walls, his monstrous shaft spearing into her insides with purpose. Her eyes closed once again, and she wrapped her arms around his neck. His muscles were tense beneath her, his breathing almost light, as he sighed in happiness at her velvety heat pulsing around him. Her nipples grazed his, and he pushed even further, going in another two inches.

“Ah!” Harley gasped, her hair whipping back and forth as she shook her head wildly. She was almost happy that she didn’t get to see the penetration – it was almost like getting a shot at the hospital, though in much more pleasant circumstances, and unlike then, she wished this moment would never end.

As he slid further in, she began to think that it never would end. Tears pricked at the corners of her eyes as his shaft plunged into her seemingly limitless depths, forcefully making more space inside her.

He stopped for a moment, and she was glad for the slight reprieve. Her pussy pulsed randomly against her control, feeling out the foreign object inside her, as if welcoming it and making it comfortable, begging his cock to stay inside.

He began to pull out of her, and she whimpered in surprise. “Nononono,” she whined, and forced out a mix between a gasp and a scream as he quickly thrust inside her again. She felt even fuller than before, and it felt so fucking good.

Harry rested his chin on her shoulder, much like she was doing to him, and his tongue swiped across her neck. She moaned sexily, and her pussy spasmed around his cock hungrily. He quickly pulled back and thrust again, tasting her neck again as he did so.

He was bitten by a lot of different creatures, and he had no idea which one to thank for the sensitive taste buds – probably the basilisk, but he wasn’t sure – but he was thankful for it as his tongue lapped at her smooth skin, her moans getting louder, exposing her neck further, and he pressed his lips harder into the tasty skin.

He thrust into her again. And again. And again.

“Fuck, fuck, fuck!” she yelled in succession, her body rocking jerkily with his cock skewering into her over and over again. His movements were still, at this point, relatively slow, but she knew that any faster would probably hurt her. Her lips were so firmly sealed around his cock, the fluids that kept secreting at a near dizzying pace could only reach the part of his shaft that was lodged inside of her, and she felt it squelch inside her with every thrust. She knew he heard it too, and she thought to herself smugly, that her pussy was just too good to leave, even for just a second.

She grunted with pain at the next upstroke – he pulled back deep and slid in deeper, and she could feel her inner lips scraping the juices off his shaft as it left her vulva. He pulled back again, and she tensed for the next one.

Harry slid back and pulled out of the natural blonde with an audible pop, and hearing a sigh of relief, he smirked. He had sensed her discomfort, and he was starting to feel it as well.

He groaned as her warm cunt juice dripped onto the head of his shaft, and he shuddered as it began leaking down to the dry base of his cock. When he felt that enough lubrication was applied, he entered her weeping pussy again, and they both groaned at her seemingly perpetual tightness. It was less difficult than when he first entered, but it was far from easy.

Harleen’s eyes rolled to the back of her head as his dick entered her halfway, not that she could see
it. Her nipples slid gracefully across his sweat-slicked chest, and his lips made a pleasurable seal at the side of her neck, sucking and nipping at her ivory skin. Tears pricked at her eyes once more, not in pain, but pleasure – at the feeling of happiness, the overwhelming feeling of her body singing with desire.

Harry powerfully thrust into her again, determined to get as much of his cock into her as he could. Had his lips not been attached to her neck, he would have been breathing raggedly, his dick rocking her lightly, her heeled green boot the only part of her still firmly on the ground, her other leg rocking in the crook of his elbow.

His eyes opened, and he picked her up by her waist.

Harley opened her eyes in shock as she was rocked against him, her foot feeling for the floor under her. She grunted cutely on his cock as he continued to thrust into her, and he turned around. She found her back to the sink as he lifted the rest of her leg to mash against her right tit, and she groaned at how he stretched her in another way. As he had her do a standing split, her red boot pointed towards the ceiling, he thrust into her again, and she gasped at the truly full feeling that invaded her. “F-fuuuuuck, Haaare, Rieee,” she moaned, her voice in sync with his slow, deep thrusting. She tested his name again on her tongue, whispering it a few more times with his thrusting, and her voice hitched with each upstroke. She kept whispering it, her mind clouding over with pleasure, her head tilting back.

He snuck his hand behind her head and pulled on the small rubber bands that held her hair up, preferring to see her hair down this time. Allowing himself a bit of overconfidence that there could be a next time, he decided that he would fuck her while she wore the pigtails and a jester’s outfit, and the makeup. This time, he wanted her.

He gripped the rubber bands tightly as he watched her hair cascade down her shoulders, a flowing wave of red mixing with a wave a green, crashing together as they shook in harmony with his cock, pistoning in and out of the lithe vixen in front of him. His hand stroked her straight hair down her back as his dick pulsed, watching her flawless face blush with desire, her leg in the air tensing, her hands whitening as she squeezed his shoulders, her teeth gnashing as she rocked through her first orgasm.

“Harry!” She screamed, her eyes opening wide, the veins in her neck pulsing out, her weeping, seeping pussy tightening around his fuckstick so deliciously, her stomach tightening oh so painfully, her body out of her control.

It was the most beautiful thing Harry had witnessed in a very long time, and he almost wanted to stop pounding her just to observe the beauty that was before him.

Instead, he thrust harder, and when she squeaked at the unexpected increase of pace, her orgasm still high, he leaned in and kissed her.

She moaned loudly in his mouth as she squirted against his cock, her juices leaking in rivulets to his plentiful sac, and he groaned into her mouth as he slipped into her a little more. His thrusts were losing control as he stuffed her with his cock again and again, desperate to get that last bit of his cock inside her.

She jumped at a pulse that bumped deep inside of her when he thrust the deepest he ever did; her orgasm spiked again. She cried out at the sensation, her cunt reflexively squeezing his cock as tight as it could, desperate to milk him.

He palmed her full breast that wasn’t blocked by her leg, and squeezed it in his hand; it was
practically a sin that he hadn’t had the chance to play with them as much as he wanted to, but if anything, it was a testament to her beauty to pay attention to first, and there was so much he wanted to explore about her.

The green/redhead gave a mix between a grunt and a squeak each time he thrust into her and hit that button inside her. If she were to hazard a guess, or if she had any rational thought left, she would venture the thought that he had reached the end of her. She wasn’t an expert in anatomy, but she was relatively sure that he hit her cervix. As far as she knew, that was supposed to be painful.

But now, she had no thoughts on anything whatsoever, other than marveling at how he was fucking her inside out with his oversized dick, and repeatedly pressing a button that stopped her from coming down from her orgasm. Had her head not been tilted back, she would have been drooling at this point.

Though they were the same height, Harry towered over her as he shifted his legs forward and stroked his cock in and out of her sopping pussy, the squelches getting louder. He quickly wiped at his forehead and put his arm back around the beautiful girl, never breaking his stride. His other hand left the back of her head to move between her perfectly split legs and fist what was left of his dick, the membrane inside her frustrating him a little, but he knew that one day it would fit.

Harry chuckled a little at the thought – he had almost convinced himself that he would have this wonderful chance with her again. Having read her surface thoughts all night, he got very mixed feelings from the girl currently writhing under him. The raw fucking they were having almost erased Pamela from her mind at this point, but he knew the two were in love with each other.

Unless they were talking in the literal sense, he didn’t want to get in between them and their relationship.

But he was content with ruining their sex life forever, though; considering most of the vines had thorns, he doubted she would ever be penetrated by them, but he wanted to make sure she could never settle for fingers again.

Harley struggled to bring her head forward, her eyes struggling to focus on the man in front of her. She stared blankly at him for a moment, noting his smile, and hearing his chuckle earlier. And she smiled.

“Fu-u-uck, Me-e-,” she panted, groaning as he rolled her peach-colored nipple between his fingers. “Fuck me so gooood,” she gasped, her body convulsing again, her brain stuttering at his non-rhythmic thrusting.

“Harley,” he gasped, his eyes losing focus, before shaking his head. Harley giggled as the sweat from his fringe hit her cheek. *Fuck*, she was cute, even as he was fucking her into a near-comatose state.

It was probably too early into the relationship to form an opinion, but if she decided that she was going to actually call what they were currently having a relationship, or any type of reoccurring situation, Harry would have to say that he was in love.

It wasn’t just because of his abnormally monstrous cock spearing savagely into her insides, her steaming cunt desperately milking him for all he was worth, her bald cunny swallowing his meat being one of the most erotic sights he had ever seen.

And it wasn’t just because her near-grapefruit-sized breasts bounced with every stroke, her pink eraser nipples capping off quarter-sized areolas, her youthful figure suggesting that she had only just
begun to develop.

And it certainly wasn’t because of the way her body stretched, her leg pointing perfectly upwards while her other trembled beneath him, momentum causing her to kick the doors to the cabinet with the back of her heel periodically as she sat on the edge of the counter.

And it most definitely wasn’t the fact that he had made it a mission, a goal, in his life to fit his entire dick into her quivering clam one day, and achieve, what was to him at that moment, the biggest accomplishment the boy-who-lived could ever dream of.

It was because he... well... he... just was.

It was too early in the relationship to make such a bold claim, but he had the rest of his life to figure that out. However long or short she chose it to be.

“Harry,” she whispered back at him breathlessly, her eyelids fluttering shut, her full lips in a cute little grimace, rosy cheeks burning with perspiration.

He was close.

He let out a single grunt like an animal, a primeval beast, as he kicked into gear and began fucking her in earnest, and she cried out in happiness, or delusion, or possibly even pain; he couldn’t tell at this point, he was too far gone. His balls, though still inches away from resting on her cheeks, still slapped heavily against her with each upstroke, a testament to the force of his strokes, and was also a testament to how far Harry had gone into bliss, for him to not wince as his testicles bounded against her ass. It didn’t deter him in the slightest as he jerked his cock with one hand, synchronous to his pace as he slid in and out of her.

As one, they both looked down at the sight, as if seeing it for the first time – and they really were, actually. For the first time, they glimpsed at the point where their bodies fused, her hairless lips stretched comically around his massive girth, her leg trapped between them. He pulled back and pushed in again, and she found it fascinating. Her mind struggled at this point to comprehend why Pammy could actually hate this. To be skewered by Harry’s godcock was a feeling that she had to share with her ex-girlfriend, if only to show her a little bit more joy, the grumpy girl.

Harley grinned stupidly as Harry picked up pace yet again, to see her cum slide all over his dick, the force of the friction causing some of her pussy juice to splatter onto her and his stomach, and her mind could only think of how enjoyable it could be licking it off of them.

“Gaaaaaaaah!” She screamed again, her fatigue wearing her, but her voice firm as ever, when Harry pushed forward as hard as he could, and pressed against her button again. She could feel herself squirting cum all over his cock – and she just pictured how wonderfully sticky his fuckstick would be by the end, his tasty dickmeat dripping onto her little tongue covered in his and her essences – and she shuddered mightily as his dick stayed there, firmly pressed into her membrane.

Right then, you could tell Harry James Potter and Harleen Frances Quinzel that she was far too small for Harry’s cock. And Harry would argue – she was perfect for his cock. The way her cunt muscles squeezed and massaged at his dick, swallowing him in even though he had gone as far as he could without hurting her, while he split her legs wide open for more leverage, gave him inspiration that if it belonged to the goddess that moaned beneath him, it was absolutely perfect.

He tilted his head back and roared as he felt his cum rushing from his balls, and Harley had a moment of clarity. Faster than he could comprehend, she removed both hands from his shoulders and reached between them to hold the outside of the dick skewering her for the first time. Harry
immediately let go, and Harley took less than a second to marvel at the sheer fucking girth of Potter’s Pole™, the pole that had her firmly planted and conquered, before her fingers stroked the underside of his cock and her hands jacked him with a crazed speed that only a thoroughly slickened cock could handle.

“Fuck, fucking cum,” she gasped, feeling his penis twitch inside of her, shaking her whole body in convulsions. His already hard dick seemed to get harder, and she could almost feel his cum race through his tube into her sweet, over-fucked cavern. Her nails grazed against his sac, and she could literally feel his large, gorgeous sac shrivel and contract, pumping her, painting her insides white.

Harry winced as his balls were drained, his body shuddering as his built-up cum finally released into her. It almost hurt to breathe as he stood, holding Harleen against him. Her hands slowed, and he tilted his head forward to look at her proper.

Just seeing her in the afterglow of what was likely the greatest orgasm of her life gave him pause; her neck and cheeks flushed with exertion, her sky blue eyes unfocused and teary, her dyed hair sticking to her shoulders and her chest, fanned out around her beautiful head, and his dick twitched once more, in defiance, but soon went still.

He was thankful. His heart was willing to go another round, but his flesh was almost aching at this point. He needed a massage.

“Ah,” he grimaced, feeling his dick twitch again at the stray thought. Harley’s hands, as though shocked, quickly released his cock and she rested her hands on the edge of the counter. She looked in concern at him. He smiled at her, and lifted his fingers to move her hair behind her ear, maneuvering around her leg as he did so.

He began to pull out, shuddering as he did, so he could give her room to put down her leg, but Harley would have none of it. She quickly grabbed his face with both hands and effortlessly leaned forward to kiss him.

The lovers kissed each other, not as two separate souls fighting for dominance, but one soul joining together, as their tongues mingled and danced with a playfulness that wasn’t there before. Her hands moved to join around his neck, and his hand gingerly pulled Harley’s leg down around by stretching it outwards, and her boots knocked together. She hissed as her breast was finally relieved of the pressure; she could barely feel the usually sensitive tit.

His hand cupped her youthful breast, and she hissed again. “Oh, sweet fuck... not again,” she moaned, her body involuntarily spasming around his softening dick. Apparently, her breast was still sensitive.

Harry chuckled as he tweaked her nipple, marveling at the paleness of her breast compared to the other one, willing to squeeze and fondle her until the blood rushed back to her tit. “I need to get in as much as I can, in case you kill me when I collapse.” He muttered it in a light tone, almost like a joke.

She grinned lazily, and her eyes peeked through her lashes in the sexiest way to Harry. “Hell no. I’m keeping you. You got a...” she sighed, “hell of a way with persuasion.”

Oh, yes, Harry was sure he was in love.

His body shivered in shock when a cold drop of liquid dropped down his leg. His penis had deflated fully now, completely drained for the first time in his sexual life, and they both hissed as he began to pull out.
Their mingled cum dripped onto the kitchen floor, Harley’s stuffed cunt oozing significantly more than the drops off Harry’s slickened dick. He pointed to the small puddle and it disappeared. He lifted his finger at Harley’s hairless cunny, but she quickly grabbed his wrist.

She shook her head, much to his surprise. She leaned forward, and kissed him again.

Harry moved his hand to around the small of her back, and tugged on her. She squealed as he lifted her up off the counter. Then he fell to the side, and she squealed louder, wincing at the crash.

Except she didn’t. She felt the front of her knees hit a deceptively cushioned softness, and she felt it before she could see the mattress behind Harry’s ear-to-ear grin.

She slapped him on the chest, her heart struggling to get back to normal. “Ass,” she muttered embarrassingly, and her belly did funny things when he chuckled deeply.

“Maybe later.” He grinned as her cheeks heated up. He marveled at the way her hair curtained around his head, her two colors perfectly separated, the strands giving a slight glow from the ceiling light above them, showcased her beauty in a way he hadn’t seen yet.

He leaned up to press his lips to hers once more, before he rolled to the side, taking her with him. Her straight hair fanned around her head, and he found it a little funny that it was the green side that covered her face, but the red that fanned out on the freshly conjured pillow, giving her a red, eerie glow.

“Tell me,” she whispered sleepily, “How you do that. The magic...”

“I’ll tell you everything,” he whispered, “tomorrow. I’ll answer your questions if you can help me with mine.”

Harley grinned lazily, moving to touch his forehead with her own. “You show me yours, I’ll show you mine?” she suggested, her fingers slipping under his side of the long pillow.

Harry chuckled, his fingers strumming to an unknown beat against her perspired skin, tickling her ribs in an ever-so-pleasant way. “And anything else we can think of.”

She tittered cutely, and Harry smiled at the heart-warming, pulse-racing sight. “I’ll tell the jokes, here,” she whispered, her lips curved in a smile.

“Good,” he muttered, “cause I’m not much of a joker.”

She moved her hair to the side and kissed him once more, a tender, chaste kiss. “I can live with that.”

She fell asleep in his arms, her naked form cozied up against his, and Harry closed his eyes, knowing that life could not get any better for him. ‘Nox’, he breathed, and the lights went out.

About an hour later, his eyes blearily opened, and he let out an unexpected groan. He heard the slurping before he felt it, and his cock twitched inside the warm, smooth sheath around him. He laid still, his back now pressed to the bed, and his arm almost dead to him. His eyes wandered to his left, and Harley was still there beside him, her smile content, her front facing his side.

His eyebrows furrowed in confusion, before the pieces fell together. He winced when her tongue lapped at the sensitive piss hole of his dick, while her hand firmly squeezed at his plentiful scrotum. He grunted as he came, and his head moved up to see a swirl of red, luscious hair swirl around his crotch.
He sat back on his elbows to listen to her audible gulps as she consumed his seed, her unbelievable tongue slinking up and down his massive cock, and his sensitive hearing picked up the distinct ‘shlick’ sounds of her fingering herself quickly. She moaned as the squelches became louder, and her fingers slid into her faster. She gurgled around his cock and he hissed, keeping note that her lips had reached halfway down his dick. His head pulsed in the tight confines of her throat, as he shot his seed directly down her gullet.

She sat back on her haunches and flipped her hair back, and their green eyes locked onto each other. Her fingers abruptly stopped their frantic pace inside her quim, and the squelching paused. Her green-tinted lips drooled, dripping onto her dark green nipple. He stared in fascination as her nipple crinkled and hardened from the fallen cool liquid.

Harry grinned at Pamela Isley’s stunned expression. “So I guess you’re not mad at her, then?”

The two stared each other down, and she seemed to be internally debating with herself for a moment, before she slid her fingers out of her juicy twat, raised her two fingers slowly, and inserted them into her mouth at an agonizing pace, her tongue swirling around the familiar sweet taste, and she smiled at him. “No. I guess not.”

Chapter End Notes

Next Chapter: The entire experience from Ivy’s point of view.
She blew a breath into the air, something that always relaxed her. Maybe it reminded her of when her mother smoked cigarettes and felt calm immediately afterwards, but it always helped.

Now... it was helping. Probably.

At least at this point, she could see that she was blowing this out of proportion, and she certainly couldn’t kick Harley out for this indiscretion. She stood up, her bare feet sliding against the bare floor as she slid away from the door, and swiftly opened it.

She winced at the sound that immediately hit her, and her heart ached. To hear her girlfriend cry, knowing that it was her fault, cut deep inside Ivy, making her pause.

She made a promise to herself, right then and there, that she would never make her Harley cry again.

To be angry at her for such a trivial little thing was ludicrous to begin with. Her Harley was bi-curious, and she just couldn’t let that go? She let a guy kiss her, and she enjoyed it. Hardly a handjob, was it?

She knew, deep down, if she didn’t have such a heated hatred for men, that she wouldn’t have gotten into such a fit.

She leaned against the corner of the short hallway, knowing that her girl was just out of her view, blaming herself for everything.

Tears pricked at her eyes. She didn’t deserve such a beautiful, sweet girl. It was an ironic thought, having blamed Harley’s teenage hormones and naivety earlier, and yet she herself was the hard-headed, immature one.

She blinked her tears away, and pushed herself from the wall. Her bare feet padded across the threshold into the room.

She shuddered as a chill rushed past her. She felt it seep into her very bones, and she felt cold. She wrapped her hands around herself, and wished she had something more than her dress shirt as clothing.

Her brow furrowed – the temperature in her greenhouse was always at a set, warm temperature.

More importantly, she had never once been cold since the incident that turned her into what she was today.

Her eyes narrowed. Something unnatural was happening. It was far beyond a sixth sense. She knew that whatever that was that affected her was not a feeling of foreboding, like a small chill up her spine. Someone did that to warn her of their presence.

Or so she thought. She didn’t see the almost imperceptible shimmer as the shield charm was erected behind her.

‘Forgive me, Harleen,’ she pleaded silently, before she slowly stepped backwards, intent on waiting until the presence showed him or herself. ‘Himself.’

She felt a paralyzing shock, and she fell to the ground. Her head conveniently – too conveniently for
her tastes – hit the threshold of the hallway and the kitchen.

For a few, painful seconds, Pamela was forced to watch Harley bawl her eyes out, periodically whispering apologies to the paralyzed woman, mere meters away from her.

She tried to move her fingers, and cursed herself when she couldn’t. ‘Harley!’ She mentally screamed, her wild eyes pulsing with light, the nutrients in her veins working fast to bring her dead limbs back to life.

And then, a figure appeared out of nowhere, and Pamela was paralyzed once again, in shock.

She knew it was him. It had to be him. It couldn’t have been anyone but him.

Had she had any control over her body, she would be trembling at the sight, with rage or fear – he certainly didn’t look like a mere kid as he leaned against the counter, his dress shirt torn on his frame, his lightly tanned skin smudged with dirt. His lean body was still, conveying a relaxed confidence, as if he knew that all of his obstacles were out of his way.

There were no obstructions to his eyes, and from the side, she saw a shade of green that she had never seen before, except in the mirror. They curiously roamed her girlfriend, and she would have grit her teeth in anger.

Her body stiff as a board, she was forced to take in the scene for a few minutes. Neither moved. He never once moved a muscle, and she didn’t look up from her hands.

Then – for a glorious, wonderful second – she looked up.

Directly at her.

And then she looked away to wipe the tears that were clouding her eyes.

And then she saw him.

Ivy stopped her story, her head resting leisurely on Harry’s chest. “What did you do to me, anyway?”

It took a few seconds for him to concentrate on what she meant – Harley’s light breathing in his ear was a pleasant distraction. “I don’t really know. I put up a shield to protect me from the vines. You’re just supposed to hit it and bounce off. Maybe it reacted strangely to non-magic users. Where I come from, we tend to use our powers strictly on each other."

Pamela bit her bottom lip in concentration, her studious eyes pondering. “It could have been my DNA. I’m not exactly like everyone else.”

Harry shrugged, mindful that the beautiful green-skinned woman had her head on his pectoral. “I wouldn’t know. From what I’ve seen of this place so far… I wouldn’t know what’s normal and what’s not.”

“Any chance of telling us where you’re from, exactly?” Ivy queried, her hand grazing over his hard stomach, her fingertips dancing across his sweat-glazed skin.

He closed his eyes at the wondrous feeling. He wasn’t very ticklish, but her touch gave him a special tingle that he loved. “When Harley wakes up, I’ll tell you both everything… I promise.”

“I’ll keep you to that… Harry,” she muttered, very aware of the notion that his name had never
escaped her lips before, and considering what her lips were closed around earlier, would probably leave room for concern, later.

Harry must’ve picked up on her thoughts. “So what made your attitude change?”

Pamela sighed, her breath making the sparse hairs on his stomach stand up. “You sound like you don’t know. I can feel your heartbeat, and you truly don’t know.” She closed her eyes. “So at this point, I really don’t fucking know.”

“Harley said something about my powers doing this to her. So I guess you thought the same?” He didn’t wait for a response. “So am I just that unappealing or something? Or did you two comically just fall for me, as if it’s an impossible circumstance otherwise?” Harry tried not to sound too agitated, but Ivy could feel the slight increase in his heart rate.

The thump was almost a painful reminder in her, as that slight increase that conveyed his anger confirmed it – he had nothing to do with their reaction to him. They acted like needy whores toward him, and he, like any straight male, took the opportunity presented to him.

She slid her head off his chest and sidled up to his side, wrapping her hands around Harry’s arm. She chose her next words carefully. “You don’t understand…” she started slowly. “I… hate men. And Harley has a lot more self-control than that. There have been plenty of men who have approached us, and we deal with them accordingly. Not once did we ever consider… this.”

Harry released a breath, staring up at the ceiling. “Sorry. I’m just not used to being wanted and rejected at the same time.” His eyebrows furrowed, not noticing her slight guilty look. “I know someone like you. She hated men too. She reacted even more violently when her girlfriend asked me to the b… err, prom.”

She tilted her head up towards him. “And? What happened?”

If all of his blood hadn’t travelled elsewhere a few minutes earlier, he would have blushed at the memory. “She was… understandably pissed. I didn’t even know they were dating. I already had a date anyway, so we all just let it go. The day after the ball, she apologized, and said that… well, her girlfriend, Cho, had a crush on me for the longest time, ever since we played each other in a sport my school has in the finals two years ago. She said that, at the least, they could still all be friends.” Harry chuckled. “What I didn’t know at the time was she was attracted to my girlfriend. It was the day after the ball, and she surprised almost everyone that night by how she looked.” He smiled at the fond memory – he had never seen a girl so beautiful at that point. “We’ve all been friends ever since.”

Pamela raised a beautifully arched eyebrow. “And what of the jealous girlfriend? Did she ever get a taste of yours?”

“A bloke never tells,” Harry said sagely, his eyes twinkling.

“That means he porked her,” a voice murmured, making Ivy jump, and Harry grin embarrassingly. “All three. At once. Can we all go to sleep now?”

“Harley… how long were you awake?” Pam queried nervously.

She cuddled up to Harry’s arm a little more. “I woke up in the middle of my orgasm. And I haven’t gotten a bit of sleep since.”

Harry furrowed his brows, while Ivy flushed in embarrassment. “Did I miss something?”

“Remember when you woke up in her mouth? She did it to me first. But I wanted to see how far she
would go. It was really hot.” She purred a little, and wiggled her body against his arm, placing her hand on his chest, incidentally over Ivy’s. They both felt a shock at the touch, and after a few moments of indecision, calmed, their hands gently caressing together.

Harry’s chest rumbled beneath their fingers. “I’m glad you two found some common ground and got back together.”

Ivy raised an eyebrow. He was the one that broke them up, and she had no idea how he got them ‘back together’, as he put it, but it was not the time to discuss it. “We’ll talk about this in the morning.”

“Ditto,” Harleen muttered against Harry’s shoulder, her eyes fluttering shut.

Harry had a smirk on his face as he fell asleep, as his arms rested in the bosoms of the most beautiful villains in the world.

Sometimes, it sucked to be Harry Potter. This was not one of those times.

Harleen’s fingers tapped against the table, setting her mug of coffee down. “I see.”

Pamela stopped fidgeting and grimaced. “This isn’t funny, Harley.”

The blonde smiled a mischievous smile. “It is, Pammy. It totally is.”

Pamela sighed and leaned back. In hindsight, it would be absolutely hilarious.

She had finished her story, and Harley mimicked her actions from last night. It was pretty much the same situation, except for the fact that while Harley had no control over what happened to her when she first met Harry, Ivy had complete control over her own body the entire time she… raped them, really.

“Let’s look at this retrospectively.” Harley grinned. “I ran into a cute guy with a bondage fetish. He kissed me, and I liked it. I come to my most favorite hideout, and as it turns out, he followed me. I’m not sure if he was curious or he couldn’t get enough, but he didn’t attack either of us until I struck first. Everything was pretty consensual. He practically asked for permission when we,” she hmmmed to herself, “knocked boots, I guess.”

Pamela rested her chin in her hands, remembering the entire buildup to their consummation, but not really sure how she felt about it. “Yes, I vaguely remember you giving him an offer to ‘Ride the Harley’.”

The green/redhead glared at her. “Right, because I was single and interested, and so was he.”

“And we’re sure about that? About him being single?”

Harley shrugged carelessly. “If he isn’t, then she’s a lucky one, whoever she is.” She looked ponderous. “It’s weird, too; he showed up out of nowhere. Right in the middle of the street. He could be an alien or something. Friendliest alien I’ve ever met.”

“Do you think there are more people who have his… power?”

Harley shook his head. “A few, maybe. But not many. And they don’t seem to know where he is, and he doesn’t seem to be in a hurry to contact them. I’ve been listening to his slip-ups. He seems to come from a society that has that power, but it’s a minority. Sexy British accent, too.” She sighed,
and Pamela twitched. Harley noticed. “Not that your accent isn’t sexy too, Red. Harley’s voice isn’t the best to hear.”

Pam allowed herself a smirk. She had slowly gotten rid of Harley’s New York accent when she had taken her under her wing, but insisted that Harleen used it when she donned the pigtails and lycra suit. It gave her an entirely different personality, especially when she had to go to school the next day as mild-mannered schoolgirl, Harleen Quinzel.

Harley released her mug and ran her fingers through her wet, blonde hair. “I guess it’s not too late to say ‘I’m sorry Red,’ is it?”

Poison Ivy smiled. “I could never be angry at you for long, Harley. You have that effect on me. The real problem is Harry. What do we do with him?”

“Ooh, can we keep him?”

Pam smirked, amused. “I don’t think we can keep a human, Harley.”

“But he doesn’t have anywhere else to go! Maybe that’s why he followed me, because he was just a lost kid, looking for a place to live! Please, Red! I’ll feed him, and water him, and we’ll have fun together all day!” She brought her hands together in a pleading motion.

Pam snorted. “That’s an understatement.” She thought to herself, and sighed. “That reminds me…”

Harley raised her eyebrow. “What?”

Harry shuddered as the hot water splashed over his tense muscles. He closed his eyes, holding his messy hair under the steady, steaming stream. He scrubbed his face of the grime and sweat that he had accumulated over the past twenty-four hours, and freshened himself up for what was likely to come.

He knew that the moment he stepped out of the shower, he was going to have to fight his way out.

When they each woke up, half-an-hour ago, they came to a silent agreement – they would talk about what happened after they all took a long, very needed shower. Harry, his eyes closed out of respect, spelled a towel around their lean bodies, and both girls were so shocked by the sudden appearance that they jumped out of them. Pamela quickly picked up the towel, while Harley, after glancing at Harry, just gave the blushing boy a one-armed hug and thanked him for the towel. She parted and glanced at Pamela awkwardly, noting the prolonged stare the green-eyed girl cast at the green-eyed boy, and after picking up her towel, walked off to take her shower alone.

“You have twenty seconds to explain yourself,” she told him in a no-nonsense fashion as soon as she heard the door close.

Harry opened his eyes, and his eyes strayed from Pamela’s busty form embarrassingly. She raised an eyebrow at his modesty, and filed it away. “I saw a beautiful girl who was about to attack me with a sledge – sorry, mallet – so I bound her with ropes. After she threatened to kill me, I tried my best to distract her before I could get away. And if it didn’t work, well, it would have been worth it.”

“And you didn’t just run away?”

Harry shook his head vehemently. “I don’t know this neighborhood very well, but I don’t picture the next person walking across a tied up girl in the middle of the night to have the purest of intentions. And while I could have untied her from a distance, I wasn’t sure if she had a gun. I mean – she did
have several police cars chasing after her.”

Pamela looked surprised. “She did?”

Harry blinked. “Uh, I wasn’t supposed to tell you that, was I?”

Ivy shook her head. “No, no… it just surprised me. She usually embellishes her heists. How many cars were chasing after her?”

“Five, I think,” Harry said slowly, feeling awkward. He had only been there for the few minutes of conversation they had, and not once did either girl imply that Ivy was in the same business as Harley. He had really only assumed because of the green skin and the menacing-looking vines surrounding them. He figured that was evidence enough.

Ivy contemplated what to do next. “Okay. Fine. When Harley gets out of the shower, it’s your turn; and not a moment sooner. Then we’ll have another discussion of what to do with you.”

Harry refrained from asking if he could take a head start when they make their decision.

He scrubbed at his hair with the natural aloe oils he had found in the shower stall, and marveled at how silky and squeaky clean his hair was starting to feel between his fingers.

He breathed a sigh of satisfaction. Of all the things that Harry James Potter had accomplished in his life – and it was quite a few, and quite important – this seemed to be a fitting end.

He had never found Sirius, but he was sure the old dog was somewhere, enjoying his life and avoiding the hell that was Grimmauld Place. He had escaped the eyes of the Ministry and Dementors for three years; he would be found if he wanted to be, to escape the perils of parenthood.

He frowned. He would have to send a message to Hermione, though. He didn’t want to sound haughty, but he had a feeling that she would be missing him about now.


He scoffed at the thought. He probably shouldn’t have taunted Lucius with that little fact as he held the prophesy orb in his hand, the smoky ball of pale light creating an eerie shadow as he recounted their first time together at the Quidditch World Cup, in the Minister’s box with Amelia Bones.

Still, it got the reaction he wanted. Lucius cast the first spell, and he ducked it easily, destroying the shelf behind him. The small group scattered, and the damn-near vigilante group, the ‘Fearsome Phoenix,’ had the upper hand at that point in the confusion.

And now, somehow, he found himself… here.

He bodily shook himself out of his stupor. He got himself into this, he was going to get himself out.

And if he didn’t, Hermione would find a way to revive him back to life, only to give him an earful and kill him again.

His fingers fumbled with the ring on his other hand; well, at least he didn’t make it too easy on her by leaving it at Hogwarts.

Harry’s ears twitched, and again, out of instinct, he jabbed his hand in the direction the sound came
from, his feet firmly planted to the sandstone floor.

Harleen and Pamela stood at the doorway, their eyes not nearly as modest as Harry’s had been earlier. While Harley seemed fascinated by the gentle swaying motion of his large flaccid dick with his sudden movement, Pamela’s eyes were locked firmly on his.

Harry felt a chill up his spine every time he looked into her eyes. It was a sense of familiarity that he was sure was unnatural, and it seemed to be a challenge for the redhead now to see who would look away first.

Harry slowly moved up his hand to smooth back his wet hair and moved back from the spray. “Have I been here too long? Or are these my last words?”

Harley giggled cutely, her sky blue eyes now focused on the teen’s face. “Aw, isn’t that cute? Doubts of self-worth and abandonment issues!” She turned to her older girlfriend. “See, Pammy? He’s damaged! He needs minders! Can’t we keep him? Pwease?”

“Speak like an adult, Harleen,” Ivy muttered sensibly, and rolled her eyes at her blond companion’s pout. “I have a few more questions to ask you.”

Harry raised an eyebrow. Pamela crossed her arms. Harley’s eyes strayed back to his swinging schlong.

Finally, he sighed, and stepped back into the steaming shower. He used the essences left on his hands to scrub at his arms.

Ivy, her cheeks red, spoke with a steady tone. “Why did you follow my girlfriend home?”

Harry spoke immediately. “Where I come from, innocent people don’t get chased by police cars. Even if they do, I wasn’t going to let her go home by herself, mallet or not.”

Harley looked disappointed at the answer – either that, or she was disappointed that he turned away from her. “Hmph! I thought you were having naughty thoughts about taking advantage of me when I was alone and vulnerable.”

“T was raised like shit, I have morals, and I’ve been told I’m a good kid. Had you not broken up in front of me, whatever chastity remained of you would have been safe around me.”

Harry smiled softly at Harley, who smiled shyly back. “You remind me of a girl I knew back home.”

Pamela eyed him suspiciously. “Another one?”

Harry nodded unabashedly. “Luna. Very quirky. Blonde, too. I imagine you two would be great friends. She’s always looking for more friends.”

Ivy blinked at the sincerity – the absolute fondness – in his voice, even over the sounds of the showerhead. Almost like he actually cared about the person he was talking about, and not another conquest.

Her concept about men was no different. And, hours ago, she would have said with a certainty that it never would change. But she was beginning to get a very human perception of Harry James Potter.

She cleared her throat. “Okay, so that explains why you followed her here. Why did you come inside?”
Harry gave her a blank look. “She walked into a pit of vines. Of course I was curious.”

Harleen perked up. “Oh! That reminds me! Why didn’t Ivy’s vines attack you? It should have caught you the moment you came in, hidden or not.”

Harry shrugged as he began lathering his legs, making sure to keep his front towards them. “I don’t know. I had the shield up all last night. But before then, I was virtually invisible. I’ve learned to hide my scent from beasts and to blend in with the environment.”

Ivy uncrossed her arms. “You still haven’t told us any of your past.”

Harry breathed a deep, long sigh – not a sigh of frustration, but rather, in Ivy’s point of view, a resigned one – and turned his back towards them. “Are you sure you want to know?”

They both gasped in shock at what they were seeing. Angry red lines and welts were marked into the child’s skin. Black, charred scars crisscrossed his back, and deep, deep cuts covered them all, the grossly parting slits where his skin was once combined showing how old the scars were. The water ran down the multiple grooves as he showcased just a small glimpse into his life.

Both girls were deeply disgusted at the sight. However, their reactions were quite different. Pamela covered her mouth to cover her gasp, and her feet took an involuntary step back.

Harleen, however, found herself stepping forward.

Harry grimaced. If this arrangement had any chance of continuing – and he finally started to believe that yes, it quite possibly could – then he knew they would have to see what he had. He didn’t really have a choice – he hadn’t placed a glamour charm on himself since two days previous, and they would likely attack him if he put a spell on his back, demanding what he was hiding.

Besides, the best way to earn a lover’s trust is to tell them your biggest secret. Only a select few of his lovers ever found out his secret, and that was through boneheaded mistakes much like this one.

It had cost him a few girls, and while they were all one-night stands with muggles, it was unpleasant to be reminded that he wasn’t as much of a catch as he wanted to be.

Honestly, he should’ve learned that by now.

So he hissed in surprise and shock as someone nimbly jumped into the shower and hugged him, pressing the cotton of her robe against his back.

“W-wha-?”

“WHO DID THIS TO YOU! I’LL KILL EM! THOSE AWFUL, CREATINOUS SONSABITCHES! LET ME AT EM! I’LL… I’ll…”

She gripped at his chest tighter, and her body shook. Harry, in shock, stood still as Harley began to cry on his shoulder.

Pamela, her hand still covering her mouth, honestly couldn’t fault her girlfriend’s reaction. She wanted nothing more than to make mulch of whoever did… that to them.

She closed her eyes and turned away. The sight was… yes, disturbing. But moreso, the sight of her girlfriend hugging what was still, technically, a stranger, naked in her bathroom…

It didn’t disturb her more than she thought it would.
In fact, it didn’t really disturb her at all. Granted, she was forced to watch them have sex, and inexplicably joined in, but… she thought she was unaffected by this point.

She had a theory; pheromones.

She was forced to whiff in the sexual energy in the room, was forced to take in the heady smell of Harry’s sweaty body, and Harley’s hungry sex.

Normally, that would only affect a human a little. However, due to her heightened senses, the pheromones attacked her nose like an aphrodisiac.

As Harry penetrated Harley for the very first time, her body unfroze at the almost visible wave of arousal that permeated from the two. Her body still weak, she carefully slid backwards and rested her back against the corner of the wall, out of their view before Harry turned Harley around and backed her into the sink.

Her breathing was heavy, and she found her hand wandering to her heaving chest. Her fingers pinched at her aching nipples under the thick dress shirt, and she let out a silent groan.

The leaves around her waist wilted away, leaving her bottomless, and her fingers slid downward into the moist heat.

The moans were now background noise – a mere buzzing as she was completely focused on the smell. She stoked the fires of her flaming cunt, her two longest fingers unrelenting as she squelched in and out of her tight passage.

Her mouth opened in a soundless scream as she climaxed – she was never really vocal, except for the occasional moan or gasp, and Harley usually did enough talking for the both of them in bed.

“Fu-u-uck, Me-e,” she heard in the far distance, and she breathed through her nose to avoid panting. A part of her was aware that she had to be silent the entire time. Never mind the fact that she was too weak to do or say anything if she was caught, but she didn’t want to be caught nude by the stranger who was apparently named ‘Harry.’

Unfortunately, she was just coming down from her high when she smelled in the pungent, dominant scent again. And, before her fingers could escape her darker green velvet vice, she whimpered as her knuckles scraped along her inner walls once again.

“Harley,” the boy muttered, and instead of rage at the picture she envisioned, she raised her hips to meet her fingers and tore at her dress shirt, the buttons popping easily with her strength.

Harry, the lean, toned, incredibly fit boy she had just met, but not really, pounding into her girlfriend from behind, his cock stretching deep in to her body with a force, thickness and speed that only her vines could go, if she ever learned the self-control to use them while at a sexual high. Harleen, her dear, beautiful Harley, lolling her tongue out the side of her mouth, panting uncontrollably as her body was used as a simple cocksleeve, her small, pink tongue doing nothing to ruin the large smile on her face. She licked at her shiny black lips as she stared at her girlfriend, her eyes unflinching even as her face shined with perspiration. Her breasts were currently being mauled by the boy behind her, squeezing and fondling her favorite toys.

And her, crawling, on her hands and knees, completely nude, sliding towards them sultrily, her eyes smoldering. Her hair covered half of her face, and yet she still got a full view of her slutty girlfriend being fucked royally by the devilish rogue, his stupid grin suddenly less stupid to her, his hard body now ogled by her.
When she was close enough, Harleen reached up, and pulled her face closer for a kiss. The girls moaned as Harry’s cock twitched deep within her womb, and as Harley tongue-fucked her throat, Ivy came again in real life.

This continued twice more, and as her brain was beginning to shut down of exhaustion and damn near dehydration, she looked up to the ceiling of the small hallway that led into the large kitchen. Her bright green eyes sparked in recognition.

The pink mist, indiscernible to the human eye, was one of the many quirks to her powers. She had never really questioned what this particular power was – she just thought it was a quirk that told her who would respond to her feminine wiles more quickly, the larger the aura the target carried. She had never before correlated that aura to those who didn’t have an aura around her, who were either married, in a committed relationship, or gay. Most single, straight men had a large aura around when they laid eyes on her, but she never bothered to ask them about their relationship status.

It didn’t even appear to her as she stared at the misty cloud that had completely filled the top half of an invisible dome in the kitchen. As she idly frigged herself to a fifth orgasm, she didn’t think about it as she glanced around the corner to see the young couple laying together on the mattress. She didn’t even question the mattress’s presence. Instead, she crawled over to the couple.

Her face hovered over Harley. So peaceful. So beautiful. She never really considered letting her hair down during sex, and when they did, Harley was blonde at the time.

It was intoxicating, seeing her like this, with no makeup, even.

Ivy couldn’t bring herself to be mad. Not at Harley.

She glanced into the face of what she now knew to be Harry James Potter. She blinked in confusion. She wasn’t as angry as she wanted to be. She was upset. Disappointed. Mildly irritated.

Not angry. She stumbled to her feet. She needed to get away. Anywhere but there. Anywhere –

She fell, and caught herself. Another wave of pleasure hit her, and she gasped.

Harley twitched in her sleep. Ivy smiled. And, before she could stop herself, she leaned down and kissed her lightly on the lips.

And she did it again.

And she did it a third time, a little lower. She kissed her soft jaw, before kissing her neck, taking a small lick as she traveled down her lover’s body, unintentionally tasting the point where Harry’s tongue had been. She kissed the top of the girl’s cleavage, then her right breast, directly on her peach-colored nipple. Her tongue danced on Harley’s toned stomach, tickling her in her sleep, before giving a small smooch to her belly button.

Her nose was attacked again with the smell – this was much more manageable, though. Still, for a second, she was dazed as she finally set her eyes upon her lover’s bald lips, between her slightly parted legs.

Her lips shook with hunger. Her eyes shined with desire. Her fingers tapped against the mattress with wanting.

And as her red lips kissed and tongued her lover’s pink petals, not a single part of her gave a tingle of regret.
And, minutes later, as she gave a small, tentative lick to the head of Harry’s penis, she felt weak. Horny. Unattached. Horny. Resigned…

A little sated.

She took a longer lick. Her sex, still burning, cooled down a little. She grinned at the tip of his cock; she had found her cure.

Her tongue rolled around the head of his penis, holding his semi-hard dick in her hand with dainty fingers. She was careful not to smear the sticky copulation juices off of his hardening cock, making small cooing noises as her body began to feel less flustered. She bathed his heavy balls with her tongue, the scent of his groin slow disappearing.

When she sat back, she sighed wonderfully to herself with a clear mind. She was cured.

The monstrous erection stood proudly in front of her.

Her sex didn’t tingle. Not even a little. And she was thankful. Even if she was attracted, she had already gotten off about six times, at her last count. The cloud of pink mist above them no longer affected her. Even the aura that permeated from the two teens didn’t draw her to them.

She sat on her haunches for a moment, watching the two laid out in front of her, wondering what to do next.

Her lips quirked. She had just gone down on a complete stranger, a boy no less, who had just fucked her girlfriend.

If she were to kill him, she didn’t think he would even argue.

Harley moaned a little. Then, ever-so-slowly, she rolled over and rested her head on his shoulder. She bent her legs up and wrapped her thighs around his arm, cuddling up to him in the cutest, most perverted way Ivy had ever seen.

Though, she had to admit, it turned back to cute when she pressed her lips to his shoulder for a small second, and rested her head back on that spot.

Ivy felt a coldness clutch at her heart. The familiarity of which she had done that… having never seen or felt Harley do that to her, and she was a light sleeper.

Harley’s aura was unaffected. She wasn’t subconsciously aroused – well, any more so than the orgasm she gave her minutes ago. And she cuddled closer to Harry out of instinct. Out of affection.

Out of love.

She glanced at the boy who was blissfully unaware of his insanely good luck. His large member and sex drive aside; there was nothing really spectacular about him. He looked fit – very fit – but he wasn’t muscular or anything. In fact, he looked a bit on the scrawny side. She liked to think that his green eyes reminded Harley of someone else she loved, but that was a bit too farfetched. The minor scars across his body made him look like a man who had fought battles, but his clean-shaven face made him look like a child trapped in a warrior’s body. He had no hair on his chest, and she was pretty sure Harley didn’t like that anyway, but it did nothing to improve his looks in her eyes.

No. Harry Potter, she surmised, was quite an unremarkable child.

Was this a fad? Was this simply Harleen going through a rebellious phase or something? She was a
bit of a mother-figure, but Harley knew how to act like an adult most times. She was wise beyond her years, and it was one of the many things Pamela had fallen in love with.

So why was he so important to her?

What made him so special in her eyes? His charming, disarming smile? The rugged, tangled hair that Harley obviously wanted to run her fingers through? His strong angular jawline, that she would just love to hold between her fingers as they kissed passionately. His lean, powerful physique that was just born for domination?

Possibly. She wouldn’t know. She wasn’t attracted to him.

But she could still appreciate the human body, and while the female form was enhanced perfection, his body produced no immediate flaws that she could see.

Pamela sighed. If she could choose a man… she wouldn’t.

But, if Harley could choose a man for her…

Her eyes lowered to his still stiff cock, the few veins poking angrily at her.

Her hands, with a small amount of trepidation, reached out to touch his pulsing member, and she could feel the heat pulsing against her fingers. It was hot to the touch. Searing.

She licked her lips and lowered her head once more…

Pamela took a deep breath, watching the two stand under the shower together.

She made a decision.

Harry stood there, unsure of what to do as Harley held onto his tight form. She had asked him who did this to him, and while he could have given her an answer, he didn’t want to. He didn’t really have to. What difference would it make?

They were all dead, anyway.

He breathed through his nose. What harm could it do to tell a couple of criminals? “I killed them,” he muttered, his voice lost into the sounds of the falling water.

He had underestimated Harley’s hearing. “Good.”

Harry turned his head to her, surprised, his body unmoving. “That’s not an answer I expected.”

“I don’t make idle threats; I would have killed them if you hadn’t.”

Harry refrained from mentioning the many times she threatened him with death, and wisely kept silent. As he had learned a long time ago; never piss off a girl when you’re naked.

One of Harley’s hands left his chest, and he heard her turn the nozzle for the showerhead. The water now only dripped to the smooth sandstone, in rapid patters, and Harley returned to hugging him.

“Tell me.”

“There’s not much to say. My last remaining relatives were forced to raise me. They didn’t appreciate the arrangement.”
“No.” She shook her head, and her soaked, darkened hair splattered water everywhere. “Tell me everything. I want to know.”

“Wait…” He gently pulled himself out of her grip, and before she could take a look at his scarred back, he turned around to face her. He eyed her suspiciously. “I didn’t show you this because I want your pity. I just wanted to warn you what you might be getting into.”

Her blue eyes lost their concern, and she shot back defiantly, “Warn me? How shallow do you take me for? You think I would reject you just because you showed me a few scars?”

Harry held his tongue. In all honesty, there were supposedly nice, lonely housewives all over Little Whinging, and it was often a deal-breaker. He couldn’t use a glamour outside of school, after all. “I… I’m sorry. It’s just the reaction I was expecting. It’s not exactly a turn-on, is it? I wouldn’t exactly be in the mood if I happened to glance in the mirror.”

She narrowed her eyes. “I’d rip off this robe right now and make you take me if you want me to prove you’re not damaged goods.” She allowed herself a smirk. “Besides, whether you’re into it or not, I don’t have any plans to be behind you.”

Only when Harry smiled, did she allow herself to hug him again. She was surprised that he didn’t tense this time, very pleasantly surprised.

“I don’t think Ivy wants me to be here, though,” Harry murmured, looking towards the door entryway.

“What makes you say that?”

“She’s not here.”

She quickly broke Harry’s embrace and looked at the empty doorway. She sighed. “Not again…”

“I’ve seen the way you two look at each other,” Harry said quickly, “and I’m not getting in between you two.”

“Not if I have anything to say about it,” she growled, and looked back to grab his hand. She didn’t want to end up grabbing the wrong appendage. Right now, at least. “Come on. We’ll go look for her.”

“Wait,” he stopped her before she could move, and she looked back in impatience. “Why are you doing this? Why…” he didn’t really know what to say.

“We had sex,” she said matter-of-factly. “No offense to Pammy, but that was the best sex I’ve ever had. Never mind that you’re a really nice guy, that I want to get to know. I don’t make many friends around my age. Including you and Ivy, I’m at a grand total of two. We’ve been thinking of expanding our team, and while Pammy wants to get this leather-clad dominatrix, you seem like a great addition to our little group. If Pammy can learn to like you, then you’re in.”

Harry tilted his head at the absurd idea. “Do I really fit the bill?”

“Huh?”

“A woman. That seems to be what ‘Pammy’ is going for.”

Harley shrugged. “You didn’t fit the bill before. But when I last woke up, Red’s a meat-eater.”
Harry’s lips quirked. He liked this girl. “So she doesn’t like men, I take it?”

“We never bring it up. I suppose to her, they’re nothing but procreation, and since she has all the babies she needs, they’re useless to her.” She bit her lip. “But, there is one thing you should know before I try to convince her.”

Harry raised an eyebrow. “Yeah?”

“How good are you with plants?”

Harry grinned.

Poison Ivy strode through the greenhouse in a tank-top and jean shorts, a little nervously.

She hadn’t seen or heard from the two teens since she had left them an hour ago, and she was a little worried at this point. She had connected to her vines to feel out the entire property of her home, and she had a location.

It was the location she was nervous about.

It was the one place that was an actual greenhouse: glass ceilings and walls, a thermostat, a sprinkler system, and of course, her luscious garden of food and rare plants.

It was the largest part of her home, and was the source of all of her proudest work.

If Harley and Harry were having sex in there, she would have to kill him, just out of obligation.

The vial of crimson liquid in her hand would have meant nothing. She had been working on the vial for the past hour, combining some very potent essences and herbs, and this all would’ve been a waste of material if the two were stinking up her biodome with their pungency.

She slid open the large clay doors, and blinked at the sight.

Harley – a fully-clothed, pig-tailed Harley – looked over her shoulder and waved back at her girlfriend. “Hiya, Red!”

The redhead, from which the nickname derived, stared at the sight before her.

Harry stood and admired his work, wiping his conjured gloves on his jeans. “That should do it,” he muttered to himself, his eyes searching the flowerbed for imperfections.

“So this is what you two have been up to.” Harry turned to see Pamela, her hands on her hips, her eyes amused. “And here I was thinking I’d have to kill you for having sex in my garden.”

Harry sheepishly grinned. “The thought crossed my mind.”

She looked plainly at him. “Don’t. Ever.”

Harry blinked – not at the threat, but the implications. “So… does this mean what I think it means?”

Pam smiled. “You’ve proved yourself more than house-trained. These rows are impeccably tidy and none of the flowers seem to be damaged. Was it your power?” She wondered, the thought having just occurred to her. When she was in sync with her environment, controlling her plants, they always got the job done… but they were never precise. Not like this.
Harry shook his head. “I was forced to do gardening as a kid. Won several awards a year for my garden. I’ve never gotten a chance to work with lilies before, though. Gardening was really the only part I enjoyed about my childhood.” He shrugged. “That, and cooking. Especially when… never mind.”

Pamela raised her eyebrow. He looked to be very uncomfortable, as if he was going to say something he shouldn’t say. “We don’t keep secrets here, Harry. You have enough as it is, so we’re giving you a lot of leeway right now.”

The boy with green eyes turned away from her. “I was just going to say when I get compliments.” He forced a smile. “That makes it worth it.” His smile was genuine as he finished the statement.

Because it was true. He loved the compliments that he got from his cooking, and they mostly came from Hermione’s family. He wasn’t going to tell her yet that he loved cooking, especially when he actually got to eat the meal he served, which he… often… didn’t do at the Dursleys.

His smile slipped, but Ivy’s attention was already on the blonde as she bounded up to them. “Did I just hear you can cook?”

Harry nodded. “But, I’m not really sure of the diet here…” His eyes searched the landscape.

“I have a pretty normal diet, actually,” Pamela alleviated his concerns. “It’s the natural circle of life. I eat the fruit and vegetables my lovely plants supply, and the animals that eat the plants. I still have a little bit of human left, so I can’t just survive off of sunlight and water, though both helps.”

Harry hmm’ed to himself. “Alright,” he agreed. “Sextoy, sidekick, gardener, chef. Anything else?”

“How good are you at repairs?” Harley asked cheekily.

“Wait, sidekick?” Ivy turned to her girlfriend. “You want him to work with us, too?”

Harley leaned on Ivy and put her arm around her shoulders. “Well, he does more than just look pretty. And even if that’s all he’s good at…” she whispered in Ivy’s ear, “…he’ll look damn good in spandex and lycra.”

Ivy rolled her eyes. He would. She wasn’t going to tell them that. “You may be forgetting the point that where he’s from, he’s a hero.”

Harry nodded to her point. “Yes. We’re illegal heroes. Our goal was to one day kill the evil overlord and take his place, stronger than ever.” They gave him surprised looks, and he shrugged. “Our world needed a better leader. Badly.”

Harley plopped herself on the ground, and Pamela, seeing what she was doing, smiled to herself and gently sat down, sitting next to Harleen. “Sit,” the blonde pointed in front of them, and Harry, confused, sat down in front of the two, his gloves disappearing.

“Before we start,” Harley began, “Pammy, I’m sorry. For… all of last night, basically. I should have bitten his tongue off at the very start, if it would have made you feel better.”

Ivy smiled. “Apology accepted. Yes, logically speaking, you should have. But,” she glanced over at Harry and offered him a rare smile. “I’m glad she didn’t. It seems she’s gained a new friend.”

“Right!” Harley exclaimed, jumping on the transition, “and you know what friends do? Share secrets!” She held her hand out to Harry who, after a short, awkward moment, reached out and shook it. “We haven’t really met properly, have we? I’m Harleen Quinzel. My friends call me
Harley. Former gymnast and ballerina. Wanted a little more… excitement out of life. Showed interest in psychology. Parents couldn’t fathom the thought. On my fourteenth birthday, they took me somewhere I always wanted to go, and they hoped it would scare me straight.” Pamela snorted at the choice of words. “Stop, Red! You’re ruining the punchline! Anyway, they took me on a private field trip to Blackgate Prison, home of the insane, the criminals, and the criminally insane. There, I met a lot of cool people. A mutant crocodile man, a scary smart dude who gave me a questionnaire on my way through, a man dressed as a bat…”

“He really was a bat. It wasn’t a costume. Much like the crocodile man, he was a mutant.”

“Right. So, I meet all these really cool people. When we’re about to leave, the alarm goes off. Prison break. I remember thinking it was going to be so much fun to watch a psychopath at work. Unfortunately for the studious side of me, I didn’t run into any.

“Fortunately,” she smiled, resting her hand on Pamela’s thigh, “I met the girl of my dreams. Pammy?”

Pamela smiled at Harley’s words, and her hand extended to Harry as well, who shook it. “Fine, then. I’m Pamela Isley, and I’m a cradle robber.”

“Pammy!” She swatted her shoulder. “You’re only four years older than me!”

“You didn’t tell me your age when I… attacked you, and subsequently kidnapped you,” she muttered embarrassingly. “You looked far too mature for your years, and you had a ponytail and glasses when we met.”

Harry smiled at the back and forth of the two lovers. “You had glasses, too?”

Harley nodded. “I’m wearing contacts, now. I wear glasses to school.”

“School?” Harry asked, perplexed. He looked her over. Without her makeup and colored hair, she looked very young, maybe seventeen. “As in to get your degree?”

She shook her head. “Nope! I’m a Sophomore at good ol’ Gotham High. I’m fifteen.”

“…Huh.” Harry was surprised, to say the least. He had met more developed girls at fifteen, but they didn’t quite look as mature as Harley carried herself. The many times she called him ‘kid’ never quite left his mind, either. “Okay.”

When it was clear he wasn’t going to say anything else, Ivy continued. “I’m Nineteen. When I was sixteen, I was interning for a big environmental company at WayneTech Industries. Several sexual harassment claims later, I found myself being pushed into chemicals that have made me what I am today.”

“A lesbian,” Harley giggled.

Pamela swatted at her knee. “I hated men before then. I became Poison Ivy that night. Now, I’m on a crusade to make the world a better place to live. For forest-life, at least.” She held out a vial with her other hand, and Harry hesitantly took it. “I still dabble in science. That vial… should… heal some of the more drastic wounds on your back.” At the unexpected news, Harley squealed and hugged Pamela to her, and she smiled embarrassingly at Harry’s look of shock.

“Th…thank you.” His voice was thick with emotion. To be rewarded so kindly by someone he had essentially betrayed…
He set his shoulders firm. He’d tell them anything. Everything he could. He had their trust, and he would do whatever he could to keep it.

He cleared his throat. They asked for it.

“My name is Harry Potter, and I’m a wizard….”
Caring

Chapter Summary

Getting to know each other, in the classical sense.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“Wait,” Harley interrupted immediately. “You mean, like a ‘Wizard,’ wizard? So that wasn’t some kind of power stick you had earlier? That was a... a wand?”

Harry nodded the affirmative. “We generally call it a wand. Though, that’s a better name. Witches, wizards, we all have one, unique to us. My wand fits me the best.”

Harley cocked her head to the side. “So, there are more of you.” It wasn’t phrased as a question; more as a confirmation of her earlier guess.

Harry once again nodded. “I don’t really know how many of us, but we’re all over the world. I suppose there would possibly be about a million of us total. We’re a secret to the rest of the normal world. The three biggest schools are in Scotland, France, and... Sweden, I think. Or Norway. Doesn’t matter. Somewhere in Scandinavia. I’ve never gone there, but those are the biggest schools I know.” He furrowed his brow. “Hermione once told me there was a girls-only school in Salem...” At their confused looks, he sheepishly grinned. “Hermione. She’s my best friend, and the most brilliant witch of our generation.”

Harleen raised an eyebrow. “And where would you rank?”

Harry shrugged. “Probably top ten, if I were to guess. Among wizards? Far and beyond.” There was a small quirk of his lips as he continued. “Anyway, I went to the one in Scotland. Don’t laugh at the name. It’s about a millennia old, and they don’t like to change things very much. It’s called Hogwarts School...” he waited for the muffled chuckles to die down, smirking amusedly, “...of Witchcraft and Wizardry.”

“And I guess,” Harley noted, smile still on her face, “that since there are no negative connotations with the word ‘witch’ where you’re from, and you seemed to have patched things up with Salem, you don’t have a... say, vendetta against the normal people.”

Harry pondered the question for a moment. “Well... yes, and no. There are those who absolutely hate normal people, or as they call them, muggles. They have taken it to heart that they are the evolved species, and normal people are the equivalent to monkeys in the evolutionary chain... if they even know about the evolutionary scale. The society I’ve been around is a bit backwards. I’d say the majority are hidden from the mundane society, and plans to stay that way. Some hide in plain sight; others just hide. Out of sight, out of mind, I reckon.” He remembered something. “Actually, there’s a funny story about the whole Salem thing. I’ll tell you about it later?” The two nodded, intrigued, and he continued. “So yeah, withes and wizards don’t get out much. Occasionally, a magical person is born in a normal family, and the immediate family is told of our society.” He stopped to ponder to himself. “Hermione would do a much better job of explaining this. She’s muggleborn, and I wasn’t really given an information pamphlet when I was introduced to this world.”
“Why?” Pamela asked him, Harleen mirroring her inquiry immediately.

“My parents died when I was a baby, so I went to my muggle relatives. My mum was muggleborn, and her sister was normal. She... didn’t like that. I don’t know if she was jealous, or just unnerved by my mum’s unnaturalness, but it obviously caused a rift between them. Apparently, they weren’t too thrilled when I was dropped on their doorstep. They made it their mission in life to beat the ‘freak’ out of me.”

The two winced at the venom at that particular word. Harleen recognized that the word ‘freak’ had a lot more meaning to it, and made a mental note to ask him later. “So,” Harley started, wanting to take the conversation to a lighter part. “How were you introduced to magic?”

Harry smiled fondly, and the girls, out of reaction, relaxed at his suddenly easygoing position. “I was actually running from my dear cousin and his equal-minded friends when I had the sudden urge to disappear. I closed my eyes really tightly, and when I opened it, I found myself on the roof of the school.” His lips quirked with amusement. “But before I could stop myself, I stumbled and fell off the roof.”

Harley gasped in surprise, and Ivy’s eyebrows rose to her red hair. “And that’s when you found out you had super strength or immortality or something?”

Harry shook his head in the negative, and he smirked. “Not yet.”

Her eyebrows rose even further.

He continued. “It was a one-story building, but I was six at the time, so I doubt I would have survived, or at least have been critically injured. I screamed, and I didn’t even close my eyes when I appeared on the roof again. It was... a strange sensation, disappearing for the first time. I’ve done it quite a bit of times since then, but it’s disorienting, to say the least.”

“You can disappear and appear at will,” Harley muttered to herself, disbelieving.

“I have to know what the general surroundings look like,” Harry defended himself, as if it wasn’t that spectacular.

“Anywhere in the world?” Harleen asked, before a thought came to her, “Like Italy?”

Harry smiled at her enthusiasm. “I’ve never tried to pop out of the country before, but I don’t think that will work. They have methods for longer range travel, so it’s either impossible to pop there, or it takes a lot more power than the average magic user can spare. I’d really have to try it. I wouldn’t want you losing something of yourself behind.”

She paled. “That happens?”

He nodded. “We call it splinching.”

“It happens so much they have a name for it,” she paled further. Suddenly, she felt like she’d rather take a plane.

“Not that often,” Harry tried to placate her fears. “It’s not like it’s in the newspaper every week or something. It’s just an occasional thing. They’re usually drunk, and if they weren’t, it’s a fingernail or a shoe.”

Ivy glanced over at her girlfriend and saw that she wasn’t as worried anymore, and she gave the kid a point for calming her so quickly. “So,” she wondered, turning back to Harry, “what did you do
with your newfound powers?”

“I left.”

“The roof?”

Harry shook his head. “Nope. My family. House Number Four, Privet Drive, Little Whinging. I don’t know if I left Surrey, but I did get pretty bloody far. From there, I traveled, trying to teach myself new tricks. I learned a lot those few years. I conned con artists, learned how to conjure knives, and eventually, when I stole one, guns, and I regularly used shields to protect myself during sleep. I’d say the shield charm is still the fastest spell I’ve ever conjured. None of my friends can do it, but I can shoot a shield out of my hand and knock people to the ground with it.”

“A force... shield?” Harley questioned, awed.

“I never gave it a name,” Harry chuckled, “but I’ll take it into consideration. Anyway, when the people got wise of my reputation, I went somewhere else. Throughout my visits, I made a few friends, and I was invited to a few rugby pickup games on occasion. I found out I was rather... gifted.”

Harley snorted with laughter. Ivy smirked at her girlfriend’s reaction. “I’d ask you to clarify, but I think you’d ruin her imaginative, twisted mind.”

Harry stared deadpan at the two. “I don’t mind if I burst your bubble. I had quick feet.”

“Of course, of course,” Harley waved it off, her blond hair flipping back as her laughing faltered, looking to the sky. “That was just... a poor choice of words, is all. Heh heh.”

“Nope, just a poor choice of meaning,” Harry grinned. “Your fault, there. As I was saying, I found myself able to run faster than all the other children. A time before that, I never played sports when I was in school with my cousin, Dudley, so I never really knew if it was my magic that did it subconsciously for me. But I didn’t have any way of testing that. I’d like to think I did it on my own merit. I had to do a lot of running when I lived on my own.

“I found out pretty quickly that the easiest place to live during the day was at a local library. As long as you’re taking books and reading them, and find a nice secluded corner, you’re generally left alone. For the first few times, I used it as a prop to sleep. Then, after a rather rude librarian woke me up, I started pretending to read, and then I found myself immersed in the book. After that, I read a lot of books, to a point that I didn’t even bother to sleep anymore. It started with fantasy, of course, but I soon found that I enjoyed nonfiction; Architecture, neuroscience, some basic math, history. It was very fascinating. I found one book on psychology on how to clear your mind, and to organize thoughts.”

“It’s crap,” Harley pursed her lips in a frown. “I’ve read that book. Bettings and Wayward wrote it, right? It’s called *Mind Magicks*, if I’m not mistaken. The biggest load of shit I’ve ever read. The mind is constantly thinking, it won’t stop because you tell it to. Just thinking that is a thought, and your mind is just processing more ways to shut up! You’d have to be mentally damaged in the mostdangerous of ways to completely shut down your cognitive –” She stopped at Harry’s wide grin. “Oh, fuck me.”

This time, it was Pamela who laughed uproariously. Harry’s smile didn’t fade. “Looks like I learned something new about myself. Though, in your opinion, I suppose that’s not surprising...”

Harley blushed and pulled at her pigtails, hiding her face between her pulled up knees.
It was only until Pamela’s melodious laughing began to die down, and Harley’s blush started fading, when Harry continued his story. “So, I learned the art of Mind Magicks. I now have near-perfect recall of all of my memories. I have the option to suppress, or even delete, the memories I don’t want, and protect the ones that mean a lot to me. Incidentally, I also learned to protect my mind from outside threats. Wizards call it Occlumency. The opposite of that – reading minds – is called Legilimency, and that’s an even rarer gift. I don’t have that.” He couldn’t read thoughts without the help of a wand, as was the textbook definition. He could however, read surface thoughts and emotions by just a glance. That was more than rare, it was unique, and he had yet another magical creature, Fawkes, to thank for that.

Best not yet tell them that, though. He wasn’t sure how they’d react to him potentially knowing how they felt at all times.

He frowned minutely. Harley and Pamela both caught it, and they knew that what happened next was going to be a rather troubling section of his life; one they were sure, was part of a few more to come. “The range of my complete memory goes back to when I was about a year old. I can easily, as if it were ten minutes ago, recall the last six months of my parents’ lives.” He smiled a bittersweet, regretful smile, and closed his eyes, as if he were reliving the wonderful moments right then.

Harley twitched her head at Pamela and gave her a pleading look. Ivy nodded immediately, knowing what she was about to do.

Without a word, Harley got on her knees and crawled closer to Harry, who opened his eyes at her movement and glanced at her in confusion. Before he could comprehend what was going on, she was at his side, wrapping her arms around his waist, and placed her head on his shoulder.

Harry’s eyes instantly searched Pamela’s, not having seen the silent conversation, and got a hesitant smile in reply. “Go on with your story,” she pleaded, her voice thick.

Harry cleared his throat nervously; he was rarely this vulnerable with anyone. “I don’t think I can, actually.”

Harley, misinterpreting his words, squeezed him tighter to herself. “It’s okay – just let it all out.”

Harry smiled at the girl’s attempt, and he honestly felt touched at her care. He raised his eyebrow to Ivy, who only smiled weakly and shrugged. “I believe she needs the comfort more than you.”

“No, I don’t,” the girl whined, “I just... sometimes, people just need a hug.”

Harry smiled at the notion, and wiggled his arm out to wrap around the girl. He had dealt with overly affectionate girls, and as a boy who once hated physical contact for obvious reasons, he cherished the moments now. “Now then,” he continued, “I won’t bore you with the details, but I had figured out why my parents died. That’s when I first discovered they were wizards. I was always told by my aunt and uncle that they died in a car crash. What really happened was the Dark Overlord I was telling you about. And I heard a magical prophecy, that as I discovered later, wizards fully believe in, because psychics do exist. They’ve never said the full thing in front of me, but I got the gist of it.”

Ivy hesitated. “And... what did it say?”

Harry smiled grimly. “He has to kill me, or one day, I could have the power to kill him. That’s it. Only I can do it. No one else.” He grimaced. “Not that anyone else has bothered to try.

“And the day he killed my parents... I did it. Well, partially anyway.”

They looked appropriately sad, so he decided to spare them the details. “My parents were betrayed
by their best friend, as he told the Dark Lord, where they were hiding. When he... when he got to me, he cast the killing curse on me.”

“There’s a... killing curse?” Harley asked frightfully, her eyes wide as she stared up at Harry.

He nodded. “It wasn’t originally used for that purpose. It stops the heart and gives animals a quick death when you’re hunting. The spell was then taken and evolved into a spell that’s literally fueled with hate. But, well, that’s how cynical the world gets sometimes.” He sighed ruggedly. “Anyway, I was apparently the first person to survive that curse; ever. The curse rebounded and hit him. And that was the start of the thirteen year absence of Lord Voldemort.”

The room was silent for minutes. Ivy stretched her long legs out in front of her, and her hands gripped the patch of grass at her side. Harley kept her hold on Harry, and he felt her hand rub up and down his back comfortably, her hand rubbing at the uneven ridges of his scars.

“Red,” she spoke out, her head leaving Harry’s shoulder, “I think that’s enough for introductions. Would you like to help me apply some of this stuff to his back?”

Ivy raised a delicately slender eyebrow. “I don’t think so. Especially if you plan on it leading to what I know you’re planning.”

She bit her lip. “Come on, Red... it’s always more fun when we do things together.”

“Harley, I’m not going to argue with you about this. I told you, this morning, that he is allowed to stay. Don’t push it.”

Harry watched the stare-down between the two with a tinge of amusement. He had women fight over him once – the Marietta and Cho incident he had told them yesterday came to mind – but it was always one for, and one against. He didn’t particularly like this trend.

“Ivy,” he interrupted delicately, “if you need more time with Harley, I do have the rest of an apparently very strange city to explore. I know who I would choose to have more time with.” His curious eyes met Harleen’s. “Still makes me wonder why you want me around. I have a friend who could introduce you to a collection of toys, if you decide you miss me. I’m not the most remarkable kid in the world, Harleen.”

“You don’t see it?” She asked incredulously. When he shook his head, she frowned. “It’s amazing how you can only see the worst in you. How you can consider yourself lucky when a modicum of good comes your way, and not notice that you deserve it. How... how many lovers have you had, exactly?”

“A few.” It wasn’t said nervously, like she would have suspected. It was merely stated as a fact.

“Define ‘a few’.”

“A bloke never tells,” Harry repeated his line from earlier that morning. “Only with their permission, will I ever tell you their names. I learned that lesson a long time ago, and it’s never steered me wrong. I can assure you, however, that they were all safe and free of diseases. My magic tells me that, in case you were wondering.”

Harleen smiled. “You see? That’s it; chivalry. You’re the last of a dying breed. I’ve met you yesterday, you tied me up, I swung a mallet at you, and now, you have my complete trust! I mean, you don’t know me well enough, but if anyone else in Gotham had the chance that you had yesterday, it’d be all over Gotham News Network today. Even if I was a nobody, I’d already be gaining a reputation tomorrow.”
“So you’re keeping me because I might blackmail you?” He asked cheekily, his grin massive.

“Nah,” she waved her free hand. “You wouldn’t. Anyone else would’ve, and I woulda just killed ‘em.”

Harry quirked a brow. “Y’know, you realize you have two accents, right?”

Harleen smiled. “Call me bi-lingual.”

Harry chuckled. “We’ve got a lot of things in common. I’ll show you later,” he told her, seeing her curious look. “So, what accent is that?”

“New York. Born and raised there.”

“Could never fully get rid of it,” Ivy muttered, loud enough for the two of them to hear.

“It helps, though,” Harleen had a smug grin. “Who has two different accents? No one expects sweet little Harleen to be criminal mastermind Harley Quinn.”

Ivy snorted with laughter, while Harry asked “So you go by your birth name at school?”

Harleen sent a light glare at the smiling Ivy, before she turned to Harry. “Well, yeah. I can’t go to school as a jester, now can I?”

Harry shrugged. “From what I’ve seen so far, anything could be possible. For a second, I thought you were going to a school for criminals or something.”

Harley and Ivy both shared a laugh at that one. “Afraid not,” Harley giggled, “but that would be pretty cool.” She straightened up. “Nah, it’s just a regular school. There are a lot of criminals, but the good definitely outweigh the bad, by the numbers at least. There are police, and there are... super police.”

“Super police,” Harry deadpanned. Even with magic, he knew that this place was weirder than he thought.

“Vigilantes,” Ivy said with distaste, moving to stand, “that are more troublesome than the police.”

“It’s supposedly one guy in a costume,” Harley muttered, “but we’re pretty sure it’s a whole group of robots.”

“O...kay...” Harry muttered skeptically. He would believe anything at this point. “Should I know what he looks like, if I’m going to join your team?”

“He’s hard to miss,” Ivy said with a smirk, crossing her arms. “But if you’re going to ‘join our team’, you should tell us how far you’ve gone with your magical skills.”

Harry smirked a very cocky smirk. He was good at a lot of things, but if there was one thing he had absolute confidence in, it was his abilities. “When I said I was the smartest wizard in my generation, I wasn’t exaggerating. I’m usually top of my class, especially practical.” He held up his hand to his right. “Accio Phoenix wand,” he whispered, and mere seconds later, the slim object sped into his palm.

Harleen looked at the plain piece of wood with interest. “That looks... breakable,” she pointed out.

“Yes, yes it does. And, as I discovered, irreparable. And without one, I’d say quite a large amount of my population would suffer greatly without a wand. But I didn’t get a wand until I was eleven, when
my peers usually go to school for the first time. By then, I found myself quite adept at wandless magic. I’ve always been forced to use it. I don’t think I’ve been in a fight without it, actually.” He pondered to himself. Then, with only the slightest of hesitations, he handed over the wand to Harley. “It’s best that I not use it again. The Wizarding World is a secret for a reason. You can’t tell anyone, or a bunch of our police will show up and erase your memories.”

Harley took her eyes away from the wand that she was holding dearly, like an ancient scroll. “Isn’t that what you said you had to do to us?”

“I wouldn’t have done it,” Harry stressed quickly. “I’ve never done it before. Messing with someone’s brain in that way is far too dangerous for me to practice. The thing is; you wouldn’t know if you were any good at it until you’ve actually performed it. Makes me wonder how they practice it, actually...”

“Nice deflection,” Harley noted with a wry smile, before she shrugged. “Fair’s fair, I guess. I did swing a mallet at your face.”

Harry bristled at the memory; the mallet practically brushed his nose as it swung past him, as he was too busy putting on the cloak to notice her reaching for the tool at the time. “Yes, well, I suppose I’d need a weapon as well, right? Maybe a pseudonym? I’d rather wait a bit until you force me to wear lycra.”

Pamela chuckled. “I’m sure she already has a design in her head.”

Harley shook her head, much to Ivy’s surprise. “I’d need a more... hands-on look. The costume defines the character, and I need to study as much as I can. And I need your help, Pammy.”

“And of course, she turns it back around to sex,” she muttered softly, glancing up to the glass roof. “What? You helped me design my costume!”

“I helped you make it; you designed it.”

“Red,” she frowned, crossing her arms, “I can take a guess at why you’re avoiding this, but I don’t want us to not involve each other when we share him!”

Ivy’s eyes went wide. “Wait – sharing him? You’re the one that wants to keep him. Not me.”

“Oh, come on, Red! Sharing is caring! I thought we went over this!”

“We didn’t.”

“Oh – I guess we didn’t. Huh.”

“This is all great,” Harry interrupted uninterestedly, his chin resting on his left fist, “but if we’re going to talk about me as an object, can we not do it to my face? While we’re at it – ” He turned to a shocked Harleen, “I’m not your sidekick. I’m your *partner*. I can promise that I’m very good at fighting and magic, enough to bring down trolls, wolves, and bloody *dragons*.” He turned to an equally surprised Pamela. “I’m not separating you two. If you have a problem with me, I’ll leave. No one should feel uncomfortable in their own home. I like Harley. I really do. She’s a beautiful, bright, cheerful girl, and we happen to have a lot of things in common. And, well... I suppose there’s a reason she’s the love of your life. If a connection can happen between her and me, then there might be a chance for us as well. I’m not forcing you, just pointing out the obvious.” He kicked out his legs and hefted himself up. He eyed the vial on the ground beside him.
Then, after glancing at the girls once more, he walked away. “Tell me when you’re done wondering who gets to control me,” he yelled behind him, and he walked through the large doors.

Before he could even close the doors, Harley was on her feet, and as she began running after him, Ivy rushed to grab her wrist.

“Red, what -?”

“He’s right. We need to talk. And you know we do.”

Harleen’s eyes moved back and forth, towards her and back to the door. “We’ll walk and talk, Red.”

“Harleen, listen – ”

“Red, I swear to God, I still love you, and I always will, but don’t you dare put me in an ultimatum. I met him yesterday! You know who would win. And you always will.” Her eyes were now focused, and blue eyes met green. “But Harry... you’ve felt it. He’s seen through me in a way I can’t describe. He’s an honest man, Pammy. How often do you see that? How often have you dreamed of seeing that?” She reached up and grabbed Ivy by her shoulders, and pulled the stunned redhead into a passionate embrace.

The fierceness of the kiss was a powerful rush to Ivy, and she found herself leaning in for more when Harley backed away. She looked dazed as well, but the usual goofy smile was placed with a serious expression.

“With all my heart, I love ya, Red,” Harley muttered again, “and I’d let him leave if you truly want things to go back to the way it was. But... well, I don’t know how to argue.” She smiled slightly, and tucked her blonde hair behind her ear. “But he’s a good kid. Just like I was. Only problem is, he’s a boy. And unlike any boy you’ve ever met. Unlike any boy you will ever meet. He’s... perfect, Red. For both of us. And I’m not saying he had a shitty life immediately before he met us, or that his life will get worse after us, but... why not see where things might go? Why not help each other feel special? Why not take that risk?

“I’m just asking you to give him a chance. Like you gave me.”

Pamela was silent for a long, tense moment. She absently licked her lips, closing her eyes.

She gave a weak smile.

“I suppose he’ll have to sleep in our bed. It’s not like he hasn’t seen everything already, right?”

Harley squealed and bounded on the heels of her feet, wrapping her arms around her girlfriends neck. Thanks were alternated with kisses littered all over her face, which Ivy didn’t mind.

Suddenly, her decision felt like an easy one. Still, it had to come to an end when she gently pulled away from Harleen. “Now get the vial. We’ve got someone to cheer up. Together.”

“Oh hello, Harry.”

“Luna,” he smiled tiredly. Her familiar face always brought out a smile in him, even when he didn’t want it. “You never called me back. I left a message last night. I was starting to think I couldn’t reach you from where I am.”

“That’s silly, Harry. You’re just in another universe. You made these mirrors. Of course it would be
Harry raised an eyebrow. “Did the Nargles tell you?” Luna nodded. And that answered Harry’s question. He learned, very early on, to always trust the Nargles. “Is there any way the Blibbering humdingers can tell me how to get back?” He mentally patted himself on the back for his perfect memory, and when Luna brightened a little at the thought that he remembered another of the creatures she mentioned and their particular uses, he smiled a little wider, and felt a little bit prouder of himself.

He needed that. And somehow, Luna was always there when he needed cheering up, even when she didn’t know it.

“I haven’t asked yet,” she informed him, “But I’ll be sure to tell them when I see them. Do you think you’ll be okay until you can come back?”

“Don’t worry about me,” he smiled softly at the girl, “what about you? Any injuries?”

“Other than Ronald’s brain injury, we’re all fine. He’s still in the Hospital Wing. Those of us who went to the ministry had to sit through questioning for a few hours. Pet has publicly announced going light and disowned her family. Lavender and Susan are co-writing a lovely article about the stupidity of the Wizarding World. We had to put Bitch to sleep; she was in hysterics over your disappearance. Madame Bones has confiscated the veil and they’re trying to figure out where you went. To the world, you and Sirius are dead. Hermione sensed that you were alive, but she couldn’t feel where you were, so she decided not to say otherwise unless you’re in danger.”

“Good,” Harry sighed to himself. Always trust Hermione to think ahead. “Luna, when you said you put Gin to sleep...”

“Oh, we didn’t kill her, Harry. Though she deserves a heavy spanking for disobeying us. No, we just put her in a magical coma.” She seemed to think to herself for a moment. “Hermione and Tonks tried calling, but she found your mirror in your bag. I’m guessing you summoned another one?”

Harry nodded. “I was following a nice stranger when I found a broken shard; I didn’t have time to tie it to me then. Tell them I’m sorry I’ve been out of touch.”

“Nice stranger?” Luna queried, her eyes twinkling.

“Her name’s Harleen,” he explained, “and she seems willing to let me stay with her for a while.”

“Ah, the bloke never tells rule, I see.” She nodded knowingly, before brightening. “Well, I hope you save some for the rest of us. Hermione may want an interview, though.”

“She would love her,” Harry promised with a forlorn smile, “Ivy more so. Just ah... don’t tell her I happen to be in another dimension right now. I don’t think she’ll react well to the news.”

“Okay,” Luna nodded, her eyes naturally wide and piercing. “What should I tell her?”

Harry frowned in concentration. “Tell her I’m in... America. A city called Gotham, apparently.” Harry noted, remembering the school Harley went to, and the GPD letters on the Police Car, putting the two together. “I haven’t managed to find Sirius yet. I’m starting to think it took him somewhere else. He doesn’t have his mirror, either. The veil is the best chance we have, I suppose.”

Luna nodded, her radish earrings shaking with her. “Arthur is now paying off his life debt to Tonks and got Bill to help our team. We’re using the Death Eaters we captured yesterday – Nine, in case you were wondering – And we’re trying to see where they lead.”
Harry raised an eyebrow. “You mean – ”

Luna beamed. “We’re pushing them through the veil with a rope attached. Only Rabastan LeStrange has been sent through so far, with a steel cable. The cable snapped.” Her smile faded. “We’ve got a bit of work ahead of us.”

“It’s alright, Luna,” Harry smiled gently at the quirky blonde. “I believe in you. Who knows; if I’m lucky, I might find a wizard civilization and use their veil.”

Luna giggled. “I don’t think that will work that way, but please inform us if you happen to find and subsequently shag another version of me.”

“Will do, Luna. Actually...” He shot his hand at the door, and it opened to find a stumbling teen, quickly catching her balance. “I want you to meet someone. The nice, nosy stranger I told you about. As you’ve overheard, this is Luna.”

The shamefaced blonde rubbed her arm awkwardly as she glanced at Harry, who looked amused. She smiled embarrassingly at the blonde. “Er, hi, Luna. Sorry.”

Luna’s pixie nose wrinkled cutely. “It’s okay. If Harry didn’t want you to listen, you wouldn’t have heard a word. My name is Luna Lovegood. I’d shake your hand, but I’d reckon it would hurt if we tried.”

Harley chuckled nervously at the girl in the large shard of broken mirror. “My name is Harleen. Harleen Quinzel.”

“Do your friends call you Harley?” Luna wondered, her always present smile comforting.

Harleen nodded with a giggle. “Yeah, actually – they do.”

“Good,” she nodded to herself. “I wish I had a good nickname. Children are so cruel sometimes. You have a beautiful name.”

“Thank you,” Harley blushed. “If you don’t mind me asking, what was your nickname?”

“Loony,” she told her, her smile still present. “Though it’s been a while since I’ve heard that title, I don’t think I ever had much to complain about, in comparison to Harry’s childhood.”

“He told me,” Harley informed her, and her new friend raised her eyebrows in surprise.

“Really? He told you something that personal? Harry? Could you please pass me over?”

“I know a girl-talk warning when I hear it,” Harry muttered, getting up from the girls’ king-sized bed and, concentrating, rubbed the sides of the mirror until it was smoothed down. Harley marveled at his feat of magic, but Harry was busy staring at Luna’s picture. “I’ll talk to you later tonight, then?” At Luna’s nod, he handed over the mirror to Harley, who took it with trembling hands. “It’s alright. It won’t bite. Well, this one, anyway. Just look into the mirror.”

“This is... really cool,” Harley commented in wonder, watching the impeccably clear picture of Luna Lovegood, from her cool grey irises to the dirty blonde strands of hair. “Magic is cool.”

“It is, isn’t it?” Harry grinned, and kissed Harley on the forehead before he walked out into the hallway, not looking back. Why not give them more to talk about?

He closed the door behind him, and turned to see that Ivy was leaning against the wall, her head
cocked to the side in confusion. “You still keep in touch with your ex-girlfriends?”

Harry shook his head. “Of course not. Luna isn’t my ex-girlfriend. She’s one of my best friends. We have an arrangement together. I’m certain she’s telling Harley about it right now.”

“You have this specific... arrangement with several of these girls?” Harry nodded unashamedly. “You have a harem at your age?”

“Hermione insists that we call it a mutual love affair; I just happen to be the only guy in it.”

“And all of these girls just flock to you?” Her mind couldn’t comprehend why so many women would want to... well, she very easily could imagine it, but he didn’t flash them all for them to want to be with him, did he?

“Not exactly. It started with a small circle of friends. Hermione, Luna, Padma, and Susan. It just... grew, from there.”

“So... they flock to you.”

Harry shrugged. “If that’s the way you want to see it. I love every single one of my girls, and I’d die for them. I have plenty of money, and I have a very voracious appetite that pissed off Hermione to no end, and we outsourced to the most trustworthy people I know. Neither of us regret it, and I don’t think we ever will.” He stepped closer to Ivy. “If this is the part where you kick me out, I understand. I wish you would give me a chance.”

“A chance?” Her lips quirked. “Because you somehow turned a girl, Harry, that doesn’t mean – ”

“Twenty.”

She stared at him strangely. “...Pardon?”

“Twenty girls. That I know of. As it turns out, males are quite incompetent, lacking in financial support and in numbers, and a fair amount of girls have turned to each other in times of need. Pretty soon, when that’s all they know, they get hooked. Sometimes, they have each other as a first choice. Unfortunately, lesbians are taboo in my world, and highly punishable. We have a very small population, after all.” He stepped closer, and she absently licked her lips. “Fortunately for them, I grant protection to anyone who needs it. I started doing that when I was twelve, and I met a couple named Daphne and Tracey. The word spread, and now, three years later, I have an empire of girls that I would die for; as they would for me.”

Ivy found herself pressed against the wall. Harry’s hands smoothly left his pocket and lightly skimmed at her right side. “So you force yourself on your girls, then?” She kept her voice even.

“Am I forcing myself on you?” Harry muttered, his eyes searching her own.

“Yes,” she practically growled, and before she could even think, it was over. Harry’s hand had left her side, but his grin never wavered as he backed away from her body.

She controlled her breathing. “So I guess you give all the girls a choice? Is that what you’re trying to convey here?”

Harry’s hands returned to his pockets. “I always give them a choice. I give everyone a choice.” His eyes glanced at her top, her nipples pointing through the flimsy black material. “I gave Harley a choice.”
She quickly crossed her arms over her chest and scowled. “What the hell caused this? This attitude didn’t happen this morning.”

“Yes, I remember this morning,” he said quickly, and it was a struggle for her not to look away in embarrassment. “And I know that nothing’s changed. I have every intention of returning the favor, and you plan on letting out your sexual tension on someone. At this point, you don’t care whether it’s me or Harley.”

Her eyes narrowed. “What makes you say that?”

“Should I go down the list? You’ve been fidgeting since I came onto you. You’re not wearing a bra, and for someone who’s indifferent about me, you have a lot of questions about my choice of lifestyle.” His eyes went to her right hip. “I’ve never been in your lab, so I suppose you’d have a lab coat or an apron to cover your shorts and tank top; so I won’t question your choice of dress. But the vial in your pocket...”

“What? What about it?”

Harry hhm’ed to himself for a moment, before he shrugged. “Nothing. Thank you. Unless you decide on taking it back, I’m grateful.” He leaned against the wall. “So. I guess we wait for her to finish.”

“I suppose so.”

He crossed his arms and closed his eyes. “Alright then.”

Damn her curiosity. “One more question.” He hhmmed again. “What makes you think I’d expect you to return the favor?”

“I didn’t expect anything. It’s just something I like to do. It’s only fair, after all.”

“Really?” She licked her lips. His confidence exuded from his seemingly lazy form, but she saw his tense arms, his stiff legs.

He wanted her. Badly.

“If I told you I could read your mind,” Harry muttered, his eyes still closed, “I would be blushing at the images I’m getting right now. Then I’d give you the offer to make them all come true. Think about it. We’re both sharing Harley. Why not... reap the benefits?” His bright green eyes opened to meet the same green eyes, curious.

“You can read minds?”

“No. But if I could; I imagine that’s what I’d see.”

“Aren’t you a charmer.” Her smile was predatory. “With such an inflated ego. You must think you’re a god.”

Harry chuckled, and she shivered a little when she heard him crescendo into a soft laugh. A good shiver. “That’s funny,” he grinned, his eyes glinting in the hall light. “I’ve heard that before. I didn’t have a reply then, either.” He uncrossed his arms as he pushed off the wall, and the two stared at each other, his amused smirk and her appraising smile. “I’ve suffered through too much humility in my life to think that of myself. Though I wouldn’t be a man if you thought of me as one. I’d be something better.”
“Please,” Ivy muttered, her eyes shimmering. “The moment you felt my touch, and you took another breath, I considered you to be so much more than a man.”

“Who has the god-complex here?” Harry queried, stepping closer to the slightly taller woman. “Because, Pamela, it sounds to me as if you deem me worthy of being with your lover.” His hand reached up to her side once again.

“Not my choice,” she breathed, his touch quickening her heartbeat. “It’s Harley’s.”

“Yes, it is.” His hand stilled at her side, and his smirk disappeared. “And now it’s my turn to prove I’m worthy of you.”

Before he could bring his hand up to her face, Ivy leaned forward and locked her lips with his, which he immediately reciprocated. He lifted his hand to cup her cheek, and wrap his arm firmly around her back.

She quickly found herself backed into the wall, lost in the embrace with the young wizard. She moaned as their tongues danced together, and for the first time, she found herself losing in a battle for dominance.

As his hands slipped under her black tank-top, his thumb circling around her right pointed nipple that had been aching for the past twenty minutes, she didn’t particularly care about dominance.

Her hands wandered, and her fingers slid along the hidden muscles under his shirt. To be against such a hard body was a completely different feeling, and her hands trembled nervously.

Harry pinched her nipple, and she let out an unladylike grunt, drowned out by Harry’s lips, and she was quite sure he felt a slight hint of a smirk.

As she tasted Harry’s mouth for the second time, she could faintly see why Harleen, and so many other girls, fell victim to his talents.

But not her.

At least, not this quickly.

Well, not within the first 24 hours of meeting the kid.

She let out a soft, breathy moan as Harry’s fingers slipped into the waistband of her black lace panties, and brushed against her bare slit. She squeezed harder against his waist, and found that his form didn’t budge a bit.

Her clit throbbed angrily when his rough fingers – rougher than she was used to – wiggled teasingly against her hood.

She was feeling an entirely new plethora of emotions, and as she approached her first orgasm, she made a mental note to thank her Harleen after she spanked her dear ass red for getting her into this.

Harleen sat on her bed, pondering, the now seemingly-normal, perfectly reflective mirror beside her. Their conversation was rather... interesting.

Pulling the wand from the pocket from her jeans, she eyed the slim wood closely, twirling it in her fingers. It was so plain. So ordinary. To believe that an entire civilization thrived on this, that an evolution of humankind needed this to live everyday life...
...And that Harry was the only person in their world that would simply discard such an instrument, ready to show what he could truly do without a *handicap*.

“A Handicap?”

Luna nodded seriously. “A wand is a wizard or witch’s focus. They use a wand to concentrate their magic onto a single task or target. In the last few hundred years or so, its been the only way anyone can cast magic. He’s supposed to need that. Any other magic that comes out of us is considered accidental, or vastly underpowered. Make sure he holds onto it.”

Her eyes flicked to the wand in her pocket, half of it sticking upwards. He didn’t seem to want it back.

“Wait.” She stared at Luna skeptically. “Why are you telling me this? Why are you exposing his vulnerability to me?”

“Simple,” Luna nodded to herself. “I was testing you. Harry has had a sixth sense about people worthy of his trust. You’ve obviously fit that bill. If he trusts you, then I trust you, and I wanted to be sure. Anyone else would’ve taken my warning and not comment on it. He can’t have us watching after him, so I leave it to you. Whether you decide to keep him for a bit longer, until we get this ruddy portal figured out, or you two part ways, I want you to make sure he stays out of trouble. It tends to find him quite easily.”

Harleen nodded resolutely. “I know the feeling. We’ll watch after him. I promise.”

Luna’s silvery eyes carried her smile as she clapped. “Goody! Now, a bit of advice – don’t be afraid to try to form a bond with him. One day, you three will love each other like the two of you always have, and it’ll happen sooner than you think. It’s already starting, and through the bond, I’ve felt a pull towards you that I haven’t felt since Hermione. I can see you, and though you have no magic, I know that you felt the pull, too. So, I must stress this. It is possible to love two people. So much, that it’s impossible to decide. And you love him. I know you do. Almost as much as you love her.”

Harley gaped like a fish at her seemingly prophetic proclamation, and opened her lips to protest. Then she thought of something.

“Wait.” She tilted her head. “Who?”

“Who, what?”

“Almost as much as I love whom?”

“Oh. I thought that would be fairly obvious.”

“Enlighten me, please.”

“Pamela Isley, of course.”

“...I never told you her name. I’ve listened to the whole conversation. Harry never told you her name.”

“Of course not, silly. We’ve only spoken for minutes. Harry barely had any time to mention her name yet. The wrackspurts didn’t need to tell me. I saw it.”

“You saw it? You saw my girlfriend?”
Luna nodded, tucking her hair behind her ear. “I See things. I’m a Seer. I See the good; I See the bad. Before I met Harry, it was very helpful for finding misplaced clothes and items that wander away from my trunk. Of all the things I’ve Seen in my life, for Harry to befriend me was an unexpected event that I’m glad I never saw, because I’m really sure I would’ve scared the poor boy off. I’ve known him for four years, and I don’t need to be a seer to know when he’s smitten.” Her grey eyes focused on Harley’s blue. “But being a Seer told me who he was smitten with. I expected to See you. I didn’t expect to see the both of you.”

“You saw... the both of us?” Harley furrowed her brows, her mind struggling to understand the scope of magic itself. “You saw –everything?”

“No. I can’t choose what I See. If you two have done anything, I didn’t See that, and there’s no guarantee that I will. But this morning, all I could See were two faces. Yours and Pamela’s. I heard snippets of conversations. He tied you up, Pamela swallowed his seed, you hugged him in the shower, and you two introduced yourselves and told your story. I’m pretty sure it didn’t happen in that order, and that’s how Seeing is. Unpredictable and random.”

Harleen refrained from commenting. It happened exactly in that order. In hindsight, maybe not the best way a relationship should start. “So how do you know? How I feel about him?”

“You aren’t denying it. So you either already do, or it’s something you thought of.”

“That’s not the point,” she sighed, frustrated. “How did you know?”

She gave an airy smile, and Harley thought it was a smile that fit her perfectly. “He’s Harry. I just assumed that time.”

She shook her head and carefully placed the wand on the nightstand beside the bed, making sure it was in a place it couldn’t roll off. She needed to go find Ivy. She would want to hear about some of this.

A sad sigh escaped her lips. She just knew she had taken too long talking to Luna, and her girlfriend had changed her mind about Harry’s double-team oil massage, and anything that may follow.

She hopped up out of bed, and she headed to the door with a slight skip in her step, determined to find the two and bring them together. Something about Luna made her want to trust her words, and she wanted to take the opportunity she had and have her favorite people make up.

Turning the knob, she opened the door to what was easily the hottest scene she had ever witnessed.

Pamela gasped as her fingers scraped at the wall behind her, her breathing ragged. Sweat nipped at her pale green skin, her shimmery red hair plastering to said skin, her eyes shut tight. She heaved a breath.

Fuck, he was good.

She let loose another moan as his upper lip swiped along her peeking bump, and her breasts shook at the impact as her entire body shook for a moment with pleasure.

Harry, having none of it, grabbed his new lover by the waist and held on tightly. His tongue explored the depths that no man had explored before, and it began slithering as he reached a place that no man could ever reach. She thrashed and wiggled in his grasp, but he had a firm grip, tonguing at her moist cavern.

She clenched her teeth when Harry reached her g-spot, a spot that was only reached with Harley’s
long, slim fingers, now being continuously assaulted by his slick, rugged tongue, scraping back and forth across her most sensitive spot.

Her neck pulsed as she forced herself not to cry out loud, her teeth gritting as only a long, slow moan escaped her lips.

Harry’s index finger prodded against her back hole, and she opened her eyes.

As soon as she could gasp out a protest, it died as Harley’s lips suddenly pressed against her own. She kept her eyes wide in shock as her girlfriend took advantage of her open mouth and tongued her oral cavity, and she wildly began to paw at her breasts.

There was a tell when Harley was particularly horny, and Ivy knew it. The blonde half-envied her D-Cup tits, and while she never particularly wanted them, because they would limit the mobility she had, she could appreciate them. A lot. Which was why whenever she couldn’t take it anymore, her sensitive nipples were Harleen’s Number 1 and 2 targets. There were a few times when before Harley’s fingers could dip any lower than her navel, her legs already had rivulets of her feminine fluids streaming down her long legs.

Harley knew her bountiful tits like the back of her hand, and she proved that by rolling her nipples betwixt her fingers ever-so-slightly, knowing just the right amount for -

She gasped in surprise as Harry’s tongue slid outside of her womanhood and attached his lips to her clitoris. He sucked and frenched at her hood with a fierceness that had her thrashing.

She made shuddering gasps, and Harley responded in kind, her hands roaming the top half of her lover’s green body, her hands grazing against her sweat-slicked skin, her pale bare breasts pressing against her own.

She didn’t even know Harley had taken off her shirt. She hoped she hadn’t been watching the entire time, witnessing her fall to Harry’s sexual prowess.

She gasped into Harley’s mouth as Harry blew into her pussy, and her hands wrapped around her blond lover, her fingers grazing Harley’s subtle muscles and quickly developing curves.

Harley finally broke her kiss against Ivy and smiled a goofy grin. And Ivy gave back her own contented smile.

She leaned down to kiss her dark green areola, and Ivy moaned at the contact, arching her back beautifully, leaning her head back to the ceiling, seeing spots.

When Harley switched to her other breast, Harry slid two fingers easily inside her tunnel, piercing into her for the second time with his digits.

Pamela screamed passionately to the ceiling as she shook in orgasm, her voice echoing through the hallway and the rest of the greenhouse. Harley lightly bit her nipple and pinched the other one, while Harry quickly increased the speed of his pumping digits, his tongue still swirling around her pulsing clit. Her juices quickly covered his hand, and the extra lubrication was almost needed to keep up with his furious pace. When she couldn’t scream anymore, she moaned breathily, her legs quaking with the strength of her cumming uncontrollably.

Ivy hissed at the sudden absence of Harry’s fingers, before moaning at the cooling sensation of the air that hit between her legs. Her knees trembled again, but her girlfriend quickly caught her with an arm around her waist. “You okay, Red? Did we break you?”
Ivy rolled her head to her shoulder and kissed her neck, making her giggle. She lifted her head up and mumbled something unintelligible.

“I don’t know what you said, Red,” Harley soothed her as Harry slid out from under the two. “But I’m guessing that the massage went well?”

“I knew that’s why you had the vial and not Harley,” Harry smirked, and Ivy gave them both a half-glare. She relented, and finally settled for smiling at the two.

“You’re both going to be the death of me, you know that?”

Harley quickly lifted her suspiciously light girlfriend and carried her in her arms bridal style. “Hell of a way to go, if you ask me.”

“No one asked you,” she muttered, and wrapped her hands around the young blonde’s neck. “Though I think I’ll keep that in mind.”

She placed a chaste kiss on Pamela’s rosy lips. “Thanks, Pammy,” she whispered against her nose, lightly tickling her. She giggled cutely, a sound she had never really heard before from the smoky, sensual voice of Poison Ivy.

“The things I do for you, Harley,” she whispered. She glanced back at Harry, who was watching the couple interact with interest. “That may have been the most fun.”

Harry raised his hand, and pointedly looked at Ivy as his tongue swiped across his index finger. She shivered when she saw his tongue strike out and swirl around the tip, before retreating back into his mouth. “The pleasure was mine.”

Harley slowly began setting Ivy’s feet to the floor. “Can you stand?”

She rolled her eyes. “You make it sound like I fainted. I can stand, dear.”

“Good.” She leaned Ivy against the wall and let her go. “Because I want you to watch this the right way.”

Ivy watched as her girlfriend strut over to Harry and lifted his hand again. She allowed Ivy to get a good glimpse of his glistening fingers before her small tongue peeked out and drug against his calloused fingers.

“Mmmm... watermelon,” Harley giggled, before she wrapped her lips around Harry’s digits.

Harry and Ivy watched in stunned fascination as the blue-eyed girl sucked noisily at his fingers, wetting his digits with her saliva before licking it off.

Her tongue reached the sensitive spot where his fingers met his palm when Harry withdrew his hand from the hot confines of her mouth. He sneakily slid his hand behind her head and smashed his lips to hers, and she happily reciprocated with a moan and wrapped her arms around his neck.

A pair of heavy breasts pressed against her naked back, and Harleen squeaked in surprise as her jeans were shoved down. “No panties,” Ivy muttered against her ear, her lips nipping against her lobe. Her fingers slid against her soft pink folds, and Harley broke her kiss to moan. “You really are a little slut, baby...” she murmured, bringing her hands up to her breasts to cup them. She glanced down at Harry, who was bent at his knees, staring straight at Harley’s hairless cunny. “Our slut.”

The green-eyed wizard smiled at the redhead, who grinned back. Harleen’s eyes were fluttered
closed, oblivious to the exchange. “Our slut,” he whispered, before kissing the apex of her thighs.

Harley whimpered.

Maybe these two were going to be the death of her?

She shuddered as Ivy nipped at her ear once more, then slid her hand down to strum at her clit as Harry’s tongue slithered deep inside of her.

She let out a contented sigh. Hell of a way to go.

Chapter End Notes

Next chapter, the three will actually leave the home and they give Harry a tour of Gotham City. You know, for those still interested in some kind of story.
I started writing this a month ago. I vaguely remember saying that this would be a nice little smut piece to write, for a horny fan that wanted to see Harry with a Gotham Harem, similar to megamatt09's Superman-verse stories.

And now, this happens.

Harleen Quinzel, despite the last few hours, found herself awake, in the middle of their large bed, and worried.

After Harry had thoroughly pleased her with his unnaturally talented tongue, he had taken her once again, while Ivy watched, touching herself, this time under much more pleasant circumstances. After her first orgasm, she sauntered over to them and kissed her, caressing the length that had yet to explore the blonde’s depths.

She fathomed that he wouldn’t be able to fully penetrate her for a few years yet – she was a small girl, at five foot two, and just over a hundred pounds. She could only hope that she had more growing to do.

And that was the thought that made her worry. Well, one of them.

He wasn’t going to be there, to grow with her, to be there with her and Ivy. Eventually, he had to go home.

And now, not even twenty-four hours after meeting him, she was beginning to find it hard to imagine him leaving their lives.

She remembered Luna’s words; she found it difficult to think about anything else; the sight of her two favorite people ‘getting along’ distracting her for a few hours, but now the thought was back after a much needed rest.

How could she potentially love someone, knowing that she could never see him again after, maybe, a couple of weeks?

She couldn’t ask him to stay – he practically had a family at home, and while she occasionally deluded herself with thoughts that she and Ivy were the most beautiful, and loveable, she wanted to be realistic.

She was replaceable, really. In fact, had she not known him as well as she did, she could very well say that this was simply a summer vacation from his regular girls, and he could very well chalk it up to another amazing experience when he went to his world, not looking back.

She could very easily see that happening.

She glanced over to him, on her left. Her head was on his arm, and he slept so peacefully, so child-like.
Pamela looked like that when she was asleep, too. She was so vulnerable around her, so safe, and Harley cherished it.

And it reminded her of the other reason she worried; her Pammy.

She and Harry had romped beautifully, and Pamela seemed to have just as much fun. She even went to grab the vial of medicine she had left in the discarded jean shorts in the hallway, and had sensually rubbed him across his scar-filled back while he reached out and fingered her moist snatch with as just a slow and agonizing pace. He had joked, with his head in Harley’s lap as she strummed her fingers in his hair, that they both close their eyes if they actually wanted to continue.

It really wasn’t a joke, in hindsight. He had said it with a laugh and a grin, but she could tell he was genuinely worried that they were disgusted by his scars to a point where the fun might stop forever.

So yes, Harley ultimately decided, Harry was a one-in-a-million gem. Tomorrow, if he had the chance to leave, he would possibly want to stay for a few more days. Hell, maybe he would ask her to come with him?

Her optimism was in full effect, and she knew it, but she didn’t care. Maybe, if they could find a way to travel back and forth between his homeland and hers, she would never have to be apart from him.

She was certain that he felt something for them. If, at the least, something for her.

No matter how implausible (compared to the rest of his life story, she sarcastically reminded herself) it alleviated her fears of the first problem. And it only compounded to the other problem.

Harry’s steady and slow tickle of Ivy’s womanhood had her panting and wanting, to a point where her hands trembled against his skin. Harley had a perfect view, and she made the offer to Harry that he should do a little more than scratch her itch.

She was haunted by the look on Ivy’s face. It was only there for a half-second, but it was there. She looked so… uneasy, at the thought; almost fearful. Harley was so distracted by the look, that she barely heard Harry’s tired excuse. Seconds later, the look was forgotten, and Ivy went on to cum on his digits, even as he prodded her anal passage again with his middle finger, and they all fell asleep soon after, Harry on her left, Ivy on her right. Harry never saw Ivy’s expression, and Ivy had never noticed her girlfriend’s stare.

So, Ivy wasn’t yet ready to take that step, and Harley completely understood.

And still, some part of her, maybe the selfish part, wondered if she ever could be ready.

She wasn’t bothered by the thought of Ivy not having actual sex with Harry. If anything, that was a normal reaction to someone she had known for less than a day. She was only mildly worried at the notion that Ivy might not trust him for a few days yet, to let him go that far with her.

But she had seen the way Harry reacted before, when he saw that she felt uncomfortable around him. She did not want that to happen again.

No one should feel uncomfortable in her own home, he said. And she agreed. She did not want that to happen, either.

Not to mention, she was feeling a bit… overwhelmed by their activities. It hurt in a pleasant way before, but now… it just hurt. Being stuffed to the literal brim did that to a girl.

Her hand grazed his arm, before kissing it, and rolling over to lay against her dear Ivy.
She almost wished she had a smaller bed. This was going to be quite a balancing act otherwise.

She was going to show him the sights and sounds of Gotham tonight, and she hoped that everyone would be on the same page. Or they’d fall before they even began.

She kissed Ivy’s cheek before closing her eyes into a dreamless sleep.

Minutes later, Ivy slowly blinked awake, feeling a lingering tickle against her cheek. She glanced to her left and saw her blond-haired lover close to her, her head nestled near her shoulder.

Pamela smiled the softest of smiles, and kissed her forehead. ‘Goodnight, love,’ she mouthed to herself, before drifting back to sleep.

Harry watched with fascination as Harleen dipped half of her head in the bowl of red ink, her half-nude body stretching wonderfully. “You have to do that every time?”

“Ohuh,” she confirmed, not breaking stride as she grabbed her can of spray. She slipped on a dirty glove to section off the other half of her hair, and sprayed generously on the red side to get the roots of her hair splashed with color. She placed the can down, and grabbed another glove for her bare hand to play with her soaked red hair, separating the strands to make sure there were no blonde strands left. She checked the mirror. “It dries quick, and it’s waterproof, so it’s perfect,” she beamed, moving the bowl to the side and grabbing a pre-filled bowl of green solution.

He glanced over at Ivy, who was currently adjusting her leaf and vine leotard-like outfit, showing a less-than-modest, and especially eye-catching amount of cleavage. “That’s one way of distracting an opponent.”

She looked over to him and grinned. “Sometimes – when Harley’s not just as distracted, it’s useless.”

“Not my fault,” she muttered over the spray, expertly shielding her eyes from the green paint. “Take it as a compliment. Harry will be just as distracted – trust me.”

Harry shrugged. “I can multi-task. I can try, anyways.”

“And that’s all we can do,” Harleen sighed listlessly. Pamela rolled her eyes and slipped into her green, elfish slippers.

“We plan on running into a few people tonight,” she reminded them, “so just don’t be too distracted.”

“No promises,” Harry promised.

“I’ll keep him in line,” the now green/redhead said with a grin truly worthy of Harley Quinn, delicately applying her lipstick.

“Green, today?” Harry asked, seeing the color.

She hummed and popped her lips, before sending a kiss at him. “Yep. I like to alternate. Red, Green and Black. Ivy, too.”

“Any significance to the three colors? There seems to be a theme.”

Ivy straightened her hair with her fingers, fanning it around her shoulders beautifully. After flipping her hair once more, she responded. “Green is a given, and red is Harley’s favorite color. Everything goes great with black.”
“What’s your favorite color?” Harley wondered, grabbing two sets of rubber bands from a dresser seemingly dedicated to her chosen outfit. “I’d have to use it for the suit design.”

“If I’m part of the team, I suppose green and black.”

Harleen nodded, parting her hair directly down the middle, between the colors. “Okay. I can work with that. You aren’t allergic to spandex, are you?”

Harry wasn’t sure whether to answer her. “That depends on how much spandex you plan on using.”

She shrugged, her hair now in her trademark pigtails. “Not too much… just enough to show off your assets.”

“I don’t think I’d get the same results as Ivy,” Harry pointed out, and the green-skinned beauty stuck out her tongue at the both of them in response.

“We’ll worry about it when we’re actually committing a crime. For now, this is just a run through of the city. You’ll need to know what you’re up against, and we need to see what you can do. If we’re unlucky, we’ll run into Night Terror.”

“Night Terror? The guy you were talking about earlier?”

“Yup,” The blue-eyed girl confirmed, slinking into her red and green ensemble. “He goes by a lot of names, but this week is Night Terror, word on the street. The news is trying to hype up ‘Bat Man’, but it’s kinda silly.”

“Batman?” Harry raised his eyebrows. “Isn’t that name already taken?”

They looked at him weirdly. “Who would have the opportunity to take that name, or want it?” Ivy questioned, confused. “You’ve heard that name before?”

“My cousin reads a lot of comics,” he explained, “and while he never let me read them, I vaguely remember a Man with a half-mask, pointed ears, a cape, and underwear outside his body.”

They continued to look at him strangely.

“So the guy’s… a legend where you’re from?” Harleen asked. “He has a freaking comic book now?”

“He could be taking from the comic book,” Harry shrugged. “But I remember that the comic was made in Nineteen eighty-seven.”

No one moved. No one breathed. Harley’s hand stopped halfway up her sleeve, and Ivy’s lipstick dropped from her limp fingers. Harry twitched as the tube loudly clanged against the floor.

“Er…” he started uncomfortably. “I suppose if either of you don’t mind telling me the date?”

Harley hesitated before she spoke. “It’s June nineteenth… nineteen seventy-four.”

They could both see Harry’s jaw drop a centimeter or two at the news. “What day is it in your… dimension?” If he had come from a completely different year, then Ivy didn’t know what else to call it.

“Nineteen ninety-five,” Harry muttered, just loud enough for them to hear. “It was June eighteenth when I left.”
“So it’s been exactly twenty-one years,” Harley noted disbelievingly. “And you can still keep in contact with your girls as you left them…”

Everyone took a moment to absorb that information. The complexity of inter-dimensional space and time travel was such a marvel in itself, and what was only a possibility in the realm of science-fiction, to now become completely and totally non-fiction to them, was… a hard pill to swallow, to say the least.

“That’s kind of a bitch,” Harley said weakly, trying to get the mood back up. Luckily, Harry let out a surprised chuckle, and she felt a bit of pride.

They entered a much more comfortable silence. Harry took the moment to cast a subtle cleaning charm on himself. He hadn’t really changed his clothes since yesterday morning, and he didn’t pack anything for his impromptu and unexpected vacation, so he really didn’t have anything else. He had banished them once, but he could easily recall them – something he was eternally grateful for when he banished his partners’ clothing in a moment of impatience.

After looking over his battle-weary dress shirt once more, he ultimately decided to shed the shirt altogether. Only his white, almost pristine t-shirt remained.

“Well,” Harry cleared his throat. “Are we ready to go?”

“Hold on,” Ivy cocked her head to the side, “did you read any of the comics?”

Harry shook his head, and wordlessly conjured a red beanbag behind him. He fell onto the plush chair, hard. “What’s the drinking age here?”

Harley and Ivy glanced at each other. “Do you really think that’d be a good idea?” Harley asked him delicately.

“No,” he mumbled, “but I’d like to keep my options open. I’d be surprised if Rosmerta even has a bar right now. Dumbledore is probably still there, though. And his brother, now that I think about it.” He glanced over at Harley. “Think you can put up with me for a bit longer while I try to figure things out?”

She pulled her other arm through the top half of her suit. “Depends on if you can keep up,” she smiled.

“Don’t sound too disappointed,” Pamela chastised him as she sauntered to Harley, adding a bit of sway to her hips as she passed by him, his head at waist level. “You’re only with two incredibly beautiful women while you pass the time, here.”

“It’s not the staying here I’m worried about,” Harry dryly commented. “It’s the reaction I’ll get when I go back.”

Pamela slipped the zipper up to the back of her neck, before fastening the seamless clasp that hid the zipper. She kissed the nape of Harley’s neck and wrapped her arms around her shoulders from behind. She looked at Harry over her girlfriend’s shoulder, blowing the green pigtail partially out of the way. “I’ve seen men do worse to get out of a relationship.”

Harry snorted in laughter, while Harley slipped on her fingerless gloves. “You’ve got a plan, Pammy?”

She swiveled her head negatively, her chin still on Harley’s shoulder. “It’s just a night out. We wait for the welcoming committee, you show off a bit,” she stared pointedly at him, “and my vines will
wrap around their legs and distract them long enough to get away. If it gets too hectic, you could pop us out of there?” She questioned him.

Harry nodded, thinking furiously. “If we want to make a statement,” he slowly stressed, “We’re going to have to make it loud. We make a display, sure, but we make it look like a show.”

“What did you have in mind?” Harley asked curiously, leaning into Ivy’s touch.

“A new change of clothes, for one.” He patted his cargo pants, the dark green material frayed slightly. “Not the best wardrobe to make a first impression.”

“Want to lift some bargain clothes on the way to the plaza?” Ivy raised an eyebrow. She didn’t want to admit it, but they made a beautiful team, her and Harley. His clothes made him seem a bit out of place. Anything in pristine condition would do him wonders.

“Maybe on the way back. I’d rather you guys pick my clothes. You should have a pretty close guess as to what I can fit in.”

“You don’t want to model for us?” Harley pouted, and Pamela felt a twinge of disappointment. She wasn’t going to lie to herself – he looked good, if a bit on the skinny side.

The ebony-haired teen grinned at the cute couple. “After the show I just got, I don’t think I can deny you. Maybe later tonight, or in the morning, though. Ivy, do you have a few extra vials I could borrow?”

She made a humming sound. “What do you have in mind, exactly?”

Gotham was a cesspool of thieves and murderers. Irredeemable, criminal scum plagued the populated city like locusts, feeding off the weak and defenseless. Streetwalkers stepped out of police cars, and back under the broken lamppost to continue advertising their flesh well into the morning, disgruntled at their pre-arranged discount with the men of the law who turned the other cheek. Weak, troubled men slapped at their arms, their skin burning, their eyes red, their lust for the fix only temporarily sated.

At the right time, usually nightfall, you could almost see the city sink into the darkest pits of hell, and the most disgusting sights could be witnessed – if you dared not lock your home, lie down, and hope you could still draw breath by the sun’s wake.

Or, best case scenario, get the hell out of Gotham.

At least, that’s how it was.

The Dark Knight crouched in the crevice of the shadows the tops of the buildings provided him, his breath steady, his posture relaxed, his cape flowing smoothly in the breeze behind him.

Gotham was now a peaceful city. A safe city.

The Batman’s city.

“Any available patrol units; we have a sighting on the duo known as the Femme Fatale. I repeat; Poison Ivy and Harley Quinn have been spotted in the Bowery, near the Jezebel Plaza. There is an unknown with them, and he seems to be unharmed and willing. As always, consider them armed and dangerous. Do not approach.”
The Dark Knight pondered the words on the scanner. Harley Quinn had gone solo yesterday, and had successfully robbed a jewelry shop. Bruce Wayne, unfortunately, was in a WayneTech meeting, and by the time he could don the cape and cowl, they had lost her.

Gotham police wanted nothing to do with him – Commissioner Loeb making it clear by titling him Public Enemy #1 – so he wasn’t getting any information from them. What with Gordon and Essen doing everything they could to capture him, he had to distance himself from crime scenes, and he couldn’t question Mrs. Hepplewhite, the owner, about the security.

Had he been there, he probably wouldn’t have lost her trail. She and Ivy made a discouragingly great team. When one was captured, the other served as a distraction, and a heavy one at that. Ivy had nature itself, and Harley had a bazooka, and \textit{impeccable} aim. She had also proved to be an accomplished escape artist, moments after he managed to get handcuffs on her for the first and only time.

Together, they had destroyed two Batmobiles so far. And one Batwing.

So in his eyes, they were his main focus, and the biggest problem. And, if what the Lieutenant had mentioned in the briefing that morning in the bugged conference room was true, Harley Quinn was getting better.

It didn’t worry him that Harley had managed to escape them.

What worried him was how quietly she broke in this time.

Subtlety and Harley Quinn didn’t go together. In fact, you could say they were archrivals. She had gotten into the store completely undetected, and only when she was seen breaking out did the off-duty officer call the police.

At first, he didn’t know what to take of that news. She was alone, and trying something new. Generally, that meant that she was trying to break out on her own, or Ivy couldn’t be with her for some reason. Both were usually good. And now, as the announcement was broadcast through the scanner, his hopes were dashed.

He set his shoulders. He didn’t expect this to be easy. He never did.

With barely a whisper, he pushed into the night, towards the Bowery.

That other presence was disconcerting, but nothing to be concerned about. Pamela hit gold when she formed an alliance with Harley; to find someone just as good to cause havoc with would be near inconceivable. Just in case, he would make sure their guest was there of his own volition.

Then he would take them all down. He was sick of playing cat and mouse.

And if he let the most elusive team in Gotham grow, then he very well could one day be the mouse.

“You have fans,” Harry noted, staring around at the bright lights, unflinching.

“You can’t get around in this city anymore.” Harley pouted cutely, and Poison Ivy smiled at the display.

“Seems to be more than usual, though,” she muttered, her eyes curious.

They were surrounded in a circle. They had walked around the Jezebel for about fifteen minutes.
Two minutes in, someone finally had the guts to call the police. The three decided to situate themselves in the middle of the plaza, standing in a small circle, and waited for all four intersections to crowd themselves with police cars.

So far, they were ignoring the mass of men and women in blue, only conversing with each other, despite the commands of the officers to get on their knees. Harry put up a shield around them, in case there was a trigger-happy officer in the crowd.

No one had dared to approach them. Not yet.

“Kinda makes me proud; that we can bring this much fear. A little flatterin’.”

“So what did you do to earn this kind of recognition?”

Ivy shrugged. “I believe this is the first time we’ve really been out in the open. I’ve attacked some places of interest, such as the Mayor’s house. I occasionally tried to bring the entire population’s men under my control and have them turn on each other. I’ve had human-sized Venus flytraps on the corner of every street, shooting poisonous spores to anyone who moved towards it. That was the first and last time I was captured. The stupid vigilante attacked my plants until I was weak enough to be brought down.”

“Since then,” Harley continued for her, “We’ve been stealing some chemicals from botanical gardens. Occasionally, Ivy’s had to ‘haunt’ a few forests that were being considered for chopping down. Most of our time’s been building the wonderful greenhouse we now live in, and getting the materials smuggled to just outside of Gotham with no one noticing, not even with Bat surveillance, is pretty hard work. Upstanding citizen Harleen helped, but only after Ivy and Harley robbed a few banks for her to buy anything. We’ve had to do double heists every now and then as a distraction. No one takes precedence over the hardware store’s missing tools when the Art Museum is missing some prized works. There was also that one time we rearranged the face of the Cyrus Pinkney Statue, and blew up a bridge. Other than that… I can’t think of anything else. Ivy?”

“We also may have kidnapped the former Mayor’s wife, so he could pass an environmental bill.”

“As it turns out, trophy wives aren’t the best bait.”

“I think she was perfectly willing to stay with us, though. She gave Harley her number.”

“God, that was embarrassing. Just seeing how plastic and fake she looked. It was unnatural. When she licked her lips at me, her tongue wiped years off her upper lip.”

“The entire experience didn’t really count in the end. He didn’t care, and only when we let her go did she tell everyone what happened. She said we were two nameless masked men to protect us – because, really, that’s just embarrassing – and they ended up divorcing. He was eventually impeached when his mistress spoke up about his affair.”

“And your hatred for men grew three sizes that day.”

“… Did you just compare me to a green monster?”

“What? Er…”

“Looks like we have company,” Harry noted, looking upwards. “Huh… not as dramatic as I thought.”

“Sorry,” Harley muttered to Ivy. “I didn’t mean it that way. Honest!”
“I was just joking, Harley,” Ivy smirked at her lover. “I know you didn’t think about it. After we deal with them, you cook dinner tonight. Deal?”

Harley smiled gratefully. “Deal, Red.” She turned towards the cops and twisted her fingers around her mallet, her grin now deadly. “You’ll love it, Harry. It’s to die for.”

“No a good choice of words,” he muttered, “but oddly, tempting; considering I haven’t eaten in a day.”

“The dangers of too much mind-blowing sex,” Ivy muttered to herself, tensing her muscles. “Sometimes you forget the basics.”

Harley used her free hand to point over to the patrol car in the back. “Looks like all the major players are here. That over there would be Commissioner Loeb. Captain Gordon and Detective Essen would be right over there. The one trying to flank us would be Branden –” She glared back menacingly at the heavily armored man with a shield, and he, along with the rest of his team, held their position stiffly, not daring to go any further. “He’s the head of SWAT. Bullock is probably somewhere eating a donut. The cute Latina in the frontline is Officer Ramirez. She’s the one that showed me around Blackgate. She still doesn’t know.”

“You were so innocent then,” Ivy pondered aloud. “A completely different person. I hope you enjoyed the change as much as I did.” Harry felt the ground shake beneath him. Harley took it in stride, and heaved her mallet to rest on her shoulder.

“Oh, I don’t think ya know how much I liked it, Red,” She grinned, her accent in full effect. “That concludes our tour of Gotham City. We hope you enjoy your stay, Harry.”

Harry took a deep breath, and he saw everything; the police standing behind the doors of their car, shotguns at the ready; the irate Captain Gordon yelling something unintelligible through the blowhorn; the lone figure on the roof watching the three with interest.

Harry exhaled.

“Oh. I think I’ll love it here. When you’re ready, Ivy.”

“This is your last warning! Get on the ground and put your hands behind your head or we will apprehend you!” Gordon lowered the blowhorn and turned to his command officer, the commissioner. “Proceed?”

Loeb grinned toothily. “Close in on em. We will capture them by any means necessary.”

Captain Gordon relayed the command in the radio, and hastily added that the officers do not shoot.

And the circle began to shrink. The trio now found themselves surrounded by officers with shields. Cars slowly rolled forward, the car doors wide open, giving the officers ample protection. Branden waited until his colleagues stepped closer until he trained his machine gun on them, and began stepping forward with them, discarding his shield.

The three didn’t move. Harley, Ivy and Harry stood, their backs to each other, their postures unwavering. Harley had one hand on her hip, the other hoisting her large metallic mallet on her shoulder, her green-painted grin menacing, red contact eyes haunting. Ivy grinned sultrily at the guards, her green eyes glowing, her red hair moving with some unknown force, the earth making minute cracks beneath her feet.
And Harry stood tall, his green eyes focused and unmoving, his hands clenching and unclenching, his mouth in a frown.

Ivy breathed tensely, and linked her hands with Harry.

One by one, the headlights switched off. The engines shut. Sarah Essen looked around in confusion as the neon light to the puppet shop began to fade.

Then there was darkness. Flashlights began to flicker on, and just as quickly, blinked off.

Everyone could still see each other, and quite clearly. The moon shone brightly tonight. Someone shouted that the moon could go out as well, and raised his gun at Harry.

He pulled the trigger, and nothing happened.

“What the fuck?” Howard Branden cursed loudly, and snarled. He clicked the gun a few more times, and threw it to the ground.

Gordon punched the hood of his car. “Branden, control yourself! Do not shoot!”

“He’s doing this, you idiot! He’s – ”

He kept screaming at Gordon. He kept screaming at everyone. They could all see his mouth continue to move.

And no one could hear him.

Branden choked on his voice. He grabbed at his throat and coughed. Nothing. He wheezed, and got the same result.

The audience around him were stunned into silence as he stumbled backwards, nary a whisper escaping his lips.

Someone chuckled. He looked up, fresh with rage.

Harley covered her mouth, her giggles getting louder. Then, after a few more seconds, she broke her hand away and burst into fits of laughter. “Holy crap, that’s funny!”

Branden yelled some choice, unspoken words, and raised his machinegun at Harley. He pulled the trigger, and it clicked once again.

“You were right,” The man behind her noted. “He is the hair trigger of this whole group. He’s a rabid dog that needs to be put down.”

Branden ran forward, and threw a fist at them.

THWACK.

Harry watched in fascination as Branden flew to the side like a ragdoll, his cap flying in the other direction with the impact. He twisted in midair, his body contorting hilariously. He landed and rolled several times before he went still.

Harley’s mallet now rested on her other shoulder, looking no less worse for wear. “On second thought,” her green lips twisted into a small grin, “That was funny.”

Harry quickly turned to the rest, and he heard the sounds of several guns being cocked and several
screams of indignation, most from the rest of the SWAT team.

And then he caught on fire.

Everyone stopped for a moment in shock, except for Ivy and Harley. They stared in wonder and fear at the man who burned brightly in the night, but appeared to be unharmed. Not even his clothes singed at the remarkable heat that emanated from his body, and the two girls remained unaffected, even Ivy’s held hand.

Then they began to notice the changes. First, it was his t-shirt, which slowly twisted from a bright white into a dark red, the color running so smoothly down his shirt that he almost appeared to bleed into it. The sleeves grew to his wrists, and the entire shirt thickened almost unnoticeably, strengthening and hardening. His cargo pants, slowly but surely, tore against his body, shredding and ripping randomly along his legs, and just as quickly, a leathery material weaved into existence, wrapping around his legs and torso, flawlessly following along with his cotton tears.

And then, as abruptly as it started, it was over. Everyone stared at the sight in front of them, not really believing their eyes.

Enormous, glinting green claw marks smattered against his crimson long-sleeve, three long matching slashes for each mark, accompanied by a small tear in the fabric for each green strike. His nondescript black jeans were marred as well, the tops of his jeans flowing smoothly with the bottom of his shirt, one clawmark covering his middle.

Harry Potter’s piercing green eyes burned. He frowned.

“Well?”

Gordon hesitated. “We don’t want to hurt you.”

He glanced at the drawn guns around him. “You really could’ve fooled me.”

“Just surrender quietly, and come with us.”

Harry pondered to himself. “No.”

Gordon rested his elbows on the hood of his car, his handgun trained on Harry’s torso. “No?”

“I haven’t committed a crime.”

“You’re associating with criminals.”

He shrugged. “That’s another way of saying it.”

A whirring sound reached his ears. “Helicopter’s here,” Harley announced aloud, turning away from Branden to look at Harry. “Ready to make the front page?”

“You’re enjoying this,” he noted, and his lips quirked into a small smile.

“I could just be excited about cooking dinner later,” she said slyly, before grabbing his hand and squeezing.

Harry squeezed both of his lovers’ hands back. “Now you’ve made me hungry again.”

“Then let’s get out of here,” Ivy spoke up, her eyes scanning the crowd. “I think we’ve given them enough to talk about for a while.”
“You three aren’t going anywhere,” the Captain warned, his teeth set on edge. He flicked back the hammer of his gun. “Move in and apprehend now!”

“You know,” Harry muttered as the group slowly closed in, “you never told me about one thing.”

“Oh?” Harley tightened her grip on the mallet. “And that is?”

“Casualties.”

“We avoid them when we can.” The concrete shook beneath them again, and Ivy cursed. “Damn sewers. It’s poisoning and wilting my babies before I can bring them to the surface; the tiny amount I need to make it subtle, at least.”

“Plan B, then,” the black-haired teen suggested. “Don’t hurt yourself. We’ll do something about the sewers later.”

“What’s plan B?” Ivy wondered, part of her wondering what he meant by ‘dealing with the sewers.’

Harry released their hands in favor of clasping his hands together.

Everyone shook at the force, and before they could even fight it, they were all knocked to the ground. An invisible wave of -something- blasted them all backwards. Guns went flying, shields and windows cracked, if not broke apart, and one or two coughed uncontrollably, their chest feeling an immense pain.

Harry stared at James Gordon, whose only shield was the car door. Had the window shattered, it would have ripped into his chest. “Warning shot, Captain. Next time, I’ll just make you pop from the inside-out.” He turned slightly to Ivy, who still stood tall at his side. “I don’t think subtle is in the plan now.”

Ivy grinned. “I think I love you.”

Harley whipped her head around to meet Ivy’s eyes. “Red?”

Her emerald eyes bulged. “I said that out loud, didn’t I?”

“So you meant it.” Harley grinned widely.

Harry looked over to the pigtailed beauty in the tight bodysuit, who seemed to be taking the news in stride. “We’ll talk about this later,” he murmured, and got a hesitant nod from Ivy and an excited grin from Harley. He turned back to the officers, who were just now recovering.

The light shining from the helicopter was the only thing highlighting them, and one officer took advantage.

BANG!

He flinched at the sound. “Been a long time since I heard one of those.”

BANG! BANG! BANG!

Apparently, that set off the chain reaction, and that one brave, bold police officer who shot first allowed for his colleagues to unload their weapons on the target. Only three or four shot about three rounds each at the deadly trio, before kneeling back behind an intact shield or a car.

It would take about a second or two for them to realize that the three were still standing. Ivy had one
hand on her hip, her opposite side’s elbow on Harry’s shoulder. Harley had chosen to sit down with her legs crossed, her head resting against his leg.

Gordon could almost feel his first gray hair appear. “Who are you? What do you want?”

Ivy’s green eyes bored into the Captain’s, her expression hard. “If you had asked us that in the beginning, it would’ve been a better foot to get off on. You’ve proved today how truly stupid your police force can be. How destructive you want to be. And I know that if I allow this to continue, this city will fall. The entire earth will be sure to follow. And I won’t allow it.

“Gotham will be the testing grounds for what I have planned, and it will be massive. Treat Mother Nature with the respect she deserves, because… well,” She smiled slightly, “I believe you’ve heard the saying. The world will know how much a bitch I can truly be.”

“You’re calling yourself Mother Nature, now?” Sarah scoffed, her gun trained on the green-skinned woman.

“I’m calling myself a proxy, Sarah,” Ivy purred. “I cannot control the waters, the sun, or the wind. I control the earth. If anything, I would be Mother Earth.”

“I suppose I’d be Daddy Nature,” Harry chuckled darkly, garnering the attention of everyone back to him, “because I can! However, that sounds a bit like I’m Ivy’s husband rather than her partner. I love her and all,” he winked at her, and she struggled not to react, “just as much as Harley. But I’d like to be my own persona. Harley? What do you think?”

Harley looked up from her spot, shaken out of her reverie. “We didn’t talk about this,” she narrowed her eyes. “And we’re gonna talk about it later.” There was no doubt of what she meant by that statement. “But hey, since we’re here, and you’ve got everyone’s attention, why not sprout out a name before someone else tries to shoot you in the face. Let’s give the people a name for the grave, y’know?”

Harry smirked. “They can try. Again. To see if there’s any difference. And there won’t be. Still; they can try. I won’t stop them.”

“Because you’re unstoppable,” Harley whispered, nuzzling her green ponytail against his leg.

“I’m more than unstoppable.” His eyes flashed an eerie green, and the helicopter’s spotlight surged, before blowing completely.

James Gordon squinted into the darkness, barely seeing the outlines of the colorful characters in front of him. The helicopter had blocked off the moon’s rays, and they had a very strategically placed blindspot on them.

The sparks from the blown spotlight sprinkled to the ground directly where the trio stood, highlighting their grinning visages for a brief, sudden moment.

Then they vanished.

Three seconds of pure, uninterrupted silence exploded around them, and it almost hurt, the deafening quiet. In the darkness, Sarah looked over to her partner, her face unsure as to what happened. She had the same thought on everyone’s lips, and he lowered the gun cautiously.

Before he could give a command, a familiar voice echoed powerfully through the plaza, its echoes ringing against the cobblestone, mockingly into their ears.
“I’m the Warlock.”

Batman watched the pandemonium that erupted, his eyes quickly scanning the large group for any sign of their whereabouts. He had been watching from a balcony, well-hidden from the news chopper above and the police below.

He had been watching closely. And he had no idea which direction they went.

His jaw set – the new guy was an anomaly. He had to have been a mutant, or some kind of meta-human. That, or he had something that gave him that power.

Unlikely. Zatanna wasn’t even this powerful, and she dealt in the dark arts. She certainly never lit herself on fire and did a full wardrobe change without a single utterance of a word or a wave of her hand. If there was something that could give her that strength, she not only would have sensed it, but she would have stolen it long ago.

He stood from his crouch. He would have to wait until the chopper flew away before he could move freely. The police were willing to believe anything at this point to make him earn the Public Enemy spot, and if he was seen leaving, then he would be slandered maliciously, accused of helping the group escape. He was already accused of Catwoman’s crimes when she first surfaced, and most still thought that they worked together in some capacity.

Normally, he wouldn’t care about what the media said, but he wasn’t going to risk being seen if he could, especially if he didn’t know where to start chasing them.

This… this new guy. He was different. He felt the rumble of the shockwave as all of the officers were knocked to the ground, and saw the relaxed look in his eyes. He wasn’t trying. Not one bit.

This was a show. That’s all it was. There was only a statement made, and his presence set the entirety of Gotham on alert. It explained why they waited until the news helicopter was here.

And he knew Harley and Ivy. He knew they would tell the young man – The Warlock - about him.

In hindsight, this blatant display of the new addition to their team could have been laid out specifically for him, rather than the police force.

“Right in one, Bruce.”

He began with a start, struggling to spring into action, but his body was frozen stiff. His eyes were his only option of movement, and he couldn’t see him anywhere. The sound came from above, but where?

“I’m above you. I dropped off Ivy and Harley, so I could talk to you. You can relax; I won’t kill you. Not today.”

He growled in response, his lips unmoving.

“Yes, I’m sure that your pride would much rather have me kill you than force you to stay like this. Still, I wanted to warn you to stay away from me. Stay away from Ivy. Stay away from Harley. I’m not talking to Batman. I’m talking to the man inside, with no trust for police, and a vendetta against hardened criminals and sadists. Leave us alone, and don’t bother to pursue us. We are not your enemies. We are enemies of the police, and you know how unwelcoming they are when someone offers to do their job for them, and they can’t take the credit.”
He had a point. Even the reasonable side of Batman could see that. Though the methods were questionable.

“I don’t beat people to a pulp when I think someone is doing something wrong. I have a set of moral codes. I hate rapists, and I’ll stop them when I can. Better yet, I can completely cover the city in anti-rape protections. The moment a woman is attacked, he’ll find himself bound and gagged. Wouldn’t that be an unpleasant surprise?”

He paused. Bruce was thankful for the reprieve. His muscles were still completely non-responsive, though he had gone through several mental calming techniques. He had almost phased the man’s voice out completely, but before he could, his words got louder.

No, not louder. More direct. And no mental technique could block it. It was so clear, even with his hearing. Too clear.

He was speaking directly into his mind.

And the Batman felt something akin to fear.

“Ignoring me isn’t helping you. Not one bit. So I’ll allow you to consider my words. Look away. Or fight me. Who knows? Maybe I’ll learn something. Maybe you’ll learn something. Should be fun. I actually kind of look forward to it.

“But for now, I think I’ll just keep you like this. Alfred can pick you up later.”

A soft white glow marred his periphery, barely above his head. He paid it no mind.

‘Alfred.’

‘Right in one, Bruce.’

A small pop sounded above him. And the Dark Knight was left alone. His eyelids shut, then opened again in surprise.

His bodily functions were slowly returning.

After thirty minutes, however, he realized that the man had done that on purpose; he allowed him to close his eyes so they wouldn’t suffer throughout the night.

As the crowd below had dispersed, and the copter flown away half an hour ago to search for the missing criminals, Batman hoped that Alfred would not notice that he was in trouble yet. He could force himself to make his heart beat irregularly, and set off alarms with his vitals, but something told him that he couldn’t stop himself from tracking down this new punk the moment he was free.

And, right now, he needed to think. Really, truly think about what to do next. Because he knew what he was considering now was certainly not the answer.

The Batman’s city began to crumble around him.

The white cloud of silvery strands swirled in the glass vial. Harleen, plopping herself in Harry’s lap on their couch, eyed the vial with interest.

“So, Warlock, you’re trying to tell me,” she began, clearly skeptical, “that a human being’s entire memory base can be contained in this small vial.”
Harry nodded. “Everything he’s ever had a clear memory of in a nutshell; or rather, in a vial.”

Harleen glanced back at Harry, then back at the vial. “Cool.”

“So we’ll know who he is from this,” the green-skinned beauty dropped the load of clothes beside them and sat on the arm of the couch, crossing her legs as she leaned over to get a better look. “How would we view them?”

“Could we see them?” Harleen worriedly wondered. “We don’t have magic, after all.”

Harry nodded, resting his head on the soft cotton behind him and closing his eyes. “I’m not sure. I don’t think so. I’d need a pensieve to show you anything. I’d have to look…in the morning.”

“Hey,” Harleen’s eyes looked upon him with concern, “you okay?”

Harry opened his eyes. “Physically? I’m fine. I just have a bit of a headache. No worries.”

“When did it start?” Ivy questioned.

Harry shrugged, his eyes still closed. “If it was there before, I’m just feeling it now. Hit me like a bloody truck…”

Harleen quickly removed herself from his lap and removed her gloves. Gently, she pressed her hand to his forehead. “It’s not warm,” she said a moment later, and looked at Red, who had gotten up from the couch. “Got anything for headaches?”

“Where does it hurt?” She asked him, double-checking his forehead.

Harry felt a twinge. Right where… “Shit. Not there again.”

“Where?” Harley wondered with growing alarm. “Your temples?”

“No,” Harry hissed, “not there. Where my scar used to be. She’s pissed right now.”

“Who?” Ivy wondered, completely befuddled, not sure if she should be alarmed for his health or worried for his sanity.

“Hermione,” Harry groaned. “And she’s really pissed right now.”

Harley felt a twinge of remembrance at the Shakespearian name, and her eyes widened. “Hold on,” she told them both, and sped out of the living room, through the kitchen, and down the hallway.

Harry hissed, and Pamela gasped in surprise as a light-bluish glow erupted from the right side of his forehead. Pale at first, then brighter and brighter – a distinct symbol lit his skin, almost like a lightning bolt…

Harley sprinted back in the room and froze in shock at the unexpected sight before her.

Harry grabbed at his head and grit his teeth in pain, struggling to force the pain out of his head. Had he any sense, he would have laughed at the impossible thought.

But all he could see was pain.

“Hermione, STOP!” He screamed, his body hunching over and falling into his new clothes.

And then, it stopped. He wasn’t expecting that, and he sat up in surprise and opened his eyes.
A pointed, dark green vine hovered over him, swaying melodiously, like a snake poised to strike.

Pamela breathed a sigh of relief, several feet behind the vine. “I thought I was going to have to hold you down,” she brokenly whispered, and the vine retreated. “What the hell happened?”

“Oh!” Harley squeaked at the sensation, and hastily pulled out a small circular mirror out of her pocket. “It just… bit me! A mirror just bit me!”

Harry grinned tiredly. “It does that to people who aren’t me. It’ll do more than bite if you don’t answer.”

The natural blonde quickly sat next to him and passed him the mirror, and pressed her hand to his forehead again. “Don’t – !”

“Ah! Dammit!”

“Sorry,” Harry muttered, wincing. “It does that. Curls my fringe up sometimes with the heat.” He reached for Harley’s hand, and she gingerly placed it in his.

“I think we need to start carrying a first aid kit,” Harley muttered embarrassingly.

Ivy watched as Harley’s pained look softened as Harry rubbed his thumb in circles at the back of her hand, magically soothing the pain. “I think we’ve already got one. I’ll go get a towel.” She strolled out of the room towards the kitchen.

“I’d make a sexual innuendo about you having magic hands, but I’m sure you get that a lot.” The girl in pigtails relaxed in his embrace, resting her head against the back of the sofa.

Harry purposefully looked at the screen, refraining to tell her that he had heard them all, and he would need to thank her later for not making him hear it one more time.

He took a few shallow breaths.

“Answer,” he murmured, and he immediately held the glass at arm’s length.

“Shit! Are you okay, Harry?”

He flinched. “What do you mean?”

“I can see your sweat! Your bloody scar’s visible again! I’m sorry, Harry, I really am!”

Harry flinched again, for a different reason. “Wait – so you’re not mad at me?”

“What? NO – of course not, Harry! You tried to save Sirius! How were you supposed to know that you’d be sent to wherever the hell you are? It’s no one’s fault but Bellatrix’s, and she’s been dealt with.”

“If you see a woman wrapped in unicorn hair and a frayed unicorn tail,” Luna sounded out of view, “then it’s probably Bellatrix. Make sure it’s her, though.”

“We’ll find you, Harry. Don’t worry.”

Harry brought the mirror closer, and inspected the girl in the reflection. “Hermione?”

“Yes, Harry?”
“If you’re not angry at me, why the hell did my head almost explode less than a minute ago?”

“I… may have an explanation for that.”

“Whenever you’re ready.”

“There’s no need for sarcasm, Harry. Honestly…”

“Ummm…” Harley interrupted, and it was disconcerting to see two different faces turn to her like a normal mirror could do. “S-sorry, it’s just that… what the fuck just happened?”

“I second that,” Pamela said as she sat back on the arm of the couch, gently placing a wet, cold washcloth on his forehead, and he smiled weakly in appreciation. “I think we deserve an explanation; Harley was almost in tears.”

Harley quickly wiped at her eyes, and glared at Ivy’s smirk when she realized she was messing with the young girl. “I was worried, alright! And I had no idea what the hell was going on! I still don’t!”

Hermione bit on her bottom lip, and Harry took notice. “Spill, Hermione. What just happened?”

The curly-haired brunette sighed to herself. “Okay. So, Ronald was just getting out of the hospital wing, and he made a pass at me, while in the same breath, insulting you and called everyone in our mutual group your whores…”

Harry’s eyes hardened. “What?”

Hermione winced. “The headache is coming my way. Please calm down, Harry.”

The glass cracked in Harry’s fingers. He dropped the mirror to the floor. “Shit. Sorry, Hermione.”

“I deserve it. I must’ve given you a massive headache for you to sweat like that. Sorry.”

He picked up the mirror and tapped it, and the mirror was as good as new. “So what did you do?”

Her chocolate brown eyes searched his emerald green. “Promise you won’t be mad?”

“I can’t promise anything if you hadn’t beaten him within an inch of his life.”

“Then you’ll be positively ecstatic, then,” Luna cheered, her cheek pressing against Hermione. “Ronald is dead now, Harry!”

“Luna?”

“What?” She asked innocently. “I’m just cheering him up. He looks like he needs it.”

“Harry, don’t listen to Luna. Ronald is not dead.”

“Not bloody yet,” Harry growled. “But he will be.”

“See?” Harley whispered to her girlfriend. “Just like Bats, but better! And British! Isn’t that insane?”

“That still doesn’t explain how he knows what you’re feeling,” Ivy deliberately ignored Harley. Lately, she’s been agreeing with everything Harley said, and she just knew something bad was going to come out of it if she encouraged it. “Is it some kind of magic thing? Does everyone have this?”

“Maybe they’re soul mates?” Harley suggested, with a sickeningly sweet smile.
“I’d definitely call it a soul bond. I wouldn’t call you and Voldemort soul mates.”

They both shuddered at the thought.

“So, that exists? You two can literally feel what the other feels?” Harley looked excited at the prospect. “So you two are literally in a bond of true, unbreakable love?”

Harry and Hermione shrugged synchronously, and it was, once again, disturbing. “I’d like to think it’s unbreakable,” Harry grinned, “but the bond has nothing to do with that. Though it may be part of the reason it was made. We can certainly feel what the other’s feeling. Sometimes, we can communicate with thoughts.”

“And that’s how I got Harry’s distress,” Hermione explained. “When I heard him to tell me to stop.”

“Though, it may be turning into a real soul bond,” Luna placed her input. “You’d have to ask grandma Joan about bonds, but most bonds are weakened when one leaves the country.”

Harley snapped her fingers. “So that’s why you said she could somehow tell that you were still alive! But how come you haven’t talked to him since he got here?”

“I couldn’t. I could feel that he was alive and well, but I couldn’t do much else. He had left his communication mirror at home. And then he blocks my bloody calls…”

“I didn’t think you’d react well to the news,” Harry protested weakly.

“To the news? Yes. To you? Of course not. Tonks and Susan stopped me from running into the bloody veil myself when I saw what you did.”

“That’s so sweet,” Harleen sighed. “If I knew what a veil was, I’m sure I’d be impressed.”

Pamela beautifully arched an eyebrow at Harleen, smiling at the girl’s fascination. She was somewhat interested as well, being in the field of science herself, and listening to how everything she had ever learned about space and time being proven wrong was quite thrilling. She knew Crane would love to hear this.

And besides, if it kept them from talking about their confessions earlier that night, then she was completely okay with any distraction.

She needed to think. She really didn’t know what about, but she knew that she needed to.

“A veil,” Hermione began explaining, “is the portal Harry walked through to land in your world. It’s the gateway to another dimension, apparently, when everyone else called it the Death Arch. We don’t know if Harry’s the rule or exception. Sirius… so far, he hasn’t contacted us, and he has no way of getting in contact with us. He could be alive, and doing well, but I don’t think we will find out anytime soon.”

“Sirius?” Harley asked.

“His Godfather,” Harry explained. “He was hit by a spell, and fell into the veil. I followed him, and here I am.”

Harley absorbed that information. If it wasn’t for some freak accident, Harry would have never entered her life. “When you find him… I want to thank him myself.” She squeezed Harry’s hand.
“You’ve found another keeper,” Hermione smiled in the mirror. “Luna told me I’d like her.”

“Which reminds me… Luna?”

Wide, silvery eyes moved into the frame. “Yes, Harry?”

“How does Hermione know that I’m in another dimension?”

“Oh; she asked me about it.”

“And why didn’t you tell her I was in America?”

“I did. She didn’t believe me. Then she threatened to go to States herself and start searching the whole country. Naturally, I admitted that I lied. Then she started making worst-case scenarios. She also suggested time-travel. I saw that, by the way. Twenty-one years?”

Harry sighed. There was no fooling Hermione – ever. “Yes, Luna. I’m in Nineteen seventy-four. Technically, it doesn’t affect me at all, especially since we’ve already established that this is a completely different world, and not purely time travel. If anything, I’ve got a shot to take out Voldemort here, if he’s here, and if there’s a James and Lily in this world, they get to live a full life together.”

Hermione looked worried. “Just don’t be rash about it. We have to plan this accordingly - if he exists there.”

“At least he’s dead here, now.” Everyone turned to Luna. “Temporarily, at least. I didn’t think you wanted to hear about that.”

“Luna…” Hermione started worriedly, “…what did you see?”

The wispy blonde wrinkled her nose. “A dead body shaped like Voldemort. More specifically, his corpse lying in a bed in a locked chamber. Not a very pleasant sight, but that can’t be helped.”

Hermione furrowed her brows. “When did you see that, Luna?”

“I saw it earlier today, before we sent Bellatrix through the veil. I informed her of her master’s death, and she seemed fairly confident that I was lying. Then she bragged about the Horcrux in her possession. I correctly assumed it was her vault. The look of defeat on her face was quite hilarious. I didn’t want to tell you guys until the goblins send back confirmation.”

“We found a Horcrux?” Harry seemed ecstatic at the news. “Great, Luna!”

“I take it that the word 'Horcrux' means something more than just a hilarious word,” Harleen queried. “Sorry. It’s just… muggle here. Clueless and therefore, useless.”

“Don’t use that word,” Harry frowned. “And you’re very useful. Horcruxes are pieces of soul, born by death. Kill someone with no remorse, and it transfers half your soul into the object of your choosing.”

“With a spell,” Hermione added. “And I never discovered that spell, nor have I ever felt a need to find out. The only way to reverse it is for either the killer to feel true remorse, or to destroy the object the Horcrux is in.”

Luna giggled. “That is a funny name, actually. Haven’t thought much about it.”

Hermione shook her head, a smile gracing her lips. “So far, we’ve found four. We’re not sure how
many he made, but we’re assuming six or seven. He was a bit superstitious, and seven is a very powerful number in rituals of all sorts.”

“Okay,” Harley nodded, thoroughly interested. “So how did he die?”
Luna shrugged. “If I could guess, it probably has something to do with the Horcrux inside Harry.”
Pamela and Harleen’s heads twisted sharply at the green-eyed wizard. “What?”
Harry sighed. “Luna, you know we got rid of that Horcrux. It’s gone.”
Luna shook her head. “It’s the only way to explain why Voldemort is dead right now, so conveniently close to you going through the veil. This is the first time we’ve destroyed a Horcrux while he’s technically alive – maybe that’s a regular reaction.”

“The proof is in the scar, Harry,” the brunette whispered, looking at the crimson mark carved into his forehead. “I think it’s been buried all this time. It’s gone now. It’s truly gone.”

The green/redhead removed her glare from the Boy-Who-Lived and focused on the brunette, her expression considerably softer. “So when you told us that you wouldn’t call Harry and Voldemort soul mates…”

The brightest witch of the ages nodded. “Yes. They were soul bonded, but it’s a bit different. Voldemort wasn’t aware of it. It was the instability of the last vestiges of his soul when he tried to kill Harry. An accidental Horcrux. Harry got that scar that night. Voldemort had so many different pieces of him out there, he couldn’t sense them anymore, he’d be almost devoid of any feeling.”

Harry lifted the soaked cloth from his forehead, and gingerly poked at the thin, jagged shape burned into his skin. “I’m not feeling anything from it. Why did it happen now? Why not when I went through the veil?”

“Maybe it did?” Harley suggested. All eyes were on her. “Maybe the horcrux disappeared when you went through the portal. I mean, that veil. The veil of death you called it. It sounds like it’s a device that no one understands, and it has rules that are plainly impossible to comprehend. But maybe it saw that Harry had more than one soul, and took that one instead.”

“That…” Hermione looked perplexed. “I don’t think that’s possible. Is it?”
Luna shrugged. “Maybe; we don’t have any other theories.”

Harry was silent for a moment. “So that would mean that Sirius is dead,” he intoned monotonously. Harley squeezed his hand, and looked towards the girls in the mirror with concern.
Luna vehemently shook her head. “Not necessarily. He could have been sent to another universe like you did. And Voldemort’s soul could have just been sent somewhere else, since his body didn’t travel with him.”

“So…” Harry rubbed at his chin. “Why are you still there, Hermione?”
“I don’t know, Harry. I’d hazard a guess that our souls are more connected than Voldemort’s was to yours, so it was loose bait.”

Harry shrugged. “At this point, I’ll take that answer. It’s better than the alternative.”

“Wait,” Harley said, putting the pieces together. “So you mean that… you’re telling me that you
guys are each other’s *Horcruxes*?”

Harry grinned sheepishly, while Hermione looked away in embarrassment. “Not exactly,” he tried to explain, “but pretty close. It did involve the same… process.”

Pamela sighed. “I’m going to go fix some coffee. I don’t think we’re going to sleep for a while.” She slinked out of the arm of the chair, and walked past them to the kitchen.

Harry, Harleen, Hermione and Luna all watched her walk away, mesmerized at the gentle sway of her hips framed by her leafy skirt. “Sweet Merlin,” Hermione whispered.

“That’s my Ivy.” Harleen whispered with a wistful smile. “Most beautiful girl in the world. Spend a day with her, and you can’t help but fall in love.” She winked at Harry. “Or less.”

Harry chuckled, his arm wrapping around Harley’s shoulders. “I can’t be blamed. Nor can I be blamed for falling for her *equally* beautiful girlfriend.”

“I’ve only met you for a few minutes,” Hermione commented, “and I’m rather shocked that Harry met you two by chance. Granted, the make-up seems rather excessive, but I certainly wouldn’t kick you out of bed.”

The girl smiled at the, admittedly, stunningly beautiful brunette. “Thank you for the compliment. I wouldn’t rush to leave the bed. Though, I don’t think Ivy would respond well to it.”

“She’s watching from the chair, with my head between her knees,” Luna said matter-of-factly. “Though I don’t know if I *saw* that, or if it was my admittedly active imagination. Though I also see a very pretty pet kitty that I’ve never met.”

“You mean Juliet?” Harley questioned, her eyes bright. “You can really see her?”

“If that’s her name, yes. She’s… flexible.”

“Juliet?” Harry asked, before Harleen could inquire further.

“Mm-hmm,” she answered him, “One of my pets. You’d get along great with her.”

“You mean the one that you’ve trained to, uh, hit me where I’m weak.”

Harley shook her head. “Nah. I’ve never tried to train her to do that. I’ve threatened it, and she plays the threatening role well, and that’s intimidation enough.”

Luna chose not to comment. Considering it was obvious they were talking about an animal, and while the girl in her vision was an excellent animal impersonator, she was most decidedly *not* a cat.

Though, Luna admitted, from what she had seen, she definitely knew how to attack Harry’s weak spot with vigour.

Harley reached up to hold the hand resting on her shoulder, and pulled it down to rest on the middle of her lycra-covered chest. “Pammy doesn’t know what to think of this. She doesn’t know how she feels. Let her think about it, and she’ll come around.”

“What do you think about it?” he asked her seriously.

She gave a heavy sigh. “I love Red, and I can’t imagine a world without her. I can’t imagine my *life* without her. We started our partnership on a purely sexual relationship, but we were open to see where it would go from there. I told her I loved her six days after I ran away with her. And I
thought it was too soon.” Her eyes focused on his. “I love you, Harry. And she does, too. If you truly meant what you said when we were out there, then I don’t want you to think that you’ve said it too early, because I feel the same. I’ve seen too many relationships break apart because they don’t know how the other feels, and they’re stepping on eggshells.”

Harry let out an uneasy breath, not even sure if he was holding it in or not. “I meant every word. I wasn’t going for a one-night stand with a girl who had just broken up with her girlfriend. I wanted to steal you. I wanted you for myself, from a woman who I thought was taking you for granted. When I found out why she reacted the way she did, I felt… pretty bloody terrible. So I wanted to make it up to her.” Harry grinned. “And you were right. It takes less than a day. I’m surprised it took you a week.”

“It didn’t,” she smiled fondly. “I was in love the moment I made the decision to run away with her. I decided then that I would do whatever I could to win her over.”

“Did she think it was too soon?” Harry wondered.

Her eyes shined at the happy memory. “I’ll never forget her words. ’About damn time,’ she told me. ’I was beginning to think you were straight.’”

Harry laughed. “Like that would stop any woman.”

She rested her head on his chest, mindful of her pigtail, her hands clasped with his. “So we’ll enjoy this; cherish it. So when you go back to Hermione, and Luna, and your family, there are no regrets.”

Hermione spoke up from the mirror. “Harry?”

“I have faith in you, Hermione. You know what they say about soul mates. Even if you wanted to get rid of me, you couldn’t. If you can’t get to me, I’ll get back to you,” he whispered solemnly. “To all of you. Even if I have to try apparating there myself.”

He said it with such conviction; he almost convinced himself that it was a fact. Hermione and Luna smiled at his words, and Harry gave a slight grin. “You’re right, Harry,” Luna murmured. “We’ll find a way. If what I Saw was a real vision, then we had to have found some way.”

“We’re not going anywhere, Harry,” Hermione smiled at her boyfriend, “And we’ll find a way. Bonded or not, you’re not getting rid of me, Harry James Potter.”

Harleen watched Hermione’s eyes – the look of a strong, fierce woman who would do anything to get hers. “All I ask,” the natural blonde whispered, feeling the eyes move to her, “is that when your vacation is over, that you remembered the two pretty girls that kept your stay here bearable.”

The two girls felt shame at the implications of their words; making sure that Harry got to their world, away from Gotham, away from the sweet girl that seemed to attach herself to the boy they love.

“We made a statement tonight, in Gotham, Harley,” Harry spoke clearly, his hand squeezing hers. “What was it?”

“That you’re here,” Harley said with uncertainty, almost as a question.

“I made three promises in that statement. I am here, yes, and together, we can make whatever change you want in Gotham to happen. The outline of that can be hammered out whenever we see fit; we have the time. My second promise was that I’m here to stay. When Hermione and Luna figure out how the hell I got here, it wouldn’t take much more to figure out how to travel in-between. My third promise was to you and Ivy.” He held her tighter to himself, and she cherished his embrace. “I’m
here to stay for a reason. When I said I loved you two. That wasn’t a statement. That was a promise; a hopeful promise. That this relationship might grow.”

Harley’s white teeth glimmered in her smile as she wiped her wet eyes. “I hope it grows, too,” she whispered.

The four sat in companionable silence, Harley and Harry getting comfort from each other, Hermione and Luna contemplating the character that is Harleen Frances Quinzel, and how in such a short time, she had fallen completely and utterly in love with Harry James Potter. And how she didn’t even know it yet.

“You know what this means, right?” the green/redhead asked him as she tangled their fingers together below her chin.

“Hm?”

“If you break our hearts, we’ll kill you.”

“If I break your hearts, it’d be because I’m already dead.”

Harley quirked an eyebrow, her lips curled. “You used that line before, didn’t you?”

“Only once; with Hermione’s father. After he showed me his gun collection.”

“He did that?” Hermione asked, mortified. “I’m going to… wait. He has a gun collection?”

Harry shook his head. “He did. For a week. Borrowed them from a friend, just so he could use it on me. It all fell apart when I was expressing interest in the types of guns, and I ended up knowing more than he did. It was kind of a bonding moment when I started teaching him about it.”

“And he wasn’t worried about how his dear daughter was with a boy who had an affinity for guns?”

“Antiques, mostly,” Harry defended himself, “And no. Man’s got to protect his own, y’know.”

Hermione scoffed. “We’ve saved each other’s arses so many times over the years, Potter. I’m hardly a damsel.”

“His words, not mine. Wasn’t going to point out that by then, we’ve been saving each other and the girls to a point where it’s almost become a business.”

“Potter’s Protection, Incorporated?” Harley quipped, and the two laughed.

“I like it,” Luna commented from the side. “We’d have to get that copyrighted.”

Hermione blushed. “It sounds more like a company that sells condoms, to be honest!”

Pamela sauntered into a room with a large pot of coffee and tea, and found everyone in a considerably better mood. “Did I miss something?” She questioned the room with amusement on her features.

Harry shook his head. “No, not really. We’re just about to get started, actually.” He threw the mirror out in front of him, and Harley and Ivy watched in fascination as it glimmered and shimmered brightly, before landing straight on its edge, as wide and tall as the maroon sofa he and Harley were sitting on. For a glimmer, Hermione and Luna’s faces were the size of Pamela’s entire body, before Hermione made a sudden movement with her mirror. In a flash, the three saw the entire view of Hermione and Luna sitting together on the loveseat in what Harry knew was the Gryffindor
Common Room.

“Luna? What time is it?”

Luna checked her watch. “It’s three-fifteen.”

“It’s about midnight here,” Harleen informed them.

“Good. More than four hours until classes ends. Plenty of time. Where should we begin?”

“The costumes would be a nice conversation starter.”

“Luna!” Hermione looked scandalized. “Don’t insult someone’s customs! We don’t know how their world works!”

“It’s not their custom,” she explained smoothly. They’re national criminals, and that’s their disguises.”

“I…” now Hermione looked mortified. She blushed heavily. “I-I’m sorry, I just assumed…”

“You’ve never met anyone from our world,” Pamela waved her off. “You’d have no idea what we are. When Harry saw that we were criminals, and Harley mentioned that she went to school, he assumed that she went to a school for criminals.”

“Not my brightest moment,” Harry muttered, scratching the back of his head with his free hand, and the girls giggled. Ivy took the time to lay out the mugs of coffee the vine followed her with and set the coffee next to them on the arm of the sofa.

“Well, it explains their outfits,” Hermione spoke, “but what about you, Harry?”

Harry looked down at his slashed-through crimson shirt and black cotton jeans. “Something I thought up while we were out. It’s not permanent, but it’ll give me a unique look for a while.”

“And you’re okay with the idea of him being a criminal?”

“In our world, Harry’s a hero. And so far, he doesn’t get a lick of respect from the public, or the Ministry. If Voldemort truly is dead, then nothing can stand in our way of our takeover of Britain. We’re criminals in our own right – in sheep’s wool.”

Luna smiled at Hermione’s words. “It’s quite a stark contrast to wearing a costume and making declarations of war with a city.”

“I like the costumes,” Harley pouted. “They’re flashy, and people view you with fear. Jesters will be more feared by children than mimes, or even clowns.” Her free hand rubbed up and down his long sleeve. “And I like this look, even though I didn’t get to design it. It’s got just the right amount of spandex.”

Ivy boldly stepped forward and pressed her hand to the material, her fingers skimming against his side, and Harry tensed lightly. “Smooth,” she whispered, and winked.

“Somebody’s done a little soul-searching in the kitchen,” Harleen grinned.

Ivy shrugged, before patting his firm abdomen. “I started thinking about it as I practically felt everyone’s eyes on my ass. Then I thought about how Harley and I confessed to each other. Never waste a moment, right?”
Harleen’s smile met Ivy’s. “Not a single second, baby.”

Ivy squeezed into Harry’s other side on the couch, mindful of the tray of coffee- and teapots and mugs on her other side. “So, I guess I’m part of your group. I’d say that it was more for Harleen’s benefit, but to quote her when she decided to run off with me – ‘Call me curious.’”

“We’d hope so,” Hermione started, before conjuring a glass. “Aguamenti,” she muttered, and the glass filled on its own. “We’ve got a bit to talk about. Normally, we’re not supposed to tell you anything about us, but it’s safe to say that you’re outside the Ministry’s reach. So, where should we begin?”

“How about from the beginning?” Ivy suggested, before pouring herself a cup of tea and leaning against Harry’s side. “With details?”

Harry settled into his seat between the two beautiful girls, and they both snuggled closer. Hermione and Luna did the same, the blonde’s head resting against the brunette’s shoulder while they wrapped their arms around each other.

And then the epic tale regarding the life of Harry James Potter began.

Chapter End Notes

Just so you know, my original requester didn’t even want Batman involved. So I’m not even sure why I wrote him in the story, or why I involved some kind of story at all. The requester just wanted smut, and I robbed him of it this chapter. We’ll get back on track with that, don’t worry.

Several things you may have noticed:

Batman: Year One, the official reboot of the Batman we were all familiar with before the New 52, was released in 1987. While that will be the generation of Batman I’ll be following along with the Animated Series, other classic story lines may affect someone at some time or another. Harry made a small mention that the first batman comic in his world was published in ’87, so Year One was the first Batman comic, and the only iteration that ever existed in that world.

Arkham Origins took place in 1976. Considering most people consider the game as a loose interpretation of Batman: Year 3 or 4, I’m going to stick to some kind of consistency and say that in 1974, we are at the beginning of the third year of the Dark Knight’s reign. He’s faced some major threats by this point (Ivy and Harley, Penguin, Riddler, Scarecrow, Killer Croc, Bane, Falcone, Maroni, and Black Mask in the forefront), and he’s cleaned up the city well, but not the ones that most of you are waiting for, simply because the introductions should be fun to write. Keep in mind that I consider the Arkham Series part of the classic story lines.

About Harry and Hermione being each others Horcruxes; I’ve never seen that done before, and I humbly ask you to find a story that uses that idea, so I can read it immediately. That’s a story I would enjoy reading, and I hope I’m not the only one that considered the thought.

Any further questions about the chapter, Please comment. I'll answer them all in the next
Thank you for reading. Next chapter, we'll wrap up the last of the first 24 hours of this story. It kinda scares me that not a full day has passed yet. I have no idea how long this will go, but it won't end anytime soon. Not with just two Gotham Girls.

Please, leave a review!
In all honesty, I probably would have gotten this chapter done sooner if "The Last of Us: Remastered" hadn't gotten in the way. (PSN: RihaanShim)

Still, be grateful for the amazing pace I'm going with this story. I know I am. It kinda scares me, actually. Still, enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

“Excuse me.”

Harry, far too engrossed in his book, jumped a little in his chair, and looked towards his intruder, who had stepped back in response. “Oh. Sorry. Hello.”

“Hi,” she said meekly. “I’m terribly sorry for intruding, but I just wanted to ask you if you were done with any of those?”

Harry looked over at the pile of books in front of him, stacked neatly by the category he found them. He flushed. “Sorry,” he muttered embarrassingly, “I didn’t know the pile had gotten that high.”

“It happens to us all,” she smiled. “Well, me. And you, I suppose. Do you really read all of them?”

Harry nodded. “Usually by the end of the day.”

“Really?” She looked interested. “All of that? Those are some rather thick volumes.”

“Eidetic memory,” he informed her curtly, knowing that it was a believable, somewhat, stock story in comparison to him telling people about his powers. He had read more than one novel about a protagonist who runs for their lives after revealing their unknown powers.

He was not going to be probed.

The girl’s eyes brightened. “You do? That’s a real thing? I’ve read that there isn’t a proven case of that yet.”

Harry nodded with interest. He hadn’t dealt with someone who actually knew what eidetic memory was. They’d assume it was relating to photographic memory, and leave him be. “That’s the only rational explanation I have for why I can flip through pages and know every word.”

“Oh,” she gasped in understanding, “so you weren’t just scanning the pages?” Harry could tell she was genuinely curious; not mocking him, as someone would usually do when they see a small boy flipping through a Dickens novel.

“No, I’ve been reading. It’s been a while since I’ve gone to the library, and...” his eyes glanced over the stacks. “I picked up whatever’s new to me. I tend to get the bigger books out of the way.” He looked over to the girl. “I haven’t checked any out; they’re here to take if you want to read one.”

“Oh, no,” she shook her head. “Miss Bryan just wanted me to ask you to put up the books. I’ll tell
“I’ll put them back in the right place,” Harry promised, and she nodded gratefully, before turning and walking away, down the fiction aisle.

He went back to his book.

He had barely gotten two pages when a small tap distracted him, and he looked up once more to see her apologetic brown eyes. “Let me guess,” he said dryly, “she wants me to put up the books right now?”

“It’s policy,” she muttered defensively, “and we can’t have everyone taking all the books they want for themselves and make a fort out of them. Two books at a time.”

Harry sighed. “That seems reasonable, I guess.” He eyed her carefully. “So, are you the librarian’s daughter or something?”

She shook her head. “I wait here after school for my parents to pick me up from work. Miss Bryan looks after me.”

“So, you wouldn’t object to helping me put up the books?”

Again, she shook her head in the negative. “Sorry, but she doesn’t want me to help you. She wants me to make sure you put them all in the right place.”

Harry raised an eyebrow. “A bit demanding, isn’t she?”

“She’s teaching you a lesson,” she defended, with a touch of anger. “You did break the rules.”

“I broke protocol and regulation, not the rules. I’ve read the pamphlet when I came in here, and it said nothing about the amount of books I can remove from the shelf at the same time.”

That gave her pause. “It doesn’t? Are you sure?”

“I trust my memory.”

She looked lost for a moment. “Are you sure?” she asked him again.

Harry sighed. “If you can find it in the rulebook for this library, then I’ll return all the books; I promise.”

“B-but it’s a courtesy!”

“You are the librarian’s assistant – it’s also a courtesy to help others when they ask for it.”

She shook her head defiantly, her bushy brown hair swishing against her shoulders. “The librarian’s word is final. Rules or not, she enforces them.”

“Exactly.” Harry’s eyes went back to his book. “Not you.”

The little girl stared at him, incredulous at his blatant disregard of her presence and the rules set before him, before she huffed and stalked away.

When the brown-haired girl returned, the librarian keeping up with the little girl’s pace, he was gone.
“Are you still mad at me for that?” Harry asked, amused.

“I’m more embarrassed,” the brilliant brunette muttered, hiding her face in Luna’s hair, and the airy blonde giggled as her friend’s breath tickled her neck. She embarrassingly fell out of her grip into the other cushion, and Hermione laughed at the sudden movement. She turned back to the mirror in front of her. “Not a good first impression I’ve made.”

Harry chuckled; his thumb rolling over Harleen’s gloved knuckles. “Still, it was a good precursor for things to come; giving you headaches since the very day I met you.”

Hermione gave an unladylike snort. “Harry, of all the things you give me on a basis, a headache doesn’t come to mind.”

“Ironic,” Luna pointed out as she lay against the cushion, “considering when you get a headache, nothing else comes to mind except the headache.”

“You didn’t give me that much of a headache, really,” Hermione admitted. “You returned the books to the shelves, at least.” She sent him a grateful smile, her straight white teeth gleaming. Harry returned the smile.

“So, that’s when you two first met?” Harleen asked with interest. “How old were you?”

“I was nine at the time,” Harry told his lovers, “And Hermione had recently turned ten. About two years from that day, we’d both get an invitation to the same school. Had we left things like that, we probably wouldn’t have even been friends for a long time.”

“I probably would’ve been dead,” Hermione noted. “Considering the mountain troll that was going to kill me.”

Pamela and Harleen held their breaths.

“Sorry,” the brunette muttered, “I’m jumping ahead. That doesn’t happen for a bit. But at least it’ll keep you interested.”

“We already were,” Pamela assured her, amusement in her tone, “but I wouldn’t mind sticking around for the troll story.”

“I’d rather not,” Hermione said quickly. “It was a rather sad moment; he died, you see. You only need to know what happened afterwards. And, I suppose the build-up to it. Had everything before not happened, it might have just been an isolated incident – a crazy circumstance with no meaning.”

Harley cocked her head to the side, resting on Harry’s elbow wrapped around her shoulders. “Everything before? You mean the development of your friendship?”

The brown-eyed girl crossed her denim-clad legs and leaned against the arm of the Gryffindor Red sofa. “Even by then, it was so much more. But we had to get over a hump, first....”

“Excuse me, but...” she gasped. “You!”

Harry winced and lowered his book. He knew this library looked familiar; he never bothered reading the names of them. “Oh... hello, again. How have you been?” he began uneasily.

“Where did you go?” She scowled at him.

“I was hiding in the nonfiction section. This whole time.”
She narrowed her eyes. “For eight weeks?”

“Fine, then; the religion section. I was trying to find sanctuary, so I wouldn’t be yelled at.”

She was aware that he was joking, so she refrained from spouting that they didn’t have a religious section. “Every book was in its right place on the shelves, and I was gone for half-a-minute at the most. How did you do that?” He wasn’t sure if she was angry because he had escaped her clutches, or because she couldn’t figure out how he did it.

“You scare me that much,” he said dryly. Seeing as she wasn’t in a laughing mood, he decided to give her a serious, never-the-less, false excuse. “My memory helped me out. I remember where every book goes, and I just went back through the shelves, putting them back.”

“That giant pile? In less than a minute?”

Harry nodded. “It’s not like you’re gonna believe anything else.”

She silently conceded to his point. She slumped as the fight left her, and gave a tired sigh. “At least you don’t have a pile of books around you anymore,” she noted with a hint of relief.

Harry again nodded. “In case I run into people like you.”

She crossed her arms. “It’s not right. In the library, you don’t hog all of the books to yourself. You just don’t.”

The green-eyed boy shrugged. “Alright.”

She stood awkwardly. “Alright?”

“Alright; I won’t do it again. So, will we have any trouble from here on out?”

“I never wanted any trouble.”

“I was never looking for it. But I’m willing to forget about it if you are.”

She looked hesitant. “This isn’t how I imagined this meeting would go.”

“Build-up of anticipation for eight weeks does that for you,” he grinned, and she blushed prettily. “Harry,” he grinned, and held out his hand.

She reached for it with a small smile, her overbite complimenting her smile, in his eyes. “Hermione.”

“What school do you go to?”

“Were you looking for me at yours?” He wondered, his book forgotten. That happened a lot recently.

“Of course not,” she huffed indignantly, her cheeks pink. “I haven’t seen you in uniform.”

Harry was aware of the hideous green school uniform, and had once considered copying the boy’s version, but ultimately decided that he could never do that. Even he had standards. “I don’t go to school.”

“You’re homeschooled, then?” she reasoned logically.
“I wouldn’t call it that.”

“What do you mean?”

Harry shook his head. “Nothing. I’ve just been moving around a lot.”

“And that affects your homeschooling?”

“Not really. I just don’t live anywhere.”

She gasped. “Really?”

Harry put a finger to his lips. “We’re in a library, you know.”

“How do you not have a home?” she whispered urgently, her eyes showing a sense of alarm, and it could have been a trick of the light, but she looked sad at the prospect.

The boy shrugged. “Wasn’t really my choice. My relatives... hinted that they prefer me as far away as possible. I didn’t argue.”

“For how long?” she asked incredulously, her mind reeling at the boy in front of her, not living under a roof.

He looked pointedly at her, his green eyes searching. “A few years. No point in calling anyone about it, now.”

He could see the battle warring on in her features. He knew that if he had ever told her, she would call for help. In the few weeks he had spent with her, she had gone from absolutely worshipping authority figures, unquestionably obeying them, to admitting that the librarian could be a bit harsh ‘sometimes’.

He didn’t have much faith that she wouldn’t immediately run to the librarian.

However, she surprised him with her hesitant nod. “How are you living day-to-day?” she asked him, her eyes roaming him over like it was the first time ever seeing him. He looked down at his own Nottingham Forest shirt that he had seen in the store, and it looked clean and new.

He looked back up to her and grinned. “I get by.”

“You steal?”

Harry nodded unabashedly. “I can’t get a job, now can I?”

She crossed her arms. “And that’s your excuse.”

“It’s the one I’m sticking to.”

“Do you feel proud of yourself? Taking from hardworking people?”

He narrowed his eyes. “Most times, yes. It’s amazing how much I can get away with.”

Hermione fidgeted, and he inwardly smirked as he realized that she remembered when he had eluded her the first time they met, many months ago. “Could you do me a favor?”

Harry nodded, unsure.
“Don’t get caught.” Her eyes pleaded with him. “Please.”

Harry wasn’t intending to. And now, looking into her eyes, he made a solemn promise that he wouldn’t.

“You know,” Harry remarked into the full-size mirror, “you took that pretty well. And you didn’t ask many questions about it.”

“Harry, I know you can’t believe it, but there was actually a time where you weren’t a social person. Even if I asked, I couldn’t get the right answers out of you. And my mind was working far faster than you give me credit for. You may recall that I found your last name a few days later because I looked you up after that very moment.”

“You found his last name?” Harley questioned, catching the brunette’s strange words. She turned to Harry, her eyes inquisitive. “You didn’t tell her your last name? Did you tell anyone else your last name, or were you really big on anonymity?”

Harry grimaced, leaning his head back. “I didn’t know it. My relatives never told me. They thought I was a... er, a – ”

“Freak,” Harleen whispered. Harry turned to her in surprise. “That’s why you flinched at that word. They literally tried the beat the magic out of you, didn’t they?”

Pamela looked away, her eyes cold. “My plants have never been particularly carnivorous. They’ll make an exception.”

“They’re dead,” Hermione muttered monotonously. “I killed them. And I’d do it again in a bloody heartbeat.” Her eyes glistened. “They reported him missing three years after he ran away. Three bloody years! And I bet it was on Dumbledore’s orders when he found out!”

Luna wrapped her arm around her best friend’s shoulders. “It’s okay, ’Mione. It’s over.”

Hermione sniffled. “Not yet, it’s not. There’s still the kingpin. It’ll never be over until he’s dealt with.”

“He will have his time,” Luna promised the melancholy teen. “He’ll pay for everything he’s done. I promise.”

Harry sighed, sitting his head back up and facing the girls in the mirror. “I would like to be there, but I’m sure he won’t respond well to the fact that I’m gone for too long. He’ll try to take the veil if he thinks we’re getting nowhere. I hope you’ve hidden it well.”

“We’ve got girls ’round the clock working on it,” Luna informed him cheerily, “the best curse-breakers we have. Fleur got here this morning; her exams kept her from coming sooner. She’s working well with Tonks and Daphne, especially. They’re looking for spells or objects that can break the path.”

“If Dumbledore or Snape give either of you or anyone else a hard time,” Harry warned the girls, “do me a favor and send them through the bloody veil. If I’m lucky, they’ll land in the same spot I was when I got here. I’ll be waiting.”

Hermione leaned into Luna’s embrace. “Actually, Dumbledore’s been rather accommodating, which annoys us. He’s allowed Luna and me to skip classes for the week. It doesn’t really matter after OWLS, so it’s nothing special, but it was a show of good faith, and it’s disturbing.”
"It’s something he’s expected to do," Harry nodded. “Publicly, you two are my closest friends. Everyone would be questioning it if he didn’t. I wouldn’t be surprised if Septima or Aurora pushed for it, though. Still, it’s going to make it seem like he’s the hero in all this, because public knowledge says I’m dead, and he was the one that allowed you to grieve.”

“Makes sense,” Luna nodded. “I’d bet Minerva endorsed the idea. She sees you like a son.”

Harry snorted. “A delinquent child you’d send to military school, maybe.”

“She’s right, Harry. McGonagall actually cried when she heard the news. I had to make her swear to an oath before I could tell her that you’re still alive. She’s in our confidence now, Harry. Her loyalty lies with us.”

Harry’s eyes showed his surprise. “Wow. That’s... she really cried for me?”

The brunette nodded. “I’d save the memory in the pensieve if it wasn’t so heart-breaking. She screamed bloody murder, and tore a new one into Dumbledore for not being at the Ministry.”

“That works for us,” Harry snickered, “considering he didn’t know until we gave Tonks the message.”

The girls in the mirror grinned slyly.

Pamela poured herself a cup of tea and sipped at it. “This ‘Dumbledore’... is he a wolf in sheep’s clothing as well?”

“Worse,” Luna sighed, her fingers running over the butterbeer caps on her necklace. “He’s the shepherd. And while I’m sure he would appreciate the term goatherdbetter, I liked your analogy more.”

“And he’s got the wool pulled over everyone’s eyes,” Harry muttered. He blinked. “Sorry. That one was unintentional. He’s got everyone fooled, I mean. I suppose he would be the police in this world, and, no offense, Hermione, Luna, and I would be the Batman.”

“Hm?” Hermione’s head popped off of Luna’s shoulder. “Batman? As in the comic book hero?”

Harry nodded. “It seems so. I’m, apparently, in a world where he’s a real person. Everything seems legitimate about him. I haven’t read the comics, but he has the same name as the Batman in the comics.”

“Same name? Wait – you know!?” Harleen accused him.

Luckily for him, she didn’t look angered that he hadn’t told them yet – he was a bit pre-occupied with his headache earlier, and she understood. There was still a certain amount of surprise, though. “Actually,” he hastily explained, “I suspected you’d want to figure it out yourself when you watch his memories.”

“Harry? Are you telling me that you did... that to a superhero?” Hermione looked shocked that he was alive, frankly. “Did you once stop to consider that it might not work on a superhuman?”

“I tried Legilimency before I took some memories,” Harry said defensively. “His mind is as normal as anyone else’s; a prodigy, yes, but for the most part, that’s a normal man under that bat outfit.”

“That wasn’t a contradiction at all,” Harley noted, and Pamela unsuccessfully fought a grin from sneaking onto her beautiful visage.
“Okay. Sorry, I overreacted. I just worry.”

“You have every right to,” Harry smiled at his best friend, “but not about me. I can handle myself.”

“The more you say that, the more I start to believe it,” she muttered with an embarrassed grin, tucking a strand of hair behind her ears with her free arm. “Still, if there’s a Batman in your world, then logic – or whatever logic there is at this point – it would suggest that there are other things related to him in the lore. Maybe Harley and Pamela are mentioned. I’d have to do more research.”

“And by that, she means she’ll read comic books all day;” Luna giggled cutely, and Hermione swatted at her shoulder, but didn’t try to correct her. She’d been looking for an excuse to get into them, having read a few graphic novels at Hannah’s insistence.

“It’d be nice to have a cheat sheet,” Ivy muttered wistfully, now on her second cup. “Though, with Harry around, I doubt we’d need it. Especially considering he’s changing everything with him being here.”

“And actions,” Harley quipped. “I don’t think they were expecting that entrance.” She snorted lightly. “I don’t think anyone expected that!”

“That was the intention,” Harry smiled, “but if you think they’re going to just let us get away with... what are we doing, exactly? Cleaning the sewers? Create a bio-terrorism war? We need a plan going in.”

“We’ll discuss it in the morning,” Ivy murmured, leaning against Harry. “But that’s the gist of it. While killing everyone in Gotham with spores was a fun idea, it was a reckless, heat-of-the-moment attack. With Harley’s help, I’ve refined my goals. We won’t stop until we get to a point where human-kind values plant-life as much as their own. They have suffered under the hands of humans enough, and I will help them calm their screams.”

“You really can hear their screams?” Harry whispered, his eyes searching hers. “All the time?”

She spared a smile at his concerned look. “Fortunately, and thankfully, no. On some level, we can speak to each other, almost like a normal conversation. I can hear screams from a plant as well as you can a human, at a moderate distance. I can’t hear a tree being destroyed in the Amazon, but this forest is loud and clear to me.” She smiled fondly. “By the way; my babies told me earlier today that they never attacked you when you first came here because you were unapproachable. You’ve hidden very well.”

Harry shrugged his shoulders. “I’ll show you my secrets next time we need it. Which reminds me; this place – how protected is it?”

Ivy looked at him strangely. “Other than deadly vines with poisonous thorns larger than your fist and sharper than a swordsmith’s proudest work? The door is locked.”

“I mean, in terms of visibility. We reach an act of terrorism, they could literally rain down fire or some other chemicals on us, and your plants might not be immune to that. Armor-piercing bullets probably won’t help, either.”

“We’re well-hidden in the forest,” Harley supplied helpfully. “At night, vines wrap up the entire place. During the day, it’s just a regular house with an attached greenhouse in the middle of the woods. We’re about four miles out of Gotham, and this is six miles of forest all around. The trees are tall and strong – they’ll hide us from a bat’s eye view. Compliments to the proprietor of this lovely green establishment.” She smiled warmly at her green-skinned lover, who flushed at the praise.
Harry nodded. “Okay. That works. When we get a bounty on our heads, we can use magical protection. But this definitely works.”

“Okay,” Pamela agreed. “We can do that, and discuss our plans, later.” She turned back to Hermione and Luna, who were patiently waiting, the blonde’s head snuggled against the brunette’s generous bosom. “But for now, I’m curious; how were you able to find Harry’s last name? Is the name ‘Harry’ that uncommon?”

Hermione shook her head, her fingers running through Luna’s sleek dirty-blond hair. “No. A member of the royal family is named Harry, so a lot of families feel some sort of perverse connection or heightened expectation by naming their child Harry. There were quite a few missing Harrys. There was only one child, however,” her eyes moved subtly to the boy in question’s forehead, “who had such a distinct mark like that. They’ve never taken a picture of Harry, but they were able to give a fairly accurate sketch, while both putting the scar on the wrong side of his head and underplaying how dreadfully underfed he was.”

“I ate more living by myself than I did with the Dursleys,” Harry laughed at the ironic thought, while the girls’ faces around him grew darker.

“You’ve killed them in your world, and I hope you didn’t make it easy for them,” Harley said seriously, staring pointedly at Hermione, and she nodded. “But if these Dursleys exist in this world as well, then I want my shot at them, too.”

“If they even did exist here, they’d be around my age, and Petunia wouldn’t even be a Dursley,” Harry commented, before a sobering thought came to him, and he shuddered. “At this point, I’m older than my **mother**!”

“And my aunt,” Hermione added cheekily, and giggled at the glare Harry sent her way. “And while I wouldn’t object to someone taking out that dreadful family again, we may be jumping the gun. As far as we know, they’re still innocent people.”

“Vernon is a bully,” the ebony-haired teen muttered. “He’s the Dudley of his generation. At Smeltings, with that stupid cane, beating and maiming people with it –”

“What?” Ivy hissed loudly, her eyes beginning to glow a very dangerous shade of green. “A cane?”

Harry nodded. “The school assigns all their students with canes, so they can hit each other while the teachers aren’t looking. Supposed to build character.”

“Sounds like it builds more lawsuits!” Harleen was seething as well. “What the hell kinda school has rules like that?”

“A school that’s lasted at least two generations,” Harry shook his head. “Of course, Dudley prospered well at that school. He’s been a bit aggressive since he didn’t have me for a punching bag anymore.”

“Wait,” Ivy interrupted, the thought just coming to her. “How do you know all of this? Did you go **back** to them?”

Harley looked incredulous at the thought. “Those bruises on your back; that’s not from a decade ago, is it?” She whispered softly, almost fearful of the answer.

Harry smiled a bit. It may have been a bit out of place – discussing the abuse he had taken at the Dursleys’ hands, and the long-term repercussions of said abuse – but he couldn’t help but feel honored that he was surrounded by people who worried about his well-being. “He can’t hurt me
anymore,” Harry whispered. “Not where he’s at. Thank you for caring, but... I don’t think I need anyone feeling sad for me right now. Anyone looking through my eyes can see my luck has dramatically changed since then.”

“Still,” Hermione started delicately, “you asked about it, and we’ll tell you. Yes, he did get sent back – on Dumbledore’s orders. Harry was twelve, and he had – arguably – the worst of his years in Hogwarts.”

“They were all pretty decent, considering the ups compared to the downs,” he smirked at his first girlfriend, his green eyes shining. “Still, there was a time when you were happy to go to Hogwarts. Remember when you got your letter?”

Hermione had a wistful look on her features. “Yeah, there was a time. I was naïve, certainly. One thing I’ll always cherish, though – the look on your face when I told you about it. When you realized that you could tell me everything.”

“And that was when Hermione Granger broke her first rule,” Luna smiled, her eyes closed. “Before she even read that Harry was a celebrity, she had already made the choice to tell her best friend that she had gotten an invitation to Hogwarts.”

“Are you falling asleep on me, Luna?” Hermione asked the blond resting on her chest, amused.

“I was listening, you just have such soft pillows.” Luna purred, and Hermione blushed.

“Moving on,” the brunette murdered, purposefully ignoring her boyfriend’s chuckles and the other girls’ muffled laughter, “I got the letter, and I thought logically about it. It seemed that Harry certainly qualified for having magic, what with the adventures he’s told me about, and the things I’ve seen him do, and I reasoned that he would likely be getting a letter had someone known where he went.”

“That was around the time I finally mastered Occlumency, and the memories started to come easier to me. I was sorting out my memories bit by bit for organization – a little each day, as the book suggested. I woke up one day knowing what my parents look like, the same day Hermione got that letter. She showed me the letter, and I told her... well, everything, really.”

“You wouldn’t shut up.” Hermione muttered, her lips curved upwards. “It was sweet. You spilled out your soul to me, secrets that you’ve never told anyone other than Luna and very few other girls, including you two. That might not mean a lot now, but here, Harry’s trust is sacred.”

Harry flushed at her high thought of him. “Well, you didn’t have to say it like that,” he murmured embarrassingly, “some things are hard to talk about, is all. Besides, you broke a rule for me; a rule with almost unimaginable consequences, just because you had a hunch about me.”

“Harry, I wouldn’t have gone without you,” she said defiantly. “I told you before I told my parents, because I didn’t want to be pressured into going. I had almost no idea if you were magical or not. I’d already made up my mind; if I couldn’t bring my only friend, then I wasn’t going to Hogwarts.”

“Hermione, you know that you’d still see me around even if I wasn’t invited. Even when Ms. Bryan banned me, you saw me nearly every day. I’d find my way in.”

“A haggard librarian doesn’t compare to a magical school, Harry,” Hermione pointed out with a smile, “but I’m flattered, none-the-less.”

“Still, I proved to break their defenses too, right?” Harry cheekily grinned. “Still, I’m getting off-track. When I saw that Hermione could do magic, I was over the bloody moon. What were the chances, really? I finally showed her my own power, and began teaching her some magic.”
“What did you do?” Harleen wondered, crossing her legs as she sat back against his arm once more. The green-eyed wizard hugged her to himself. “Something simple, and rather tame, actually. I levitated a book, then I summoned a small fire in my hand. It was a cool little parlour trick I discovered I could do, but I knew it was too risky to do something like a street show, so I wanted to show off a bit.”

“He just held up his palm and blue fire hovered over it. The heat and brightness of it made me shield my eyes. It swirled so intensely, I was sure it might spin out of control.” She looked at Harley, then at Ivy, making eye contact with both. “No one can do that. Not Dumbledore. Not Voldemort. Not even me. And, full disclosure, we are quite easily the four most powerful people in recent history.”

“A bit dramatic, there, ‘Mione.”

“Harry, you didn’t even flinch when you summoned that fire. It was blue, for Merlin’s sake.”

“Merlin?” Harleen queried, having caught that name a few times. “So he’s a real person?”

“Indeed,” Hermione confirmed. “And he’s just as famous to us as he is to the rest of the world. He attended Hogwarts, actually; a millennia ago.”

“What did he look like?” Harley jumped in her seat excitedly, gently breaking away from Harry’s embrace.

Pamela smiled softly at her girlfriend’s childlike exuberance. “Down, girl. I doubt they have a picture of him.” She glanced over to Hermione skeptically. “Do you?”

“Actually...” Hermione started, “...we have a drawn picture. The look of Merlin is pretty similar to what normal people think he looks like. His picture is, I think, most accurate in *Hogwarts, A History*.”

As Hermione was finished talking, Harry gingerly removed his right arm from Pamela’s shoulders, and proceeded to wave his fingers back and forth. They watched in fascination as pages began to appear in thin air, sliding along his fingertips and stacking on top of each other, floating before them. Hermione’s face heated more and more as each page materialized in front of them. “Is that... verbatim, Harry?”

He gave her a deadpan look, the pages spilling from his fingers. “Every. Single. Word.”

Luna laughed uproariously, while Pamela and Harley looked confused at the brunette’s embarrassment. “And to believe – Harry’s never read a page!”

“It’s a good book,” Hermione squeaked.

“I know it is, love,” Harry muttered, dragging his finger along the spine, and Harley cooed as the leather binding wrapped around the stack. He grabbed the levitating book and flipped through its pages. “Ah, here it is; page fourteen.”

Ivy and Harley stared at the Dumbledore look-alike, while Hermione tried to regain her composure. “Well, if you could conjure books, then I suppose you wouldn’t mind conjuring a pensieve, then? It’s a lot better than describing it.”

“Would that work?” Harry wondered. “I mean, it’s a magical object. At most, I’ll be conjuring a kettle. I was trying to figure out a way to show Batman’s memories to them. I think the only way
might be to find a pensieve in this world; if it exists.”

Hermione thought furiously, and turned to Luna, who still had wetness in her eyes from mirth. “Luna, do you know any way to let them see the memories?”

Luna shrugged. “Other than the obvious.”

“What’s the obvious?” Hermione wondered with a bright smile, knowing that it would be a thought that no one considered.

“Harry puts the memories in a quartered off section of his mind, and you can access it. Then we put it in our pensieve, and jump in there with the mirror.”

“Luna; you’re a genius.”

She looked confused. “You didn’t think of that? I thought you didn’t want to suggest it because we don’t really know how strong your mental connection with Harry is right now.”

“I can feel it getting stronger,” Harry told the two, leaning forward. “I scream in my head, you can hear me. You get pissed, I can feel it. The theme seems to be whenever we’re feeling something powerful, it’s loud and clear. So I don’t think you’ll be able to get a good connection with me for now.”

“The fact that the connection is still working is impressive,” Luna noted. “I’ve said this before, but you two aren’t really supposed to put that much distance between you two. It’s why all of Voldemort’s Horcruxes are in Europe. At this point, he has too many, but if he had two or three, he’d feel a bit of pain if one of them left... oh.”

Realization dawned on the two smartest witches of their generation, followed closely by the three on the other side of the mirror. “Shit,” Hermione breathed. “So Harry killed Voldemort that way? By going to a different dimension with a piece of his soul?”

“Could it really be that simple?” Harleen wondered, her eyes wide. “Just getting in some distance between his Horcruxes? Shipping a package to a distant relative in the United States could kill a Dark Wizard?”

“There has to be more to it,” Harry said slowly. “…Right? It can’t be that easy.”

The silence that ensued suggested that it very well could be, and just might be.

Ivy cleared her throat. “That still wouldn’t explain why you and Hermione are not suffering from any negative effects.”

“You have a point,” Hermione muttered, before biting her bottom lip in concentration. “I’m tempted to look into it, but figuring out that veil is a priority right now.”

“Killing Voldemort is always a priority,” Harry pointed out. “But yeah, since he’s temporarily down, getting back would be nice. I’ll go back to the scene in the morning.”

“We’ll go back to the scene,” Pamela corrected him. “After you model your clothes for us, like you promised. We purposefully waited until nighttime to show you what Gotham looks like. It looks so drastically different during the day.”

“I’d have to disguise you,” Harry remarked. “You’re pretty recognizable, and I don’t want police surrounding the scene I spawned from.”
Ivy shook her head. “No need. Harley is a master at disguise.”

“You won’t even recognize her,” Harleen spouted proudly. “Especially when Ivy puts on a performance. She’s really good at acting like she tolerates other people.”

She shrugged. “Only because I know I’ll enslave them soon.”

“Are we working for plant equality, or plant world domination?” Harry asked, amused.

“Whichever’s easier,” she smirked, leaning against his shoulder, “and knowing the stubbornness of humans... I’d say that forced slavery is the best bet.”

“And that’s not going a bit overboard?” Hermione asked after a short pause, seeing Harry’s shocked silence.

Pamela shrugged, once again. “Maybe. Whatever it takes for them to follow my message.”

“World domination...” Harleen muttered to herself, tapping her chin in thought. “It sounds fun!”

“Doesn’t it?” Ivy grinned, reaching over Harry to pat her girlfriend’s thigh. “The journey there should be pretty exciting, at least.”

Harry scoffed and crossed his arms. “How much fun we might have is not the problem. Having a city, a state, or even the government hounding us is going to be a problem. Are you ready to have the world gunning for you?”

Ivy lost her smile, and her eyes focused on his. “I told you before; I told them all. Gotham is nothing but a testing ground for my plans. Then my presence will spread through the other major cities – Keystone, Metropolis, Star City. It will escalate when other nations respond, and we’ll have to strike first.. I honestly don’t know if Harley and I alone can handle this, but it needs to be done – someone has to do it. Whether you join us or not is your decision.”

Harry looked back and forth between the two, while Hermione looked ponderous. His eyes settled on the redhead. “Would you love me any less if I declined?”

There was an uncertainty in her eyes. “I... I don’t know if I do now. Is there an attraction? Of course. Sexual tension? Obviously. Could I see this relationship between us continue? Sure. I don’t... I’m not going to try to understand the depth of the relationship you have with your girls. I don’t really understand the immediate attraction Harley felt towards you. I feel it towards you, only after Harley pointed it out. There’s something about you – the charming, modest, intelligent person that I see, that happens to have incredible power and a streak for considering other people’s feelings. It’s just refreshing. And it’s something that makes me lose even more faith in humanity, because I see you, and your friends, and I see them, out there, and I wonder... are we the worst? Is our world so dirty, that looking in from the outside, we’re entertainment? The fucked up humanity I’ve seen in Gotham – it belongs in a comic book.

“And that’s how your world sees it. And as you’ve said, your world is corrupt as well, and that’s why you’re trying to overthrow your government. And still, they have the time to read our escapades. A story of how a world is so polluted, a man dressed like a bat does more than the police. Do you know how easy it was before he came along? The fact that no one could stop me is a testament to how screwed we are. No government steps in. No state police. Nothing. Maybe I’m too soft? Maybe I need to kill more? I don’t know. But the facts are that if I can take over, then anyone with a modicum of power can. I’ve seen that there are others like me – mutants. Powerful criminals with much more nefarious plots than anything I could stomach. Just three days ago, a man held up a
packed football stadium hostage with bombs, simply because it was Father’s Day, and he wanted to ‘celebrate’ the unappreciated holiday. Everything was back to normal the next day. The people, the news, they were all bored with that story, and waited for the next – and we were the new story, that’ll be talked about for days. The only thing that’s keeping their attention even that long is because you’re new, and unexpected. It’s... maddening. Picture what would happen if Batman weren’t around? The Commissioner, reportedly, never left the goddamn house during the bomb threat! The only reason he was there to meet us was for good press; a chance to say that he did something, like arrest the best team in Gotham.

“This is far beyond my babies – nature is in danger, but so is the rest of the world. So,” Ivy sighed, sitting back against the sofa. “I guess what I’m trying to say is no. I wouldn’t love you any less if you didn’t join us. But,” her eyes focused on Harry’s, “I wouldn’t love you any less if you had the sense to get out while you still can. I’ve made the offer to Harley.”

“As often as possible,” the natural blonde muttered, wrapping her hands around Harry’s arm. “I’ll stick by Red’s side until the end. She knows that – she just doesn’t like it. You know what I tell her? It’s what people who love each other do.”

Harry nodded. “You’re right. It is. But that’s not the main reason I’m staying.”

Harley breathed a heavy sigh of relief, while Pamela almost choked on her own breath. Harry’s hand rested on her thigh. “Several months ago, I once told the world that Voldemort had returned from the grave. Not only did they all turn on me, they discredited every word I’ve said since, simply because the minister didn’t believe me. The only authority figure who has ever publicly supported me was the Prime Minister of Wizarding France, and she was my friend. No one cared about my evidence. No one cared about my word, and I’d given them no reason to distrust me. It was then when we decided that something needed to change – that we needed to overthrow the authority, and change the world for the better. I’d be a hypocrite if I said that your idea is any different from mine. In fact, it’s very much the same idea. I’m joining because I don’t know much about your world, but you’ve given me no reason to distrust you, and I’ll believe your word. I’m joining because...” he glanced at Harley, then back to Pamela, “because I’d hate myself if I didn’t. I’m not worried about your well-being – you two seem to have been able to take care of yourselves before I got here. But I don’t think I could tolerate myself if I didn’t help make your journey to the top easier.”

Ivy leaned in and kissed Harry chastely. “Thank you,” she murmured, her eyes shining.

“You are so gonna get laid tonight,” Harley whispered, loud enough for Ivy to hear.

“Don’t you have dinner to cook?” She said loudly, refusing the rosy blush to surface on her cheeks.

“Can’t cook without a menu,” Harley shot back with a grin. “Besides, I’m hungry for... something else.”

“Of course you are,” Ivy muttered to herself, smiling. “But we do have to eat, eventually. It’s been more than a day.”

“It is an essential part of being alive,” Harry pointed out. “My magic can sustain me for a while, as my earlier street-hopping days showed me, but I’d rather not starve myself, especially with the energy I’ve been burning. Why don’t I whip something up quick? It’ll be a few minutes.”

“Are you sure?” Harleen asked, releasing his hand as he got up from the couch. “It’s no problem – you really shouldn’t be cooking for us on the first full night here.”

Harry chuckled as he paused at the doorway. “Funny – I feel like I’ve been here for a lifetime.”
Ivy grinned at her newest lover. “Any regrets?”

He grinned back. “Haven’t decided yet. It hasn’t even been twenty-four hours.”

Hermione waited until he was out of sight before speaking. “So, Pamela, Harley... if you don’t mind me asking... what do you two regularly look like – without the costumes?”

Ivy flushed and looked away, while Harleen giggled.

“What?” Hermione wondered. “Did I say something wrong?”

Luna smiled as she finally fell asleep against her best friend’s breast.

“I thought you quit.”

James Gordon breathed steadily into the air, the smoke wafting into the black night. “Yeah. I thought I did, too.”

Detective Essen crossed her arms as she leaned against the doorway. “Are you going to be long?”

He shook his head, and took another drag.

After a few more seconds of uncomfortable silence, she pulled open the door and walked back into the station.

Jim sighed. Alone on the roof.

He could be with his wife and daughter right now.

Instead he had to deal with... whatever the hell just happened tonight.

Loeb was pissed about it all. Patrolling units all night long was apparently in the schedule. Even speeding tickets were ignored as they searched for the elusive trio.

Howard Branden was still being treated. He likely wouldn’t be allowed to search with them, as he almost definitely suffered a concussion.

Which was a good thing. He’d rather they bring at least one of them in alive. Of course, the commissioner didn’t care. He wanted answers, but he’d rather they be put down quickly, rather than given another chance to escape.

The injured were sent to the hospital. He would visit them in the morning. He had almost gotten into the back of the ambulance after a routine check-up when Barbara called, having seen the news broadcast.

Which led him to his first cigarette in months.

She won the fight, of course, mainly because she fought him with the truth. He had no idea why he continued to fight for this city. Corrupt colleagues aside, what he found himself facing was far and beyond out of his league. It was like there was an entire generation of freaks evolving into something else. Scum with the power of gods.

“Only crazy can fight crazy,” the Captain muttered, flicking the butt of the cigarette to the ground, before squashing it. Right now, he didn’t know what to do. It was times like this he wished the vigilante and the villains took each other out. God knows he was searching for them right now, and
they were waiting for him.

He pulled out another cigarette. One more couldn’t hurt.

Not as much as the paperwork would.

“You know,” the gray-haired Englishman remarked, knuckles digging into the back of his employer’s neck, “if you listened to me, you wouldn’t be in this situation to begin with.”

The Batman said nothing.

“And now,” he pressed his palms into his bare shoulder and squeezed the muscles tight, “you could have been killed tonight, and without a fighting chance at all. You just happened to meet someone gracious enough to allow you to live. I’d be very thankful, Master Bruce, and count my blessings.”

There was silence as Alfred Pennyworth poked and prodded along his back. “What if someone had seen you? What if someone had captured you? How were you going to explain this to anyone? What would I tell Andrea?”

Bruce winced. Of course Alfred had to involve her in this.

The faithful butler’s fingers pressed at the small of his back, and Bruce’s fingers twitched. Nodding with satisfaction, he stepped away. “You should be able to move most of your body within the next few minutes. I suggest you take it and use it wisely. I’m not telling you that I wouldn’t help you next time you get in a situation like this, because I would; I made a promise to your parents. A promise that I intend to keep. A good and human promise, that actually meant something to them.” His tightening fists suddenly loosened, and he joined his hands behind his back. “Batman cannot stop them. I’ve seen the news. I’ve taped it. I’ve paused it. They literally vanished into thin air. Batman cannot do that. And if they’re the ones who did that to you, then maybe I should be thankful. They gave you a warning – a wakeup call. Instead of the death wish you seem to be begging the criminals of Gotham for years.”

He gave a heavy sigh, watching his ward’s insistently wiggling fingers, and his pulsing veins in his body. “One day, Master Bruce, you will want to take the time to hear my pleas. And it’ll be too late for them to make any difference.”

He turned and walked away from the medical bed, moving towards the elevator. “Twenty-five minutes until dinner is served. That will give you plenty of time to ignore me. But even when he knew he had to save the world, even Jesus celebrated his last meal, sir.”

“Okay,” Pamela muttered, having just swallowed the first bite of the steak in front of her, seated at the table in their kitchen. “I’m aware that I’ve been saying this in the heat of the moment, but that’s how good this is; I think I’m in love with you.”

Harleen giggled, her blonde tresses covering her eyes. “I don’t know what I can say to top that. I’ll just have to settle for: This is really good.”

Harry grinned behind his fork. It really wasn’t the first time a girl had proclaimed her love for him when he cooked. “I’m glad you two love it. Hope it fills you up – we have been neglecting eating food lately.”

“Meh,” Harley waved it away, “At this point, I’m restocking energy. I have no intentions of letting it sit still. You deserve a real nice ‘thank you’.”
“If you want to show gratitude, saying thank you would be easier,” Harry pointed out, his grin full-bloom.

“Arguably,” she licked her lips after taking another bite of her fettuccine. “But a blowjob would be more fun.”

“This is the part where I’d choke on my food,” Ivy muttered, pinching the bridge of her nose. She looked pointedly at Harley. “So what is this? The honeymoon phase? What’s with the constant sex on the brain?”

“Aww,” she cooed, “that’s sweet, Ivy. Pretending that your nips haven’t been as hard as steel since we got back.”

To her credit, she didn’t blush. “They usually always are, dear.”

She looked pointedly at her green-skinned lover. “Pammy, sweetie, I look more than you do. It’s only when you’re horny.”

Harry took another bite of the casserole. Normally, the food would be much more interesting to him in awkward moments like this, but he decided to take on a more proactive role. “So which one is it, Ivy?”

She looked curiously over to him. “Which one what?”

“Which one of us kept you wet? Harley or me?”

Ivy gasped at his frankness, while Harley’s eyebrows arched delicately. “I... I don’t...”

“When you were rubbing my abs earlier, and licking your lips, were you thinking of how you couldn’t wait to tuck into bed? Or were you thinking that I might take you both in the kitchen, Harley riding me and you grinding along my stomach while you sucked on a man’s tongue for the third time today, like an addiction you didn’t know you couldn’t quit?”

Harry smirked as Ivy’s hand trembled. “Or maybe it’s just me,” he whispered, turning back to his food.

Harley rubbed her thighs together under the table as she made eye contact with her girlfriend. She looked so vulnerable – so weak.

Just like she herself did the first time she met Harry. And the first time she met Pamela, now that she thought of it.

Slowly, Harleen placed her fork down next to her half-eaten meal, and wiped at her chin demurely. With her other hand, she took a long sip of the glass of ice water, and she almost laughed when she saw Ivy gulp nervously.

The cloth she had used to dab at the corners of her now unpainted pink, pouty lips, slipped from her nimble fingers and fell to the floor. “Oops,” She grinned.

Pamela’s eyes widened. Surely, she wasn’t thinking...

She gasped in surprise as she felt a shock run through her. Rough hands grazed her bare thigh with a feather touch, skimming and skipping across her smooth skin. She immediately glanced over to Harry, who was calmly chewing a bite of his cube steak, one hand wrapped around the handle of his fork, the other under the table.
Doing *sinfully* good things to her. She bit her lip to hold back a moan, and closed her eyes for just a moment, feeling his fingers get dangerously close to her covered womanhood. She sighed raggedly, spreading her legs just a little bit, willing to let herself go completely.

“Oh!”

“Where did that stupid cloth go?” Harleen muttered, her breath against her thighs, her bare hands gripping her ankles. Teeth nipped against her skin, and Ivy whimpered each and every time.

Harry’s nimble fingers stroked down the middle of her gusset, gathering her wetness into her outift, *soaking* the material sufficiently. His fingers suddenly hooked into the side of her crotch, and pulled it away, revealing her precious green petals to her Harley’s hungry eyes.

Pamela moaned long and hard as Harley’s tongue dragged up her slit, her tongue bathing in the redhead’s flavor-filled fluids as she wrapped her arms around the older girl’s legs. Her pink lips formed a light suction on Ivy’s nether lips, wiggling her talented, well-trained tongue in and about her moist cavern.

Her eyes still closed, she suddenly felt lips against her own. She quickly responded, reaching up to run her long fingers across the clean face as she leaned back in the chair. Her lips parted delicately, and he took advantage, his wide tongue polluting her mouth with the taste of broccoli in a deliciously good way, his hands suddenly grasping her left breast, covered by her strapless leotard.

She shivered into his mouth as her outfit suddenly disappeared, and she was naked, her breasts and undeniably pointed nipples exposed to the room, her juicy twat being thoroughly excavated by Harley’s skilful tongue. She stretched her lithe body and wrapped her thighs around her girlfriend’s neck, placing the bare soles of her feet against her blond lover’s naked lower back as she climaxed in both of her lovers’ embraces.

She barely recognized that Harley had removed her shirt when Harry pinched lightly at her nipples, before rolling them languidly between his fingers. She shuddered wonderfully, squirming around Harley’s tongue, and she cried out at the pleasure assaulting her, her orgasm prolonging.

Her fingers slid down his clothed chest, sliding down the abs that she had admired earlier, and periodically throughout, her fingernails lightly grazing against the cloth just hard enough for him to feel it.

Poison Ivy – known to the world as the insufferable coquette, the look-but-never-touch beauty, seducer and destroyer, quickly and blindly unbuckled Harry’s pants and wrapped her hands around his massive shaft before it could even flop out of his pants. She didn’t even question his lack of underwear as she stroked his cock.

Harry broke the kiss to moan and stood fully, and she finally opened her eyes and allowed herself to get a closer look at his tool. It was even more intimidating than she remembered it, as his large ball sac could have weighed it down all on its own, his head looking bigger than her mouth could fit around.

But she knew from experience that it very well could. And it damn well *would*.

Her tongue peeked out to lick the slit of the head, and her mouth watered at the taste. Her tongue quickly swirled around his head, trying to ignore the overwhelming tongue-lashing she was getting courtesy of her over-pleasing girlfriend, and instead focused on the massive beauty of her boyfriend.

Her boyfriend.
She could get used to that. And rather quickly, too.

Perhaps, later, she would reflect on her life, and her utter hatred for men. She would take a long, hard look at herself in the mirror, at her sticky body, covered in the fluids of her two lovers, knowing that the night would likely end that way, and she would consider her stance against all men under one umbrella, and maybe, one day, admit to herself that there were exceptions to the rule.

Right now, though, for the second time today, and for the second time in her life, all she knew was that she needed some cock in her, and she needed it now.

She wrapped her lips around the head of his dick and spit, moistening his tool further. She released his cock from her mouth and tilted it upwards, taking only a second to watch in fascination as her spit slowly dribbled down his cock, beginning the impossibly long journey to the summit, before licking and kissing the side of his meat, trying to cover his tool with her spit.

Her lips stretched obscenely around his mast, her small, long tongue swirling around his cock like a candy cane stripe, much like the vines at her command, and he shuddered violently at the foreign sensation. If she had the space to smile around his dick, she would’ve, but instead, she settled for pushing further onto his large shaft.

Without warning, Harry’s fingers gripped tightly into her hair, and pulled her forward, skewering her onto his stake. His head pushed past her tonsils, and her throat gurgled around his tip, painfully burning, while Harry only felt a gentle massage. Her eyes began to tear at the strange sensation, as she could hardly even breathe through her nose. She closed her eyes, and concentrating, slid forward even further, and she had to lower herself as Harry’s dick travelled vertically down her throat.

Harley’s mouth slowly retreated from her quivering clam and she scooted out from under the table. “Shit,” she gasped, her eyes wide with arousal as she saw her girlfriend swallow and gargle on her newest lover’s cock, her throat visibly expanding as he forced himself – or was she doing the forcing? – down her gullet. She could actually see her throat muscles convulse and pulse around his luxurious fuckstick, squeezing and rolling against his dick with a passion.

The blond teen quickly removed her shorts and sauntered over to Harry’s side, reveling at his expression as he tilted his head back, and rubbed her fingers along the base of his shaft, and she was amazed at the length that was, as of yet, unexplored.

No wonder it could never fit in her. The beast was halfway to Ivy’s stomach and he still had more to spare!

The first night she and Harry had made love, she had considered it a challenge to fit as much as she could in her without, if she could avoid it, killing herself. A part of her was sure that Harry was thinking the same thing. And now, as she watched Ivy’s moist eyes closed, breathing heavily through her nose, practically purring in pleasure, and Harry, his head tossed back, his body tense, lost in the pleasure surrounding him, she smiled at the thought that they didn’t care; they were having too much fun to notice.

With that in mind, and feeling a little bit better about herself, Harley kneeled to the floor, next to her longtime lover, and gently gripped Harry’s testicles in her hand.

Harry shuddered mightily, and looked down to see the two gorgeous girls worshipping his cockmeat, Ivy’s lips earning the reputation she had been falsely given for years, Harley’s small hands smoothly caressing his heavy hairless sac.

Harley looked up with bright blue eyes at him, and winked, before sticking out her well-used tongue
and licking at the wrinkles of his scrotum.

Harry, at this point, was relatively sure he would die – of either pleasure overload, or the old legend that you usually see what the heart wants most in the world, in a mirage, before leaving, feeling some false sense of accomplishment.

This felt far too real, but he was rather willing to admit that this was supernatural enough that he couldn’t really explain what was happening in words. Not that he could speak, really. He was sure it would come out in some grunt, or a girly sigh, or something.

He slowly untangled his fingers from Ivy’s hair, careful not to let his ring get caught in her auburn tresses, and awkwardly kept his hands at his sides. Most of his girlfriends were okay with him taking charge... like that... and he was sure that they were turned on to the idea as well, but he didn’t want to assert that type of dominance too soon, and much too fast.

Instead, he settled for slowly putting his hands on his girls’ heads, running his hands through red and golden locks as they sucked and nipped, respectfully, at his tool.

Ivy preened at the touch, slowly leaving her uncomfortable seated position in the chair and sitting on her haunches, his dick sliding slowly out of her throat as she adjusted, and she slipped her mouth off of his steel cock. She cleared her throat – she had gotten far more comfortable with his dick down her throat than she should probably be comfortable with, but seeing as she had no gag reflex, it probably wasn’t a surprise – and lifted her hands to stroke at his thickness once more.

She found herself a bit proud that her hands could barely fit around his penis, but her mouth could handle it well.

Her eyes moved over to her lovely girlfriend, whose mouth was currently bathing Harry’s testicles with love and tenderness. She showed as much dedication whenever she focused on her, as she had proved mere minutes ago. Jealousy was far from her mind at this point. Perhaps mutual respect? He had managed to capture the heart of Harleen Quinzel and Pamela Isley, and he truly deserved the world for that fantastic feat.

She giggled, and kissed the tip of his gorgeous cock. Then, taking Harley’s attention, she kissed the girl’s cheek. Her girlfriend popped her mouth off of Harry’s sac for a moment, staring lustfully at her first lover.

The two began to kiss slowly, their lips gently smacking against each other’s. Their bare breasts glided together freely as their hands roamed each other’s sides.

Harry quickly stood back to watch the two vixens in front of him, stroking himself as he did so. He leaned against the counter, as he witnessed a sight that very few people wouldn’t kill to see.

Ivy’s fingers travelled down her blond lover’s stomach, and swiftly slammed two fingers into her. Harley broke the kiss to squeak in surprise, and Ivy took the opportunity to nip at her young lover’s throat, kissing and sucking at her soft, supple skin.

Harley whimpered as she was assaulted by Pamela’s fingers, a sensitive spot on her neck being assaulted by her loving, curious pink muscle. Normally, this was the point where her vines would come out of nowhere, when she was distracted, and hold her down, because she tended to thrash around during their bouts of lovemaking. Her hands were free, so she decided to show her appreciation by sliding her fingers down her sweat-slicked stomach to Ivy’s moist snatch and rubbing aggressively at her throbbing clitoris.
“Ah!” she moaned loudly, her private area sensitive. She whipped her hair back and continued to suck on her neck, lowering her body, leaving a trail of saliva down the young girl’s neck. She grinned against the top of her cleavage, feeling her lover writhe and wiggle against her, her back arching towards her hungry lips.

“Fuck,” Harley yelled aloud, her peach nub tingling as her lover wrapped her soft lips around it, and she felt Ivy curl her fingers inside her snatch, wriggling them pleasurably – and a little painfully. “No, Red,” she gasped, then moaned, as she felt her knees weaken to the pleasure. “I’m – still sensitive.”

The gorgeous green teen lifted her lips from the nub of her fleshy mammarys. “You wanted to take on two lovers,” Ivy hissed, her index finger rubbing the bump inside her girl, and Harley squeaked loudly at the overwhelming sensation. “Don’t make me feel left out, Harley,” she simpered, and attached herself to her teat once more, thrusting into Harley without pause, curling her fingers at every other upstroke.

Harley moaned incoherently in response, her body rocking with her girlfriend’s, grunting occasionally as the pleasure and pain melded together into an entirely new feeling of unimaginable euphoria.

She hadn’t felt like this since... last night, actually.

“Still as tight as I remember you,” Ivy whispered into her ear. “Even after he stretched you out – I thought he wrecked you like a cheap car.”

“He did,” She whispered guiltily, her breath in gasps as she reminded her of that very moment that crossed her mind, and the morning after. Her pussy squeezed and swallowed at her girlfriend’s long slim fingers, and she dimly felt her knuckles slap against her aching bundle of nerves resting against the top of her slit.

“He’ll have to try harder,” she muttered, loving the feel of the blonde’s tight cunt spasming around her digits. “My sweet, pristine Harleen...

“Maybe it’s because you have an audience,” she speculated quietly, still loud enough for said audience to overhear. “You’re putting on quite a show for him. Just like you two put on a show for me.”

Harley’s head lolled to the side, and she witnessed Harry slam his long shaft with his own hands, wonderful schlicking sounds meeting her ears as he pumped his hard organ, covered with her lover’s spit. “Baby,” the teen whimpered, her legs shaking as she bounced on her girlfriend’s digits, her pale green lover’s snatch forgotten. “Don’t be mad...” She gasped loudly, and quivered in orgasm unexpectedly. “Fuck!”

Ivy quickly added a third finger, and she found it truly surprising how difficult it was to slide her digits back in. “Bouncing on me like it’s his dick,” she murmured softly, watching as her eyes hazed with pleasure. “You’ve never been more turned on in your life.” She grinned sinisterly. “And neither have I.”

Harley squeaked again as Ivy began to thrust even harder, her hair flipping every which way as she kept cumming, her fluids leaking onto her lover’s soaked and practically confined fingers. Her mouth opened in a soundless scream as her abs tightened painfully, her legs shaking uncontrollably.

Ivy’s strength kept her body up, her free arm wrapped around her bare waist as Harley wheezed powerfully, struggling to get her breath back. Ivy took a moment to watch her baby recover, her eyes half-open, her sweat-soaked hair matted to her forehead, her painfully erect nipples,
one of them shining with her spit, resting atop her heaving breasts, her irregularly expanding stomach, heaving with every deep breath, and her blushing, pulsing snatch, doing everything it could to keep her fingers locked away inside, almost visibly pleading with her to stay.

“Love ya,” Harleen whispered, her eyes shining with moisture.

Pamela Isley chuckled at her girlfriend’s out-of-zone look, kissing the bridge of her nose. “I love you too, Harls.”

She squirmed as Ivy slowly pulled out of her, and sighed as her girlcum gushed down her lover’s arm, her clear fluids spilling to the floor. “That was... different.”

Harry released his fist from his slicked hardness, groaning tiredly. “Tell me about it.”

“Never seen two girls go at it?” Ivy questioned with a smirk.

Harry shook his head. “There’s a difference between seeing two girls and seeing you two,” he muttered, staring pointedly at their lovely, curvaceous forms. “Harley just makes the cutest noises when she squeals, and no offense Ivy, but you have an... exotic vibe about you.”

Pamela laughed heartily. “None taken; I get that often.”

Harley weakly raised her hand. “I say it often. Green’s my favorite color for a reason.” She eyed her girlfriend uneasily. “Are we... okay?”

Ivy shrugged. “If you’re going to ask for two lovers, you’re going to have to take the brunt; so to speak. Don’t worry,” she smiled, “I have salves.”

Harley shivered delightfully, and winced. “Don’t tease me like that, Red. I might have to walk on my hands for the next few days.”

“I’d kiss it all better, but I don’t think that’ll help much.”

She winced again, and she lowered her hand to cup her sensitive womanhood. “Red!”

“I do remember us mentioning something last night,” Harry muttered slowly, his eyes roving over her irresistible cuteness. “And I promised you later.”

Her eyes widened, and she instinctively went to cover her rear. “Nuh-uh! No! Hell no!”

Ivy laughed at her reaction. “What did I miss? I was a bit pre-occupied at the time.”

“He scared the bejesus out of me, and I called him an ass.” She narrowed her eyes at him. “He has an active imagination.”

Pamela flushed. “At least he didn’t put a finger there.” She smirked at him. “So you’re an ass-man, Harry?”

His steely dick pulsed imperceptibly. “Honestly? I’m just greedy.”

Her lips pouted. “Greedy? Looking for a hat-trick on our dear Harley, Warlock?”

“No way, José!” Harleen shook her head wildly. “Not while these chairs are still cushion-less!”

“It wasn’t a command or anything,” Harry grinned, guessing that she probably would have allowed him if he commanded it. “Just a suggestion. Magic makes it more enjoyable. I had assumed you were
Harley eepeed and crossed her thighs, still in Ivy’s embrace. The green-eyed woman nuzzled her chin into her girlfriend’s neck. “I don’t have good control when I’m in the throes of passion,” Ivy explained. “They’re good at tying her down, but... I couldn’t live with myself if I did something wrong.”

“Not to mention the thorns,” the blonde muttered, hiding her face in Ivy’s luscious red hair. “I have no intentions of being a jester shish kebob.”

“You practically were this morning,” Ivy reminded her, recalling the last time they had sex.

Well, when Harry and Harley had sex.

She gently leaned Harley against the leg of her chair and turned her attention to the man in front of her, licking her lips at his still erected staff. “I suppose there’s no running from it now, is there?” She wondered, a twinkle in her eye.

Harry looked down, then back at the green-skinned beauty mere feet away from his towering erection.

He stepped away from the counter, and before she could even think of protesting, leaned down to his knee and grabbed her by her waist. She squeaked loudly, louder than any of Harley’s squeals, as she was hoisted into the air, her heart pounding as he pressed his lips to hers.

She moaned as he rubbed at her soaking petals once more, feeling her wetness drip down his fingers quickly. She hesitantly reached down and grabbed the shaft below her, stroking however much she could reach, which was still a rather substantial amount.

Pamela leaned back, a small string of saliva connecting their lips, and looked up to Harry. Green eyes peered into green eyes, and for the first time, it clicked.

She could trust him. She could love him. And someday, very soon, she could very well absolutely need him.

She used her sweat-slicked body to wiggle down onto the tip of his cock, her hand pumping and directing his tool towards her dripping canal, and she groaned at the sensation of his heat between her thighs.

Harry grunted at the teaser of what was to come, as she languidly slid her tiny crevice against his massive rod, purring quietly with each little swipe. He connected his lips to hers as he pushed inside her, two inches sinking into her writhing body immediately.

She gurgled sexily – he didn’t know how she did it, but she most definitely did – and wrapped her legs around his waist and her arms around his neck, locking her fingers and rubbing at his nape. “Yes,” she hissed, gyrating on his cock salaciously.

Harry lowered his hands from her waist to her curvaceous bottom, sliding over the soft, firm cheeks of her fleshy orbs. He gripped the bottom of her ass tightly, pulling apart her cheeks, and prepared to fill her to the brim.

She whimpered, needy, and closed her eyes as Harry penetrated deep into her, slipping along her tight, glorious walls and stretched out her slick cavern.

Both groaned, their breaths heaving, and it was Ivy who began to move up, hooking her arms around
the back of Harry’s shoulders, before dropping her light body back down.

Harleen cooed at the wondrous sight before her. She loved it when her friends got along. Standing up with shaky legs, she collapsed on the chair behind her, taking Ivy’s seat. She grunted in surprise and looked down.

A padded chair; a wonderfully padded chair.

She chuckled as she slid her fingers gently across her sore spot, slowly bending her leg up to rest her chin on her knee, the heel of her foot on the seat.

If anyone could pull a hat-trick, it was the Warlock. And, by the lovely, mystified expression on her Pammy’s face, she idly wondered who would buckle first.

She tingled unexpectedly when her pointer finger brushed against her clitoris, and she spasmed. Apparently, that wasn’t sore.

With this in mind, the blonde sat back in her new cushioned chair and happily frigged her nub at the alluring sight of her lovely, curvaceous girlfriend being speared into by her handsome, well-hung boyfriend.

Over in the sitting room, Luna turned off their mirror, completely forgetting her question, and her congratulations to Harry for not getting himself killed for a full twenty-four hours. She shrugged helplessly, her naked breasts bouncing perkily, and retreated back into the thighs of her lovely mistress.

~Several Years Earlier, in a world a skip or two away~

The dark brown-haired boy stepped off the boat and held his hand out.

“Such a gentleman,” she remarked, giggling as she jumped off the boat, their hands linked.

Harry shrugged. “Not really. I got you those shoes; I don’t want anything happening to them.”

“Prat.”

He smiled. “No, I’m just cheap.”

“You didn’t even pay for these!”

“I’m really cheap.”

She laughed again. He had always liked that laugh. “Sure. You did it because you’re cheap.”

“I can’t think of any other reason,” Harry said slyly.

“Oh, get a room you two,” Daphne muttered, climbing awkwardly out of the boat. Harry quickly went to her assistance, and she gratefully smiled. She watched as Harry held out his hand for Susan and Cho as well.

“Any chance you could get me a pair of shoes, too?” Susan smiled sweetly, fluttering her eyelids.

Cho tilted her head over to the brunette. “I don’t think she would like that.”

Hermione rolled her eyes. The three had been teasing them the entire train ride, ever since they
walked in on her sitting on Harry’s lap, reading a book. It was something they had done for a while, at this point, and it was completely innocent, but they all found it quite funny. “Let’s go. Harry, I think the sorting will start soon. You won’t get another chance alone.”

Harry glanced around at the children who were otherwise distracted by the magnificent sight that was Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry for the first time in their lives. He saw Hagrid, who was corralling the boats onto the shore. “I suppose it’s as good as a time as any.” He shook his head wildly, the long locks of chestnut hair spinning loosely.

“What are you – oh!” Susan squeaked, now getting a good look at his hair. The brown hair was now black, the glow of the lanterns floating around them all making it easy to see the slightly changed colouring.


“I’m trying to keep a low profile – it’s something Padfoot taught me a few weeks ago. I can hide my scar easy, but people would still notice.”

“You... scar?” Cho said slowly, enraptured by the boy’s bright green eyes that she was just positive wasn’t there before.

Susan gasped. “Harry? Harry... Potter?”

The Boy-Who-Lived held his finger to his lips and winked.

“You’re supposed to be missing, or dead,” Daphne whispered, shocked that she was standing near him, let alone talking to him for the past few hours on the train.

“I am,” he explained cheekily. “I’ve been allowed by the ‘beings that are’ to visit Hogwarts for one day, to see how my life could have been, with the best company I could find.”

Hermione swatted his shoulder. “They’ve already seen a ghost. You don’t need to spook them.”

“So when you joked about breaking your Godfather out of jail...” Susan whispered, her skin white.

Harry shook his head. “It was a joke. He was also completely innocent. If I didn’t know for a fact, I wouldn’t have broken him out.”

“You really did break Sirius Black out?” Cho urgently asked him, her voice pitching, her volume low. “But you just said you were joking!”

“Oh, no. I wasn’t joking. I was referring to the security system of Azkaban.”

Susan looked ready to faint, and Cho looked primed to drop soon after. Daphne, however, had a wide grin on her face. “You are not what I expected you to be.”

“Last I checked, you expected me to be dead.” He raised his hand. “Harry Potter.”

She immediately shook it. “Daphne Greengrass. Pleased to meet the Boy-Who-Lived-Then-Died.”

He frowned. “My friends just call me ‘Harry’.”

“I didn’t know I was your friend,” she feigned shock, fanning herself with her other hand.

“I’m calling you my friend, not my concubine,” he said cheekily, and chuckled when her cheeks flushed.
The redhead of the group took a deep breath. “I’m Susan Bones. Nice to meet you – again.” Harry gently released Daphne’s hand in favor of shaking Susan’s outstretched palm.

“If I may ask,” Cho asked hesitantly, “Why isn’t he exonerated if he didn’t commit a crime? Why tell us that he didn’t do anything if you didn’t tell anyone else?”

Harry shrugged. “More fun this way to have it revealed when we get the real guy. Sirius is a bit of a prankster.”

“We?” Cho muttered weakly.

“Harry and I,” Hermione chimed in, “will be catching him. We’ve already seen him on the train. He’s absolutely powerless and helpless right now. Especially seeing as he doesn’t have a wand.”

“Sounds interesting,” Daphne admitted. “I hope to see you still alive when it’s all said and done.”

“If there’s a guarantee I’ll live, it wouldn’t be as fun.”

Hermione swatted at his arm once again, and he dodged it. “Prat!”

“This...” Susan started, as she saw the brunette chase her friend all the way to the castle, “…is going to be an interesting year.”

“Certainly more interesting than last year,” Cho breathed, “and I don’t know if that’s good or bad.”

“If you knew, it wouldn’t be as fun,” Daphne mimicked, her grin refusing to go anywhere. “I hope he lets me tell Tracey about this!”

“I think he will,” Susan speculated. “And the twins. We were all in the same compartment.”

There was a small pause as they began the trek towards the school, leaving Hagrid and the gang of first years behind. They had a relative guess as to where they were headed.

“Is anyone else going to point out that he knows what a concubine is?” Daphne wondered innocently, drawing looks of recognition.

“Black is an ancient and noble house,” Susan shrugged, “so I’m sure Harry’s read some books. What intrigues me is the fact that he specifically asked you to be a concubine.”

Daphne tilted her head towards the pair of obvious misfits, who were now struggling to out-tickle each other. “I think the role of anything higher is rather taken at this point.”

Cho looked scandalized at the thought. “They’re first years!”

“First years that broke a wanted man out of the maximum security ward of a prison that has never been broken out of. Your point?”

Susan giggled at Cho’s fish imitation. “In her defense, I don’t think they know that they like each other yet.”

Cho looked over to Harry’s high-pitched laughter as he was tickled mercilessly by Hermione. He hugged her close to him to lock her arms, and they fell to the ground, laughing. “It’s funny,” The pretty Asian girl noted. “They’re in front of the most amazing castle I’ve ever seen, and they didn’t take a second glance at it.”

Susan stopped. “I didn’t even take a second glance at it.” She looked at the school, the glowing
magnificence, well aware of the history this building represented. And she looked back at the couple; Hermione had her hands locked behind her back as Harry grinned at them, his chin resting on her shoulder.

“Caught her,” Harry said happily, completely ignoring his captive’s squeals of laughter. Hermione made no real attempt to escape his clutches, instead moving to whip her hair around, continuously slapping his face with her wild bushy brown hair. Harry winced every time, but he held firm, his grin wide.

“I’ve said it before – get a room,” Daphne chuckled, watching their flushed cheeks burn with exertion. “For someone trying to be low-key, don’t you think you’d try to be... low-key?”

Hermione slung her hair over to her other side once more, then craned her neck to Harry. “I blame you.”

Harry grinned and blew a small breath onto her neck, and she gasped and shivered. “It’s not too late. We’ve got an impression to make.”

Unthinkingly, Hermione craned her neck and kissed his cheek. “Let’s go, then.”

Chapter End Notes

Two separate story lines are going on here. I’m absolutely, positively sure that it might lead to something, maybe. Only choosing key snippets of Harry and Hermione’s lives. Ideas for Ivy and Harley’s plans for world domination are appreciated, as I am not a bio-terrorist, so I gave Ivy more to fight for.

Referring to the incredible speed (for me, anyway) I’m churning these chapters out – if it, in any way, gets too repetitive, or if there are too many errors grammar-wise, or continuity-wise (though I’m usually pretty good at that), or I screw something up, then please alert me. I keep most of my other stories under such a tight leash because I’m too busy running quality control, or seeing what the characters would do.

This is a free-reign story. I plan on going years through their lives, if at all possible. There is no end-game, and I don’t want there to be one until this gets stale.

Due to the overwhelming positivity I’ve gotten in the last chapter – and I really wasn’t expecting that, thank you all so very much – I’ll ride this through, with literally no end in sight.

Compliments, concerns, and complaints are extremely welcome. If you like the story, and don’t comment, then I will never know, and a piece of me dies. Are the chapters getting too long? What is your ideal chapter-length? Because, in all seriousness, this could have been cut in half.

I’ll try to reply to the comments I get.
“You know what? I think I’ll keep it.”

Harry glared at Malfoy, who tossed the glass ball in the air with little caution. “Can’t afford one on your own, then? Have to take hand-me-downs from someone you like to call a Squib?”

The blonde sputtered. “Shut it, Potter! You want it back? Come take it.” Without a word, he sped off into the sky.

After glancing towards Hermione and Parvati, who looked deep in conversation about how useless a remembrall was if it couldn’t even remind you of what you forgot, he turned back to a grinning, floating, ponce. “You know what? I think I’m good down here.”


“It’s not my remembrall; Neville seems like an okay guy, but I wouldn’t literally fly through hoops for him.”

The boy scoffed. “This is what your Golden boy is, everyone! Scared of ruddy heights!”

“That’s not a bad name,” Harry muttered to himself, before he yelled back up, “At least you’ve accomplished one of your lifelong goals; High and mighty over everyone else!”

Draco looked indignant as the small crowd of children laughed at him, including a few Slytherins. “I’ll show you, Potter,” he whispered, before he tightened his legs around his broom, and pushed himself forward.

Towards the ground. Towards Harry.

The ebony-haired child looked at the boy speeding towards him incredulously. What would he mean to accomplish if he crashed into him? It would probably hurt him more. Was he planning on only getting a fright out of him, pulling up at the last minute? He hoped he realized he was going far too fast to stop at that pace.
On second thought – no. He hoped Draco didn’t realize that at all.

The children immediately around him scattered, but he stood his ground. This was Harry’s true first impression. And he liked leaving a mark.

He slid his wand out of his back pocket, marveling at how easy it’s been since using the frail object, before pointing it skywards. “Protego!” he chanted, casting a simple shield charm.

At Draco.

The boy’s eyes could only widen in surprise as the small wave of energy shot towards him, and hit him in the shoulder.

He was unconscious before he fell off the broom, his body twisting and turning as he tumbled thirty feet to the earth.

He had barely fallen ten feet when Harry swooped under him, catching him with both arms as he balanced himself on his broom.

The kid was uncomfortably light, but Harry figured that – the frail boy’s best friends were practically body guards, and for good reason.

Though, he wasn’t sure how well they were faring if they were getting paid, because they were currently staring up at him dumbly, simply watching as Harry returned their keeper to them and dropped the boy three feet into their quick-thinking arms.

He floated back to Hermione, who had ran forward to greet him, shaking her head incredulously. “I thought you were going to keep your powers a secret?” She asked him, exasperated.

“I just shot a shield charm – incantation out loud and everything. It’s got to be second year at the most, isn’t it?” Harry guessed, figuring that spell wasn’t all too complex to learn for anyone, really.

He really needed to start reading the titles of books instead of rushing right through the material.

“Fourth year,” Hermione corrected him, “and as far as I’ve read, nothing suggests that it can be used as anything other than a shield that wraps around you. You can’t throw it.”

“But… I just did,” Harry pointed out.

The brunette huffed, but he could see the corners of her lips turned upwards. “So you did. Imagine everyone’s surprise when they find out they can’t.”

Harry shrugged as he hopped off the Cleansweep broom. “I’m sure if they put their mind to it – ”

“MISTER POTTER!”

Harry winced at the sound. “Haven’t heard her like that since the Sorting.”

Hermione remembered as well as he did, and she was sure she’d never forget the look on everyone’s faces when they saw the once feared dead Boy-Who-Lived. “Hopefully, she won’t force you to explain what happened this time in front of everyone.”

Harry sighed. He had decided, after he was practically forced to tell a far more dramatic tale of his upbringing to the enraptured public, that he wasn’t going to be pushed to explain anything about his life after the Dursleys. Especially with Dumbledore watching. Just looking at the elderly man gave him a headache.
“I’ll be back after class,” he muttered, turning away to follow the irate Scotswoman, and she nodded, expecting nothing less.

McGonagall’s eye twitched. Not once did she consider that he might say no to her deal. “Pardon?”

Harry set his eyes upon both Oliver Wood and his professor with firmness. “I didn’t agree to join the Quidditch team. We never even talked about it. I’ve barely been here a week! I can’t add practices and games to my schedule.” Not to mention how Hermione might respond if he had more time taken away from her. And, with her birthday coming up soon, he didn’t want anything interrupting what he had planned.

Still, looking into their eyes, he could tell that they weren’t intentionally forcing him into the sport, and were genuinely hurt by the thought that he wouldn’t even consider it. “I don’t want to go to practice. I just don’t have the time nor patience. And I don’t even own a broom.”

“You can own as many brooms as you want, Mister Potter,” the professor informed him after regaining her composure. “Your father was the chief investor in Nimbus.”

Harry’s eyebrows rose. He certainly wasn’t told that when he had gone to Gringotts. He made a mental note to see what else he hadn’t been told. “Still, I won’t have the time. I’ve heard horror stories about your training schedule, Wood. I want no part of it.”

The fifth year student, to his credit, didn’t flinch. “You’d be the only first-year to be on the Quidditch team in at least a century, Potter. You sure you wouldn’t at least try to go for the reserve? If you’re anything like your father, I’d try anything at this point.”

Harry winced at the abstract memory, of his father sneaking him onto a broom and flying him all across London for a day.

He didn’t know how his mother found out, but she did. It was not pretty.

“What would I have to do in Reserve?” He wondered, half-feigning interest.

“Show up for one of the practices once every two weeks, and only the minimum time. According to Professor McGonagall, you seem to be the best as a Chaser, but I’d like to test you on that myself. I just want you to come to the rehearsal trials.”

Harry weighed his options. “I’ll have to think about it,” he finally decided. “I’ve seen the bulletin. I’ll tell you by next Saturday if I show up or not.”

Wood seemed to breathe a sigh of relief – it was as good as he was going to get at the moment. “Alright. I’ll be in the fifth year dorm if you need anything. Thank you, Professor.” He nodded once, and after being dismissed, walked back into class.

The Deputy Headmistress looked like she very much wanted to say something, but the emerald-eyed boy looked firm in his decision. A part of her would be pleased to note that she may have inadvertently stolen a Ravenclaw student from Flitwick – willing to think ahead and focus on studies rather than sports. “Thank you for indulging me, Mister Potter. You may return to class.”

“Can I go back in a moment, Professor? My classmates are expecting me to be expelled, or worse, by you right now. I want to make them squirm a bit. Draco all but cancelled class for today.”

McGonagall caught herself from smiling. She’d be even more pleased to taunt Severus with the thought that the boy in front of her could have been a Slytherin. “Very well, Mister Potter. Shall I
interest you in a biscuit? Lunch is next, anyway.”

Harry gratefully accepted, and the two walked to her office, McGonagall subtly explaining the rules of Quidditch, and the heart-breaking tale of how the Quidditch Cup hadn’t been in her house’s hands in a decade.

That streak would end that very year.

Pamela Isley stretched lazily in her bed, her beautiful lithe form on display for anyone present.

She opened her eyes, and glanced around in confusion. She was the only one in bed. Looking at the ceiling window, designed for her whenever she felt weak, she decided that she hadn’t been sleeping for too long.

A part of her took note that a mere twelve hours ago, she would have easily assumed the worst, and thought that Harley ran away with Harry. It would have been a ridiculous thought, even then, but the thought would have crossed her mind, and she would have had a small panic, easily.

But, now, all she could do was laugh at the absurd idea, and fall back to sleep, wiggling her bare thighs minimally. She was beginning to realize how her girlfriend felt; in the moment of passion, their lovemaking felt unbelievably good – it had to, in order for her to orgasm four times – but she was still feeling a bit sensitive. Even her quick regeneration was taking more time than it should.

She’d have to go to the lab today. But first, she needed her beauty rest. They wouldn’t mind.

Her last thought was the idea of Harley snickering, wondering which shade of green she considered healthy enough to finally wake up, and she smiled in her sleep.

“Hocus Pocus!” She whispered in the darkness. “Kazaam!”

Harry leaned against the wall as he spied Harley waving around his Holly wand in a battle stance, brandishing it like a sword. He was tempted to silently shoot a spell at whatever she was pointing at, but he wasn’t sure she would like being indulged like that to such a degree.

“Bibbidi Bobbidi Boo!” On second thought; maybe it would be therapeutic for her.

He kicked off the wall and stepped forward. “Disappointed at what my little stick can do, Harleen?”

She jumped, and pointed the wand at him, before quickly jamming her hands behind her back. “Oh… hey.” She chuckled nervously. “Morning.”

“Good morning,” he smiled. “Having fun?”

She pouted. “Just making sure your toy worked. Is that okay?”

Harry shrugged his shoulders. “At this point, it really is a toy. I’ve been using it because I’ve had to. It’s a great focus for my magic, but I’d rather have it go straight through my hands.”

She pulled the wand from behind her and inspected it closely. “So there’s no, like, abstract magic in it?”

He shook his head. “Afraid not. It’s got the feather of a phoenix inside it, but that won’t react unless someone magic actually holds it. Sometimes, it still won’t happen, because it’s made specifically for me.”
She hmm’ed to herself, somewhat fascinated to learn that the feather of the legendary firebird was in her hands, before pointing it towards a blank wall. “Alakazam! Abracadabra!”

The boy-who-lived winced. “You’re not far off with that one from a real spell. It’s pretty dangerous, though.” He decided not to tell her the right way to say that spell, for her sake and everyone else’s.

Actually, he didn’t know if the taboo was still in effect against unforgiveable curses. Voldemort had perfected silent casting because, back in his first reign, the Unforgiveables were a taboo; one of the many attempts of capturing him that had ultimately failed.

Considering in this time, he was at his peak, he wouldn’t be surprised if his own Taboo was now in place. It likely didn’t reach outside of Europe, so he and the girls were safe.

Assuming, of course, that he was in Europe. Or anywhere.

Did this place even have a Europe?

“Harleen?” He queried, interrupting her chant.

“Open Sesa – Hmm?”

“This may sound like a ridiculous question, but is there a Europe here?”

She nodded, dropping the wand to her side. “Yep. You speak Britain, aren’t you?”

Harry nodded, relieved. There didn’t seem to be too much of a difference between his world and theirs. Except for the twenty-one year thing, but that was a pretty minor detail, now.

“Yu Mo Gui Gwai Fai Di Zao! As-Salaam-Alaikum! Mecca Lecca Hi, Mecca Hiny Ho!”

“What’s that supposed to mean?”

“I have no idea.” She sighed, and dropped her hand at her waist again. “Well, that’s it. I’ve got nothing. Guess I’ll just have to settle for card tricks.” She pocketed the wand and turned back to Harry. “So – after we go back to the place that changed my life forever, what’s next for the day?”

Harry laughed at the casual way she said it, and she smirked cutely in response. “More sightseeing? Dinner and a movie? I’d like to know you two a little more, and I really want to see where I am.”

“It’s surprisingly bland during the day,” Harley explained, “and the only good movie theatre is playing some old black and white movie with some has-been star. We could see a performance? I hear there’s a magic act coming in a few days.”

Harry raised an eyebrow.

“Right – cheap imitations.” Harleen chuckled. “Though, I think Zatanna could stand head-to-head with you. She can do magic, too.”

“Zatanna?” Harry questioned, vaguely remembering his comment about ‘stage names’ when he first arrived.

“Another super-police chick. She’s not in town, but you might’ve lured her out with your magic.” She smirked. “Should be an interesting fight.”

“Do I sense a lack of confidence?” Harry wondered, wrapping an arm around her waist.
She snickered. “More like a lack of focus, when you see her.”

“I take it she uses the ‘Poison Ivy’ approach to gain an advantage?”

“Trust me – it’s a common thing to use distraction in a fight, and the ladies like to use as much as they can. Spandex, leather, and Nylon are a super-girl’s best friend. Dudes, too, now that I think about it. You actually looked out of place – the leather was good, but your pants were nowhere near tight enough.”

Harry’s eyebrows rose at the revealing fact. “What a strange world I’ve been put in. Wouldn’t there be excessive wardrobe malfunctions, especially during fights?”

She shrugged. “I’ve never seen ‘em. And neither has the news or tabloids, and they see a lot of things. There are, of course, rumors, but I wouldn’t trust ‘em. The magazines still place Harley Quinn and Poison Ivy in their early twenties.” She chuckled. “Not that I’m complaining. Everyone else seems to believe it.”

Harry hmm’ed to himself. “Good to know. So if I were to, say, strip a female crime-fighter nude and threaten to put pictures of them on display, you think they would back off?”

Her eyes widened, and her lips parted slightly. “You somehow manage to do that,” she said incredulously, “And they’d join us to stop those pictures from leaking! Though you probably could have just removed their masks! Your idea is much more fun, though! Where did you get that idea?”

“Just thought of it,” he said sheepishly, “being a red-blooded male and all. Though it’s based on a regular campaign Hermione, Luna and I did, and it worked brilliantly.” He didn’t need to point out that it was Luna’s idea; the quirky girl loved to think outside the box. “Death Eaters – what Voldemort’s followers call themselves – are one-track minded, and rather obsessed with their cause of Pure Wizard superiority. Their spouses, however, might be on the same cause, but are kept at home, because they’re mainly trophy wives, and quite frankly, just want to be associated with the winning side and a large bank vault. They are there for relief and for heirs – they have no option to fight, for their own safety, and the Death Eaters don’t trust each other, or their master.”

Harley could guess the next part. “So that leads to some rather lonely nights.” Her eyes twinkled. “To have sex with the other cause’s leader, though?”

Harry shook his head. “I’m not a miracle worker – I use glamour charms, or disguising spells, so they or anyone else don’t know who I am. I pretend to be part of their cause, and bang on their door looking for immediate shelter when I know they have another meeting – and thanks to my scar, I know exactly who is in that meeting. I claim that I’m from a distant part of a pureblood family, and steal traits from that family; Sirius had vetted me well on the twenty-some of the purest bloodlines, and we have a library of notable portraits from nearly every one. The rest… well, they usually instigate it. At the very least, we become very good friends by morning, so there’s no need to blackmail.” Andrea Goyle and Terry Nott helped him on occasion, even – similar to the muggle culture, Pureblood housewives tended to keep in touch and form a network of ‘friends’, while not really trusting or associating with them, but it was best to have a few sets of watchful eyes. “Seduce them, get them to cheat on their husbands, and threaten to show them the pictures I took that night. That’s how it regularly went.”

“I don’t know the urgency of defeating the ‘Death Eaters’ in your world, so I may be out of place in saying this – but doesn’t this method seem a bit, erm, inherently and obscenely cruel?” She leaned against his chest. “Not that there’s anything wrong with that. You just don’t seem like a ‘means to an ends’ type of guy.”
Harry saw her point – he was basically using them for sex and then betraying them – or so it seemed. “Their husbands are rapists and killers – two things you have to do before taking the Dark Mark, Voldemort’s symbol of allegiance – and their wives know it. Arguably, you could say that it’s plenty enough reason for what I did, but I showed them some pity – I don’t actually release the pictures. It makes for a nice little scrapbook, and the occasional calendar for my most loyal friends, but I don’t ever publicly send out those pictures. Considering they don’t know my glamoured face, they’d quite easily assume I was not a wizard, and kill her before she could explain otherwise. Best situation; they could start a blood feud with the family I claimed to come from, or just kill the closest relative they know. I couldn’t live with that. Using them, though, I’m not particularly sorry about.”

He remembered something, and chuckled. “There was only one person who found our collection when she wasn’t supposed to, and she was incidentally a reporter, looking for dirt on me. She tried to blackmail me, but I knew that the biggest backers of her newspaper were those wives’ husbands and me, and she had no interest in releasing it anonymously. At some point, I realized that I was really the only one that could get away with putting up those pictures anyway – I already have Voldemort trying to kill me. One of his followers seeing his wife on her knees, barking happily and getting shagged thoroughly into by some unknown stranger, probably isn’t going to change that much if they ever found out it was me.”

“Hell of an inside job,” she laughed, “but what about Hermione and Luna? Where do they fit in?”

“So to speak,” Harry continued for her. When she looked confused at the comment, he explained. “They did the same thing I did. They use a more stable form of disguise, glamour potions, what we call Polyjuice, and they use it to look like me. We usually choose amongst each other to see who we want, and if there’s a conflict of interest… well, it’s more believable if it’s more than one guy talking about how they were ambushed by Wizard Policemen, and were looking for a place to lay low.”

The blonde’s eyes were wide with disbelief. “Are you telling me that they get…” her eyes flickered to his crotch, “…all of your appearance?”

Harry smirked at her reaction. “Harleen, don’t tell me you’re getting turned on by the thought. Ivy and I aren’t enough for you?”

The blonde smiled and pecked his lips with her own. “I thought Ivy was enough until you came along. You thought Hermione was enough until… well, more came along. But a girl can have fantasies, can’t she?”

“Indeed, she can,” Harry grinned. “I’ll make sure you get copies. That’ll help the fantasies along.”

She almost began to drool at the thought. “This demanding and predatory side of you – Is that always there, laying dormant? Some kind of bi-polar disorder? I don’t care – I like it!”

The teen chuckled, and Harley preened at the rumble of his chest against hers. “I don’t think I’m bi-polar. The voices in my head tell me I’m perfectly normal.” The two shared a laugh. “Though, as it turns out, I’m not the submissive type.”

“I am,” she smirked, “as Ivy’s taught me. But I have never seen Pammy that submissive before. Sometimes, she gives me the reigns, but she’s never – I mean, you practically had her on a leash!”

Harry nodded – he had suspected as much; that Harley and Ivy’s relationship was like that. He had seen first-hand just last night. “Probably because she didn’t give me the reigns; I took it. She put her faith in me the moment she accepted this relationship, and I wanted to see how far she would let me take it. I think she’s more submissive than you, actually.”
She almost moaned at the thought; the idea of her aggressive, compassionate, loving girlfriend wanting to be dominated and broken. “I find that hard to believe.”

“Maybe,” Harry shrugged, “but you saw the evidence yesterday. You saw how turned on she was when I took control. Like, whenever you get playful, and you start it, I bet she happily lets you. This was just a considerably rougher version of it.”

She clenched uncomfortably. “That’ll be a fun thing to bring up.” She wrapped her arms around his neck. “How much time until we go to the theatre?”

“The theatre?” he wondered. “I thought you didn’t want to go there? Besides, we have to check out the portal, first.”

“Oh! I thought you noticed. The portal was right in front of the theatre, in the middle of the street. I just saw a flash, and you were there, rightly in a panic. Scared me so damn much you almost made me drop my loot. Didn’t know I’d get such a priceless gem out of it.” She reached up and kissed him once more. “How much time?” Harley wondered again, squirming against him.

Harry unwrapped his hands from her waist to glance at his watch, and grimaced. “Forgot to change the time.” He put his hands back, and answered her question. “When Pamela wakes up, I guess. I reckon at least one of the girls are working on the veil, or at least have a monitoring charm on it, and Hermione or Luna probably told them about the time difference. We still have plenty of time, and I can still put up a notice-me-not ward around the place if people are out and about.”

Harley chuckled at the unique name. “Notice-me-not…” she muttered, and giggled again.

The green-eyed boy smiled. “You haven’t been reading the Hogwarts book, have you?”

“When have I had the time?” She countered sultrily, slipping her free hand in between them. “I’ve been way too busy lately…”

“You may have a sex problem,” Harry muttered quietly, and didn’t argue any further, nor did he ever intend to.

She shrugged. “You should’ve seen me and Pammy in the first two months in after she kidnapped me. We had to do it in the greenhouse just so she wouldn’t tire out.”

Harry recalled the comment Ivy made about her plant side half-living on sunlight and water. “In the greenhouse? What happened in there that made her ban it from any, er activities?”

The blonde sighed, a little depressed. “We found out later that it wasn’t the best air for the plants to be around. I liked the fresh outdoors feel of it, and Ivy was more energetic with me. In hindsight, I’m kinda glad we left the greenhouse. She was a machine. I don’t think I could have survived another week. Occasionally, she surprises me, and though I’m unconscious for a few hours, I love her more every time.”

“You… really might have a sex problem,” Harry practically forced himself to say again.

“Oh, don’t worry,” she muttered. “I’ll peter out in a few days… couple of weeks, tops… maybe a month…”

“And after that?” he murmured, reaching up and gently cupping her chin.

She wrapped her fingers around his wrist. “Think I’ll get bored of you? The most interesting alien I’ve ever met?” Her eyes went unfocused for a moment. “We’ve never really had much pillow talk,
“Do you feel comfortable with that?” Harry asked her, concern in his eyes. “A relationship built on sex?”

She bit her lip. “That’s how Pammy and I started. We admitted how we felt six days in, and that was it – not much in common, so we couldn’t really tell each other anything. Our old place, for the longest time…” she glanced around the house. “It was quiet – really quiet. There was the occasional moan and groan, awkward conversations of what to do next, and more moaning and groaning. Eventually, we just… stopped talking.” Her eyes went back to him. “A full week. Maybe eight days. I didn’t bother counting. We eventually made up, and today, she’s my lover, only second to my best friend in the world.” Her eyes shined, and she grinned up at him. “You seem to be friends with all your girls. How do you do it?”

While the question was valid, Harry could easily see that it was a distraction. She would tell him the rest when she wanted to, and he would wait with Hermione-like patience; it was how she got all of the answers out of him. “I’d say the ones I mentioned are my friends, actually, before I ever got to know them intimately. For the few that I’m not too close with, well, they’re either friends by proxy with my closest friends, or students I regularly chat with in and out of class, or it’s a full-grown woman who isn’t really looking for a relationship.”

“You’re a whore?” Harley asked aloud, and covered her mouth embarrassingly.

Harry laughed heartily, expressing that he wasn’t mad at the accusation. “I suppose I am, but there’s no transaction or anything. Being a target means you have a few spells going at your back at all times. In the world I live in, women are not property, per se, but the Lord of the house is just that – the king of his household. It’s archaic, and it’s a tradition I plan to upend, but I can’t avoid it while it’s still there. Spoils of war is very much a real thing in the Wizarding World. Luna’s actually taken to calling me the Battle Master. So yes, the occasional slave may come my way, along with properties and bank vaults and… kids. I occasionally rescue girls from Marriage contracts as well – that was Daphne’s idea. So while they’re not looking for a relationship, they can’t exactly date around with a magically binding, unbreakable contract, unless I sell them, and they happen to trust me not to use them. Hermione likes to call it a comfort service.”

“Like she calls your harem a ‘mutual love affair’?” she wondered, and Harry seemed surprised she knew the term. “Ivy told me. Is Hermione really okay with this entire situation? All of your girls? Her names for them seems like she’s trying to cope with reality.”

Harry smiled. “I really don’t know what I’ve done to deserve her, and she knows it, while she feels the same – our mind links tell us that all the time. She knows I love her, and I know she loves me. She knows that I’ll always return to her.” His eyes pierced hers. “No one can have the connection we have. Maybe, in any other relationship, I can be self-conscious about everything I do around her, even if we were monogamous, but I have access to her mind – all of it. We know each other’s every little secret. She knows things about me I haven’t even figured out yet. Believe me when I say that her idea of this open relationship is just as much her idea as it is mine.”

The blonde looked confused. “So she… likes girls? And guys?”

Harry shrugged. “Maybe, she did, at some point. It’s complicated, but from what we’ve figured out, reading about soul bonds, is that there is a… well, an open limit. She likes girls because I like girls. She’s believed, that before our soul bond, I was the only one she had an inkling of feelings for, but it was nothing more than an innocent crush. So my preference, my visual images, and my preteen hormones were available to her at all times, and it eventually turned into a strong feeling. Her attraction to girls only grew as she went through puberty, and her thoughts were realigned from my
reference point. Had she been attracted to boys from the beginning, I’d probably be a lot more popular with all of those housewives’ husbands. And sons.”

Harley took a moment to absorb that information. “Wow. You lucked out.”

Harry didn’t look too concerned at the thought. “Either way, my mind would have allowed me to enjoy it, because she probably would’ve enjoyed it. It’s not like I’m trapped in her vision, I just have the option to see the way she sees things. My love for books have compounded, and I look at teachers and professors, and studying material with more respect than I used to. You’ve seen that I have a bit of a domineering side, and if we didn’t have a bunch of friends by that point, we’d both probably be loners, not looking for any type of companionship but each other.”

Harleen hmmed to herself, playing with the tuft of hair on the back of Harry’s neck. “Sooo…” she drew out the word teasingly. “If you saw the way she saw things… does that mean the good and the bad?”

She squeaked in surprise as Harry picked her up by her waist and forced a leg around his, the thin holly wand clattering to the floor beside his bare feet. Understanding his silent command, she wrapped her other leg and crossed them behind his back. “If you’re asking what I think you’re asking,” he continued with a grin, “Yes, we went through puberty together. I felt some very strange, very painful things, and so did she, until we learned how to block it off completely. Now, I could safely say that we have a pretty insatiable sex drive, when we’re fully linked. Even after puberty, we’re perpetually unstoppable when we’re bored.”

“I thought I had the sex problem?” She wondered with twinkling eyes, but she wasn’t complaining.

“The first step is admitting it,” he swiftly replied, his hands resting against her cotton-clad back, against her overly large t-shirt. “We admitted it was a problem the first time we had sex – and believe me, we shagged for hours; when we were finally spent, we realized what time it was, and Hermione fell out of bed because she couldn’t move her legs. I fell on top of her when I tried to help her up, and Susan found us like that. So yeah, then we realized it was a big ruddy problem.”

Harley whistled lowly. “Sounds like a hell of a marathon.”

Harry shrugged, unconcerned, not willing to admit that back then, he was a bit of a quick-shooter, and it would have lasted far longer with the stamina he had now. “Have you noticed something?” Harley shook her head. “We haven’t found a shortage of words between each other, have we? I doubt I’d ever run out of questions, and neither will you. We’re getting to know each other, and we seem rather interested in what we have to say. Does that seem like an unhealthy friendship to you?”

She smiled fondly. “You know just what to say, don’t ya?”

He leaned back against the plaster wall, and leaned forward to kiss her unpainted lips. “Just enough to keep us talking,” he muttered, and she giggled as their lips connected once more.

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*Femme Fatale’s Newest Trick up Their Sleeves!*  
*The Warlock Puts a Spell Over Gotham!*  
*The Ménage à Terror Debuts, with a Menacing Message!*

Bruce Wayne grumbled something unintelligible as he glared at the Gotham Gazette.

“Excuse me, sir?” Alfred wondered, and cursed himself immediately. He knew where this was leading, and now the billionaire could air his grievances.
“They still haven’t been caught,” he growled, slapping the paper on the table next to his oatmeal. “And now their speech is the headline. I knew I should’ve gone after them, Alfred.”

“You were in no condition to, Master Bruce,” he reminded his ward, almost in a bored fashion. Of course his words weren’t going to ring in his ears for long.

“They’ve gone into hiding, planning their next move. And I could’ve stopped them.”

“Sir, I feel that I have to remind you that you are in no condition to stop them, and if you had attempted to, then they could have simply killed you and continue planning.”

Bruce was unperturbed. “We’ll never know for sure.”

“Yes, sir,” Alfred whispered. “That’s the problem. We do.” He was silent for a moment. “The police department could use more funding. They could even do wonders with a new cadet, if you’re interested.”

“We talked about this, Alfred. The police can’t do what I do. The system doesn’t work.”

The faithful butler sighed, and gathered his meal. “You’re right, sir. If it did, then you would have never become the Batman. I admit it. And if it worked today, they would have captured the Batman a long time ago.”

Bruce looked disbelievingly at Alfred’s back as he stood at the sink. “I am not a criminal, Alfred!”

“Of course not, sir; what you do is perfectly legal. I’m sure the mayor is crafting a key for you at this very moment.” He put his plate up in the cupboard, and turned back to face the last Wayne. “You’ve done a lot of good things, sir. I’ve seen you stop terrible, horrible things, and put away vicious, disgraceful people. But I don’t think you know that there’s a point where you allow the police to step in and do their job. The scanner says that they have ignored everything in favor of finding those three. Perhaps the petty criminals think they might be ignored with their crimes?”

Alfred was aware that Bruce knew what he was doing – distracting them from facing the trio again, and abandoning the job completely for the police to handle.

He’d never go for it, but he figured he should try.

After a minute of silence, Bruce calmly rose from the table and walked towards the sitting room without a word.

The Englishman sighed once more and gathered the unfinished plate and utensils from the table.

Minutes later, he peeked into the sitting room, and saw the last Wayne sitting in his father’s favorite chair, with his chin resting on his knuckles, his elbows on his thighs, staring at the portrait of Thomas and Martha Wayne.

Right beside him was the bust of William Shakespeare, as of yet untouched. It was, frankly, a near-obvious spot to have a secret passage, for someone who knew what they were looking for, but he could understand – it was the same spot he made the decision to become a vigilante.

Then, without warning, he jerkily pulled back the marble head and slammed down on the button. The bookcase smoothly rolled back, and by the time it stopped, Bruce was already inside the elevator beside it, pressing the button to close it.

Alfred and Bruce silently looked at each other for a brief, tense moment, before the bookcase
obstructed each other’s view.

And then the sitting room was empty.

Alfred Pennyworth hoped that it wouldn’t stay that way. For Bruce’s sake.

Pamela Isley stared at her chocolate skin with a sense of wonder. “It never ceases to amaze me how good you are at this.”

“Believe it babe,” Harleen grinned, smoothing her lover’s jet-black hair, making sure all the red was covered up. “I got skills.”

Harry marveled at Ivy’s transformation. A part of him had to remind himself that she wasn’t using a glamour charm, and while the extreme change would’ve been a lot shorter, he was very interested in Harley’s skill after she bragged quite boisterously about it.

She was underselling.

Ivy still looked beautiful, and naturally so, as her purple contacted eyes blinked innocently at him, her smooth brown skin shining almost naturally under the room’s light. “So real,” he whispered, reaching out to touch her.

“Nuh uh!” Harley warned, not looking away from her hair. “Ink needs to dry; no touchy.”

A breath rushed through Pamela’s lips while her eyes rolled in annoyance. “I’m not a sculpture, Harley.”

“When you’re in my hands, you’re a masterpiece,” she muttered, running her fingers along her girlfriend’s eyebrows from behind, checking for excess powder. “Perfection enhanced,” she grinned as she stepped from behind her and walked to Harry’s side. She inspected her work carefully before nodding. “Looking good, baby!”

She gave a small grin. “I better be.”

Harley slipped on her glasses and quickly banded her hair into a ponytail, rather than the pigtails Harry had ever seen her in.

It was a damn near transformation of her entire character in a matter of seconds, that Harry was sure that Ivy was jealous of. Her blonde tail rested on her right shoulder, as she winked through her silver-framed, square-rimmed glasses. “Ready to go?” Harley asked cheerily, her smile bright and almost innocent, if the two didn’t know her.

Harry nodded, when the sound of thunder rolled in the distance, far from the house.

“Shit,” she deflated in one breath. “Ivy’s not waterproof.” She looked hopefully at Harry. “Any spell for that?”

“I don’t even think the Wizarding World knows what umbrellas are,” Harry considered, thinking back. “Except someone I know, Hagrid, and he probably won it in a bet.” He looked at his blonde girlfriend curiously. “You okay with me messing with your glamour? You seem rather proud that I can’t tell the difference.”

Harleen shrugged and shook her head, her ponytail falling from her shoulder and spilling behind her back. “Nah – I just wanted to show off. Make changes as you wish – this isn’t exactly a complete
Pamela looked herself over. “Except for under the clothes, it looks pretty complete to me. I’d rather you keep the ink and makeup away from sensitive places – it’s pretty difficult to rub off.”

“You never complain when I clean you,” the perky blonde reminded her, and Ivy stuck out her tongue at her. “So, Harry, how long is it gonna take? Is there going to be some secret ritual? A rain dance? Perfect weather for it. What about – ?” She squeaked when Harry shook his head quickly, and his unruly black locks flashed brown in a single swish. “Woah! Okay, that works, too!”

The brunet smiled at her, flashing her his now grey eyes. “Sorry, but not much involved. I’ve been doing this for years – before I even knew magic.”

He waved his hand lazily over Ivy’s form and colors exploded from her body, completely engulfing her for a brief, tense moment. When both girls opened their eyes again and saw that she looked the exact same, with slightly curlier hair, the brown-haired boy crossed his arms. “I can certainly make it flashy, though. Feel any different? I’ve rarely gotten the opportunity to do a full-body makeover.”

Pamela felt tingly all over, and she giggled at the sensation. “Full-body?” she wondered, and pulled out the collar of her red t-shirt to look down. “This is… surreal,” she marveled, seeing the dark skin of her flat stomach.

Harley went around to Ivy’s hair and rubbed a few strands between her fingers. “It’s real fucking hair,” she breathed in awe. “Is it always this easy? To just change your DNA around like that?” She sounded like she was almost in shock, but Harry could see that the idea worried her a little.

Harry shook his head. “It’s not permanent – even I can’t make it last forever. It feeds off my magic after a while; it’s almost like an illusion I have to keep up. All the changes are physical, it’s not like an eye trick or anything, but it’s not your natural look, and you have to be magical for this to work, usually. Even wizards and witches normally take potions, and they’re rather difficult to obtain. Even if they did masquerade as someone you know, they wouldn’t be very good at it – they’re pants at trying to be normal. So how do you like it, Pam?”

The once green-skinned girl craned her neck to look at her backside. “I’ve always wanted one of these.”

The bespectacled blonde slapped her rear unexpectedly, and she yipped in surprise. “One to have or one to own?” she wondered, watching her lithe form closely, not seeing any differences, yet looking a slight bit more appealing right now. “Because I wouldn’t mind a few hours with my minty-chocolate goddess right now.”

The violet-eyed teen looked particularly playful as she smiled at her Harleen’s joke. “Think you can handle this, white girl? Don’t make me bend you over my knee.”

She put on an innocent face, and both onlookers had to remind themselves that this was Harley Quinn. “Do I look like a girl who could ever do something wrong?”

Ivy licked her bare lips. “You have no idea how delicious you look right now.” She shook her head wildly. “Stop that. We have things to do today.”

“I know,” she grinned. “And we’re going to be out all day. It’s going to be so funteasing you!”

Harry was near-positive that it was going to be a short day. “When you two are done torturing me,” he said with a smile, and the girls grinned coyly at him.
“So,” eleven year-old Harry muttered awkwardly, skimming his fingers alongside the brick walls of the corridors, “I’m aware that I’m a celebrity, but I’m starting to find this a bit creepy.”

No one responded. He didn’t expect her to.

“Or maybe you’re not a fan,” he said slowly, “maybe you just find me attractive. If it helps, I find you attractive. But I honestly have no idea how that relationship would work. You can’t exactly take me to Hogsmeade without raising a few eyebrows, can you? I mean, it’s conceivable, in a year or two, but for now, it’d only be a pipedream. So I could understand why you want to follow at a distance.”

His free hand dug into the pocket of his robes for a moment, before he pulled out a small sheet of plain, normal paper. “I keep your secret, and you keep mine, okay? I can see you – I always have. My mum showed me this once. Apparently, I giggled at the dots moving randomly around the paper, and it never failed to put me to sleep. *The Marauder’s Map*, they called it. That’s what my dad and his friends called themselves. You work for a man who practically raised them – You should ask about them sometime. They’re a fascinating bunch; bullies with good intentions. Just like the guy you report to. Am I right?”

Silence. Harry paid it no mind as he poked the paper, watching as the animation came to life. “They all had one; it was a bit of a competition to see which one made it the best. His friend Moony won, but he got it confiscated soon after. He never tried to go after it – after all, they had three more. Filch never knew what he had. Don’t tell him I said that, okay?”

The Boy-Who-Lived watched his specially-made red dot blinking on the paper, and the two dots in close proximity. “Of course, the one mum showed me went with everything else in the fire, but as soon as I remembered it, I made one of my own before I even got here. You have no idea how bloody useful this thing is. Hermione’s got a copy, but I can’t give it to anyone else – not until I get Wormtail.” He spied the abnormally tiny red ‘X’ on the paper and groaned. “You’d know him better as Peter Pettigrew, I’d imagine. But right now, he’s in a form that makes him harder to catch – for me, anyway.”

He snapped his head sideways, towards a dark corridor, and a figure jumped back. Harry grinned. “You can come out now,” he said placatingly, leaning alongside the wall and sliding down to the floor. “You’ve been following me all this time; you’re going to have to work with me if you want this to continue. I can get away from you anytime I want. You’ve only been allowed to see the things you see because I want you to see it. Now that I’ve got it all planned out, it’s time to return the favor. It’s much more valuable than reporting on a kid doing nothing, isn’t it?”

Yellow eyes pierced from the darkness, curious. “You don’t want to catch a rat for me? I’d say he’s worth quite a few meals.”

The black cat padded silently and slowly towards the kneeling boy, her nose wriggling cutely.

She stopped a few feet away. Harry slowly pointed to the spot on the map.

“I imagine you’ve got this place mapped out in your head. You’ve been here enough years to know exactly where this is. On the third floor, next to the painting of the knight riding a unicorn into battle. There’s a small room behind the painting. There, you’ll find the fattest, juiciest rat you’ll ever see. If you get him, come back to me with the head. That’s all I want – the head.”
Mrs. Norris eyed the map with great intensity, her ears flickering back and forth, twitching excitedly. Then, without warning, the small cat shot forward, brushing past his leg, and quickly paced down the corridor, hissing menancingly.

Harry stood up when the cat drifted around the corner, tapping his map once again. He smiled to himself as he pocketed the folded sheet.

“If you want your cousin to be proved innocent, I’d hurry. No time to report to Dumbledore. Time is ticking, Ms. Tonks. We’ll talk tomorrow at that spot, this time. No one’ll know you’re missing – it’s Halloween, after all.”

Harry walked on, smiling slightly as his sensitive hearing picked up a whispered curse.

“Earlier,” Harry started, holding the compact mirror up to the girls, “I told you about glamour charms and polyjuice potions, and how I don’t really follow those rules. Ladies, I present to you the only other exception to the rule that I know. This is Nymphadora ‘Don’t Call Me Nymphadora’ Tonks.”

The pink-haired girl grinned brightly. “Wotcher, ladies!”

“Er… Wotcher, yourself!” Harley replied, almost as a question, but with the same energy the bubbly girl seemed to exude.

The pink-haired girl’s teeth gleamed. “It means hello. Old British slang, don’t worry about it.”

“Oh,” Harley flushed. “I suppose I could have guessed that.”

“Hello,” Ivy said politely, smiling warmly at the teen. “Thanks for being up so late.”

“I’m used to working the night shift,” the young beauty explained, “so it’s nothing. I’m one of the only non-students allowed in here without breaking curfew, other than Fleur, Cissy, Seppy and Ari. Luna’s keeping Hermione thoroughly distracted, and we’re doing a little to pitch in, and since she knows how you are, she hopefully won’t be losing much sleep. Dumbledore is looking closely at everyone right now, but I can just disguise as Snape and walk right through. He can do anything suspicious, and the old man will turn a blind eye to it. I don’t think he knows I’m even here right now.”

“Students go home next week,” Harry said suddenly. “Where are you moving it – if you can?”

Tonks thought to herself for a moment. “I’m the only one cleared to move it, but we really haven’t discussed where. The best place to hide it would be Amelia’s house, I reckon. I’ll start putting protections on it tomorrow.”

“Why?” Harry wondered curiously. “Dumbledore still doesn’t know where my house is – it’s unplottable.”

But Tonks was shaking her head even as he was talking. “Sorry, Harry, but the Unspeakables have a charm on it. That was their only condition when Amelia took it into custody. They know it’s at Hogwarts, but they’ll ask questions if it’s somewhere they can’t see. They’ve already visited this room twice since yesterday, and per our rules, agreed not to monitor us, but they’re not happy about it. They still believe you’re dead, and want no part in helping us. We’re not telling them otherwise.”

“That’s best,” Harry nodded. “They’ll be none-the-wiser about it. They’re probably not gonna tell anyone about me being alive even if we told them, but some of them could owe Dumbledore a favor.”
“Speaking of,” the girl continued, “he’s the biggest problem. He claims to be busy, dealing with the press and whatnot, but he occasionally shows up to look at our progress, and give snippets of mostly useless advice. We’ve transferred all of his monitoring charms to other items in the room, but I think he’s going to notice a missing archway when we take it out.”

Harry rubbed his chin. “He knows I’m alive and well, and he’s not in any real hurry to get me back. He just assumes I’m in a different place. He knows if he can’t find me, then Voldemort can’t find me.” He looked back into the mirror. “Does he know that Voldemort’s currently deceased? Did Snape tell him?”

She shook her head. “Unless something happened in the previous hour, Snape knows nothing, so Dumbledore definitely doesn’t know. As far as Luna can tell, the door is still locked, and the Death Eaters are afraid to intrude.”

Harry’s eyes sparkled. “Good. Tell Snape to unlock the door. That’ll keep him busy for quite a while, I imagine.”

“Will do,” Tonks nodded dutifully. “So… how are you holding up?” She switched to concern, her dark eyes shifting to a golden colour.

Harley and Ivy stared with interest at the slow shift, while Harry gave a slight smile. “Better than you would expect, transporting to another dimension. Nothing to complain about, certainly. How about you, Tonks? I don’t want you to worry – I’ll be back soon.”

“That depends entirely on whether or not this bloody thing’ll work,” she said stubbornly, looking off to the side to what Harry assumed was the veil. “Right now, we’ve got Yaxley, tied up and ready to go. We’ve used a steel cable and unicorn hair, two things famed for their toughness, and nothing so far has worked as a good fishing line. We have no idea where they went, and while part of me knows that I don’t care… well, we’re no closer to getting to you. So, unless you see the tied up bodies of Bellatrix and Goyle, then we’re shit out of luck for figuring what to do next.”

Harry made a show of glancing to the left at the empty road, devoid of bodies. “Sorry, nothing. If they did show up, I doubt they would still be here. Push Yaxley through – if he shows up here, we’ll start looking for the other two.”

The pink-haired auror nodded reluctantly. “Alright. I’ve got the Carrows here, too, if you want ‘em. We’re trying to use them sparingly. Don’t have many souls to go around.”

“I’ve got an idea to try, later,” Harry told her. “It’s something Harley thought of. I want to see if it’s possible.”

“Hm?” Harley wondered, her eyes on the back of Harry’s head. “When did that happen?”

Harry shook his head and grinned. “I’ll show you in a moment. Tonks? When you’re ready.”

“Righteo,” she murmured, flicking her wand at something out of their view. “Okay, Harry. Wrapped up in iron chains and laced with unicorn hair, I’m sending this bastard through in three – two – one.”

She flicked her wand again. “Bloody hell! The end of the chain is still here!” She rushed forward and grabbed onto the chain. “It’s… it’s the same weight! He’s still on the other side! See him?”

They waited for seconds – in the tense silence the three watched the spot that Harry had appeared, literally dropped into their lives. The first drops of moisture landed on the cobblestone, twinkling merrily, despite the dour situation.
After a few bated breaths, Harry breathed tiredly. “Nothing, Tonks. Sorry.”

Ivy looked further down the empty road both ways. “Is there a rip into space I’m supposed to be looking for? Is a body going to be falling out of nothingness?”

“Hold on, Harry.” Tonks tossed the mirror, and in a flash, they saw the pink-haired girl tugging on the rope and chain. “…Dammit,” she muttered, staring at the listless form of Abreaus Yaxley. “I think ‘e’s dead.” She looked ponderous. “What time did you go through the veil?”

“Six thirty-nine,” he answered immediately, remembering how odd he thought the time was under the streetlights when he arrived.

“Shit,” she whispered, before her eyes lowered. “It was six-thirty two when I got to the Department of Mysteries. I remember thinking it was about five or six minutes before I saw Sirius get sent through. I don’t think there’s much lag-time. There’s a chance he might fall through within a few minutes, but it’s minimal.” She sighed, and put up a fake, cheery voice. “So, what’s your idea?”

Harry stared at the unmoving Death Eater, scratching his chin. “I’ve gotten through this once, and I can do it again,” he muttered, looking up into the watery sky, the rain lightly pattering onto the trio with abandon. “Fine, then. Plan B.”

Omake by Rihaan:

Sirius stared blankly at the infinite whiteness around him. His mind was blank; his expression calm. He stood there, his eyes passively roaming the area around him, before he let out a low whistle.

“Well, at least it’s not a dark red, or black or something. So that’s probably a good thing.”

“Wouldn’t have been my bet.”

He looked back and gasped. “J-James? That really you?”

The raven-haired young man bowed. “Of course, mate. You’re lucky – they don’t really allow welcoming committees; especially in Limbo. You must be the exception to the rule. You’ve earned it Pad.”

Sirius reached out to touch his best friend, his hand trembling. James swatted his hand out the way, and immediately leaned in to hug him. “Thank you, Padfoot,” James, whispered, his voice gruff with emotion. “Thank you for taking care of my son. You don’t know how grateful Lily and I are.”

Harry’s godfather laughed at the thought. “Please, Prongs – if anything, he’s raised me. You shouldn’t have put me in any position to raise a child.”

“Considering how you got yourself killed, I agree.” The two shared a weak laugh at that.

Sirius stood back, and smiled slightly. “Look at you, Prongs; you haven’t aged a day. And I bet Tigerlily is as beautiful as ever.”

James tapped him on the back of the head. “We don’t need another Snivellus, Paddy. Stop ogling my wife.”

“And to believe, you could’ve stopped him from doing that at any time,” Sirius snickered.

Indentured servitude is the next best thing to ordering him to shut up forever.”

Padfoot barked a laugh. “That’s what I said you would’ve done!”

The latest Potter to pass on had a twinkle in his brown eyes. “I wanted him to stand out in the sun until his hair caught on fire, but when I heard your idea…”

“SIRIUS!” A scream echoed throughout the vast emptiness, quite a bit louder than an echo one would expect.

For the first time since Sirius’s death, the two old friends looked worried. “Harry?” Sirius croaked. “Not you, too…”

“He’s too young!” James whispered, almost in shock. “He can’t be! He promised me!”

“SIRIUS!” the voice yelled once again, this time from a single source. They both turned to see a giant picture before them, Harry’s scratched, dirtied, angry, wonderful face in front of them. “NO!”

Sirius watched helplessly as Harry ran towards the veil, full-speed. “No, Harry…” he whispered brokenly. He gasped. “Harry, STOP!”

Of all the things that he would have suspected to happen next, for Harry to actually stop was not one of those things. The green-eyed boy’s stride was caught mid-run by time itself, and, he noticed a moment later, so was everything else in the picture. He saw a red spell whizzing by his godson in mid-cast, but Harry had craned his neck to the side to barely avoid it.

With a stray thought, the picture zoomed out, and to his chagrin, the veil was only several strides away.

“James…” he whispered, “what do we do? James?”

“He can’t hear you, Sirius.”

An unknown echo once again ominously rang across the infinite space, and Sirius, by instinct, looked around for his friend.

He was once again alone.

“I sent him back,” the voice intoned, its smooth tenor tones calming him faster than he wanted, “but I can’t move you yet.”

Sirius nervously swallowed the air, not certain if he still had lungs to breathe in or not, and looked back towards the picture. “Why not?”

“You know why. You’ve read the prophecy. The veil will not kill him. It will kill the tainted soul inside of him, but his own soul half and the half-soul of his love will remain together, intact. This has never happened before.”

Sirius thought furiously. “The tainted soul? Harry still had that damned Horcrux inside him? And it’s just been lying dormant?”

“A small piece of his soul had remained. It became even more complicated, actually. However, all traces will disappear.”

“Doesn’t the veil have another side? Can’t he just run right through?”
A mirthless chuckle filled the air. “I cannot. The veil must have one complete soul. It is the one constant I cannot change on the earth. Furthermore, I am not that inhumane. If he immediately walks out of that veil without a scratch, the boy will be considered a Deity or a Martyr. I cannot tell you the definite future, but I can predict the stupidity of the common man. The second he hits the veil of death, he must either leave that world behind, or he will fight the world – though it was planned, he is not yet ready. One day, he may be, but not this day. Right now, this is the only way it can be done. It is how it must be. For now.”

Sirius looked unsure, before he sagged his shoulders. “Okay. Am I here to watch him die? Because of my actions?”

The next laughter that rang through was full of mirth, and Sirius couldn’t bring himself to be angry – or rather, he couldn’t even try. “Once again, I am not inhumane, Sirius. No, you have already served your sentence for any transgressions. Nine years in prison, and almost six more in solitude; you have earned the right to live eternally alongside your friends. However, as I said, it is not your ward’s time. He and his mate Hermione have certain tools that guarantee their life – the veil, even if it wanted his soul, can never have it under these conditions. He will undoubtedly have a place next to you when he passes, along with his mates. None of them will appear here for a very long time.”

“A ‘Very long time?’ You mean he would have survived the fight against Voldemort? All of them?”

“I cannot tell you what I don’t know. However, the odds were in young Potter’s favor. But now, there will be no fight. There will be no Voldemort. To the rest of the Wizarding World, Harry Potter will die. The veil has some rather interesting qualities to it, however. It’s a… collector, you could say. When one Horcrux falls through, the others are sure to follow its mate. That’s how the veil works. One whole soul must go through. I only have the influence to choose the soul that is accepted, though in this instance, he’s made it significantly easier – now, I can choose where it can go. In a single instance, the broken pieces will be whole again, and stripped from the earth. The other soul… is why I have you here. You must decide, temporarily, where to take Harry Potter’s soul.”

“What do you mean? If he must leave earth, what’s left?” He almost scoffed at the thought. “Another universe? Some other dimension?”

“Precisely.”

The silence that followed spoke volumes.

The last Black grimaced. Harry Potter, his Godson, and Hermione Granger, his, for all intents and purposes, goddaughter-in-law, not to mention his girls – he was going to have to leave his life behind for – he didn’t know how long.

A part of him didn’t worry. Those two, even separate, were the most powerful forces magic had ever seen. How he would fare anywhere else, he didn’t know, but he was willing to bet that he’d find his way back to her – them – even if it broke the rules of magic itself. They’d find a way to each other.

What concerned him most, however, was that it seemed like the old bastard really was right. Love – that’s what’s going to do Voldemort in. Harry running into the veil, attempting to save his Godfather, would finally kill the Dark Lord for good.

It was time to start acting like the Godfather he never tried to be. It was time for Harry to truly enjoy his life with no interruptions.

“Fine, then.” Harry Potter’s final guardian spoke with a heavy breath. “What are my choices?”
“You were silent for longer than I expected, actually.” He sounded almost sheepish. “I had posed the question to James and Lily as well – I felt that they needed some say. Lily had a suggestion.”

He blanched at the thought. “It’s some place called Biblioworld, isn’t it? Nothing but books as far as the eye can see?”

There was a scoff at his side. “I’ve missed you too, you old dog.”

Sirius nearly jumped back in surprise. “Lily!”

The impeccably beautiful redhead really hadn’t aged a day. She smiled. “No, I’m pretty sure you’ll like where Harry’s going. It’s based on something I’ve read.”

“Of course it is – OW!” The mangy-haired man grimaced as she flicked his ear. “How does that still hurt so much?!”

She looked out, into the vast nothingness. “Make it so, Ignatous. At least this way, he’ll have a bit of a challenge with making his harem.” She glared at Sirius. “At least you weren’t riding his coattails.”

“Had I not been a convicted criminal, I might’ve,” Sirius muttered. “OW! Stop doing that! Where the bloody hell did you send him, anyway?”

The redhead had a fierce look in her green eyes. “A place where he’ll be ready – a place where he’ll be prepared to avenge his family. He’ll go back and lay waste to Dumbledore and all that have wronged him – us – from the very beginning. They’ll have what’s coming to him, and he’ll need powerful allies to make sure he stays on top. He’s far too nice, otherwise.”

Sirius silently conceded to her point. “Fine, then. Are there at least any companionship he can enjoy? You know his condition, Lily…”

Her smile was predatory. “We need to have a talk about that, Sirius…”

He gulped.

He was very familiar with that sinister smile. And for the first time under her scrutiny, Sirius wished he was not dead.

Chapter End Notes

As you can see, I’m actively trying to avoid angst. While a terrible decision in any other story, I am not Canonizing Harry. Not with the lengths I’ve gone to make him so different. The reaction will be believable, when we get to it, and a bit sad (because I’m not emotionless, his godfather’s dead for Merlin’s sake), but we will not see bitch!Harry in this series.

On a more important note: I’ve written a bit over 400,000 words over the years, and I’m just now getting around to having Harry in a conversation with my third most favorite love interest in the HP series, Tonks. What the hell have I been doing all this other time? I don’t like it. Either way, I consider it a milestone, hence the chapter name.

Who here has a website? Do you do any type of advertising for revenue and support? Just asking for future purposes. I’m thinking of writing something original, and I don’t
know whether to take it to Amazon or here, where I can make it freely available, with the occasional ad.
The Steps We Take

Hermione breathed raggedly, her voice in hiccups. “H-Harry?”

“’M alright,” the boy slurred, struggling to get to his feet. “Ah!” he gasped, and fell back to the ground. “Bloody – my leg hurts like hell!”

“Don’t move it!” she said urgently, forcing herself to move from the corner; she scrambled forward, pushing the rubble out of her way as she reached her friend. “Hold on,” she frantically whispered, moving to his side and giving him a once-over. She flinched as her eyes locked onto the awkward way his left leg was bent. When she looked back at his face, his eyes were closed. “Speak to me, Harry,” she muttered brokenly, her voice raw. She reached for his wand arm and wrapped it around her shoulders. “Please.”

“I’s sorry,” he slurred again. “Gettin’ you in this. M’ fault.”

“It’s not your fault, Harry. You know that.” She lifted him slowly, making sure he could lean on her. “I’ve got you. Let’s get you to the Hospital Wing.”

The battered, broken child didn’t seem to hear her. “How could you say it’s no’ m’ fault?” He was angry, now, and she wasn’t sure if he was angry at himself or the entire situation. “You don’t deserve this. None of it.”

She hooked her arm behind his back. “Harry – look.” She waited patiently until Harry lifted his weary head to look at the giant carcass before them, the beast’s headless body still. “This is not your fault. It is this – this thing’s fault! Not yours! Don’t blame yourself for this.”

“You... you almost died tonight, ’Mione. You almost died because you followed me into this.” He looked over to her, seeing her teary face. “I... I can’t – ”

She leaned over and gave a quick, gentle kiss on his lips. “Shut up, Harry,” she whispered. “You talk too much.”

Harry was silent as his best friend led him out of girl’s bathroom, stumbling slightly. They were halfway down the corridor when he spoke again. “I’m still sorry.”

Hermione gave a weak chuckle. “I’m not kissing you again. Not until you’re checked out by Madame Pomfrey.”

“Worth a shot.” He was silent for a moment. “How the hell did a troll get into the school?”

The brunette bookworm shrugged helplessly. “Maybe Nymphadora didn’t catch Wormtail?”

Harry shook his head. “I checked the map this morning – she has him. He’s still in rat form, too.”

“I’ll meet with her,” Hermione told him, leaving no room for argument. “Tomorrow. We’ll take Pettigrew and Owl him to Madame Bones.”

“Not safe enough,” Harry grunted, lifting his damaged leg high and holding more firmly onto Hermione, in favor of hopping at a more rapid pace. “And not trustworthy enough. The school owl
will eat him. I’d need to transfigure a cage.”

“I’ll do it, and don’t argue.”

Harry chuckled weakly. “Fine. We still need to figure out who did this.”

“I don’t think Dumbledore would’ve done it,” she wondered, pacing to keep up with Harry’s stride. “We’ll have to ask Snape about it – he might know something.”

“Hope this meeting goes better than the last.”

Hermione noticed that his grunts were getting steadily louder. “Harry? How’s the pain?”

He shook his head. “It hurts, but it’s starting to fade.”

She went still. That wasn’t a good thing.

Quicker than a flash, Harry was hoisted into her arms bridal style, earning a yip from the Boy-Who-Lived, and she paced faster down the corridors. “Hermione!”

“T’m not letting you lose a leg for me, Potter!” She growled, her eyes staring straight forward. Faster than she thought her small, slim legs could carry her, the bookworm rushed towards the moving stairway. “Emergency!” She yelled loudly, and the staircase quickly lined up for her, leading to a more-or-less direct path to the floor she wanted.

She made a mental note to read *Hogwarts: A History* more.

Harry was silent for a few seconds, helplessly hanging onto the girl’s neck. “I’d lose a lot more for you,” he whispered, his eyes closing.

Hermione could practically feel him start to lose his strength, and shook him roughly as she hopped up the stairs. “Come on, Harry! Stay with me! I need you to be awake!” She had seen him fall nine feet from the troll’s back to the tiled floor, head-first, and without missing a beat, summon a knife and jump on the beast’s back once more. It was imperative that he stay conscious, or he might suffer a concussion, and she didn’t know what cure there was for that, or if Wizards even knew what those were at this point.

Plus... she didn’t know what to do. She felt as much fear now as she had facing a troll about to club her into oblivion.

Harry was jolted awake by the brunette’s shaking. “I don’t think you’re supposed to do this to someone injured.” It came out as a protest, but his voice was weak, and his breath shortened as he spoke.

More tears streamed from her eyes as she made it to the top of the staircase, and without stopping, turned left. “Please, Harry. Stay with me.” Her voice was just as soft. She didn’t think it would be fair to scream at him again as long as he listened.

“I’m not gonna die, Hermione,” he said forcefully, and her eyes lowered to his pale skin for a moment, dubious.

She couldn’t understand why, but she could feel Harry’s life draining away in her arms – the danger was over, but the impending doom that had surrounded them, for some reason, stayed.

Harry had, at the most, a concussion, a cut on his cheek from a broken marble sink, and a disfigured
leg that could probably be fixed with a bit of skelegrow.

But, for some reason, Hermione had the overwhelming feeling that if she didn’t get him to the Hospital Wing right now, he would die.

She shook her head, slowing down minutely, her left leg beginning to cramp. This was ridiculous. She didn’t even know what to tell Madame Pomfrey when she got there. ‘Madame Pomfrey, please help us! We were attacked by a troll! Yes, we know we were supposed to be in our dorms, but Harry had to come get me! How the hell was I supposed to know that the name Eugene belonged to a troll? It was a dot on a map to me! I was just trying to get to Quirrell, before he went into the Slytherin’s dorms. I just wanted to ask him about a man he seems to be... close to. I don’t judge, it’s just... it’s complicated.’

She’d rather avoid the entire conversation. She didn’t want to reveal the map, or any of the answers to questions that may come with it.

Working with Harry was a chore – she had known that since she followed him to Azkaban and helped him break out Sirius. He had protested the idea every step of the way, of course.

And when he finally woke up, he would never hear the end of how honored she felt being by his side.

Her eyebrows furrowed – where did that slip come from? When he woke up? – and she looked down.

Harry hung limply in her arms, his jaw hanging lethargically, his hands slowly sliding off her shoulders. She could only see the whites of his wide-open eyes.

“HARRY!”

The rain pounded heavy on the streets of Park Row, spattering loudly around the three occupants of the empty roadway. A clear dome protected them from the downpour, as they looked out onto the horizon of Gotham.

But they weren’t really paying attention to the admittedly beautiful scene. No, they were more distracted by the story regaled by the currently brown-haired, silver-eyed teen.

“Wow,” Harleen whispered, her eyes wide. “You fought and beat an eight foot tall beast with a club when you were eleven?!”

“And you decapitated it,” Pamela noted with no small amount of surprise, her voice shaky. Now she had known why Hermione was so hesitant to tell them the story – she was thankful Harry had spared the details of the actual battle.

The Boy-Who-Lived nodded with no hint of pride in his eyes. “I’ve never killed anyone before that. I mean, I’ve held guns...” he scoffed mirthlessly. “I’ve made guns. Whenever I was in trouble on my own, I’ve fired the gun, and my force-shield charm went behind it. I’ve never had to use a bullet. But when that Troll went for Hermione...” his eyes went unfocused, before he quickly shook his head. “It doesn’t matter. Hermione hunted down Snape, one of our professors, and explained what was going on. With his help, she obliviated – the memory-erasing spell I told you about – the school nurse and took me to his chambers instead. He was really the best person we could’ve gone to either way – he brews the potions that the nurse, Madame Pomfrey uses. Hermione didn’t trust her, and we had every right to trust Snape.”
“Why?” Harleen interrupted, absently smoothing down her skirt as the rain poured heavy around them. “Was he friends with your parents or something?”

Harry shook his head. “No, but he owed a debt to my dad. But now you know why I think Harley’s idea could work. That night, Hermione got half of my soul. We don’t know how that ritual took place, but it happened – after it did, she could link to me in ways we’re still figuring out. Her cramp in her leg disappeared when I fell unconscious and couldn’t feel my own broken leg. We had soul-bonded – half, anyway. It would be a bit down the road for Hermione to complete the ritual. And I had two different souls in my body. Why didn’t the veil touch those? Why specifically go for the small, tainted soul? I doubt someone with more than one soul has gone through the veil – actually, it’s safe to say that I’m the only one with three. Is Hermione right? Did we really just stick together, and make a whole soul? I barely know how I feel and what Hermione feels anymore – it’s one in the same, except I usually feel it in my scar. We’ll have to test that more, now that the Horcrux is gone.”

He pointed to his currently unmarked forehead, to the place where his scar was, once again, hidden.

“Nym,” he looked back at the mirror, and the girl now sported a mousy brown colored hair, to reflect the tone of the conversation. “I have to take a gamble here. If two people went through the veil at the same time, you think it might trick the arch into thinking it was looking at two souls, and pick one?”

“I... don’t think that would work, Harry,” she said slowly. “Maybe I’m giving it more credit, but maybe the actual souls have to go through at the same time?”


Harry blinked. “Err... yeah, actually. I could see through Voldemort’s eyes, sometimes.”

“Oh – you told me that. Must’ve slipped.” She crossed her arms and put her chin against her chest, thinking furiously.

Harry was in slight awe, looking at the small, care-free girl’s brilliant mind go to work. “It must be in the right side of his brain as well. His soul’s got to be there!” She looked up at the young Metamorphmagus. “So if you sent two at the same time, head-first...”

The young auror looked back to the still Yaxley, unmoving on the ground. “If it doesn’t work, we can capture more Death Eaters, I guess... wouldn’t mind tossing in Umbridge. Nosy bitch walked down this hallway twice. Third time’s the charm.” She sent a spell at the body, and the steel chain wrapped in unicorn hair uncoiled from the Death Eater. Another spell, and he was banished again into the glassy, smoky archway. “Though, that leaves the question of what happened to the body, and why you didn’t see it.”

Harry shrugged. “Can’t answer that until someone makes it to the other side and can tell us. Better get some Veritaserum ready.”

“Already got some left,” the auror grinned, her bubbly persona returning, her hope renewed. “Daphne’s idea. We’ve been interrogating some Death Eaters while we had them – It’s how Bellatrix admitted that Luna’s guess about her hidden Horcrux was right.” Tonks’s hands went to her sides, and she pouted at something off to the side of the mirror’s view. “We haven’t had the chance to do the Carrows, yet... and we don’t have enough for two.”

Harry frowned. “They’re pretty high ranking, last I checked. They might know something useful.”
He sighed. There was always a hitch. Dark Marks protect Legilimency, so that wasn’t an option.

Hold on...

“Tonks?” Harry inquired. “Check their arms for the Dark Mark.”

She looked somewhat confused at the request – they knew, after all, that the two were Death Eaters – but she did it anyway. She walked off to the side, out of Harry’s view, and his hearing picked up some shuffling.

Seconds later, the metamorph’s boots signaled her approaching as she walked back into frame, and the confusion on her heart-shaped face doubled. “Err... Harry, is there something you’re not telling me?”

“I take it that it’s fading then?” Harry wondered, his grin widening.

“Fading?” The metamorph shook her head. “No, mate. It’s green. The whole bloody tattoo is green! The veins sticking out around it... it’s colored green as well! It’s really weird!”

Ivy could see, by the look on Harry’s face, that he wasn’t expecting that news. “I suppose his tattoos have never done that before, then?” she wondered, recalling what Harley was telling her when she finally awoke about the Dark Mark.

Harry pinched the bridge of his nose. “I don’t know what the hell...” He looked up. “When Voldemort was defeated the last time, the Mark was faded. Usually, the more powerful he is, the darker it gets. It’s never acted like a bloody mood ring before.”

“So he could be alive?” Harley wondered, her eyes alight with curiosity. It wasn’t particularly good news, but she wanted to see this Dark Lord.

The brunet gave a heavy sigh. “I don’t know,” he admitted. “But this fucking veil is really grating me.”

The former redhead hummed softly. “Eddie would consider this a wetdream.”

“Eddie?” Harry and Harley asked at the same time, setting their eyes on the currently ebony teen.

“Eddie,” she repeated, “you’ve met him, Harls. He’s the one that gave you that questionnaire the day we met. He prides himself on his riddles, and quick wit. We got along well enough at Blackgate – insulted my intelligence on occasion, but he messed with the others equally. He knew he was the smartest in the room.”

“Is he at Blackgate?” Harry wondered, half-curious. He wasn’t too keen on telling everyone his origin story, but it wasn’t like telling anyone could have any negative effects on his own world.

She shook her head. “Last I heard, he broke out months ago. He developed the security for the damn place, so I guess he knows the weak spots. He used to work for the police department,” she answered their unanswered question. “Cybercrime division. It’s really the only reason I would trust him, after what you did to the police.” Her violet eyes went to Harry. “Not saying that you should. He’s an information junkie – always looking for blackmail material and gossip to exploit. Just a thought for if we really needed the help. He helped me break out, so giving him a brain-teaser like this should keep him turgid for a few days, at least.”

Harleen giggled loudly, while Harry nodded. “I’ll think about it if nothing works. If there’s anything magic taught me, is that everything’s a riddle. I wouldn’t be surprised if the veil is one giant ruddy
“Never finished that questionnaire,” Harleen whispered to herself. “I should get back to it sometime. Think I still got it around somewhere.” She noticed the three looking at her with amusement. “What?”

Harry smiled mischievously. “Harley... you want to have fun today?”

“Depends on the fun.” She licked her lips. “You suggesting we go back to the house after just getting some fresh air?”

Ivy shook her head. “Can we please try some sort of interaction instead? I’ve opened the windows to air the house out – we have plenty of time to stink it back up.”

“I’ve been told that I’ve got a rather pleasant scent,” Harry huffed, and Harleen giggled.

“One day,” Ivy pleaded half-heartedly. “Just one day without trying to rip each others’ clothes off. I’d rather we actually get the chance to have breakfast again.”

“Chocolate syrup and whipped cream doesn’t sound like a balanced breakfast to you?” the ponytailed blonde asked innocently, her eyes roaming her two lovers. “If not, I can think of a place to stick the sausage.”

“I blame you for this,” Ivy smiled, looking over to Harry.

Tonks spoke up from the mirror. “Considering it’s about three in the morning, and we finally got Hermione asleep, how about we pick this up later? Gives me time to talk to Fleur.”

Harry nodded. “Alright, Tonks. Be safe... and... if Sirius... I mean... If something happened to him –”

“Honestly, Harry?” she interrupted softly, her frown marring her features. “I considered it. I thought about it the moment he went through. I considered it the moment you both went through. I’ve learned to never count you out – you always find a way to make it through, breaking the rules of magic and physics along the way. We both know there’s only one way to check if he’s truly gone, and I’m willing to bet you haven’t tried it. I’m betting you don’t want to, either. Hell, I won’t want you to.”

Harry was quiet for a couple of beats. “Maybe,” he admitted. The two girls beside him had distracted him since he had arrived from really thinking of a solution, and quite wonderfully so, but he knew that there was a way to check – if he lost all hope for getting back. “If he is, then we still have the stone. I don’t know if it would work without a body, though.”

Tonks shrugged. “Essentially, we won’t need a body. As long as the soul exists somewhere, that’s what we need. We can transfigure a body.”

Harry swallowed roughly. “Alright. That’s what we’ll do. If he’s dead.”

Both girls chose not to speak at the entirely somber conversation, their mood deflated.

Then Harley’s mind finally caught up with the words she just heard.

“Hold on!” She looked at the mirror, her blue eyes wide. “You can bring back people from the dead?”

The pink-haired auror gave a weak grin. “It worked on a friend we know – Myrtle. And Pandora,
Luna’s mum. We haven’t really done it to anyone else, though.”

“Try it,” Harry started. “Use it on Ron. Bastard needs to be taught a lesson.”

“If we tried it and it doesn’t work,” Tonks muttered hesitantly, “then it would point too many fingers to us at this point. He’s been rather... mistreated, you could say, by most of the girls at Hogwarts. Apparently, someone overheard Ron’s comments. I suspect Hermione told you what he said, then?”

Harry nodded, his scowl expressing his anger quite adequately. “I’m not letting him get away with those comments. Tell Fred and George to test every single product they have on him. Especially the untested ones.”

“You doubt the temerity of the twins, Harry,” the punk girl smiled. “They’ve been setting up traps all night. You have no idea how many hallways I’ve avoided to get here. They’re triggered to Ron, but I’d rather be safe.”


“Other than Dumbledore and Umbridge, we should be –” She snapped her fingers. “Umbridge! I’ll use her for the veil and try to bring her back! We don’t really have ties back to us – everyone hates her!”


She grinned deviously. “You want me to try to take down Dumbledore ‘if it comes up?’ I knew there was a reason I keep you guys close.”

“You couldn’t live without us, Tonks,” he said cheekily. “You’d probably be Head Auror without us around but hey – one less Dark Lord to take down, right?”

She childishly stuck her tongue out. “Thanks for taking out the challenge, mate. Makes it real boring from there on out.”

Harry scoffed. “I wouldn’t say that...”

A piggish laughter, deep and boisterous, rang through the black car. “The Burning Man! I like it!” He slammed down the morning paper on the seat next to him. “Looks like the two dykes have picked themselves up a pimp!”

Candace, sitting on the opposite side, glanced at the photo and licked her lips. “Hell of a sugar-daddy, though. I wouldn’t mind a taste.”

He grimaced. “What? I’m not good ‘nough for ya?”

The dark-skinned girl peered down her rectangle glasses. “Good enough implies that you’re better than decent, honey.”

His beady eyes stared at her for a good, long moment.

Then, without warning, he laughed loudly, and she winced at the nasal sound. “Well said, Candy!” He paused, and eyed her up and down, and she crossed her legs in response. “How would you know what you ‘aven’t tried?”
It was her turn to grimace. “Tracey won’t shut up. Good or bad, she’s got to keep me informed.”

He grinned. “Yeah. She’s got a gob on her, doesn’t she?” A wistful look appeared in his eyes. “Got its uses, certainly…”

“Oh! I can ‘ear you!” the blonde driver complained from the front, turning back for a short moment. “This gob can also bite yer ‘ead off!” She turned back to the road, checking her cap in the mirror before focusing on the two individuals behind it. “And I’m talkin’ about the one growin’ hair, not losin’ it!”

Candy made retching sounds while Oswald frowned. “That’s not funny.”

She stuck out her tongue at the mirror, and focused on the road. “Wha’ can I say? I’ve got a gob on me.”

Candace tapped her crossed legs and smoothed down her skirt as she looked over to the schedule at her side. “You have a new shipment of ammunition coming in today. Usually takes a week to unload, but you might be able to move more than a usual shipment today, what with the distraction the Femmes made last night. The pigs will be busy dealing with that.”

Cobblepot nodded. He knew there was a reason he kept her around – her secretarial skills were the only perks she put on the table when he hired her, and despite his efforts, she didn’t change her resume. It was difficult to find ladies with a mind like hers that could turn to a life of crime, so he didn’t really have much of a choice hiring her. And she was easy on the eyes – that helped. “’A’ight, then. Send three trucks. Make ‘em take different routes, in case.” He seemed to remember something. “and put a few zeroes on the next check to our lovely clients, will ya dear? I’m running out of cigars.”

She nodded, making a note on her clipboard. “Anything else, hun?”

The short, stout man glanced at the paper again as he absently reached over to pick up his top hat, recognizing the car’s turn into his establishment – the Iceberg Lounge. “Yeah. Water the plants this mornin’. I wanna make a good impression.”

She paused. “They’re coming by, sir? They’re not on the schedule this week.”

His monocle glimmered in the nondescript automobile as he grinned toothily. “We’ll just have to make ‘em an offer they can’t refuse, won’ we?”

“Did we find them yet? I’ll kill that bitch! Doesn’t she know who she’s messing with?!”

Jim groaned from his desk. It seemed that Howard, despite all odds, had suffered no concussion. “Officer Branden – I see you’ve recovered.”

The SWAT leader in his trademark cap turned to him and sneered. “Gordon – the hell are you doin’ here? Thought you’d have found those punks by now. It’s been a whole night. Gotham’s Golden Boy’s got a reputation to uphold.”

Jim went back to wiping his glasses clean. “I went home, to my wife and kid. If anyone’s reputation needs protecting, Howard, it’s you. That mallet to the face is the headline photo.”

He sputtered. “What? Where the hell did they get a picture?! Did you send it to them?”

He shook his head. “Unfortunately, no. I didn’t have a good angle. But the people behind you did.”
He was silent for a good long moment – then he stomped away. Gordon assumed he was going to look for the nearest newspaper. He didn’t have to look far; it was on every desk in every cubicle. It would be a matter of time before he figured out that the perfect angle to see him get clobbered like that had to have come from his own division.

He slid the paper back under his book and leaned back.

He briefly wondered how Branden would respond to the pseudo-meeting he had today – The one-sided conversation he had with their mutual enemy in his car.

He opened the drawer and eyed the circular speaker / receiver with no small amount of dubiousness. This was probably a bad idea. He could get fired for this, or imprisoned. But the ‘anonymous’ voicemail left on the thing promised that it was untraceable, and would become a useless piece of junk in twenty-four hours.

If it wasn’t, he’d take a hammer to it and refocus his efforts on the damned Batman again.

The voice in the speaker had a point. Not even the police could take on this threat alone, and if they didn’t want any federals pitching their tent in Gotham, then they would have to work together. Just this once.

“All right. I hope you’re listening, because I’m only going to say it once.” Plausible deniability – if no one heard him rambling, then the conversation never happened. He looked at the police report in his lap, pointedly ignoring the picture of the woman with red and green hair grinning sheepishly, hiding a mallet behind her back as she posed for the camera, several decimated cars behind her.

He leafed through the file. “Here’s what we know. Harley Quinn, real name unknown, approximately aged twenty-two to twenty-five...”

Fifteen-year-old Harleen Quinzel yawned. Loudly.

No one took offense. The theater was empty. She, Harry, and Pamela were the only ones there, sitting together, in the middle seat, middle row – the best way to watch a movie.

Or this one, at least. The movie was obviously made when they were just looking into the magical marvel that was color. It was far too bright and blurry to sit up front.

Though the plot was probably good – she remembered her parents liking this movie, especially this actor, Carl something – she found herself disinterested.

She looked over to her left, past Harry, to Pammy, who looked just as bored. Honestly, she didn’t know why this movie was playing – it was a mom-and-pop theater, but they had to have rights to something younger than her, right?

She yawned again.

Harry looked over to her. “You’re the one that chose this place,” he whispered, chuckling.

She would’ve giggled at the thought that he was respecting the rules of the theatre in an empty room. “It’s thundering outside,” she defended herself, her voice just as soft. “Where else could we have gone? I’d rather not get wet, and we’d have to be to fit in with everyone else. Gotham usually shuts down on thunderstorms. This is all we got.”

Harry shrugged. The nice old couple who owned the shop next door to the theatre set up the reel,
and happily so when given several gold bits, courtesy of his mokeskin pouch, one of his few obvious links to the magical world. Gold was worth far more than wizards suspected, and shaved, broken galleons, with no description or hint to their previous value, made them rather priceless to any other currency. “We probably could’ve just gone to a café. I could have summoned an umbrella.”

She shrugged helplessly. “Didn’t consider that.”

Ivy quirked her lips upwards. “I think she just wanted to take us to a nice, quiet, dark place.”

She stared at her lover innocently, her square-rimmed glasses accentuating her wide sky-blue eyes. “Why would I wanna do that? I just want a nice, quiet peaceful time with my two bestest friends.” She turned back to the movie. “Besides, I’d never give it up on the first date. Mama didn’t raise no fool.”

They both chuckled at the irony of that sentence. “Second date, actually,” Harry pointed out.

“Oh,” she squeaked, mentally chastising herself for almost forgetting their outing last night. “Well...” she pondered, eyeing him up and down. “I guess some over-the-clothes stuff is alright.”

Pamela twirled her curly, luscious hair in her finger as she glanced away from the screen once more. “I knew you couldn’t last...”

“In my defense,” the blonde said quickly, putting up her index finger to emphasize her words, “...I knew I couldn’t last either.”

Harry wrapped his arm around Harley’s shoulders and pulled her close. “You know what? I think I’ll let you keep me.”

She giggled cutely. “I’ll allow you to think that.”

Pam shook her head, amused, and turned back to the film. She squeaked in surprise as Harry’s other arm wrapped around her. “I only let Harley because you let me,” he grinned roguishly.

Her lips pressed against Harry’s cheek. “Of all the men I’ve ever met,” she whispered sensually, “keeping you was the... easiest.”

“I’ll take that as a compliment,” he murmured, kissing the side of her head.

She grabbed his chin and guided his lips to hers. “I meant it as one,” she whispered, licking her own lips, before kissing him.

Harley fanned herself at the sight. “Intermission time,” she said hurriedly, and no one argued with that.

The three popped out of the Monarch theatre, and out of the sight of the unblinking eyes upon them.

“I never read that pamphlet.”

“Huh?” Hermione asked eloquently, looking through her new favorite book. The amount of things she discovered about the school were fascinating. She made a note to tell Harry about the more useful details, like the idea that every founder left a piece of themselves behind with a hidden room / private study. Just the idea of a large room of books collected by Rowena Ravenclaw tantalized her to no end.

what it said. I mainly wanted you to leave so I could get out unnoticed. I couldn’t have an adult looking into who I am.”

Her mind’s eye showed a vivid recollection of her first conversation with the boy in front of her.
“Harry – I already knew that. I tried looking for one after you left. We didn’t have an informational material of any kind at that library.”

“Oh.” He laid there, staring at her blankly. “Thanks for not hating me.”

She smiled softly. “Who says I didn’t hate you? You’re the bane of my existence, Harry. I’ve been waiting until this very moment to take you down when you least expect it.”

Harry closed his eyes. “Make it quick, then.”

“My pleasure,” a voice sounded behind them, and they both jumped. “If only that was a command,” the thin, pale man intoned silkily, looking down at them over his hooked nose. “Ah, to dream again... I highly doubt it was, so I suppose I still find myself a peon to the Boy-Who-Lived.”

The small boy smiled weakly. “Good to see you too, Snape.”

He frowned at the lack of respect, but otherwise ignored it. “A troll, Mister Potter? You skipped the feast so you could go fight a troll? If there was ever a banner for Gryffindor...”

Harry sighed. He was going to go against his word on giving Severus free speech one day; he just knew it. “No, Snivellus. Hermione went to meet Tonks to pick up Wormtail. I was preoccupied dealing with the most annoying boy in the world. He seemed quite gleeful at the thought that I lost my parents ten years ago today. Remind me to kill his parents when I’m feeling better.”

Snape raised an eyebrow. “An eye for an eye, Potter? I suppose it’s always worked before...”

Harry’s fingers twitched. At the very least, he would one day make sure he couldn’t speak in sarcasm. “Enough, Snape. How am I?”

He started without further encouragement. “You don’t have a concussion, and you seem as normal as you could be.”

Hermione seemed pleased, and hugged Harry gratefully. “You’re alright,” she whispered, her lips pressed against his cheek. Harry wrapped his hand tightly around her back, and the two shivered at the touch they felt.

Their eyes opened, and Hermione jumped back.

“W-what was that?” Hermione gasped fearfully. Harry sat up, glaring at Snape, who held his hands up placatingly. He looked back to Hermione, who seemed to be trembling, lost in her own world. “Hermione?”

“I see v-visions,” she whispered frightfully, visibly shaking, and sweat broke out on her forehead. “Harry, help me,” she whimpered. She looked around frantically. “Where am I? I’ve never – ” Her head whipped around to a dark corner in the chamber. “Who are you? What – Ah!”

Harry scrambled out of bed as he saw his friends head whip back.

“Stop! Stupefy!”

Harry dodged the spell, and without thinking, sent his own stunning spell back. Severus wordlessly
dropped to the floor. He ran to Hermione’s side, and his magic pulsed in his fingers as he grabbed both her arms. “Hermione!”

“Help me,” she whimpered again, not really looking at him. “It’s dark. I can’t see anything.” Without warning, she started struggling to escape his grip, and Harry squeezed her to himself as she thrashed around.

She screamed something, and Harry, with a thought, stunned her in his arms. She fell limp against him.

Harry collapsed to the floor, his rear hitting the green carpet, holding Hermione close. He looked over to his professor, meters away from him, lying on his side as he was blown back from the spell.

He looked back to Hermione, then to the professor, and it clicked for him. Snape was trying to knock Harry out so he wouldn’t get to Hermione, because she began getting the... visions, or whatever she had, when they touched.

He looked down to Hermione’s peaceful face. He brushed the sweat from her brow, and kissed her forehead.

He spent the rest of the night, rocking back and forth, cradling her head in his lap. When Severus finally awoke, that was the sight that greeted him. With Harry’s command – or rather, plea – he forewent carrying her to the transfigured medical bed, and cast the appropriate charms on her right there, with Hermione’s head in his lap.

He couldn’t find anything; absolutely nothing. She seemed to be perfectly normal, mentally.

Harry was about to fall asleep, when she whispered something unintelligible.

Well, mostly unintelligible. He was able to hear the tail-end of the statement.

“...Dudley...kill you...”

Severus paused and looked away from the image projections his wand gave him. “What? Who is Dudley?”

“My cousin,” Harry said, confused. “I’ve never told her his name. She knew about the Dursleys, but I never told her Dudley’s name. His name was never in the search report for me.”

Snape was silent. “The troll; is he dead?”

Harry nodded. “What does that have to do with anything?”

Severus sighed heavily, and for the first time in his life, he felt something akin to sympathy for a Potter. “Everything. She has developed a knack for Legilimency. Suddenly, she seems to be at your level of proficiency. Her mental barriers before were menial, at best. Now, her shields are impenetrable for even the Dark Lord. And she knows something that you’ve never told her.” He allowed the boy a moment to absorb the information, before moving over to his desk and picked up a small black book with empty, well-worn pages.

The book crashed on the floor in front of Harry, and he looked up in surprise at the frowning professor, who now stood in front of him. “Tell me, Potter,” he said silkily. “You seem to know many things – things you aren’t supposed to know, things that even I have yet to find out. What do you know about Horcruxes?”
I’d lose a lot more for you,” she whispered brokenly. “I’m not gonna d-die, Hermione....”

“WHAT? You’re telling me this whole time – this whole fucking time we’ve been talking – he’s been listening to us and – where the hell is my bazooka?!”

Harry and Ivy winced at her tone. “He wasn’t there the entire time,” the buxom raven-haired teen weakly defended. “I don’t know how long he was there, but I noticed about the time Harry closed the connection.”

Harry rubbed the back of his head shyly. “Yeah... sure, let’s go with that.”

They both stared at him, and he stepped back in response. “What do you know?”

He looked over into Pamela’s violet eyes. “He was there. He was always there. In the alleyway, behind the theatre. He didn’t notice us there until we went to find the couple who let us in.”

“You sound so sure about this,” Harley noted, narrowing her eyes. Combined with her square spectacles, Harry felt a chill up his spine at the intimidating sight. “You’re telling me you knew exactly where he was and didn’t kill him when you had the chance?”

Harry shook his head. “No. We can use him.”

She tilted her head, her glare still in full effect. “How the hell are we gonna use that guy? He’s a freakin’ enigma!”

Pamela sat down on the sofa and let out a heavy sigh. “Alright. I guess we’re gonna do this now.” She looked up to the now raven-haired teen. “If I’m close, tell me.”

Harley looked confused. “Tell you wha- OH! His identity!” She looked embarrassed. “Slipped my mind for a sec. Lots of information I’ve had to go through recently – very busy.”

Harry directed her to the seat, and she sheepishly followed. “Alright, ladies,” he smiled, “What’s your guesses?”

“It’s Harvey Dent,” Ivy said instantly, conviction in her voice. “It’s gotta be. No one is that obsessed with catching criminals as that guy. Plus I get a creepy vibe from him.”

But Harley hmmed negatively. “I don’t think so. I don’t think it can be someone who actually has legal power like that, yet go to such lengths to capture them. I think it’s someone who would rather not take any legal route to see justice served. I don’t think he – if it even is a he – has any faith in the justice system we have, and he only delivers thugs to the cops because he doesn’t want to be seen like a criminal, or even a cop, himself.” She grinned at Ivy’s expression. “Public school libraries, Right? They give too much info for our own good.”

Harry pressed his finger to the side of his nose and winked.

Harley pumped her fists in the air in victory as Pamela glowered. “So now we’re playing charades?”

Harry refrained from mentioning that he had never played that game – or any fun party game that families do, really – but he didn’t want to bring them down. “I don’t know how that might work. I don’t think I can act out his life in front of you.”

“Oh!” Harley clapped her hands happily, her grin wide, “We could play Twenty Questions!”

The game was familiar to him. He searched his mind for the name, and he found a memory –
Hermione and her parents playing the game after returning from Hogwarts for the very first time. She was feeling absolutely miserable at the time, and as Harry found out later, it was not because of the actual game itself. “Alright. Pammy. You’re first.”

It wasn’t lost on her that it was the first time he had called her by that name, and she smiled a little at how natural it sounded coming from his lips. “Fine, then. Was he born in Gotham?”

“Ooh, good question!” Harleen praised, and Harry nodded the affirmative. “Harleen?”

She chose her words carefully. “Does he have a certain position of power, where he probably could make a difference if he wanted to?”

Harry nodded.

It was Ivy’s turn. “Is he rich?”

Harry nodded again, grinning.

Harley sat back, and leaned against the arm of the couch. “Is he really that muscle-y? Or is it all padding?”

Harry considered her words. “He has single-digit percentage body fat, and looks quite intimidating, but yeah, there’s padding and armor in that suit. To answer your question, he doesn’t look like a body-builder at first glance, but you’d notice if he flexes.”

“Alright,” Pam nodded. “Narrows down the list considerably. Rich, but in shape.” She looked down at her crossed arms, and glanced back up at Harry. “Could you turn me back? I feel a little out of my skin right now.”

Harry nodded, and when she looked back down, her skin was green again. She knew she shouldn’t be surprised by now, but she couldn’t help but feel a sense of awe.

Harley took the distraction to steal a question. “Is he a hermit?”

Harry paused before he answered. “You see him on television, occasionally. He’s a public figure. You’d never see him outside of his obligations.”

“She asked two, I get two,” Pam argued, and the bespectacled girl giggled.

“You only get twenty either way,” Harry pointed out. “You’ve got fourteen more.”

“Hold on... hey!” Harley shouted. “We only asked five!”

Pamela recounted in her head. “Oh, you didn’t dare...”

Harry grinned evilly. “You probably shouldn’t be asking questions in a game about questions unless it’s relating to the topic. You asked, and I answered by turning you back to normal.”

Harley folded her arms while the now-green vixen pouted cutely. “Dick.”

Harry laughed out loud at the unexpected response by the redhead. “Maybe,” he admitted, “though that would make for an interesting prize...”

Harleen adjusted her glasses. “Shit just got real.”

Pamela ignored her in favor of asking another question. “Have I seen him on the news recently?”
Harry shrugged. “I wouldn’t know that.” He didn’t even think they had a television. He certainly hadn’t seen one.

She blushed. “Oh... sorry, forgot. If I turned it on right now, would he be?”

Harry pondered to himself. “Late-night, usually. But he wouldn’t be a regular.”

Harley snapped her fingers. “Does he go to Social Functions?”

“Yup,” he confirmed, falling back into a freshly conjured chair that went into focus right as his butt hit the seat. He smiled at the girls’ reaction. “You have no idea how many times I’ve fallen on my arse to get that trick right.”

Ivy scooted uncomfortably on her suddenly hard seat. “Could you –” she started, before she stopped herself. “Never mind. I’ll ask after, or you’ll cheat again.”

The green-eyed boy grinned, and she felt herself sink further into the cushion. She sighed in happiness as magic itself weaved beneath her curvaceous form.

Harry sat back as the two settled into the couch, seemingly forgetting about the game. That is, until Harleen’s head shot up. “Oh! I almost forgot about his freaky tech! Does he buy it from somewhere in Gotham?”

Harry shook his head. “He doesn’t buy it. You’re close, though.”

Ivy could see the twinkle in his eye as he said those words, and had the overwhelming feeling that he just dropped a huge clue. Or Harley did. “He doesn’t buy it...” she heard her girlfriend mutter to herself. “So how the hell am I close...?”

Maybe he doesn’t buy his tech, because he already owns it?” Ivy wondered.

“He owns it?” Harley repeated questionably. “Like he has a high tech hardware store or something?”

Pam shrugged. “He’s rich. Maybe he’s the CEO of some giant technology conglomerate.”

“Oh!” she snapped her head up to Harry “It’s Roman Sionis! It has to be!”

Harry tilted his head a little, his face impassive. “Why would you think him?”

“He fits every description,” she argued. “Born here, rich as all hell – he owns a bank, for God’s sake – at social functions, you never see him in public, he owns a freakin’ Steel Mill, and,” she cleared her throat. “Being a psychiatrist, I know that the Batman is clearly a victim of either criminal abuse or a deep-seated childhood trauma that somehow involves bats.”

“Childhood trauma?” Pam wondered. “And Sionis suffered from that, I guess?”

She nodded. “I read somewhere that his parents died in a fire; he’s gotta be it. No one should be that socially balanced without a closet bulging with skeletons. He always looks like he has something to hide.” She turned to Harry with a triumphant smile. “Right?”

He tapped his fingers against the arm of his chair nodding along with her points. “You’re right on most points, actually. Hell, every point except one. Sorry to say that he’s not Batman.”

Her face visibly fell. “Wait, but...” she scrunched her eyebrows together. “How did you know who Roman Sionis is?”
“Batman looked it up and researched him extensively. Sionis has an identity, but it isn’t Batman.”

“There’s more of them,” Ivy fretted, looking weary. “I’m sick of dealing with masked crusaders.”

Harry did nothing but grin. Harley got the message. “Oh! You didn’t say anything about him being a good guy, did you?” She narrowed her eyes. “You know, we’re not playing Twenty Questions: Gotham Edition. We can’t guess every masked citizen in the stupid city, because, sadly, we’re going to be here a while.”

“Oh, alright, then. Would’ve gotten bonus points for guessing, though. He’s the Black Mask.”

“No fucking way!” Harley yelled, sitting up straighter. “That guy? The Black Mask? The guy that has homeless shelters named after him, owns the biggest drug-smuggling business in Gotham?”

Ivy looked just as unconvinced. “I met him once. When I was all-human. He seemed nice enough. He didn’t leer at me, at least. There was a short time where Sionis was interested in buying the biochemical wing of WayneTech Industries. In hindsight, he could have been interested in improving his drugs with biochemical and such. Maybe he wanted to invent a new strain that he could sell exclusively, or lace his regular drugs with an addictive chemical?”

“Didn’t he and Wayne have a falling out?” Harley wondered. “Like, a decade ago?”

“Five years ago,” Ivy corrected her gently, “And Roman, at that point, was buying all of his companies back that Wayne had bought from him, like Janis cosmetics. Within about two years, Sionis went from bankrupt to a multi-millionaire.”

Harry nodded. “Yup. With the hope that he might get rid of his life of crime if he had a legitimate business to run again, Wayne gave him his old company for a marked down price. You probably would’ve ended up working for Sionis had he been more subtle about using that company for a front.”

“More subtle?” Harleen questioned. “What? People knew? This is the first time I’m hearing about it! Seems like the only one who had any idea about it was...”

Ivy blinked. “Bruce Wayne.”

Harry wordlessly pressed his finger against the side of his nose. “We’ve got a winner.”

“Holy shit!”

It was a general summation of everything the two girls felt at the moment. The idea of the richest aristocrat in Gotham, the playboy, the seemingly bored heir of the most recognized name in Gotham’s history was... that guy.

Harleen’s head hurt – not because of the startling revelation – she was young, but even she knew of the Wayne family’s impact on their society today – but the fact that neither she nor Ivy said anything just now.

She was getting really fucking tired of people spying in on her conversations.

The room kept silent, almost unsure of where the mysterious voice was. It was most decidedly a woman’s voice, and somewhat familiar....

“Selina?” Ivy wondered, looking around curiously. “Where the hell are you?”
Harry’s eyes lost focus for a moment, before he looked up towards the skylight in the ceiling. “No point of sneaking away now. I can see you.”

They heard a whispered curse. “I guess you really are the real deal,” the voice lowly murmured, before a shadow peeked into the open skylight. “Give me a break, alright? I just found out that I flirted with Bruce Wayne like, a week ago.”

Harleen rolled her eyes. “Is there a reason you decided to not announce yourself? Did you think we would stop playing a guessing game because you showed up?”

She shrugged. “Call it a defense mechanism. Information is valuable. And that may be the most priceless thing in the world I could steal.”

She slowly leaned forward, and fell down into the room. Harry blinked in surprise, seeing her absolutely calm face as she fell at least twenty feet, but more importantly, the absolutely salacious uniform she wore as she flew gracefully, even sneaking in a roll before she landed nimbly on her feet, her motion stopping in a crouch.

Her yellow eyes sparked with mischief as she laid her eyes upon the trio, rising from the ground. “Girls,” the curvy woman nodded, resting her hands on her hips. She eyed Harry with heavy curiosity, her ruby red lips fixed in a permanent, cocky smirk. “Warlock.”

Harry raised his eyebrow at the sensual tone. “Kitten,” he replied, spying the ears on her skintight jumpsuit, and focusing on her cat-eye irises. “Quite an entrance,” he remarked. “Trying to impress?”

She scoffed, and smirked. “Make one good appearance, and you think you’re the hottest thing in Gotham.”

“I was on fire for a good moment there,” he countered, crossing his arms.

“Hold on,” Harleen interrupted. “Were you really planning on stealing from us?” She looked almost upset at the thought.

The woman known as Selina seemed to ponder to herself, but faltered a little to the cuteness that was Harleen Quinzel being upset at anyone. “No, sweetie. It was only a joke. But,” her eyes fluttered to Poison Ivy, “I would hope that you would’ve eventually told me. After all, I apparently lost a free room.”

Pamela rolled her eyes. “Boarding is still open. We still have a free room available, should you agree to the terms.”

Harley looked uncertain, before she shrugged it off. “Eh, doesn’t matter. I got the roomie I wanted out of this.”

A black, buckled boot stepped forward, and the blonde felt herself sinking further into the cushions. “Oh, you don’t like little ol’ me?”

“I’m more afraid of the metal-looking whip at your waist.” She giggled nervously. “Not sure if you’re looking at me like you wanna make me lick faster or assigning me a slave name.”

That got a genuine smile out of the masked woman. “We’ll work on safe words, dear.”

“First of the terms are: hands off of Harley,” Pamela droned, and Harry got the distinct impression that it wasn’t the first time she said that to her.
“You said nothing about flirting,” she purred – literally *purred* – and her eyes roamed over Harry’s form once more, and he felt akin to a ball of yarn. She suddenly narrowed her eyes, and glanced back to Ivy. “What about him?”

The green-skinned beauty leaned back against the arm of her chair, stroking her chin not unlike a 1920’s villain stroking their pencil mustache. “A tease like you? Talk about pussy-whipped…”

But she was already shaking her head. “Oh *please*, Ivy. I wouldn’t be asking permission. What I want to know is how come he and Harley have each other’s scent slathered all over each other?”

Harleen’s nose wrinkled, before she lifted her arms and sniffed. “I showered just this morning!”

Harry snickered. “Yeah; with me. I don’t even remember us *using* soap.”

Pamela laughed at Selina’s expression. “He’s not a tenant, here, Selina. He’s a partner.”

She pouted. “And I can’t be? I thought you guys were looking for someone to work with?”

Ivy grimaced. “We were. And we found him instead to work with. And he became our... *partner*.”

The leather-clad seductress looked confused, and Harley poked her lover in the side. With a meaningful look, Ivy relented. “Okay, okay, I get it. I shouldn’t be afraid to say it. I’ve just never had one before. He’s our boyfriend.”

The cat-like girl blinked owlishly at the two. “Really? You’re both hooking up with him?” She blinked some more. “So that shitty *Ménage à Terror* name they’re coming up with? It’s legit?”

Ivy tilted her head. “What do you guys think?” she asked the room.

Harley’s tongue ran across her lips. “They could do better. They called me a clown when I first got on the scene. Me; a freaking clown! Could you see that? I don’t even have face paint! Not a big red nose! Nothin’!”

Selina still looked perturbed. “Seriously? What kind of magical dick made you guys turn?”

Harry snorted as Harley and Ivy gave each other knowing glances. “It has its properties.” He held a leather-like skullcap in his hand, and inspected it closely. “I could use something like this for my new costume. Mind if I borrow it?”

“Borrow...?” her delicately maintained eyebrows furrowed, before her eyes widened. She grasped at her bare, flawless face, and ran her fingers through her short-cropped ebony hair frantically. “How the fuck did you – ?”

“Magic,” he said simply. “How’s that for information you can steal?” He turned the face of the mask towards her. “That wasn’t a parlour trick yesterday. If I had an inkling of encouragement to, I could steal the clothes off your body.”

She eyed him delicately. She wasn’t sure if he was telling the truth, but she wasn’t going to take any chances. “I’ll be good; I promise. Scout’s honor!”

The Boy-Who-Lived smiled disarmingy. “Good kitty.”

She frowned. “I’m pretty sure I’m older than you.”

He eyed her form appreciatively. “Not by much.”
Her cheeks colored at his frankness – usually, she was the forward one. “Alright, well, asking you about your boy toy is not why I’m here.” She turned back to Harley. “Did you get the gem?”

Harley nodded, pushing her glasses up her nose. “Yup. It’s in the kitchen. I don’t think I moved it since I stole it, actually. Been a bit distracted.”

“Gem?” Ivy wondered, moving her red hair behind her ears. “You mean the heist two nights ago?”

She nodded. “Yup. Selina gave me the code. Got me in and out pretty quickly. Of course,” she tilted her head to her other green-eyed lover, “you saw what happened when the heist didn’t go exactly as planned.”

“And why couldn’t you steal it when you got the code?” Pamela wondered, curious.

The ebony-haired beauty shrugged. “I was busy. Had some eyes on me that I’d rather keep away from the jewelry shop, and I found out it was just sold in auction. I didn’t know who bought it, and I didn’t know when they’d get it. She volunteered, alright?”

Harley allowed herself to push out of the couch and stretch her legs. “Damn, that’s comfy,” she sighed. “So, how’s my babies?”

“Yeah, I’ve been meaning to talk to you about that...” Selina started slowly. “They’re scaring my cats. They won’t come near me, now. I don’t like it.”

“I could talk to them,” Harley tried to compromise. “You wouldn’t be able to move in if they couldn’t get along; that’s why we tried this. They need to learn how to make friends. You were supposed to teach them how.”

“Yeah, I thought I could do that.” she muttered, and she almost sounded disappointed in herself. “I’ve never domesticated a fucking tiger, though.”

“They’re not all tigers; at least one of them should be trained by now! And you dress like a cat dominatrix! You should be the perfect teacher!”

“She has a point,” Pamela agreed. “You are basically calling yourself the Cat Queen.”

“I’m a wildcat who domesticates humans, Ivy,” she simpered, glaring at them both.

“I’m beginning to see a trend, here,” Harry muttered, sitting back in his seat. “I’m starting to believe that all humans hate each other.”

“Nah,” she disagreed, moving to sit in his lap. “Just us crazy ones.”

Selina ignored them. “Cats just tend to like me. I can’t promise they’d all like each other.” She looked back at Harley. “Weren’t you supposed to be getting my gem?”

“You’re the thief,” she countered. “I wouldn’t be surprised if you already took the damn thing.”

She shrugged. “Fair point.” She slid her gloved fingers into her ample cleavage, held only by the silver zipper that kept her suit together, her smirk firmly in place. “I was actually on my way out when you guys showed up... you had the windows open, so I let myself in....”

The smirk somewhat faded seconds later, as she awkwardly kept fishing through the deep pocket between her breasts, three sets of eyes on her. “Where the hell...?”

Harry, successfully amused by her confusion, reached behind his girlfriend’s ear, and pulled a
quarter-sized jade rock from between his fingers. “Didn’t even need magic for that one.”

The black-haired woman covered her pale chest, suddenly feeling violated. “Hey!”

The Boy-Who-Lived wordlessly tossed the gem towards her, and she fumbled before she caught it. “I was referring to the behind-the-ear trick. It was boring those first few years before Hermione. I had to learn a few tricks of a few trades.” He nodded towards the stranger. “Like how to distract enemies to getting what you want.”

She looked indignant as she pocketed the gem in her actual pocket, not willing to give them another show. “Whatever. I can see I’m not welcome here.”

“Someone’s had sour milk this morning,” Harley muttered, leaning back against Harry’s chest. “Relax, Selina. We’re just messin’ with ya. Harry, this is Selina Kyle, Gotham’s resident Cat Burglar.”

She crossed her arms, unintentionally lifting her ample bosom. “Fucking Vicki Vale couldn’t even try with my name.”

“Selina,” Harley patiently interrupted. “This is Harry Potter, otherwise known as the Warlock, and wizard extraordinaire.”

“Charmed,” Harry said brightly, and Pamela laughed unexpectedly at the pun.

“Uhuh,” the ebony-haired girl said sourly. “I’d say it was nice to meet you, but you just saw how it went.” She turned to Harley. “So, do you want your cats back or what? I think they’ve been away from their mother long enough.”

She looked towards Ivy, who tilted her head, as if to say she didn’t care either way about the manner. Then she turned to Harry. “So, how do you feel about a few giant beasts roaming the halls at night?”

Harry shrugged. “Nothing I’m not used to. As long as none of them go for my bits.”

“They don’t actually bite your junk off,” she said exasperatedly. “Maybe, if they’re curious, they’ll take a whiff. Ivy woke up that way, and she’s had a vendetta against Bubbles ever since. But they’re not particularly violent to the male anatomy. I’d never risk that on you. It – you – mean too much to me.” She smiled impishly at her Freudian slip, but Harry knew she was joking.

“Juliet and Bubbles?” Harry re-clarified.

“And Twilight,” she added. “Cutest little pets you ever saw.”

Selina snorted. “A fully-grown tiger, a lion, and a fucking snow leopard aren’t little, Harley. So, are you taking them off my hands?”

Harley looked up at the skylight, and saw the cloudy weather. “It looks like it might rain again, soon. Wanna take the express?”

Ivy stretched her long, smooth legs before standing up from the couch. “Other than bombing Wayne manor, I wasn’t planning on doing anything today.”

Harry set the light blonde on her feet before he stood up. “I also have to check with Tonks again in about an hour. And, of course, I have to talk Pam into not killing Wayne yet.”

“I look forward to your argument,” she said dryly, moving over to hold Harry’s hand. She reached
out with her other arm and grabbed Selina’s whip at her side. “Huh. It really is metal.”

“Because it’s a weapon,” Selina muttered, rolling her eyes. “I’d be some kind of freak if I was trying
to take down enemies with actual leather whips.” She glanced around. “Can someone tell me why
we’re holding hands like a Kumbaya?”

“Popping over to your apartment,” Harleen said happily; she might have been getting addicted to the
rush she got when being squeezed in a tube, much like flying.

“Oh.” She was silent for a moment. “Are we bursting into flames to do that?”

Harry blinked. “You want to?”

“NO!”

“No need to shout.” He closed his eyes and concentrated on a picture. “Harleen, are there snow
leopards in the zoo?”

“Uh-uh,” she shook her head. “I took their only cub. They’ve never replaced them after they got
endangered.”

“So is it a safe bet that you’ve got the only one in Gotham?”

“Yup yup. I’m unique like that.”

Selina gave her a look. Before she could say anything, Harley spoke without opening her eyes, “Not
a peep, cat lady.” The black leather-clad thief’s mouth audibly snapped shut.

Pamela Isley looked over to her newest lover, and saw him trying to hide a ghost of a smirk on his
lips. “You’re loving this, aren’t you Harry?”

He squeezed both of their hands. “Far from hating it.”

“It gets worse.”

“Counting on it.” With a thought of a black-spotted jungle-cat – something he was very familiar with
– he popped out of existence, taking the group with him.

__________________________________________________________

Omake by Rihaan:

A thin wooden cane struck the floor with gusto, and sparks emitted from the steel tip at the bottom.

“Riddle me this,” the holder announced impatiently, leaning against the cane with the curved handle
with both hands, propping himself up as he stared into space, his teeth bright and gleaming. “What
tries to evolve, to adapt with the environment, yet also tries to stay the same?” He grinned
mischievously, his eyes twinkling.

“Oh, don’t worry. I’ll wait.”

Chapter End Notes

Clarification of the last chapter – I didn’t mean I was writing without an end-goal in
mind. I meant to express that this story was going to be quite a while, and the end-game is a ways off. Harry had shown up in the story shortly after midnight, so this is now Day 2. Of course, the story will progress faster soon enough.

Note about the names of Harley’s ‘cats’: Juliet, Bubbles, and Twilight. No offense to Arleen Sorkin. Let’s see how many people get the reference, shall we?

Those looking for action; You heard the lady. It gets worse. Action feels unnecessary in this fic, but it’s Batman, so dammit, let’s do it!

Comments/Questions/Concerns/Positive Feedback? Please and Thank You!
In the edge of the shadows of Park Row, Bruce Wayne reflected on the past several minutes – the unbelievable moments that had transpired before him.

What happened the previous night – the fire, the command Warlock held, the deflection of the bullets, the fierceness of the duo at his side as they almost begged for a full-on battle, and their teasing smiles as they vanished into thin air; all of it proved that he was facing a new league of opponent.

“I’m more than unstoppable... I’m the Warlock.”

Bruce closed his eyes, shaking his head ruefully.

What happened before paled in comparison to what he had just seen minutes ago.

Now… he was unsure as to what to do at this point, as stubborn as he was to admit it. The previous night, he had discovered, in a rather unpleasant way, that The Femme Fatale – the Divas of Destruction – had a new member of their group. And he was more dangerous than the both of them combined.

Though, he probably wasn’t giving Harley and Ivy enough credit. There were certainly enough missing and misplaced assets in WayneTech’s funds to prove that they were, quite possibly, the deadliest people on earth. On the streets, they really didn’t do much – small jobs, a few statements made, and a few other crimes that he suspected, but ultimately couldn’t accuse – but when they did strike, they did it with a ferocity that brought out the best in the Batman.

And whenever he attacked one, he always brought out the best in the other, more than ready to defend, for their partner’s sake.

Now, he could see exactly how close they really were, and why they fought so fiercely for each other. And as he discovered that fact, a new ripple appeared in the form of Warlock. Now he knew what he was truly dealing with.

Nothing could convince him more that he was facing a very dangerous man – a man that could seemingly talk to a different country without any technology, raise the dead, and has a seemingly endless supply of his power and influence. Any of those alone would be a daunting task to overcome.

But it didn’t matter. None of it mattered. The information coming in from Captain Gordon was something that could be very useful. He needed every bit of information if he hoped to track them down. By the sound of things, they were living in the same home. Unfortunately for him, it seemed very unlikely that he would ever be able to follow them.

He had to have a history somewhere else, likely in Europe; he also had to have done something to catch the duo’s attention in the first place.

He paused. The heist. It had to be it. It was so outside of Harley’s character, the act of sneaking in and out completely undetected, that she had to have learned it from someone.

He was with her that night. It would explain how she quickly escaped their sights.

He needed to go to the crime scene – the police may have gathered what evidence they could, but he
had more to work with now.

He could see what they were becoming, and they needed to be stopped. He had a great deal of planning to do.

But first, he had to find Nigma – and quick.

“What…? What am I looking at?” Selina asked the uncomfortably silent room carefully. “Pam? Harls? Can someone tell me what I’m looking at?”

No one responded. She probably wouldn’t have been able to hear them, let alone be pleased by whatever answer she got. Already disoriented by the uneasy feeling of popping from one place to another, she didn’t need another disconcerting moment in its place.

Juliet leaned forward on her front paws, before slowly strutting forward. Her piercing red eyes were on the new presence, tense and ready, while her ears perked up at the sound of her followers staying close. She began her slow inspection of their subject, her tail twitching in excitement as she started to circle her newest… inquisition.

She stopped abruptly as Twilight bravely marched forward, and looked into the subject’s eyes with her own steely grey.

The mysterious black cat didn’t flinch – it just stared back curiously, its entire form relaxed, yet intimidating, as it looked down at the smaller, by comparison, form.

Juliet licked a striped paw as she waited impatiently for the staring contest to finish, before looking up to her owner.

Harley was knocked out of her transfixed stupor by her tigress’s stare, and looked away from the green-eyed panther. “Did somebody say something?”

Ivy flinched in surprise as a tail brushed against her bare leg, and her head snapped towards the golden lion peering up at her with icy blue eyes. “I missed you too, you little squirt.”

“Hey!” Harleen complained indignantly. “I don’t hear her calling you anything!”

Selina’s eye twitched. “Maybe because you don’t speak cat.”

“I’m not even pointing out the irony,” Ivy muttered, leaning down on one knee to brush her hand against Bubbles’s soft golden coat.

They heard an unmistakable growl, which came out more like a chuckle, as the large black cat was licked on the side of his face by the snow leopard beside him.

“I think they like him,” Harleen noted, amused. “More than me, I think. Though, if I had the powers of a Manimal, I think they’d be more receptive to me, too.”

Ivy tried to make sense of the sleek, large, black panther with familiar green eyes, still absentlv petting the purring lion. “When… when we get back. I want you to write down every single trick you have. It’s okay to surprise others – I don’t like surprises.”

The panther did an equivalent of a shrug, mindful of the leopard’s head resting against his shoulders, and looked back over to Juliet, whose eyes were back on him.

She began circling him again. His eyes followed her imperiously, a relaxed confidence in the air
while he was being stalked upon.

In the end, she stopped at Harley’s feet, and her nostrils flared. She looked up at Harley, and back at the imposing figure.

“Hah!” Selina boasted. “She smells him all over you!”

Harleen reached her hand down to pet her youngest feline. “Note to self – sex and hygiene aren’t best friends. Isn’t that right, Jules-y?”

There was a groan, and everyone’s head snapped back to the green-eyed wizard, who now had a relaxed Twilight across his human legs, stroking her gently from head to tail with his human hands. “A baby voice? Really? I suppose I shouldn’t be surprised, but…” he made a tired groan again, conveying his feelings on the matter.

“We can’t all be Catboys,” she said scathingly, narrowing her eyes. “Was that a trick you learned ten minutes ago? What the hell was that?”

“I can transform my hair, my eyes, and my own skin,” Harry explained, scratching lightly behind the leopard’s ear. “If I tried, I could look like you. An animal transformation doesn’t sound too impossible.”

Harley shook her head, trying to make the headache go away. “Trust me – it does.”

“I’ve just got the one,” he said quickly. “You know – if that means anything. I’m not going to turn into a cockroach in bed or anything.”

“Oh, that’s cute,” Ivy tittered, standing back up. “You still think you have bed privileges.”

“You guys sleep in the same bed?” Selina wondered, grinning like her namesake. “Well, at least he’s housebroken.”

Harry looked around at the three mildly irritated women. “I feel like I’m being ganged up on.”

Juliet purred lazily under her owner’s fingers, and Harry chuckled. “Well, yeah, I suppose the ‘good way’ is out of the question, now, isn’t it?”

“A book,” Harleen muttered. “It’s going to take an entire fucking book, isn’t it? To list all the powers you have.”

Harry shook his head. “Actually, Hermione’s been keeping detailed notes. It’s kind of emasculating, just writing down what I can and can’t do.”

Bubbles, feeling ignored, moved over to Harry, calmly tucking her head into his outstretched palm.

Ivy leaned against the chair in the sitting room, trying to absorb the astounding sight before her. “Why? Because it’s just not impressive enough?”

“It’s not that,” Harry tried to defend himself. “But it kind of is. I mean, she’s just going for the basics. I can turn into a Shadow Panther, I’m a Metamorphmagus, I can do wandless magic – but what about the other stuff? No mention on how I can cook, or how good I am with my hands, or how well I can sing. Okay, I can’t really sing, but a mention of the things that aren’t so… strange, helps. I mean, most of the things that I do weren’t things I could do without a lot of help.”

“What do you mean by that?” Harley wondered, sitting with Juliet, rubbing her upright back.
“Magical rituals or something? Virgin blood and frog tongues?”

“We tend to use salamander tongues more, actually. And virgin blood doesn’t mean much in rituals, from what Daphne could find. No, it’s more to do with me being bitten by quite a few magical creatures. After I found out I had a Horcrux, I began to lack in inhibitions. It wasn’t until I met Fawkes, my phoenix, when I really started taking drastic measures. When you have a dark lord after you, and you’re partially immortal, you do anything you can to get a leg up.” He looked down to the white mountain cat; she seemed to have fallen asleep on his legs. “Unfortunately, I don’t have powers that would stop my legs from falling asleep. Or super-strength.”

Harley looked around awkwardly. “Well, whaddya want us to do about it? Twilight isn’t exactly portable.”

“How did you get them here?” Harry inquired. “Wherever here is?”

Selina fished out her jade stone and put it on her shelf, before turning back to the two trios. “We’re in an old building complex that I spruced up a bit.” At Ivy’s raised brow, she frowned. “Remember when I was looking for a room?”

Pamela looked around the dark room some more. It had a lot of high-end furniture, in a low-end shack. The television set upon a polished oak cabinet, which sat upon a Persian rug. The dusty floor below it, however, discredited the otherwise elegant view.

The green-skinned girl sighed. “Harley, what do you think?”

“She keeps the whip and claws away from me, and we don’t have a problem,” she said simply, scratching the young tigress’s chin.

She eyed her boyfriend warily. “Harry?”

“Your house,” he said simply. “I’m a visitor. Sorry for not telling you before about my form. Just thought it would be a pleasant surprise, is all. The moment I heard you had a pet, I made the decision not to mention it.”

She could tell that he was genuinely upset at their reactions, and her voice softened. “It was a surprise. We just had an overreaction. It was… unexpected.”

Harleen laughed heartily. “As opposed to everything else you’ve done since you got here.”

“Here?” Selina looked at her weirdly. “He just got here. You mean here in Gotham?”

Harley shook her head. “Nope. America. As you can tell by the accent, he’s not from around here.”

“And don’t ask how we met,” Harry quipped. “We’re still thinking of a cover-story.”

The ebony-haired beauty opened her mouth; then closed it silently. “I don’t want to know. So, do I have a room?”

Pamela nodded. “Sure. Fair warning – Harley’s in heat.”

Her girlfriend blushed furiously. “Well you don’t need to say it like that! It’s not like you two are helping!”

“We’re actively not helping,” The raven-haired teen supported her claim. “We’re encouraging it, really.”
“As if I was saying it like it was a bad thing.” Pamela smirked. “So, while the walls are soundproofed, there will always be a standing ‘Enter Before Knocking’ policy enforced.”

Selina nodded vigorously, grateful. “No problem. I won’t even knock – I’ll just stay the hell away.”

“I should probably be insulted by that,” Harry muttered nonchalantly, still scratching the purring lion’s head between the ears, “considering you had a completely different tune before you met me.”

The spandex-clad thief hummed to herself. “And then I met you.”

“Play nice, kids,” Harleen chastised the two, before hugging her pet tiger to herself. “I’ve missed you so much, Jules-y. Yes I ha-ave!”

Harry shrugged at the tigress’s pointed look. “Yeah, I guess it’s something I have to get used to.”

“Oh, shut it! She likes the way I talk to her. She thinks it’s cute! Don’t you, Julesey Woolsey~”

“I think it’s time to go now, Harley,” Ivy interrupted, pinching the bridge of her nose. She was starting to think that she liked it better when the dear girl was sexed out. “To our home,” she said pointedly to Harry. She hadn’t forgotten that ‘visitor’ nonsense. “We can pick up this stuff later.”

He looked around. “I’ve never shrunken any electronics before. I don’t want to risk it. I can handle the furniture, though.”

“I’ll handle the more… personal items,” Selina purred, “and I could always steal more furniture. Though it would be a pretty good challenge for me. Getting all these things to the outskirts of Gotham…”

Harley still had a pressing question to pose – “What about Selina’s cats? They don’t get along with my babies. I don’t think that arrangement’s gonna work long.”

“They’ll get along,” Harry assured her, subtly slipping out of the massive weight of the snow leopard on his legs, having successfully put the cat to into a near comatose sleep. “They were just rather defensive of Juliet’s… cravings.”

The three girls stared at him weirdly, and he felt a sense of déjà vu. He nervously cleared his throat. “She’s in heat.”

After a few moments of silence, Harleen looked at her dear tiger, looked at Harry, and spoke. “You’re not fucking my cat.”

Harry laughed; a rich, pure laugh. “I didn’t even consider that thought!”

She raised a skeptical eyebrow. “Really? Why? She not good enough for you?”

He let out a mirthful scoff. “I wouldn’t know – I’m human.”

Harleen eyed the shape-shifter incredulously. “So was that another illusion?”

“No,” he explained, “I was an actual panther. I could talk to them and everything, if they bothered to speak. Every witch or wizard has at least one form. Hermione’s is an eagle and a lion.”

“And your other form?” Ivy wondered, and Selina would be lying to herself if she wasn’t a little curious.

“Just the one,” Harry shrugged, “and it seems that no matter what I do, the one form is all I can
achieve. Since our magical cores are linked through our spiritual core, I can do her forms and she can do mine. With a twist.”

“Of course there’s a twist,” Harley smirked, expecting no less. “Let me guess? With the powers combined, when the blue moon rises and the stars are in the shape of a lightning bolt, you can turn into a dragon?”

“That would be pretty cool,” Harry said wistfully, before he shook his head, his loose ebony hair swishing against his ears. “No. I don’t really need a dragon. I’ve had enough of dealing with those. What happens is Hermione’s eyesight, in her eagle form or not, can see miles ahead. My panther form can run faster than Hermione’s lion form. Little indiscretions like that.”

Selina nodded knowingly. “Okay, that’s odd. Lionesses are the second-fastest cats in the world. I’m also assuming that you both can speak to animals even when not in that form?”

He nodded. “Not very useful unless you’re looking for someone.”

“Speaking of which,” Selina inquired, “Who is Hermione? Your sister?”

“Close,” the Boy-Who-Lived admitted slowly, “Or rather, closer. To the outside eye, she’s my best friend.”

“… Am I still considered an outsider?” She wondered incredulously after a few seconds of silence.

The green-eyed boy took a moment to consider. “Yes,” he said in the end. “I don’t know much about you, nor you about me. I don’t know your intentions, nor do you know mine.”

Her black gloves rubbed her chin. “Fair enough, I guess.” She grinned. “But I’m going to guess that she’s your friend with benefits.”

“Huh,” Harleen said plainly. “Never considered that term before.”

“I’ve always thought it the same thing,” Pamela argued, shrugging. “Friends who have sex. The only thing missing is the monogamous commitment. Technically, I guess, that’s a term that describes us.”

“You wouldn’t consider us committed?” Harry asked them curiously.

“In the classical sense – no,” the blonde admitted, “though I can tell you quite a few psychiatric treatment doctors that might argue with that. Still, I suppose in a more modern era, it’s a less relevant term. Commitment is overrated.”

“Says the girl who was in a one-girl dedicated relationship two days ago,” Ivy pointed out with a sly grin. She looked over to Bubbles and Twilight, who were purring under Harry’s gentle hands. “Though you make it very difficult to regret our actions – so far.”

“So far,” he confirmed. “You don’t know how bad my luck can run most times.”

“Hot blonde, smokin’ exotic redhead, and a dominatrix that takes her role too seriously,” Harley ticked them off. “All in about thirty-six hours. I look forward to seeing what you consider good luck.”

“Don’t involve me in your little stable,” Selina held up her hands. “I plan on paying for my room with money, thank you.”

Ivy rolled her eyes. “You done pimping out our man, Harley? We’ve still got an appointment for
today, and we need to go get dressed.”

The young blonde patted the tiger once more on the head, then jumped up. “Where to, Red?”

“Well,” she began, “if we’re going to murder Bruce Wayne, I’ll assume we need some reinforcements. Getting into his mansion probably won’t be easy.”

“It won’t be,” Harry shook his head. “Which is one of the many reasons we can’t kill him yet.”

She crossed her arms, lightly frowning. “I’m listening.”

“Yeah,” Selina agreed, leaning against the wall. “I kind of want to hear this.”

Harley tilted her head. “I can see why you wouldn’t want to kill him now, but you said that he could be useful. How? Do you see him joining our side anytime soon? Or are we talking mind-control here?”

He raised an eyebrow. “You have a very active imagination,” he smirked.

She waved it off. “It’s always the crazy ones.” She crossed her arms, much like her girlfriend, with the exception of a soft smile on her lips. “Well?”

“I’m not going to lie; I’m betting the idea is tempting to you. When Hermione gets back to us with the comics, it’s going to be even more tempting. We’ll know everything that happened, and everything that could potentially happen. I’m betting I won’t be in it, so I can only imagine that there’s going to be a lot of changes starting today.”

“Did I miss something?” Selina raised her hand.

“You’re supposed to raise your hand first,” Harley pointed out.

She shrugged. “I never went to school. So what’s all this about a comic? Everything that could potentially happen, you said? You’re telling me that you can see into the future?”

“Even where I come from, soothsayers are widely considered skeptical,” Harry chuckled, “Including me. I get the occasional bad feeling of impending doom, but other than that, I couldn’t tell you what you’re doing tomorrow. Long story short, you’ve probably been catalogued in a series based on the adventures of the guy you fight on a weekly basis. He’s the star, and you’re all the antagonists.”

“Which is bullshit, by the way,” Harleen sniffed. “He’s a guy in a costume. That’s generic. It’s not like he’s the world’s only superhero or something, and he’s not even super! It shouldn’t be a comic, it should be a movie, and I should be the star. Cecilia Sunbeam stars as the world renowned Daring Demoness Harley Quinn!”

“You put thought into that,” Pamela said slowly. “Do I get a part in your feature?”

“Trilogy,” she corrected her, “and of course. The Seductive Siren, Poison Ivy, played by Roxanne Snow.”

Her lips quirked. “Siren?”

“A glimmer of playfulness sparkled in her eyes. “In my world, babe, you’re ascreamer.”

“I don’t think I’d mind that,” the Boy-Who-Lived slowly admitted with a grin. “But before we get to your own movie trilogy, we’re going to have to get to a place where we’re in control. Police will be a problem, yes. And so will Batman. But what about the others?”
“Others? You mean the other superheroes?”

He shook his head. “They’re a much bigger problem that we’ll have to deal with later. I’m talking about the guys who want to do what we’re about to do. We try to take this city, the ones who already have it, or are looking forward to taking it, will be threatened by us.”

Ivy and Harley seemed to absorb that information, while Selina still looked confused. “You still haven’t told me about these comic books.” Irritation seeped into her voice. “You telling me we’re all being recorded or something? Somebody else out there knows who all of us are?”

Harry frowned. He knew she would have to be introduced to his world sooner rather than later. “I don’t know. Not yet. I only know of his lore, and that he seems to be a popular figure where I’m from, and no, it’s not from this world.”

She blinked. “You’re an alien?”

Harry, not really having any other reference, nodded.

The spandex-clad thief shook her head wryly. “Now things are starting to make sense around here!” She looked over to Harleen. “So how’s the… probing?”

She didn’t show a hint of embarrassment. “Really? That’s the best pun you could come up with? Probing? What do you expect me to say? ‘Out of this world?’ You can do better, Kyle.”

The ebony-haired girl flushed. “Give me a break, alright! I’ve never met an alien before, when the fuck am I gonna get the chance to say it again?”

The blonde only rolled her eyes. “Kind of my point.”

Ivy had by now approached Harry, and was leaning against him, watching the two bicker. “We could just leave them here, for a while,” she suggested with a whisper. “She sent her cats here so they would get acclimated to Selina and her pets. I think Harley should get the same treatment as well.”

“I can hear you,” Harley whispered to her girlfriend, just as lowly, as if keeping the same secret. “Whispering only helps when we’re yelling.”

“Then how come no one heard me when I asked if we were ready to go?”

Selina whistled through her teeth a calm, low whistle, and a second later, a brown-spotted tabby zipped from behind the television and leaped into her waiting arms. She began stroking its harried fur delicately, before looking back at Harley. “Believe it or not, this one was the least afraid of my cats. Sasha will be my only carry-on.”

The green-eyed wizard nodded approvingly at the useful skill, before reaching down to rub his hand across Twilight’s vast spine. “Everybody hold hands – you know the deal.”

After some confusion on the jungle cats’ sakes, and a final look at the run-down shack, Selina nodded, and the significantly larger group disapparated.

--Flashback, Pre-Veil--

Harry caught himself as he almost slammed forward onto the business end of his fork.
“You okay, Harry?” Parvati asked worriedly, putting her quill back in the inkwell next to her essay, her half-eaten meal forgotten. She eyed him carefully. “Did you get any sleep last night?”

“I’m alright, Pad,” He slurred, “was just up a bit late. No problems.”

She frowned. “Is it about Hermione?” she asked softly, eying the Great Hall for any onlookers.

“Hermione?” Susan wondered, sitting across from Harry. “Is she alright? I assumed she went to class early.”

Parvati shook her head. “There was a family emergency – she had to go home for the weekend. That’s what Lavender told me, anyway.”

“Oh,” Susan gasped. “Harry, do you know what happened?”

He shook his head, not trusting himself to speak, considering that it was a cover story he had convinced Lavender to spread. Hermione, physically, had gotten better, but she still wouldn’t awaken. It was the only thing he could think of, and had been thinking of for the past three days.

He had told her a lot of things that had happened at the Dursley home, and his journey abroad, but now, she knew… everything. She knew the worst of the worst, now.

Harry didn’t know if he would ever tell her about ‘Harry Hunting’. He didn’t think he would ever explain that while Dudley got bored of any new toys he had very quickly throughout his lifetime, his favorite toy, that lasted for an astonishing three months, was the fire-poker, that was only discarded when it was far too bent – of course, Harry was to blame, for not being fragile enough. He never wanted to tell Hermione about the breaks, the snaps, the internal bleeding that he had to endure on his sixth birthday, when he innocently asked his aunt what day it was, literally not having a clue as to what day it was.

But if there was one thing that he had promised never to tell anyone, it was the ruddy cupboard.

He honestly didn’t know what point he had stopped worrying about his friend’s well-being, and started worrying about his own secrets revealed to her, and he felt ashamed of himself for it. But it didn’t stop him from worrying, never-the-less.

He still felt her lips on his three days ago – their first kiss. It was out of nowhere – and, for a moment, he thought it was truly just a ploy to get him to shut up. But he knew her.

However, it now seemed that she knew him better than anyone else. Maybe she knew that he wanted a kiss? Could she have done that just to appease him? Could it have been pity? A spark of emotion, generated from his soul half in her body? Could anything she try to feel in the future simply be an extension of his own emotions? Could she never have her own feelings expressed again, and she would be nothing but a vessel?

His mind had been in turmoil for the past three days with these pressing exasperating questions. And now, on a Monday, he had to deal with classes.

He had ordered Snape to go on sick leave, so he could spend all of his time on looking over Hermione, but it would be suspicious if both he and Hermione were conveniently sick.

On the plus side, he finally had confirmation from Tonks – The rat was flooed to Madam Bones the previous night. In a matter of days, Sirius would be free. He seemed to be relatively comfortable inside Potter Mansion, but Harry was sure he’d like the idea of stretching his legs a bit. Maybe get a place of his own. Sirius, bless him, could never be much of a father figure. Harry had been more of
the parent in their relationship during the times he wasn’t walking Padfoot, or when Hermione was at school and he needed a friend to play with.

Perhaps it was best if Sirius went off and lived his own life – the life he was never allowed to have. He seemed particularly pleased when he read that he was merely *national* criminal.

Harry Potter – all alone, once again. As it probably should have been from the beginning.

“*You’re not alone, Harry.*”

He didn’t bother to react. He had been hearing Hermione’s voice all night, in short statements, once or twice an hour, and he resolved to himself to take a dreamless sleep potion tonight.

“Harry,” Parvati said quietly, and he lifted his head weakly to meet her brown, curious eyes. “Would you rather take the day off? I’ll take your notes for you.”

He wanted to shake his head, but it was far too heavy to put it in such a motion. So he just stared.

She bit her lip nervously. “You and Hermione have the highest marks in our year so far. I don’t think they’d mind if you played hooky once.”

Susan, unbeknownst to Harry, had gotten up and stood behind him. “Let’s take you back to the common room,” she said gently. Harry, unable to do anything, allowed Susan to lift him to his feet. He swayed a little, and Susan caught him, and he quickly righted himself. He quickly decided that having someone carry him everywhere was not something he wanted repeated anytime soon.

He wildly shook his head and sleepily thanked Susan, before stumbling towards the doors of the Great Hall, ignorant of the murmurs and whispers around him.

The Fat Lady’s portrait was finally in his sight when he noticed that Susan and Parvati was behind him – and he only noticed when they began talking to a third person.

“Are you sure you should be with us right now?” Susan said carefully, her eyes glancing back and forth between Daphne and Harry’s faltering walk.

The platinum blonde had her arms crossed as she eyed the boy in front of him. “They won’t be a problem. Is he alright?”

Parvati shook her head. “He called me Padma earlier. He must be out of it.”

Daphne tried not to show her surprise. Sometimes, even she got the two confused, when not looking or listening for the tells, but Harry had never mistaken one for the other – he made it look easy.

“Does this have to do with Hermione’s absence?”

“Word spreads fast,” Susan admitted. “So you know about her family emergency?”

She frowned. “Makes more sense than what I heard.”

“What did you hear?” the redhead inquired.

“I heard that she was injured when she and Harry battled that troll together.”

The two girls were in a shocked silence when Harry murmured the password to the Fat Lady (“*Lionheart.*”). He carefully leaned against the swinging portrait passageway and turned back to the girls. “Thanks,” he muttered tiredly and awkwardly. He had no idea what they were talking about, but he assumed it was something big by the way they were looking at him.
“Did you…” Susan tried to phrase her words carefully, knowing how private he and Hermione were about some things. “Is Hermione okay, Harry?”

Even through restless eyes, he could see the sincerity in hers. “She’s better,” he promised, yawning as he did so – not bothering to cover his mouth.

The girls took no offense, but they did look concerned. “You should get some sleep, Harry,” Parvati said gently, but firmly. “You look a wreck.”

“I am,” he promised again, before he promptly fainted dead, not hearing their shrieks of surprise and worry.

“ You’re never alone. We’ll take care of you.”

~Post-Veil, Hogwarts~

Severus eyed the misty archway before him with disdain.

“Such power,” he murmured in reverence, almost admiring the ancient artifact. “A doorway into another world. The Dark Lord is now gone, and dear Harold taken into another life. The mysteries you hold…”

Daphne cleared her throat. “It’s not that mysterious anymore. Fleur and I figured it out, with help from Tonks and Harry.”

Tracey leaned against the wall with her arms crossed, eying the veil with pure hatred. “I don’t know whether to destroy the bloody thing when we’re done with it or use it against the rest of the followers.”

Severus joined his hands behind his back. “I wouldn’t put it behind some of them to have a Horcrux of their own.”

“That’s the thing that we discovered,” Daphne told her Head of House, before pulling out a chain attached to a locket. “A week ago, this locket was heavy. Now, it’s noticeably lighter. And that was our first clue.” She pushed some light strands of blondish blue hair from her eyes as she handed him the locket, which he took with minutely trembling hands. “It’s gone. The Horcrux is completely gone.”

His fingers ran over the emerald stones that laid an ‘S’ form, feeling a chill up his spine at the serpentine design, before he sneered. “Did it escape?”

She shook her head. “It’s always a possibility. But the more likely answer is that it’s gone. Gone with Harry’s soul. It couldn’t take that degree of separation, and it was ripped from Voldy himself.”

Snape cringed. Even now, it was strange to hear a Slytherin call the Dark Lord by the name ‘Voldy’. “What of Mister Potter? The same should have happened to him and Miss Granger.”

“Yes, it should have,” a slightly accented voice agreed with them. They turned to see Miss Delacour stalk into the room with purpose, her eyes locked on the veil. A brilliantly gleaming tiara sat askew upon her head, loose strands covering her stunning visage. It didn’t ruin her beauty, or mar her tired stare. “Harry and Hermione would have died two days ago, if he had gone through this veil unprotected.” She closed her eyes and breathed a sigh of relief. “However, thankfully, they are protected by Death itself.”
Snape tried not to show his confusion, but Daphne seemed to pick up on it anyway. “When I was a child,” she began, “I read a story about three brothers, and how they managed to trick Death. One of the prizes awarded was a cloak of invisibility that lasts forever. The other was a stone that communicates with the dead. The last was a wand that made the castor unbeatable.” Her eyes flashed dangerously. “I was there when it happened at the Ministry. Hermione was setting traps for the Death Eaters. ‘Expellium Wards’, she called them; Domes that could disarm you the second you stepped through, leaving you open to attack. That way, if any of us got caught in the almost unnoticeable ward, we could still protect ourselves, but very few others could use Wandless Magic to that degree. Dumbledore walked through that room, saw his wand fly out his hand, and I’ve never seen him so grave before. He looked straight at me and asked me who put up the ward. I was rather busy fighting Rodolphus, but I don’t think he believed me when I told him that I didn’t know. He picked up his wand, and I saw him struggle as he performed simple charms on the ward. The fact that he never found out who cast it is evidence enough that Dumbledore’s wand, oddly, became useless to him.”

Her eyes burned a hole through the back of his head, and Severus, had he not been an accomplished Occlumens, would have felt violated at that very moment. “He still doesn’t know that Hermione is the true owner of that wand – the Elder Wand.”

He took a moment to absorb that information. “And the Resurrection Stone?”

“The ring,” Fleur murmured with confidence. “The Gaunt Ring. That’s not their coat of arms etched into it. It’s the symbol of the three hallows. I don’t know how it can be activated, but it should. Harry and Hermione cannot be touched as long as one or both of them have that protection. Even death’s portal knew that.”

Severus blinked. “And what of the Dark Lord?”

“His soul was a leech,” Daphne spat, “and it was treated as such. It was always sucking off of Harry and Hermione’s soul, never actually being a part of it. It was never truly connected.”

“That’s our thoughts, anyway,” Fleur disclaimed, sighing tirelessly into her hands. She seemed to remember something, and removed the familiar diadem from the top of her head. “Hermione will be pleased to know that this works.”

“We’ll have to tell Hermione about Sirius,” Tracey said depressingly. “She’ll probably take it better than Harry would.”

“The ritual will take more than a few days.” She looked pointedly at Snape, once again. “Which is why we summoned you here.”

He raised an eyebrow. “I am no alchemist, Miss Greengrass. I would not have the slightest idea on how to use the Stone.”

She shook her head. “I figured as much. No, we need a distraction for Dumbledore. The press will provide that for us. We just have to give them the bait. Unlock Voldemort’s door. Let everyone know what happened to their precious Lord.”

His throat tightened. He would have to do it quick; he’d rather not be there for any reactions. “And how will that get back to the media?”

“Lavender already knows the story. All she needs is a picture. Or a pensieve memory.”

“And what of the Alchemist?”
She shook her head. “We’ll have to talk to Hermione about it.”

“Flammel?”

“Maybe. If he’s willing to help.” She shrugged. “We don’t have him on a payroll or anything. We’d probably have to give him an artifact in return. We left on good enough terms.”

Severus eyed the veil one last time before stalking out of the room.

Tracey sighed tireslessly in the silence. “We’ve been holding up rather well. Daph?”

“Better than I would’ve ever thought,” she chuckled. “I suppose when we signed up for this, we should have suspected something to happen. This year has been rather uneventful.”

A soft glow emitted from Fleur’s delicate hand. “Lucky you. I’ve had to deal with nosy classmates. And Gabrielle would not stop talking about her upcoming maturity.”

The younger girls eyed her pulsing hand. “Fleur?” Daphne started slowly.

Her sights were set on the archway in front of her. “This thing; what have you done with it?” She inquired testily.

Daphne considered her words. “Nothing too experimental. Just seeing who can go in and out, and where they might lead.”

“So you’ve never tried a spell?”

“Objects? Yes. Spells? No.”

Flames flickered into life in her palm, before a raging ball of heat swirled between her fingers. “No time like the present.”

---Present Day, Outskirts of Gotham---

“Seriously, though. You’re not having sex with Juliet.”

Harry feigned sadness. “What’s the point of turning into an animal if I can’t move to the jungle and assert myself as the king?”

Ivy snorted. “You practically did when you came here.”

Harley got the hint, and rolled her eyes. “Yeah, yeah, I get it. You’re not as into being a cat as Selina, I guess.” She laughed at the irony.

“If anything,” Harry shrugged, “Sirius would be your biggest problem. He’s sort of looked down upon in my world, which makes it difficult for him to get any attention from the fairer sex. His animagus form is a dog.”

Ivy slipped off her flip-flops and sat on their bed, groaning as she did so. “And to think, we were only going to see a dinner and a movie today.”

“We still can,” he suggested. “Or we could cause some havoc and draw out Batman again. We need to talk.”

“Don’t bother,” she shook her head. “He only shows up at night.”
Harry looked confused. “Then who shows up during the day?”

“Er – the police?”

“That’s a bit… odd, don’t you think?”

Harley moved over to her drawer, where Harry remembered her dedicated outfits to be. “I’ve stopped trying to make sense of this city a long time ago. Makes things easier. So, where to?”

“Actually…”

Pamela raised an eyebrow at his mischievous grin. “Last time you looked like that, you showed us the Warlock.” She began to smile. “What do you have planned?”

“Any idea where Eddie might be?”

“He told me – in a riddle. Why?”

“And we’re live in five, four, three, two - ”

A short pause. “This is Vicki Vale from GCTV News, reporting live from the scene of Gotham’s latest chaotic rampage. Until now, we haven’t been able to give you any close-up footage of the crime scene since the now infamous bird’s eye view of this very spot – The spot where a new criminal mastermind infiltrated the city of Gotham working with Poison Ivy and Harley Quinn – there isn’t much information we can gather, but for now, he is known simply as the Warlock.”

She brushed her shoulder-length hair back, looking perturbed as she glanced behind her. “No information has been released to the public as of yet. The police are struggling to find answers to the mysterious appearance and disappearance of the new threat. Behind me, you can see the taped off scene, including the police cars inside the tape. Those cars were the ones destroyed beyond repair in what appeared to be a shockwave caused by a clap of the Warlock’s hands. There is no trace of gunpowder or radiation, so we don’t have any other choice to believe that there was no other – ”

“It was an earthquake,” Harvey grunted, walking past them towards the scene. “Nothin’ to see here, people.”

“Really, Bullock?” She put her free hand on her hip, not amused. “Do you really expect the people to believe that?”

“I don’t expect you to believe anything! Get that camera outta here!”

“So I’m guessing you’re not willing to answer a few questions for us?” She looked towards the camera. “Detective Bullock, in his ever-reaching wisdom, does not believe in freedom of speech.”

“I believe in free speech,” he snarled. “You just need ta’ shut up when you do it!”

She huffed into the mic. “As it appears we won’t be getting any information from Gotham’s finest, especially while he’s busy with his donuts – ”

Bullock scowled and held the bag of confectionary treats to himself, stalking off to the team.

” – we will now take it back to the court house, where the newly elected District Attorney Dent will address this matter. Hopefully he will have more answers on who – or what – we are dealing with, and if he doesn’t, we will certainly find something for you, the viewers.”
“We’re clear.”

She flicked off the microphone and pocketed her weapon of choice. Glancing around, she noticed the sheer… inactivity of the policemen involved, and sighed heavily to herself. “We’re all screwed.”

“Maybe,” the cameraman agreed, rubbing his shoulder, “but I don’t think that’s the info the people want.”

“They could use a dose of reality,” she grumbled. “Is it me, or is the fact that an insane woman threatening to essentially eliminate mankind until the plants are left is the one is starting to make sense?”

Before the cameraman could respond, he winced in pain. “Ah! Damn thing!” He removed the offending equipment from his ear and eyed the small earpiece with disdain. “I think the whole damn radio’s broken again. These are new.”

She rolled her eyes. “I told them to get this fixed. We can’t continue if you don’t know when to turn on the camera.”

“We still got yours,” he reminded her. “I’ll call them and tell them to give you the signal instead.”

She looked displeased, but couldn’t really argue to his point. She pulled her radio from her jean pocket, what the earpiece would have been plugged to, had she not gotten rid of them months ago, and turned it on. “I’ll do it myself. Got a spare?”

He checked his carry-on bag and pulled out a spare wrapped cord. “Hopefully, this won’t pop in your ear.”

“And you wonder why I don’t use them,” she grumbled, but gratefully took the offered buds. “Live stories don’t need breaks. Why do you have breaks?”

“Everyone loves the new DA,” he muttered, picking back up his camera. “That’s when our ratings are at the highest. Nothing but…” he trailed off as he realized who was talking to.

“Hopeless housewives and teenage girls who need a strong man to tell them everything is okay?”

She fluttered her eyelashes.

He laughed heartily. “Something like that!”

“Well, you did make that promise.”

“Then fuck that,” she scowled. “Pretty boy can’t arrest anyone without any evidence, or hell, even proof of existence! Let’s look deeper. There’s got to be something here, and I’m going to find it.”

“Yeah, you did make that promise.”

She furrowed her brows, her fingers pressing into the hearing device embedding in her ear. She tried to recognize the voice. “Hello? Can you hear me?”

“Yes, yes I can.”

She narrowed her eyes. “How? There’s no mic on this thing.”

“Magic.”

She glanced around subtly, ignoring her co-worker as her keen eyes scouted the area. “Warlock? Or some wannabe?”
“You fuckin’ serious?” her co-worker muttered in surprise, but she waved him off, waiting to hear his response.

“Either way, I don’t think you want to find out the answer to that.”

“I’m an investigative journalist; of course I want to know.” She shifted on her feet, and glanced back to the police, who were all sitting on the hoods of the decimated cars and sharing Bullock’s donuts on their lunch break.

“Don’t bother, honey,” a different voice soothed in her ear, unabashedly female. “The ones doing any work are either at the station or elsewhere, actually looking for us.”

She was familiar with that voice, through the echoes of Gotham as she threatened the livelihood of men everywhere. “Pamela?”

“You read my file.” She sounded surprised.

“Journalist.”

“And a good one at that. If I recall correctly, you were the one that actually broke the news of the Mayor’s wife going missing, and found his mistress.”

She walked off from the scene, running her fingers through her blond hair as she steadily collected herself, conversing with one of the most dangerous women in the world. “She was a friend, and I thought he had killed her. That was a technicality. Wait – how do you know about that?”

“About her being kidnapped? Well, it was on the news – you reported it after all.”

“No,” she shook her head, a part of her knowing that someone was looking at her, “why do you bring up that specific case? Did… did you kidnap her?”

“Clever girl.”

“What did you do to her?”

“More like what she threatened to do to us. She wanted my dear Harley’s number. Poor girl had nightmares for weeks.”

She frowned. She wasn’t sure what to believe, but she knew she was getting some kind of truth. As she talked to her friend about the case, there were so many inconsistencies in the descriptions and the chain of events that she had to let the story go, not wanting to put her friend in a bad light. She swore up and down that she couldn’t tell her what really happened, but that it was nothing dangerous or harmful.

Vicki could only guess that it was something as simple as a getaway or an affair, as there were no bruises anywhere except for rope burns on her wrists. She had to make up a story herself, to cover the mayor’s wife, and in the end, got a promotion from the story with the description and events that she ‘acquired’, along with breaking the story to begin with.

And by the way Isley talked, she had no doubt that she knew the entire story was false. “Alright,” she muttered. “Is this blackmail? I’m honored.”

There was a chuckle on the other line. “No. This is an opportunity. You promised those people some more information. And lucky you; you get to follow up.”
“You praise me for my journalism, and spoonfeed me?”

“No – I’m rewarding you. You could be useful to our cause. We need a mouthpiece.”

“At least you’re not sugarcoating it.” She leaned against the news van. “What’s the message?”

“Our message,” another familiar voice chimed in, in her damn near trademarked accent, “is a simple one. We’ll relay it to ya when you’re live.”

“And I don’t get the privilege of knowing what I’m going to say?”

“The resources you get now aren’t much,” the male voice sounded again. “If you’re fired tomorrow, you’ll only bat an eye at the easy access to tech equipment. But in two minutes, you’re going to be the face of this crisis. You’ll be a household name. We plan on making the headlines a lot in the following weeks, and you have direct access to it before it even happens.”

“What does that mean?” She bit her lip. “Like an attack? I won’t be used for that.”

“We don’t need to announce an attack. We just do it. No, we want to give Gotham a chance, first. A fair chance.”

“More of a chance than they deserve,” The voice of Harley Quinn continued. “Still, we’ah nice people. Eliminating mankind ‘til the plants are left is an option ‘B’.”

She was very aware that Quinn was using her own, mostly sarcastic words, against her. “Why relay the message through me? Why not Ryder, or anyone else?”

“Because you’re one of tha good ones.”

She was confused by that statement. “What, Jack’s crooked?”

“No. But he’s not here, either. He’s snug in tha studio, waitin’ for tha story ta fall on his lap. You’re willin’ ta’ get the scoop no matter what. The fact that you can see this city’s flaws is a nice bonus.”

“I’m sure,” she sighed. She had accepted a long time ago that her big mouth was going to get her into trouble, but this was a long reach. “How long until I go live?”

“According to your boss – one minute.” The Warlock made a humming sound. “Don’t expect the feed to be cut off. They’ll be experiencing technical difficulties. How many Towers are in this city?”

“Eight,” she replied instinctually. The massive towers were a gift from Roman Sionis to counteract Satellite Television failure, which was, incidentally, also provided by Sionis.

“Good. Just making sure they’ve all been marked on the map.”

She breathed a deep sigh, before kicking off of her van, as she had done many times before, and a part of her knew that it would be her last.

She rested her hand on the free shoulder of the still befuddled cameraman in front of her. “It’s been great working with you, Jerry.”

He looked flustered, but still confused at her smile. “Ms. Vale?”

“I just got an offer I couldn’t refuse. Might work out, might not. But I probably won’t be standing in front of this camera for a while after this. If you want to back out now, then this is your chance.”
“Was that really the Warlock that contacted you?”

She nodded solemnly.

“Are you being forced to do this?”

She shook her head. “Maybe I’d feel better about myself if I was.”

“Paid?”

She flushed. “I probably should’ve asked about that.”

He chuckled and adjusted the heavy camera on his shoulder. “Talk business with him after. If not, I’m sure my dad will give you a job in reporting. The Gazette could use a new face.”

“I’m sure they’re doing well enough with Lane’s,” she rolled her eyes. “Still, you don’t need this in your record. Intern or not, the things I might say on camera could lead to a scandal.”

“Then I better get your good side. DVR isn’t kind to the prettiest of women.”

She chuckled and kissed him on the cheek. “Good man. We’re on in fifteen seconds. Don’t get pissed at me when you find yourself deported back to Metropolis.” She backed into her marked spot.

“That’s the best thing about being a Cameraman, Ms. Vale.” He focused the screen and uncovered the lens. “Nobody cares.”

“Please,” she smiled, clicking on her microphone. “Call me Vicki.”

~An Hour Ago~

“Man.”

Edward blinked. “Excuse me?”

Harry pointed to the thin wooden instrument the man leaned on. “That’s a cane. The concept of it has existed for centuries. It’s always been a cane. It’s been reinvented, re-circulated in different shapes, forms, and such, but it’s always meant to act the same – to prop you up. It’s a cane, and it always has been. Mankind did that. Same for the chairs we sit in, the clothes we wear, and the instruments we use. Obviously, the objects can’t do them on their own. They don’t try to be anything different. Humans do it for them. It’s human. They try to change, and adapt, but they will always be… human.”

He pouted. “Lucky guess.”

Harry didn’t expect him to believe the story of a stone eagle testing him on a near daily basis, never allowing him to just pass through to converse with the ‘Claws, so he didn’t bother telling him. “Either way, it was right. Please activate the towers.”

He let out a sigh. “Black Mask won’t like this.”

“No, he won’t. Just make sure to emit the only signal in Gotham when we give you the signal, in an hour. We’ll hide you after.”

The man tipped his bowler hat and raised an eyebrow at Ivy. “Where did you get him?”
She smirked. “Wouldn’t you like to know the answer to that?”

The camera clicked rapidly as she leaned against the building, hidden in the alleyway. She grinned, proud of herself. None of the police, or the small news team, could see her. She figured she shouldn’t push her luck too much, so the bespectacled redhead didn’t have a choice but to do it at a distance.

She sighed to herself. She wouldn’t be having this problem if her father would just give her access to the evidence. Any information about this case in particular was coming in dangerously slow, and the GPD building had been locked down, so she couldn’t access it directly. She was getting fed up of all of it, and considered the possibility of hacking into the database herself. They were using her firewall – something they should have been grateful for.

She sighed, refocusing on her task and clicked away again. When she saw the cameraman remove the lens of his own expensive equipment, she knew when to get out of there, not wanting to be captured on the news, plain as day.

“I don’t think you’re supposed to be here.”

Barbara jumped, and her camera crashed on the cobblestone steps. She turned around. “Oh God, it’s you!”

He waited a second, wondering if she was going to scream. She had a mix between awe and terror as she eyed him slowly. “So you’ve heard of me.”

The teen stumbled backwards. “Crap!” Her hands felt behind her, looking for anything she could use.

Harry took a hold of the camera that she had dropped and inspected it closely. “Seems simple enough,” he muttered to himself, before the lens zoomed out. “There. Good as new.” He tossed it to her.

On instinct, she caught it, confused. “W-what – ?”

“You won’t find much of anything here, but…” he pondered to himself for a moment. “I’ll tell you what. Take a picture of me.”

She was stunned at his words as he shook his hair out, and dusted off the imaginary grime on his black pants. She noted with surprise that he was far younger than she would have guessed – maybe around her age. “Why are you doing this?”

“I haven’t done anything yet,” he looked unconcerned, “but I won’t lie. I will be.”

She frowned. A villain worried about lying? Just who was he? “What are they paying you? To do this for them?”

It took a second for him to realize she was referring to Harley and Ivy. He snorted. “Wouldn’t you like to know? There are far richer people in Gotham that could use my services, but unfortunately for them, they won’t be around much longer. Things need to change, and as you well know, the Justice system can’t stop me.”

“What do you have planned?”

He nodded his head over to the News Reporter, and she, smartly, didn’t turn away to see where he was looking. “You’ll have to wait for the news, like everyone else.” She flinched as he pulled out a
small device and spoke into it. “Kill the towers.”

She gave a frightful whimper, not fully understanding the meaning of his words, and he seemed to read her mind. “Not any skyscrapers,” he said tersely. “Radio Towers. I’m not stupid – there is a such thing as too much attention in too little time.”

Barbara eyed him carefully, and took a moment to recognize that he had a brain to go with his… power.

She didn’t like it.

“Considering we’re going live in seconds,” he told her, “I think we should skip the interview, and go straight for the photo shoot. I prefer headshots.”

She glared at him, slowly rising from her seated position, and threw the camera to the ground at his feet.

His eyes only followed the camera as it stopped twisting and rolling on the ground. “Clumsy,” he muttered, and before she could blink, the camera smashed under his boot. She gasped at the sight – the camera itself was not very durable, but it shouldn’t have been possible to crush into pieces with a single stomp.

“I hope your dad isn’t too mad with the equipment failure,” he shrugged, kicking the scraps to the side.

“He’s going to catch you,” she spoke with confidence.

“I’m talking to his daughter, and he has no idea,” he clarified the situation for her. “Don’t take it the wrong way when I say that I’m taking the threat lightly.”

“I wasn’t referring to my dad.”

“At least we’re both not giving him the vote of confidence,” he concluded with a nod, which only seemed to incense her further. “I’ll cross that bridge when I get to it.” He nodded, and stepped back into the shadows of the alleyway. A bright flash ruined her intense stare, and she blinked away the lights in her eyes. She quickly looked back, and as she suspected, he was gone.

“This is Vicki Vale live, with some new information regarding last night’s events.” Barbara quickly remembered where she was, and ran to the alley wall to avoid getting on the camera. She looked at her broken, smashed-to-bits camera with a grimace – a camera she had ‘borrowed’ from the GPD. It would take a long time for her to fix it, and it looked like quite a few expensive replacement parts were necessary.

As carefully as she could, she scooped up the pieces and poured them into her hoodie pockets. With a last glance around, she pulled her hood over her head and walked out of the alley, her head down, on her way back to the house.

Or, at least she would have.

Until she heard the actual words Miss Vale was saying.

“Allright, Vicki,” he grinned, “We’re on in five, four, three, two –”

She took a deep, steadying breath. “This is Vicki Vale live, with some new information regarding
last night’s events.” On cue, her earpiece buzzed to life, and Poison Ivy relayed to her what she had to relay to Gotham. “Right here, in the intersection of the Jezebel Plaza, two known assailants and one unknown were seen wandering about the stores. Their descriptions are mostly unconfirmed, as this was a rare public sighting for them, but we are the first to capture them on camera.” She could only guess that homemade pictures were actually appearing on their feed on television screens around Gotham. “The Femme Fatale is known as one of the most elusive teams in Gotham. Pamela Isley, known as Poison Ivy, aged twenty-seven, surfaced alone as a legitimate threat three years ago, and is the only reported case in Gotham to be legally claimed as a living, breathing, walking Biological Weapon. Her mental powers of Nature itself has been demonstrated extensively in the past three years, and some buildings are still covered in moss as a reminder of the devastation she could bring to our city, were it not for the good police of Gotham and the caped crusader himself, who this reporter has, maybe too conveniently, named the Batman.”

She didn’t know it at this point, but in every home in Gotham, people gasped as they saw the first ever clear, close shot of the legendary Dark Knight in mid-flight. So much detail was in the picture that some might suspect if he posed for it himself. Still, everyone who had glanced at the story in passing were now glued to the television. “Her vines were known to destroy streets and cars, and the superhuman strength, combined with thorns, and the occasionally mind-controlled police officer, cemented her as one of the most dangerous forces Gotham has ever seen.” She licked her lips. She could say, with all honesty, that she wasn’t over-dramatizing that statement in the slightest.

“Poison Ivy disappeared shortly after she broke out of Blackgate Prison, and resurfaced with a partner just as deadly as herself. Harley Quinn, aged twenty two, appeared out of nowhere, but has proven to herself to be a natural when it comes to crime. Her favorite weapons of choice are her trusty mallet and a bazooka, but she has proven herself to be very adept at any weapon she comes across. She is a very capable fighter, and, in her past life, was very likely an accomplished gymnast before she turned to a life of crime.”

She blinked rapidly. Even she wasn’t able to discern this information from past cases. They were revealing all of these details on purpose. “The two are rarely seen, and this photo, discovered recently, is the only recorded clear shot of them.” She wisely paused, allowing the audience to take in an extended, clear look at the couple. “Their rampage is unmatched by many, and the times that they are out and about, they almost always prove to Gotham the many flaws that this city has, whether they successfully destroy the bridge that leads to Metropolis, or steal valuable items from Gotham’s most protected museums with far too effective smash-and-grab operations.”

As per the instruction, she looked behind her, and pointed to the crime scene, and gave the camera a moment to focus not only on the decimated cars, but the policemen still on lunch break. When Jerry gave her the thumbs up, she continued. “Until now, there has never been a clear message for their acts. They all seemed to make some kind of statement, alluding to their power, or pointing out the flaws in our justice system. Until now. Viewers at home, you may remember that last night, we were only able to get a glimpse provided by the GCTV News Channel 7 Copter. Now, Ladies and gentlemen, new footage has surfaced of the incident. Courtesy of the dashcam of the police car closest to The Femme Fatale and Warlock, and the listening device of one of the officers at the scene, I present to you the unedited footage of what happened last night, complete with sound.”

“You’re offline right now.” Ivy informed her over the bud. She made the motion to Jerry to cut the broadcast and breathed a sigh of relief. “Don’t get too relaxed. The video is playing now, and it’s about three minutes.”

“Just three minutes?”

“It’s amazing how much of an impact someone can make in three minutes.”
She was silent for a moment. “Any chance I could watch it?”

“Oh, you’ll get plenty of time to see the video,” she teased. “It’s playing on every channel Gotham can broadcast right now. All of the Towers have been redirected to that camera’s video stream. You can thank the Riddler for that. You can also thank him for blocking the signal from all of the officers behind you, or they would have gotten the call that evidence had been taken directly from their crime scene. It will be about ten minutes before outside officers can get to you, though. We’ll have you out of there in no time.”

She bit her lip. “So I’ll be a fugitive. I’ll get a prison sentence.”

“Or a Pulitzer.”

“I don’t see that happening anytime soon.”

“I don’t see you getting arrested anytime soon. Just one more part, and then go into the alley behind you, at your four o’ clock. Your friend will be delivered back to Metropolis.”

“And me?”

“Well, you were talking about pay earlier. How would you like an even better arrangement?” She paused for a moment. “Think about it. Now, let me give you the rundown of what to say next....”

“Hmmm.”

“What?”

The man in green raised his necklace, which showed a blinking question mark pendant. “Apparently, someone’s breaking into my lair.”

Harley sighed exasperatedly. “I’ll handle it.”

“Hold on.” Harry frowned. “Wasn’t expecting him to be out around this time. He should have been at home watching TV.” He looked over to Riddler, and his eyes looked particularly haunting over the green glow from the monitors around him. “I suppose you have a lot of monitors in your lair?”

Edward nodded wordlessly.

“And you can control them remotely?”

He shook his head. “They’re connected to the towers. If he bothered to look at the monitors, he’s seeing the same thing everyone else is seeing.”

Harry smiled. “Good. He won’t be in your lair for long, but I suggest checking for any devices.”

Riddler grimaced. “He wouldn’t dare; not around me.”

“He had to have caught you once, right?”

He turned to Ivy, his face sullen. “I don’t like him.”

She momentarily turned off the connection to Vicki and shrugged. “Not my problem. You want a place in the future, you work with us. Feelings have nothing to do with respect and trust.”

His lips quirked. “I suppose.” He winced when Juliet purred, just feet away from him, under the
ministrations of Harley. “Fear helps.”

She winked at her precious cat. “Goddamn right it does.”

“Behave,” she said absentmindedly, before pressing the button on her headset. “Fifteen seconds.”

“As you have just seen, the events that played out last night were, in a way, frightening. He clapped his hands, and as Detective Bullock brilliantly pointed out, it was a powerful earthquake, albeit short. A shockwave cracked the ground below them, and while Ivy and Harley didn’t even flinch, the police cars’ windows shattered and tires were blown, and several officers had to be rushed to the emergency room. Fortunately, there were no casualties.” She paused for dramatic effect. “This time. As you could see, and by the many cameras facing them all at the time, there is no conceivable way to discern how all three of them managed to disappear in front of them. Due to the convenient surge of all lights in the surrounding area, including our chopper a hundred feet above them, their actual disappearing act is still a mystery until we can lighten up the image. However, considering the surrounding officers and SWAT team, the hovering helicopter, and the evidence that they had managed to leave that spot in less than a second and leave no trace of ever being there, other than the destruction they caused, leads me to ask this question.”

She took a breath. “Who in the hell is the Warlock? What does he want? And what will he, and the young women beside him, be willing to do to get it?”

She smiled into the camera. “This is Vicki Vale, with GCTV News Channel Seven. I hope I’ve enlightened you and informed you. If you haven’t gotten the message yet, then I will sufficiently give you that time. For the next twenty-four hours, this broadcast will be played in its entirety. I urge all of the viewers at home to really consider what is at stake here.

“We here at GCTV News believe in second chances. And we are all hoping that Warlock and Femme Fatale are willing to forgive Gotham, for our past mistakes. We can all only pray that he believes in second chances as well. Have a nice afternoon.”

She tapped her foot once, and that was the cue for Jerry to cut the feed. “I think that went well.”

Sirens sounded in the distance. “Maybe too well.”

Jerry looked towards the alleyway that Vicki had told him about, and his eyes widened. “Holy shit.”

She looked around to his eyesight, and gulped as she recognized a large black panther staring at them patiently. After holding eye contact for mere seconds, the large jungle beast turned away and padded slowly back into the alleyway.

Vicki knew that it wanted them to follow, and, oddly enough, felt calm about the thought. She felt herself walking forward, and heard Jerry step in line with her soon after, gently placing the large, heavy camera on the ground.

Her eyes met Harvey’s as she turned her head once more to look at the scene, and he had a smug grin of satisfaction on his face as he winked at her.

She gave a grin of her own, and winked back, before dropping her mic on the ground next to her, never losing her stride.

Vicki Vale didn’t need money – she didn’t even plan to make a career out of journalism, but she was glad to get recognition for her hobby – but she, more than ever, hoped that the Warlock could really perform magic, just so she ask him if she could see the look on Bullock’s face the exact moment he
found out what happened during his extended lunch break.

She ripped the bud out of her ear as she stepped into the alleyway. “Wouldn’t want to get shocked again.”

“I’d hope not.” His voice was light, and friendly. “I blew the first bud out. Sorry about that, Jerry.”

Her former cameraman rubbed the back of his neck. “What the hell can I say to that? ‘Don’t do it again?’

He chuckled, and stepped forward, and brilliant green eyes pierced into her shining blue.

She made the connection instantly. “You were that panther.”

“I was.” He held out an obscenely thick roll of bills. “In twenty seconds, this will take you back to your apartment room, in Metropolis.”

He only seemed to consider it for a second, before tipping his invisible hat to Vicki, and gratefully accepted the roll. “Hope they pay this much in Keystone,” he chuckled. “Hope it turns out well, Vicki.”

She smiled fondly and reached out to shake his hand. “If I’m ever looking for another intern…”

He shook his head. “Dad doesn’t like me dabbling too much in the competition. Spend too much time in Gotham, he’ll think I betrayed him.”

She snorted. All the horror stories she had heard about Barry were apparently true. “Good luck, Jerry.”

“Try to avoid prison, Miss Vale.” He quipped before a color beam of light flashed, and all that remained was the mysterious man, patiently waiting. He held out his hand.

“What?” She asked, amused. “No money?”

“Did you think about our offer?”

Wordlessly, she reached out and shook his hand.

“I find it rather intimidating to see how many of you are willing to break the rules to see a different future.”

“A good story is a good story.”

“That would be a massively stupid reason if that were the entire truth.”

“Then I guess we’ve both got stories to tell.”

“Take a deep breath,” he muttered, “and hold tight. I’ve been told the next part isn’t pleasant.”

“By who?”

“The Cat Burglar.”

As they popped away, Vicki couldn’t help but think that she made the right choice.

Or a very, very terrible one. Still, she wasn’t the most daring journalist in Gotham for nothing.
Suck it, Lane.

**Author's Note:** I’ve been working on other stories, a [one-shot or two](#), an original fiction, and an original erotic novella, but I’m not neglecting this story. This story is still rather fun for me to write, and while I have been heavily distracted lately, this will be a priority.

**AnAddictedReader**, when I told you that you were the closest one to the answer to the Riddle, I meant that you were the only one to get it right. Congrats! Unfortunately, you win nothing. College drains me, and it doesn’t care about any of our accolades in life.

Please review! (Or join the tip jar, if that’s your thing, too. I don’t judge.)
Chapter Notes

If you’re looking for smut here, I’m afraid you’ll have to wait until the next chapter. The smut that I had written was subpar and confusing, so I’m rewriting it, so it won’t be able to make the final cut for this chapter.

Though I admit, enough is happening here for you to forget it. I hope. Please.

Have a Happy New Year, everyone! (For future reference - posted December 31, 2014)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Oh yeah,” Harvey bragged, leaning back against the hood of the car, the last doughnut in hand. “She wants it.”

His partner snorted. “Yeah, sure.”

“She just winked at me,” he whined, his eyes narrowing. “I can’t believe you all missed that.”

Detective Flass rolled his eyes, dusting his hands of the yellow dust on his car. “Sure Harvey. We all, at the same time, missed her winking at you, while we were staring at her ass the entire time she was over there. I’m so sorry we missed it.”

DeCarlo snickered. “I think you had too many doughnuts.”

Bullock looked him in the eye when he took a large bite of the glazed baked good.

“Get ready, guys,” Flass warned everyone. “In a couple of minutes, we’re gonna be really sorry that we just missed him getting a blowjob!”

The team laughed, and Harvey blinked at the sight before him. “Fuck. I’ve had too many doughnuts.”

Arnold Flass laughed harder. “Hopes she gets to the base!”

“\textit{I imagine that wouldn’t be too difficult.}”

The laughter stopped. The echo hung through the air, similar to the one Warlock held before. The rest finally realized where Harvey was looking, and their eyes instinctively followed and turned towards the News van.

Despite her green skin, it was always her hair that attracted everyone first. Her long red tresses shimmered in the daylight, frequently in motion even as the air kept still around her. Her skin in itself, usually pale and human-like in texture, was almost glowing with radiance, pulsing in random places on her body as it absorbed the rays of the sun. Her eyes, however, caught all of their attention.

Poison Ivy’s burning eyes gleamed with carnivorous glee at their squirming, and she sauntered forward.
“You boys liked the doughnuts? I imagine they were good. I hope you saved one. I’m starving.”

Their throats tightened. Flass noticed first that he couldn’t reach for his gun, or really move much at all. His hands shook violently, and he suddenly felt cold.

Her shiny black lips gave a mischievous grin. “Do you think you’ve had too many? You don’t really know when you’ve had enough until it settles. Bread tends to expand.”

“Frosting is no slouch, eithah.” They couldn’t move their heads, but they heard a gentle tap on the hood of the patrol car behind them. “That outta really slow ya down. I never trusted artificial sugah.”

“You shouldn’t.” Her green irises flashed with playfulness. “Nor would I trust the cars you’re sitting on. It’s a bit too late in the year for pollen, isn’t it?”

Bullock’s hands trembled against the dusty patrol vehicle, and only his eyes could express his pain when a well-placed boot smashed his digits into the hood.

A gloved hand tickled the side of his neck, and lightly squeezed his chin from behind. “Cat got your tongue? Or are you just petrified in the presence of beauty?”

The jester leaped off the car and landed in front of them, the TV News camera on her small shoulder seeming like a light prop in her hands. She steadied the camera onto Bullock. “Nah. I think he just pissed himself.”

He could feel the edge of the gloves break his skin as her claws gripped tighter. “That could be arranged.”

“We need him in control of his bodily functions – for now,” Ivy warned. “He’ll have plenty of chances to soil himself, but not anywhere near me.”

The woman behind him sighed. “Fine.” She pressed her boot to the middle of his back, and violently pushed forward, with a force on his wide frame that he didn’t think she, or anyone else, had.

He forced his legs to move, and he was only able to lumber a few feet before he fell forward into Ivy’s waiting grasp.

She gripped his light overcoat tight for a moment, glaring at him through half-lidded eyes, before her lips curled into a cold, callous grin.

“Oh, yes – we could **use** you.”

She pushed him back, and he felt a cold, metallic coil around his neck. He wheezed – it was the only thing he could do – before he passed out, standing there, frozen.

Catwoman laughed, keeping him embraced in her cold whip before she took a deep breath, and they both vanished.

The rest could only stare in shock; not that they had any choice in the matter. They found that they had just enough mobility to gulp nervously.

“One,” Harley muttered. She turned the camera to the redhead, her green and red hair swishing about her shoulders. “Need any more?”

She shrugged. “Warlock promised he only needed one. Just one, and he would know all of Gotham’s secrets.” She paused, and eyed her girlfriend strangely. “Is that camera really recording
anything?"

"Nah. What’s-his-face left it heyah. I picked up Vicki’s mic, too, if you want it. The signal’s blocked, compliments of Eddie, and there’s no tape. Could be useful in the future, though."

Ivy wasn’t sure where Harley’s mind was when she said that, but the teasing smile gave her an accurate guess. “Hope you’re not camera-shy.”

“Oh, you know how much I like to put on a show.” She turned her head away from the eyepiece and glanced back to the six officers there. “Whaddya say, boys? Ready to get this party started? It sounds like your friends are almost here!”

Harry knew something was wrong the moment he apparated onto the scene.

The Riddler’s lair – what he supposed looked like an abandoned warehouse with a very sizeable basement for underground work – had a missing door.

The raven-haired teen could only guess that Edward would have had the common sense to at least give the option for a potential enemy to knock, so he could safely assume that something was amiss. His eyes swept the building, and his lips curled in a frown.

“It’s not just Batman in there,” he warned his partner.

“Good,” Catwoman purred beside him. “I need to blow off some steam, anyway.”

“Sorry for that.”

“Just stay out of my way, and you’ll be forgiven.” She stretched out her arms as she stepped forward confidently into the shack. “Roomie.”

Harry removed his cloak from his black cargo slacks and wrapped it around his shoulders. With a dip of his head, he was gone from the face of the earth.

He gave a grim smile. Oh, whoever was in there wished that would happen.

With a thought, black gauze wrapped tightly around his hands, the wiry mesh thinly separating from his skin, giving his hands an armor that he could barely feel. The wrapping moved across his body, covering every inch of his skin below his red and black uniform, the hint of it showing through the green claw marks adorned on his torso and legs.

He really, truly felt naked in this uniform, for good reason – the wire surrounding his body, only a millimeter thin for each layer, was always separated from his body by micrometers. The hairs on his body brushed against the material, and it gave him a tingle that always kept him alert.

It was a cheaper and a more flexible defense compared to Basilisk skin, as he had discovered the hard way. The thin wires could be enhanced and separated, and could cut through trees whole.

A fact that he wouldn’t be telling Pamela anytime soon.

He squeezed his hands, testing out the armor; he hadn’t used it since battling Voldemort himself, and he was rather worried that he might not be able to use it, due to the constant magic he had to pour into the suit. It subconsciously fed off of him, and he didn’t want this suit freezing on him. The results would be rather disastrous. Hermione didn’t approve of it, but he needed it.

He needed to make another good impression. At this point, his character called for it. The Warlock
liked to show off.

With nary a whisper, he blew into the building, and Catwoman didn’t even notice him breezing past her, inches away from her leather-clad form. Skipping over the fallen door (mystery solved), he made his way to the basement.

“Who in the hell is the Warlock? What does he want? And what will he – ”

A bullet between the eyes prevented her from asking any further questions.

Or, at least, that’s what he would have done; what he wished would have happened to Vale. But for now, he had to settle with unloading his gun into a television screen.

Four shots in, he held his fire, willing to wait until Riddler got back.

“He had one job,” he grimaced, straightening his blue tie. “One simple goddamn job.”

The crew was silent. He didn’t expect them to respond, lest they wanted to feel his wrath.

The wooden mask was impassive as ever, as anyone would expect it to be. But shooting repeatedly at a television would give anyone a different impression. However, the only impression he wanted, at the moment, was a very deep one in Edward’s far-too-smug face.

“Can I help you?”

His men jumped at the voice, and carefully looked around, but he didn’t bother looking for the voice – it sounded like it was coming from everywhere at once. What he did know, and truly cared about, was that it wasn’t Edward’s. “Yeah. Bring me Poindexter.”

“May I ask why?”

“Business.”

“Oh.” The silence echoes the admittedly large shack for a moment – nothing but the whirring of mechanical fixtures and the static of radios, until he spoke again. “No.”

“No?” He chuckled deeply. “And can I ask why?”

“Business.”

“Good. So you’re the punk I’m looking for.” He nodded to his henchmen. “Strip the room.”

“It’s bold of you to assume that I’m in the room.”

“My guys checked the room for bugs. All recording devices are as dead as you’re gonna be.”

The voice scoffed. “I imagine you would feel the need to check again. You obviously missed something the first time.”

Roman growled. “What?”

“Look up.”

His Beretta gleamed as he pointed it directly above him, and he was only able to see a blur of a shadow before a sharp pain struck his wrist.
The gun slid away harmlessly on the floor, further away from him; but the batarang rested at his feet, staring up at him reproachfully.

Black Mask let out an angry howl. “*Kill* that sonovabitch!”

Harley gently sat the camera down behind the patrol car and picked up her weapon of choice. She hoisted her weapon on her shoulder and waited. “Come to mama…”

The green-skinned teen’s eyes glowed, and the leaves of her skirt blew back and forth as the wind around her gathered. “Let’s make this quick.”

The sirens got louder and louder, but they had dealt with them enough to know *exactly* how close they were. Cars rushed into the intersection – at least five – and, thankfully for them, the decimated cars blocked all three lanes but one of them.

They were still surrounded, again, and it was a new feeling for them to be out in the daylight like this, but it felt... freeing, in a way. To do something so daring, out and in the open.

Ivy just hoped they didn’t get shot. Fidgeting with one foot, then the other, she kicked off her elfish slippers, leaving her bare feet to touch the concrete floor. She wiggled her toes a little, feeling the heat against her skin (it was odd that extreme temperatures could never affect her since her transformation, but she could feel the slightest change of temperature around her) before she narrowed her eyes at the police wordlessly getting out of their cars and taking out their guns. “You never learn.”

Captain Crogan flicked on his bullhorn. “This is only a formality. Step forward with your hands in the – Where’s Bullock?”

“Really?” Harley looked dumfounded, her red eye blinking into the sights. “You kiddin’ me? We have six of your men hostage ovah heyah, and you want to know where the *stooge* is?”

He cleared his throat. “We don’t make any deals until we see Bullock.”

“We’re not in a deal-making mood.” Pamela narrowed her eyes moving slightly over to get a direct vision at the man, blocking Harley from his sight. “You probably missed our message on the way over here, but I just wanted to clarify on a few things.”

He stepped out from behind the door, his jaw set. “We do it your way when we fucking feel like it. Until then, get on the fucking ground and hope we don’t handle you too roughly when we take you back to Blackgate!”

“That escalated quickly,” Harley muttered with a giggle. “Oi, Captain Jack! You forgot ta take your meds today?”

Corgan growled and lifted his gun. “I’m sorry I wasn’t here last night; you two are far too much trouble than you’re worth.” He cocked his head. “*Far* too much.”

“Be that as it may,” Ivy continued smoothly, “we feel that if you’re not constantly reminded of our presence, then you’ll forget about us. And then you’ll forget our warning.”

“Honestly,” the grizzly man spoke into the megaphone, waving the policemen to get closer, “I already forgot the warning. You should probably put it in writing.” He squinted at Harley, who was practically hidden behind the car. “You done taking a piss-break, girlie? That’ll be the last time you’ll get in any private time. Make it count.”
Harley’s weapon beeped. “Oh. I will.”

Ivy’s hands, which were resting tensely against her hips, balled into fists at the sound of that beep. She slightly bent her knees, and closed her eyes.

The captain fumbled as he pulled back the hammer of his gun, allowing himself a grin as he prepared to take down the most violent team in Gotham – and he would give the order. “Duck and Cover! Shoot to kill!”

“Yes Sir!”

That loud chant confused the officers for less than a second at the unusual shout of confirmation from the villainesses’ side, for the very earth to tremble beneath their feet. In that second, the ground cracked and shifted, and a large mound burst into existence beneath Poison Ivy’s feet.

She extended her legs, and she gracefully flew into the air in a perfect summersault, before landing next to a petrified DeCarlo in a crouch. Her hands, in fluid motion, waved and pushed, and the men on their side were suddenly thrown towards them, flying not as gracefully into the air, their petrified bodies launched by the springy coils that spiked from the ground.

So busy trying to refocus their guns on the elegant beauty, and more considerate officers attempting to catch the corrupt men, they didn’t notice the sudden exposure of a terrifying visage, lying in wait behind her lover.

Harley Quinn, her mouth twisted into a wide smile, rested one elbow on the hood of the cop car, and extended her middle finger towards the sky, pointing it at the group of officers in general.

The other hand pulled the trigger of the candy cane-striped bazooka in the same direction.

She quickly turned the weapon to another car, and she pulled it again.

And again.

The ground erupted powerfully before her, and an explosion of green was all she could really focus on before her girlfriend grabbed her shoulder. She moved her knee over to touch the camera, and with two taps of her offending finger, the two felt a pull at their navels.

She knew that would give them something to remember.

“How am I not surprised to see you here first?” Ivy wondered, dusting herself off after the two collapsed to the floor, returning from their trip.

“Because you don’t like surprises,” a non-wired Harry gently informed her, still holding Harley’s hand as he pulled them both up. “How well did it work?” he asked nervously, looking at the still-smoking instrument of destruction on the ground.

A sound kiss from her answered any questions he had.

Still, after they parted, she answered his question anyway – “Like a fucking charm.”

“And you get on me for my puns,” A voice behind them grumbled, and Ivy and Harley looked back to see Selina lying across a couch they were sure weren’t there before. Her leg was bare, the leathery garment cut cleanly from the rest of her full suit, and she was once again unmasked. “Don’t ask.”

“She was shot,” he told them quietly.
Her ears twitched. “Damn you.” She could provide no further defense – she looked exhausted, and for good reason. “So, if you three don’t need me anymore, I think I’ll just go to sleep...”

Harley turned to Harry as the ebony-haired girl drifted off. “So... you also heal gunshot wounds?”

Harry shook his head. “Not really. I have a vial of phoenix tears. Doing it myself would take much longer, and we just got here.”

Pamela leaned against Harry’s other side. “It’s been a long day. I’ll get an explanation out of you after my nap.”

Harleen eyed her girlfriend carefully. “Hey – you alright?”

“Déjà vu,” the redhead muttered, before she shook her head. “I’m alright. That really took a lot out of me. I’ve never done so much in so little time. I made my babies grow as much as I could with as little time as possible. I just hope my penmanship is legible.” She smiled weakly at Harry. “No headaches or anything.”

Harry wordlessly pressed a hand against her forehead. “Just making sure.”

She gently removed his hand and kissed his knuckle. “When I was out there, I haven’t felt that... challenged... in a long time. We should do that more often.” She grinned against his palm, and forced a tingle through his arm. “I’ve never felt more with nature than at that point. I feel stronger, now.”

“Ditto,” Harley agreed happily. “Today was fun. We should do it again, sometime. I think we were really productive.” She moved to Nigma’s empty chair in front of the monitors, and swiveled the chair to Harry. “So, what happened on your end? Is Batman so afraid of us that he finally started packing heat?”

The Boy-Who-Lived shook his head wryly, taking Pamela’s hand in his own. “Well, you know what they say about curious cats...”

The first thing Harry noticed when he got downstairs, ignoring the elevator in favor of the grates, was that the basement was... deceivingly large.

He was aware that it was a warehouse, so he supposed that it probably should be this big, but a part of him couldn’t help but theorize exactly what was in here that required so much space.

He shook his head, and carefully jumped onto the steel beam that was in front of him. He hung high over the group below, and he noticed the man dressed in white first. Black Mask. Roman Sionis.

He thought to himself for a moment – what gain did they make from giving away his identity? Probably not a lot. Black Mask had been arrested many times, and they let him go before they could even remove his mask, thanks to his lawyers. Or maybe the police knew who he was, and just looked the other way? But if the people knew who he was, then he’d just go to being the Black Mask full time, after taking all of Roman’s immediate assets, which was probably a considerable amount.

He shelved the thought – maybe another time.

Jumping from beam to beam, he spotted the items that Edward had told him about – the items that he absolutely needed from his base, after recognizing that Batman might not be the only one looking for him, and that his life would likely end short if he stepped in the base after tonight.
If the Batman was here, alone, then he would have a better chance of retrieving the items. But now, in a room filled with armed henchmen, and one pissed off mob boss, he figured that apparating around *really fast* probably wasn’t the best strategy.

He spied Selina on the floor level, pilfering a few hard drives and any data that looked important to her. She moved around like liquid, right under the guard’s noses, and Harry thought it was hilarious. The warehouse wasn’t well-lit, and she was abusing it well. He admired her lithe form squirming in and out of places, sneaking into guards’ back pockets and taking their ammunition.

When she finally decided to get to the actual items they were here for, Harry would have some respect for the thief. Still, at least she was having fun right now.

He, on the other hand, was almost positive that Batman was here, at this very moment, staring holes through both of them.

He tilted his head, and at first glance, he could see nothing up here with him.

And then he looked up – past the ceiling lanterns, in the darkest part of the room, were a pair of pure white eyes staring straight at him.

Harry, for a moment, was paralyzed.

There was a time, he remembered, when he was four, and he got his first glimpse of the vigilante on the cover of Dudley’s comic. He had considered his choice of dress amusing – that anyone could be intimidated by the garb seemed like a joke to him. Upon reflection, he could even see himself thinking that it would look perfect on a villain, who desperately tried to be terrifying, but ultimately failed.

That was no longer the case. Now, Harry didn’t feel so intimidating in front of the black-clad hero.

Rationally, he knew it didn’t make sense to worry. They weren’t going to fight in the ceiling, right above an armed room. He was simply observing, as he had done last night. He clearly wasn’t expecting Black Mask to be here, and was now waiting in the wings for Edward to return so he could save him and promptly interrogate him. Batman, for the moment, was not a threat.

But looking at him, close-up, he desperately wished that the vigilante would join their side, or at least, stay out of their business. He did not look forward to making a true enemy out of him.

Well... maybe he did, just a little bit, look forward to their fight for dominance over Gotham. But it didn’t hurt to make one last plea.

He tapped the ceiling beam feverishly, a small light blinking from his steel fingertips in irregular patterns, being sure not to make too loud a noise.

*I see you have ignored my offer.*

For a brief moment, there was nothing. Then, his buckle began blinking.

*There was no offer. I ignored your threat.*

Harry felt an annoyance begin to blink in at the pit of his stomach. He was a reasonable guy, he thought, but he rarely met someone this stubborn. This man was a special breed.

He tapped again. *And what was your reply going to be if you had caught me unprepared? “Heed my order to stop, or I will beat the holy hell out of you and send you to prison?”*
There was a slight pause. *Not if you surrender quietly.*

Harry contemplated his logic; it wasn’t very sound. Maybe, in his world, it all made sense. At some point, Bruce realized that he was more than an authority figure – he was The Law.

*You don’t control our actions.* He tapped very slowly – deliberately. *You control no one. Stop pretending that you can do anything about it.*

He leaped, and dropped gracefully onto the beam to confront him. “We’re done with this conversation.”

Harry flinched at the quiet tone. He seemed to have hit a nerve, especially since he was no longer using Morse code. His whisper didn’t carry, but Harry damn sure heard it.

He was ten feet away from him, head-on, and it gave Harry a new perspective. The two stared at each other.

The wiry mesh moved slowly around his head, and the black material covered a hundred percent of his body. Sans his clothes, he was shrouded in darkness. “Fine, then. *Can I help you?*”

Even the caped crusader looked flummoxed as Harry raised his voice significantly, and it echoed along the walls.

Out the corner of his eye, he saw Selina steal the last item on their list before slinking into the corner, out of view.

“Yeah.” The Black Mask’s voice boomed from below. “Bring me Poindexter.”

Harry groaned in frustration. “I don’t know which one baited whom. I put most of the blame on Batman, while making Black Mask think that I’m on his side, so I suppose it was better for me. A stray bullet hit Selina before I could get to her; nothing too serious. I cleaned up her blood before I got to pop out of there. As far as I know, the gunfight is still happening.”

“Really?” Harley asked incredulously, her eyes wide. “So he could be dead or something right now?”

“Doubt it. He’s crafty. He was knocking out the lights as I got to Selina. My guess is he’s taking them out one by one. I wouldn’t be surprised if Roman is in prison by tonight.”

“And freed by his lawyers tomorrow,” Ivy guessed. “I always wondered how he got out of prison so fast.”

Harry tapped his thumb against his chin. “That won’t happen again. I need to add protections to Blackgate Prison. And your home.”

“Our home,” she replied with a raised eyebrow. “You’ve proven yourself as a big part of this team, and our family. Enjoy it.”

Harry smiled weakly. “I’ll try.”

Harleen checked one of the monitors with a timestamp on it. “We still got time for that dinner. I think we’ve deserved a little break.”

On cue, Harry’s stomach grumbled. He chuckled. “Not the worst idea I’ve heard today.”
“If we really want to see a good movie, we’d see the footage of the cops and their... predicament.”

Harley picked up her liberated news camera. “Ready to make the headlines? Again?”

Harry sighed dramatically. “Well, if I have to...” He smirked. “I think I’ll do the report this time. Vicki’s still getting used to all this.”

“Where is that reporter, anyway?” Harley pouted. “I always wanted to meet a celebrity.”

“Right now, she’s with Eddie, filtering through the hard drives. Selina scared her off – I don’t think she forgave gave her for naming her the ‘Cat Burglar’. Plus, I suppose she was a little agitated, being shot and all...”

“Huh.” Ivy pondered to herself. “We’ve got a lot of people we need to hide. Think they’ll all fit under one roof?”

Harry smiled personably, having the simple answer for the simple problem. “Magic.”

Harleen squealed a little. “I just get a little jittery every time you say that!”

Pamela smiled, watching her girlfriend act her age for a moment. It was a rare, truly beautiful, sight. “What did you have in mind?”

“Expansion Charms and Protection Wards,” he answered immediately, “especially the latter. We’ve got their attention. Now we just have to make sure it’s only when we want them to. Hiding your house might be enough, but I don’t take risks when I don’t have to.” Well, when it was just him, he was rather dangerous in his aloofness. The Tournament proved that. Still, his girls needed protection. “I’d have to talk to Hermione about a few things, first.”

“Sounds good,” Ivy admitted. “If it’s really that simple to renovate a house that Harley and I’ve been working on for a long time now, then could you also expand the garden? We’ve been meaning to make the place bigger.”

“Of course. The whole house would be to your liking. A blueprint might be helpful.”

Harley spun around in her new favorite chair and handed him the mic. “Gotta wait ‘til Eddie gets back. I can’t work that computer. What speech are you going to give?”

Harry eyed Pamela with a smirk. “A Lesson on Respect, and why it should be so important. I should probably tell them before someone tries to chop at the vines.”

“Don’t want things to get too messy,” Ivy grinned back. “I absolutely have to know the plant that you based that magic on.”

“Devilarium Dracinus,” Harry remembered. “The Devil’s Snare. It may be a gamble to say that this world hasn’t seen it yet, so rename it at your leisure. My friend Neville actually grew a strain that makes it more resistant to light. My spell only strengthens it.” His eyes moved to the microphone in his hand. “We should probably go back.”

Both Harley and Ivy scrunched their eyebrows in confusion. “Because we didn’t hammer the point home enough?” Harley asked jokingly.

He rubbed his chin thoughtfully. “I just feel like something’s missing. Batman is occupied, and this is as good a time as any to strike. You said it yourself, Ivy – they have a vastly short attention span.”
Ivy weighed her options. “Well – honestly – there isn’t much left to do at this point but to wait for a response. Until something noteworthy comes up, we’re at an impasse.” She looked up. “Maybe try to recruit someone else?”

“Who?” Harley wondered. “We’ve got the main players that want anything to do with us. The rest don’t seem like they’re willing to work with us, yet alone for us.”

Harry snapped his fingers. “Ivy, you said something about the sewers last night, and how toxic it was. Did you have any problems with it just now?”

She shook her head. “I was trying to bring up just enough to trip them up before. Now, I used everything I had to make my babies grow and overpower them. It was more sludge than toxic.”

“I could use a few spells and clean up the water a bit. At least around that immediate area, to make sure it doesn’t miss with the... er... sculpture.”

Harleen bit her lip. “Now that I think about it, I don’t think the sludge is going to be the main problem. But the last time I checked, Croc is still in Blackgate. Don’t think he’ll appreciate us renovating his home.”

Harry blinked. “Anyone else in Blackgate?”

The three looked at each other.

“I can’t believe we didn’t think of that before,” Ivy admitted. “A mass breakout would cause the panic we need.”

“It doesn’t have to be mass,” Harry countered. “Just some people we could recruit. Henchmen?”

Ivy let out a sniff of disdain. “Let’s try that again.”

The side of Harry’s mouth quirked upwards. “Not all of us guys are bad.”

She only stared at him.

Harry pouted, and Harley giggled. “Trust me; you don’t want to fight this.” The jester tapped her chin. “Ya know, if we really want to make a statement, why not disappear for a while? Make them think that we’re planning something big.”

The raven-haired teen weighed the options in his head. “And what would we actually be doing?”

Harley couldn’t contain her mischievous grin, and Ivy rolled her eyes, but said nothing.

They all turned as a door slammed, and saw Vicki step through the door in a huff. She stopped abruptly at the villains in front of her. “Er... hi.”

Harleen, the dirty ideas in her head being discarded easily, blinked rapidly at the woman in front of her. “Wow... you’re hot. I thought that was all TV makeup.”

The blonde struggled not to self-consciously brush her hair back behind her ear. “T-Thanks. Coming from you, that means... I don’t know what that means.” She took in the sight of the three superpowers standing together. “So, is this the part where my services are no longer needed, and I suffer a painful parting of ways?”

“We were actually considering just shooting you in the face as you entered the door,” Harry deadpanned, “but you didn’t give me time to reload.”
She was silent for a few beats. “Mind if I get in a quick interview, first?”

Harry let out a surprised chuckle. “This whole bloody world is insane.”

Ivy and Harley sent each other knowing looks, while Vicki gave a little smile. “Not the first time I’ve heard that. But I usually hear that from the even less sane.” She let the comment hang in the air.

He shrugged in reply to the reporter. “I’ve got no proof to the contrary.”

“The first step is admitting it,” the blonde smiled, not sensing either of the three to be particularly deadly in this mood. “So what were you saying earlier about a business proposition? A chance to be the face of the new crisis that is the Femme Fatale and the Warlock?”

Harley refrained from mentioning what a nice face it would be, resting her head against her girlfriend’s hips from her chair. “Need anything picked up from your house?”

She shrugged indifferently. “All of my valuables are in storage. I like to move around. Job hazards and all. Don’t need my house on the public record, after all.”

“Clever girl,” Ivy repeated, and Vicki frowned as she looked closer.

“You... you look younger than I am.”

“But I couldn’t be,” Pamela informed her innocently. “I’m twenty-seven. Don’t you look at the news?”

Vicki suddenly laughed, realizing what they did. “You confirmed a lot of false rumors, and now Gotham is taking them as fact. Now they have no idea what to look for.”

“Actually,” Harleen countered, “they know exactly what to look for. They’re just wrong.”

“How good are you at keeping secrets?” Harry wondered in an innocuous tone. “Regular secrets, I mean. Not the ones where we have to threaten with death.”

“Err,” the blonde stuttered, “it’s not usually a good mix with my job, but I can keep a secret.”

Harry nodded approvingly, and twirled the mic in his hand. “We’ve got a little problem here, and we need your expert opinion on something.”

“Oh – alright.” She visibly relaxed. “What can I do for you?”

Ivy pursed her lips. “How big of an impact do you think we made so far?”

Vicki pondered to herself, and chose her words carefully. “Honestly?” They nodded. “No one does that anymore. No one expresses their intent. Yes, usually there is an impressive display of powers, and some vague announcement of taking over, but what you three did was effective. You’ve got their ear, at least.”

Harleen grinned toothily. “Perfect. Hope they get the message.”

“For their sake,” Pamela agreed, nodding with a full-fledged smile – a rare sight for Poison Ivy.

Harry shrugged in defeat, somewhat amused as he handed the mic off to Harley. “I know when I’m beat. You’re right; I think we’ve done enough for a while.”

“Aw, don’t feel so bad,” muttered Harley, exuberantly wrapping her arms around the green-eyed
wizard’s torso. “I’m sure we’ll run into Bats again. I’m sure Tonks and Hermione would like to talk to you again. Why don’t you give them the update, and see what they think? I’m curious to see how far they’ve got along, too.”

Harry, taking her advice, was half-way through pulling out his mirror when he gave her a strange look. “Really?” Harry didn’t know how to take that statement.

“Well...” she began slowly, “The faster they figure out the veil, the closer they are to figuring out all of their secrets. I imagine if it takes any longer than a few months to get you to find some way back, then the code to everything might be nearly impossible, if only a percent figured out. And then we’d have to find the portal, because I’m not really sure if it stays in the right place. Then there’s the chance of multiple universes, and other threats that could step out of your veil if someone starts tweaking with it and – ”

“What if I was pulled here?”

Harley stopped abruptly. “Wha?”

“What if,” Harry conjectured, “and I mean, this may be a big ‘if’, but what I was meant to be here? There isn’t a portal in front of the Monarch Theater, unless it was specifically looking for some other type of ‘Arch’. If this world had magic, then why did I not step out of the veil here? Why not in any other world with that arch? It’s got to exist somewhere else, right? This can’t be the only other place. I don’t see, in any way, how I was chosen to be here. Twenty one years ago. In The United States. In Gotham. Right next to where you were robbing a Jewelry Store.”

He looked away, feeling uncomfortable in the extended silence. “Fate and I... don’t get along sometimes. I like to think I forge my own, but I can’t imagine that the good things that have happened to me was by my own merit. As far as I see it, this cements it. This could be a meeting of fate. Maybe I was sent here because I was supposed to. To see this through with the both of you. Maybe... maybe I was fated to not go back.”

Harley didn’t blink. “Then change your fate again.”

Harry scoffed light-heartedly. “Saying it and trying to believe it are two different things.”

“Then believe it.” She grabbed his hand. “Don’t think for a second that you’re not wanted, here or there. Fate or not, you’re going back, and whenever you want to, you can come here. Or we can go there. Fate put you with Hermione, as it has me with Pammy. Maybe that much is true. Might also be true that fate made you a hero, like it made me a Villain. But you forged the rest of your path. You chose the dark side. No matter how much pressure you felt to be good, like I did, you chose the darker path. In a lot of ways, we’re on the same path.” Her lips quirked. “Maybe, in some kind of fucked up reality, I’m supposed to be the parallel version of you. The fact that you bumped into me might be what you call fate, just as much as when Ivy broke out of her cell the only day I visited Blackgate, where it’s just too beautiful to be coincidence. There’s nothing beautiful about leaving a family behind. Your girls are also your fate. If it was never meant to happen, then it wouldn’t have.”

She looked over to Ivy, who blushed under her appraisal – another rare sight for the green teen. “I don’t have the best understanding of fate – I’m more into logic, myself – but I can’t imagine my life without Pamela. Maybe I would have gone on and never shown up at that prison, but to know any other life, knowing that this is what could have been, isn’t a life worth living.” She looked back to Harry. “You still have the means to make that mirror. You still have the link to her. You still have the memory of her. If you think Fate would send you here with the full memory of another life, and just expect you to tough it out here, then it’s time to fuck Fate right back. You can bring people back from the dead, Harry. You are fate. You could be his or her worst nightmare. You could have more
power than they ever could. There are two people that can decide what happens next – you and Hermione. Fate might’ve put you two together, but breaking you two apart? From what I’ve heard so far – Literally. Impossible.”

Harry snorted again in the light-hearted sense. “You might be right, Harley.” He smiled softly at her, and she returned the gesture. “Alright. I’ll keep that in mind. Thanks.”

“Any time. Keep in mind the next time you have doubts like that again, I might just kick your shin or somethin’. Gets the same message across.”

He leaned down and caught a quick kiss. “I wouldn’t worry about those doubts again. Thanks.” At her nod, he stood back up and looked over to Ivy, who was leaning against the console, giving them space, and smiled in her support at every word Harley had said. Probably including the last part. “If anything, I’m glad that I’ll never have to compete for a place in Harley’s heart like yours. I’ve got my own one true, thanks. In case there were any lingering doubts.”

Pamela easily shook her head. “You’ve snuck into my heart just as much as Harley’s. I don’t consider it a place, or an order. You can love someone in different ways, or you hate someone in different ways, or there’s indifference. I love Harley in every way that there is. And while you’ve only been here for a matter of days, I can easily see why, even with your bond, it’s not too hard to fall in love with you. Even with my bond with Harley – even in the more spiritual sense – that I find myself falling for you almost as hard. That’s what confused me – the ability for you to love so many girls. I couldn’t understand how you could undermine such a relationship that, to be blunt, usually dilutes when the number of partners increase. The line between love and lust is wide, but hazy. But now, I see it – you’ve always known the difference – you love those girls. And you love us. As equals. And while Hermione may hold a special place, you’d die for any one of us, wouldn’t you?”

Harry nodded soberly. “As would Hermione.”

She glided forward, and kissed him tenderly.

When they parted, sparkling green eyes met deep emerald hues. “As would we.”

“Ditto,” Harley agreed, as eloquently as she could put it without tearing up. In her opinion, watching the two embrace was even sweeter than their reunion last night.

The Boy-Who-Lived cleared his tight throat. “Let’s hope it doesn’t come to that.”

Ivy handed Harry the mirror that he had put down earlier. “Come on – let’s call Hermione, and see what everyone’s up to. I’d like to meet more of the girls I said I’d risk my life for.”

Harry chuckled. “I’d need another book for that; Volume One for Hidden Powers, Volume Two for Girls.”

“I want my own chapter,” Harley responded immediately, with a teasing smile.

“You’re certainly not a footnote,” he muttered, and stepped back to lean against the console. The two followed, Harley spinning in her chair all the way.

She took note of the crack in the door that the reporter had gone back through earlier, presumably to give them some privacy. She really hoped the older blonde could keep secrets.

She also took note of the catsuit-clad thief turned away from them as she was lying on the sofa. While the back view was impressive, there were more pressing matters – like the fact that she was lying on the once-injured leg. She was lying like that because it was the one way she could lay
comfortably to hide her face from them.

Selina didn’t have a good track-record of secrets, but hell, no one yet knew the correlation between Harleen and Harley, so the girl gave her some credit.

Hell, if any of this leaked, she’d honestly be looking at Eddie first. God knows how many cameras must be on around here, if only for insurance purposes.

Let the test commence. There shouldn’t be too many secrets on a team anyway. If anything got out, then it wouldn’t be too big a deal. Best to find a weak link now, when everyone is still new.

As she rested her elbow against the console, she smiled innocently at Ivy’s silent question and nodded her head at the Cat Burglar. Pammy smirked and nodded over to the door. She had a good view of the door the whole time, so she must’ve known something Harley didn’t.

They smiled conspiratorially at each other, completely missing Harry’s innocent chuckle before he spoke Hermione’s name into the mirror.

~Pre-Veil~

“You should get some sleep, Harry,” Parvati said gently, but firmly. “You look a wreck.”

“I am,” he promised again, before he promptly fainted dead, not hearing their shrieks of surprise and worry.

The sound of a baby’s cheerful laughter was the first thing that penetrated Harry’s senses when he awoke. Absently reaching for his glasses, he squinted as he sat up.

The laughter stopped, and soft cooing noises began to gurgle forward. Harry’s eyes stared blankly ahead, numbly aware that even without his glasses, he could see the shelves of books before him very clearly.

The plain white books on the plain white shelves, in a vast expanse of whiteness. Plain whiteness.

He turned his head towards the sight, and choked back a gasp.

Hermione Granger was there, smiling as radiantly as she had always been, as if she herself didn’t know what happened to her. Her two front teeth bit into her bottom lip with anticipated glee as he noticed her, and Harry found himself, just a little bit, forgetting about the previous days he had to endure.

But, oddly enough, it wasn’t his best friend that his eyes had dwelled on first. It was, rather, the small baby shifting backwards and forwards in her cradled arms. “Dada!”

Hermione had a preciously nervous grin as Harry looked on in wonder. “Hello. Dada.”

Harry slowly stood up, disjointed to say the least. He couldn’t even see the white floor he was standing on, it blended so well into the rest of the nothingness. “Hermione? Is this another dream?”

“I asked myself that when I got here.” She looked down at the baby in her arms, reaching for his ‘father’. “Even as I lived your life, I tried thinking that it was all some sick nightmare.” She gently removed her hand and cradled the child with the other, and held her finger up. The little one, easily, reached out for the dangling finger. “At first, it was your parents. Context aside, I’m really glad that I met them. It was short, but it was lasting.” She watched the tiny child suckle on her finger with a
serene smile. “Then it was them. I won’t say much. Nothing you already don’t know.”

Harry felt himself tremble as he stepped forward, towards the illusion, unaware of the robe wrapped around him. Even as she talked so plainly about the Dursleys, smiling at the young infant, she looked distant – cold. Trying to detach herself from her emotions.

The baby began to cry. Hermione was quick to begin rocking the infant, whispering encouraging words into his ear. “Shhh; it’s okay, darling. Mummy and Daddy are here. You’ll never have to worry again. You’ll never have to be afraid. You’ll never be forced to be alone. You’ll never yearn for love again. I promise you.” Tears fell from her eyes, the salty wetness dampening her smile.

Harry tenderly pressed his palm against her cheek, and it sent a shock through him as he felt her skin – it was so real.

“Am I...” He cleared his parched throat. “Are we in purgatory?”

She looked up and her smile now looked genuine. “That was my first thought.” She leaned into his hand. “My parents were Catholic – notwithstanding the concept of witches, they tried to raise me the same. I kept myself firmly in the realm of logic – meaning, I couldn’t really decide what decision to come to, for my sake or my parents’.” She stepped closer, and the child, enveloped in a gray blanket, had since stopped crying, and looked to both with curious eyes.

Deep pools of curious green eyes.

“At this point,” Hermione muttered, looking down into the beautiful orbs, “I still don’t know what to believe in. I’m not dead – my body is adjusting, I think. To your presence. Your Horcrux. So I came to see you. It wasn’t too hard to find you. You were always right next to me.” She motioned towards the teething baby boy. “And then I found... a shriveled, grotesque, spawn of a child. It was hideous. It was deformed. It was almost unbearable to look at.

“But,” she muttered, almost to herself, “above all else, it was suffering. It was abandoned. It was in pain. Had I known beforehand what it was, I probably wouldn’t have picked it up. But I’m so glad that I did. And even after I found out that this was once a piece of Voldemort, I didn’t regret it. I just took it in my arms, and it stopped wailing. And then... it changed. Into this.” She gently plucked her finger out of the newborn’s mouth, before cradling it with two hands again. “And then,” she sniffed, “he called me mummy.”

“Mummy!” The baby repeated on cue with enthusiasm, wriggling in his blanket, his beautiful green eyes attached on the flustered girl.

Harry had tears in his eyes as he saw the happiness in Hermione’s – the eyes that he had thought, for a moment, that he would never see again. “It seems that he likes you.”

The infant remembered the other person in the room. “Dada!”

Harry felt a wave of emotion hit him, and his eyes clouded over. “Dada,” he repeated softly.

“Dada!” the child reiterated, smiling brilliantly. His messy brown hair was smoothed over gently by Harry’s fingers as he stroked his head tenderly.

Hermione was gleaming as she watched the two interact, before she suddenly frowned. “You’re going to be woken up soon, Harry. He’s trying to get into your mind. Don’t trust him.”

Harry nodded, feeling a small ache at his temple, but ignored it for now. “Can... can I hold him?”
Hermione slowly handed the newborn over, and Harry felt awkward as he cradled the infant in his arms. He had never held a child before, but some part of him felt that no matter how he was holding it, it felt – *right*.

Harry didn’t have a particular religion in his life – his relatives were church-goers, but he wasn’t going to go by their standard for anything – but, seeing the child swaddled in his embrace, and the girl in front of him, he was sure that while he hadn’t prayed, someone had answered them.

“Fate, Harry,” Hermione whispered, even over the pounding in his head. “Maybe even some type of destiny. We’ve already connected in the spiritual sense. A divine intervention?” She wiped her sleeve against her eyes, and grinned a happy grin. “I don’t want to question it. Just don’t think for a second that I like you any less than before this all started.”

Harry desperately wanted to believe her – and surprisingly, he did.

“Good,” she muttered, gently gripping onto the now-sleeping baby and holding it against her. “I imagine we’re going to have a lot to talk about when I wake up,” she grinned.

Harry smiled back over the splitting headache. “I just might look forward to it.”

She tenderly hefted the child so the chin could rest on her shoulder. Tentatively, she leaned forward to kiss the ebony-haired wizard, and Harry could only respond by kissing back. It was chaste, much like their last and only kiss before, but they were both excited about the things to come – their future together.

“Embrace it, Harry,” she whispered when they parted. “And... it might be too late. For the actual Horcrux from Voldemort. But while we can – we can embrace it. See what it has to teach us. See if it can be changed. Molded, somehow.” She nodded towards the baby. “You’d be surprised what can happen when you realize you’re not alone.”

Harry gave her a quick kiss, and grunted over the blinding pain. “Especially,” he breathed, “when you’re with someone you love.”

With a *snap*, he felt his mind put together again, and into place. And he was gone.

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His eyes fluttered open, and he groaned.

“Are you okay, my boy?” The first thing Harry noticed was the kindly smile. The second was a pair of twinkling eyes over half-moon spectacles.

Harry’s head began to throb again, and he quickly focused back on the nice smile.

“I must say, Harry, you gave us all a fright. I hope you had a well-deserved slumber.”

“Thank you, Headmaster,” Harry muttered in what he deemed a grateful tone. “What happened?”

The wizened wizard stroked his impossibly long beard. “Why, you fainted, dear boy. You’ve been out for a couple of hours. Your vitals read normal, but we were still concerned at the prolonged hibernation.”

Harry refrained from snorting. They had it far easier than he had it in the past few days. “Where am I?”
He made a show of looking around. “The Hospital Wing. I imagine that this is your first time here, yes?”

He nodded.

Dumbledore’s hand waved, and the curtain pulled open from around them. Naturally, Harry was more focused on Dumbledore’s other hand, behind his back. Still, he made a show of looking around as well, mimicking Dumbledore. “You will find that Madame Poppy Pomfrey is the best medical healer around, even if,” he chuckled to himself, “the medicine is not quite as appealing in taste as one would hope. But very effective, so I would hope you can down them all.” He motioned towards the headstand next to his bed, and Harry sat up to look at the four small bottles of heinous looking fluid. “Take your time, Harry. Now, do you mind telling me what happened for you to faint? Do you remember anything?”

Harry’s mind was working hard for an excuse, and threw caution to the wind. “I don’t know, sir.” He absently reached for his glasses, and realized with a start that he could see perfectly well. Still, his face didn’t betray him, and he nonchalantly slipped his glasses on. He eyed the headmaster curiously, marveling at how the glasses blurred his new vision spectacularly. He had no idea how truly blind he once was. “Much better.”

Dumbledore’s whiskers glinted in the light as he smiled. “The guardian of the Gryffindor Tower – you may very well recognize her by her other endearing title, the Fat Lady – warned me as soon as she saw you collapse. Miss Patil and Miss Bones graciously escorted you to the Hospital Wing, with a rather impressive use of the Floating Charm.” His eyes twinkled in Harry’s direction, and Harry felt a niggling in the back of his mind. “Poppy had a fit – she thought they would drop you. I am proud to say, however, that nothing of the sort happened.”

Harry outwardly breathed a sigh of relief, while mentally thanking the girls, and making a note to personally thank them. “So, is that it? After the potions, I’m free to go?” He was very, painfully aware that Dumbledore had not yet even tried to call for Pomfrey, and even probably disabled the wards from alerting her when he woke.

Albus frowned minutely, knowing this private conversation was over, as what Harry was aiming for. “I’m afraid that you will have to inquire to Madame Pomfrey about any other tasks she needs to perform on you.” He flicked his wand again, and while Harry wasn’t ready for it before, he noticed it now; Dumbledore’s magic flared as he reenacted the ward, and the immediate pulse that flared confirmed Harry’s guess of the ward announcing to Pomfrey that he was now awake.

“Some advice, my dear boy,” Dumbledore murmured sagely. “Please eat. And it is imperative that you get a good night’s sleep every so often. You’re still a growing lad, yet. Miss Granger will be back soon enough. You two have been inseparable ever since the first day of school, and I admit, that may be because you knew each other far before.” He began to stroke his beard again. “I also admit; you are far different from what I expected you to be, Harry Potter. Ever since you ran away from your family, everyone looked for you, and you did a very good job at staying hidden.” He saw Harry visibly wince at the word ‘family’, and refrained from mentioning any future summer plans to the boy. It was best to wait until after the potions fully kicked in, which could be in a matter of days. “I’m just happy that you’re safe and alive, my boy. Perhaps, you could regale me with your adventures abroad sometime?” His eyes sparkled merrily, and Harry had to give him credit – the man did not seem to give up when it came to getting information.

Harry nodded. “Of course, Headmaster.” Harry needed to work on his improvisational story-telling anyway. He would be the perfect test. “Anytime. If Hermione would like to, I would prefer her to come with me.”
“Of course I would, Harry.” She spoke from the doorway; even Dumbledore looked back in surprise, not expecting her to be there. “Greetings, Headmaster. I have returned. Please send along my thanks to Professor Snape for allowing me a few days absence.”

“I will pass on the message, Miss Granger,” he murmured, slipping back into his impassive face. “Just please, contact your head of house first if there is an emergency.”

She nodded. “I will keep that in mind, Headmaster.” Her chocolate brown eyes turned to Harry, and the gleam in her eyes was a sight that Harry welcomed openly. “Parvati told me what happened. Are you alright?”

Harry only grinned in reply, not really sure if he was still dreaming again, as the matriarch of the Hospital Wing bustled into the room, and her eyes roved over Harry’s relaxed form before she breathed a sigh of relief.

“I only hope to see you in this bed once this year, Mister Potter,” the motherly matron said in a clipped tone. “I’ve seen you play Quidditch. This does not need to happen out there, with the stunts that you do.” Her frown softened. “It’s nice to see that you are alright, and you were merely famished. Please come to me if you find yourself unable to eat more than a few small portions of food a day. I estimate that you’ll be able to eat normally in a few days...”

Harry was half-focused on Pomfrey, more focused on Hermione’s grinning visage. Nothing else mattered. All was right with the world.

It was only minutes later that he found himself alone with his best friend. She sat by his bedside, holding his hand as they sat together in silence. She twiddled with her thumbs in concentration, and while Harry had so many things to tell her, he would wait until she said her peace.

Finally, she said something – it was quiet, and Harry almost asked her to repeat it, but his logical mind quickly caught up to her mumbled words.

“I love you, too.”

Hermione squeaked in shock as Harry hugged her to him, barely noticing him even moving, and she tightened her arms around him.

She smiled against his neck as she breathed deeply. “Sorry for scaring you.”

Harry shook his head. “Sorry for making you think you had to apologize.”

She laughed heartily and kissed the side of his neck. “Apology accepted.” She stood against him, and gently pushed him away. “Now go apologize to those girls for trying to push them away when they were trying to help you.”

Harry awkwardly rubbed the back of his head. “Want to come with me? They’ll be happy to see you.”

Hermione slipped her hand in his. “Of course.” With a quick spell behind her, the bottles of murky fluid were all empty. She winked, and Harry chanced a quick peck on the cheek, before the two walked on, oblivious to the next drastic shift in the fabric of reality.

The two went to search for Parvati, Susan, and Daphne, their lives unknowingly changed more drastically than they ever thought it would.
Gordon stared incredulously at the writhing mass of vines and its captives. “What the hell happened here?”

“Poison Ivy,” Bullock grumbled, rubbing the back of his head. “Whaddya think happened? Bitch got the drop on us and had us wrapped tighter than a freakin’ Christmas gift.”

His red mustache wiggled in annoyance. “Let me guess – you didn’t see them escape?”

“I was unconscious! They left me for dead and went on their merry way!” The entire situation seemed to upset him more than anyone else. “I can’t believe she knocked me out.”

Gordon looked back at the aggrandized memorial to the green vixen’s power. “And she was alone.”

“Nah. The clown was with her, too, like always. He wasn’t there this time, though.”

Gordon snarled. “I doubt him and they already parted ways. Warlock must’ve been up to something else.”

He had no idea how to describe this to the communicator, but he was sure Batman was looking at this, from... somewhere. It wasn’t too hard to miss.

Oversized, tree-sized vines had completely taken over the intersection, writhing and slithering about, daring anyone to come close. Their baseball-sized thorns made the circle of relative safety even wider, ensuring that no one would come within reach.

Bullet-proof. Or rather, an invisible shield preventing any bullets to get to the vines. That alone would make this an isolated, quarantined incident, provided that the vines could not escape the dome.

But hidden, in its sprawling thorny depths, were thirty-seven officers who were lost in that thing.

James turned away from the pit. They needed to be stopped.

And he was finally beginning to accept that he alone couldn’t. The entire damn department probably couldn’t.

He paced away, about to make the call, when Sarah ran up to him. “Jim! The Monarch Theater! It’s been burned down!”

“Call the fire department!” He didn’t understand why Essen was telling him about an abandoned theater when they were dealing with this serious issue.

“It’s too late. It’s gone. We think it was Warlock.”


“Thirty minutes ago – around the time Poison Ivy was seen here – the Monarch caught on fire. No one saw who did it. It collapsed and burned to a crisp in seconds. The fire was blue, James. No other building was even affected. Not a scorch mark. Just – just ash.”

Not even Firefly could do that. Gordon admitted that as The Warlock was the only unknown, and he seemed to have an affinity to fire, this could very easily be his handiwork.

But what was the purpose? Why destroy a random theater? Was he sending a message? He sent a bigger one here. He couldn’t understand it.
But he’d be damn sure to figure it out. Something must’ve happened there.

“I need to go.” He pointed to Bullock, who was roughly adjusting his neck. “Harvey! You’re on point tonight.” He took a chance and guessed. “Hit it with fire. See if that doesn’t get past the dome.” He turned to Sarah. “He’s been acting strange. Keep an eye on him.”

She nodded resolutely, and he ran off to his patrol vehicle.

This wasn’t going to go on any further. Warlock, Femme Fatale, even that damned newswoman – all of them would be brought in for this; he swore, then and there, this chaos would stop.

Selina stalked out of her brand new room in a green t-shirt and blue jeans, her petite bare feet not making a sound as she roamed the vaguely familiar hallway. She brushed a stray strand of her short-cropped black hair from her eyes, as she looked for everyone.

Eddie was on his laptop in the kitchen, lamenting at the loss of his lab as he watched the footage of the carnage that took place hours earlier. She made sure to sneak past him, or he’d be lamenting non-stop about how it was the perfect place to hide (and as Harry pointed out, he was captured at least once, and Batman had found it immediately) and that Batman, and Black Mask, would pay for this.

She managed to sneak into the Living Room, where she found the rest of the group. An elaborate wooden block set welcomed her – an impressive looking sculpture was slowly rotating in seemingly mid-air.

“What do you think, Kyle?” She blinked and looked over to Harley, who noticed her first.

“Uh....” She prided herself on her quick wit, but she had just woken up and got changed into her civilian clothing. Still, from what she heard earlier, she could take a guess at what the group was doing. “Maybe a basement for Eddie? He won’t shut up. Or a Prisoner of War cell?”

Harry slapped his hand against the house, and it spun a little faster. When it slowed down, looking significantly taller than she remembered, he looked to the couple for approval.

“Looks good,” Ivy leaned forward with her chin in her hand, sitting on her new favorite sofa, “but we’d have to dig carefully if we want to go that deep. I don’t exactly have, uh, conventional plumbing in this house. It’s all a well-pump connected to a cache of water underground.”

Harry nodded, understanding. “I can take care of that. Anything else? Vicki?”

She shook her head. “A newsroom? Just a small one. With a green screen? That way, it could look professional. It’s all about the presentation.”

Harry clicked his tongue at the sculpture. “We could add that to the gym, maybe? Put it under a Silencio ward. Or maybe in the war room?” Harley really liked the idea of a war conference chamber. She was firmly convinced that she was just the only one unafraid to admit it.

“This place is getting pretty big,” Harley admitted, sitting back on the arm of the sofa, next to Ivy. “We could just put it in one of the guest rooms? Or in one of the guest cabins.”

“This might be too much,” Ivy muttered worriedly. “I can’t believe that even in the scope of magic, that someone couldn’t see this.”

Selina, while having seen what he had been able to do so far, had her fair share of skepticism as well.
Harry did—*something*—with his hands, and the wooden blocks exploded outwards. Everyone in the room, sans the Warlock, flinched at the incoming barrage, until they looked carefully.

The entire landscape of the property was laid out before them. The trees were voluminous in size, even on the scale model. He lowered the model, and they marveled at the detail of the inviting expanse. The house was the most prominent—arguably—and the guest houses could be seen as well. At this point, the house could be considered more of a mansion, and the guest houses were part of the massive estate.

Then, one by one, the houses disappeared, and more trees took its place.

“*Fidelius Charm*,” Harry spoke, and the girls all looked towards him. “If you don’t know what exists in these forests, then you will never find it. That’s how the human mind works—I’ve always believed that wizards have been able to pick apart the brain so well, they can’t comprehend it themselves. The charm tricks you into seeing more trees, since that’s all you saw before. That’s all you can see. Just trees.” By the time he finished speaking, the trees were expansive and vast across the scale, looking uniform and perfectly... plain.

A small wooden crow squawked loudly, flying up from the middle and flapping its wings across the tops of the trees. It flew away from the sculpture and glided gracefully towards Ivy. Stunned, she held out her finger for the small bird, and it landed on the tip, before pecking affectionately.

Pamela looked up to Harry, who was smiling confidently. “Remind me to eat my words next time I doubt you.” The big grin on her face took away the embarrassment of her situation.

Harry chuckled and eyed the crowd. “So... anything else?”

Selina winced at the stray thought, but decided to voice the idea, anyway. “Maybe... maybe a cat palace?”

She felt all eyes on her, and for once, she didn’t like the attention. “Just a thought,” Selina muttered.

“It’s a good idea,” Harry admitted. “What with the multitude of cats around. I doubt your cavalcade of felines would come to the forest, but...” he shrugged, “stranger things can, and will, happen. What does the room say? Cats get their own mansion?”

Harley pouted. “I prefer that my cats stay in their room with their mommy.”

“I vote for the cat palace,” Ivy said easily, missing the glare from her girlfriend in favor of focusing on the little bird in her palm. “They can spend the night whenever, Harley. But just imagine cleaning after them in such a large house—the hidden places that we could never find, that they can come and go to. I imagine they’d be quite pleased with a play pen and a house-sized litter box.”

Harley didn’t stop pouting, but she could see her point. “Alright,” she grumbled. “But I just can’t help but imagine you sending me there if I misbehave.”

“Doghouse, sweetie,” she simpered, and finally looked away from the bird to her girl. “Unless you want to adopt a wolf or something?”

Harley blushed. She had considered that, once. “I’m more of a cat person, thank you.” She crossed her arms, and looked away. “I’ll get back to you on that.”

Vicki felt that she had to say something. “I’m allergic to cats,” she told the room.

Harley’s eyes shifted. “Don’t look down.”
The adventurous reporter, normally non-compliant towards a villain’s demands, regretted it when she immediately looked down.

Bubbles, her eyes an eerie icy blue, stared up at her, transfixed, from the side of the chair. As soon as the blonde saw her, she rested her chin on the woman’s jean-clad knees.

There was a slight slump as Vicki fainted in the chair, and the massive lion began licking her limp hand affectionately.

Ivy, Harley, and Selina all stared at the sight for a few moments, before Harley pat her thigh. Bubbles quickly turned her head and skipped over to her blond companion. Harry raised his hand to *Enervate* Vicki, but thought better of it. “It’s best to let her sleep it off,” he muttered to himself.

“I’ll take her to her room,” Selina sighed, moving across the room to gather the girl in her arms. Her lips twitched in amusement; the woman who penned her that horrible name was now unconscious in her clutches. While she had imagined the scenario, the events leading up to it were significantly drastic from what she had envisioned.

She raised her eyebrow at Harry as she walked past him. “Where’s my gifts?”

Harry only smirked in response. “You mean the stuff you stole from Eddie? I gave it to him.”

“What is this, the House of Hypocrisy? We’re all criminals, here.” Even as she tried to sound indignant, the small smile she had ruined her serious tone.

“We’re a team now,” Harley gently informed her. “Besides, where’s your spirit of giving?”

The ebony-haired thief scoffed. “Only on Christmas, dear.”

The bespectacled girl shrugged. “It might be *somewhere*.”

Selina looked flummoxed. “I have no idea how to respond to that.”

Harley waved it off. “Pair it with the whole conversation you were peeking in on, and it’ll all come together.” She smiled sweetly.

The thief rolled her eyes. Either she was losing her touch, or they just *knew everything*. “Whatever. Good night.”

They bid goodnight to her before she left the room with the reporter, before Harley turned to Harry. “Selina seems to have softened up to you – I guess being shot really made her think about the allies she shouldn’t try to push away. But can we trust ‘em?”

Harry nodded. “I think so. I think we can also trust Edward. Magically binding contracts are out of the question – no magic to bind – so we’d have to go on their word alone.”

“They live here now,” Ivy reminded them. “It’s a long trek back to the city. We can keep an eye on them for as long as we need to. If any of our secrets are spoiled, then we just figure it out from there.”

“I think we don’t have anything to really worry about when it comes to what we’re planning – there’s nothing to really gain on that. We have far more dangerous secrets that they don’t really need to know. And once the property is built, and hidden, no one is able to tell anyone else where the house is. So we’re safe on that front. But,” Harry eyed the two curiously. “Were there any more team members you’d prefer?”
Ivy eyed the small wooden crow circle above her head like a makeshift halo. “I can think of one. But he’s in Blackgate.”

“Partners,” Harley muttered to herself, “can’t think of one. But a good pet? Refer to the ‘sewers’ comment.” She smirked at her girlfriend. “Think that dude could be domesticated?”

Ivy only scoffed in reply, her eyes on the green-eyed wizard. “So Blackgate is our next target?”

Harry nodded. “After the renovations, would probably be best. Gotta look the part of a major crime organization, right?”

Harley clicked her tongue. “Got a lot of people here,” she murmured, prolonging ‘lot’ for effect. “And just a few days ago, we were living in isolation.” She looked up at Harry. “Don’t get me wrong – it’s for the better, and I don’t regret how we got to this point, it’s just, I feel like we’re running a hotel, here.”

Harry could see her point. There was a time that Hermione, Sirius and he lived alone in the Potter Family home, and that was now far from the case. By that time, Sirius had been banished to Grimmauld Place by Dumbledore. Harry sometimes missed the solitude – the quiet moments of escape and blissful detachment, with his Godfather and his best friend.

“I’ll work on that,” Harry told her sensitively. “Sometimes, you need your space. You two need some time to be alone together. I could make something I’ll think you’ll love.”

Harley smiled at the thought, but frowned at the implications. “I wasn’t including you on the visitors’ list.”

Ivy stretched her legs out and stood up, gently pecking Harleen on her soft lips as she rose. She sauntered towards Harry, and lifted her arms to lock around his neck. “What do you say we got to bed? The three of us; as fate intended.”

Harry had no problems with that, and his heart swelled with emotion at her proclamation of what he meant to them now.

A part of their family. Not the worst thing in the world to be, he was sure of it.

The platform of building blocks slowly floated down to the sitting room floor, the crow wordlessly flying back into the vast land, as Harry took his lover into his arms and showed her how grateful he was for the invitation.

The Batman loomed over Park Row, looking over the setting sun of Gotham City.

He only spared a glance at the ashes that was once the Monarch theater, before he abruptly turned and set off.

It was time to put these criminals down.

Chapter End Notes

Okay, guys. Crunchtime.
I have appreciated every single review I’ve gotten, and I’d like to stay on that path. So now is a good time as any to ask for any critiques and such.

What do you want to see in the next chapter, and for the rest of this arc? I venture that we are a bit over half-way through this first arc, in our multi-arc’d series. I decided to put them in arcs so the story could be all-encompassing, and to not drag on storylines for the entirety of this long-ass story. They won’t be completely unrelated/separate stories, but shows have seasons for a reason, right? I wouldn’t put up with a run-on series with no resolution and slow progression for twenty chapters. What do you think? Again, leave a review or a PM.

Now that I’ve passed 100,000 words in this story, a new milestone for me, tell me what you’ve thought of the story so far. Where you you like to see this going, or where do you think I jumped the shark without some repellant? (Old school Batman joke, don’t worry about it.) Should I just quit while I’m ahead and continue one of my other stories? What about the characters? Too many Harley-patented one-liners? Not enough Riddler? (Trust me, there will be more of him.) Wondering how the hell this mega team-up is going to work together? And... well, you get the picture. Or not. Review or send a PM if you want the picture. Or, better yet, if you want to draw the cover art for this story. 100,000 words(!) later, and still no fan art. Help me out.

I really look forward to your reply. It’s the reason I keep writing.

While this was supposed to come out closer to Christmas, I’ve been pretty sick, but now that I’m feeling better, let me be the last to tell you to have a Happy Holiday (of your choosing), and the first to tell you to have a Happy New Year!

You’ll hear from me soon!
Honest Complications

Chapter Notes

If you need a refresher course, http://blog.rihaansfics.com/?p=378 is the ultimate guide to understanding everything that happened in the story. It’s very comprehensive, and I’m pretty sure nothing is left out. I may start doing this every five to ten chapters.

Yes, you heard that right. This story’s going long. Can I do it? We’ll see.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

~The Previous Day~

Alfred Pennyworth’s hands trembled at the computer, his eyes still trying to comprehend what was happening in front of him. He finally looked away, and his lips quivered as he breathed.

He knew what he was looking at, and he was the only one who could clearly see it; he was watching the destruction of the Batman, and more importantly, the breakdown of Bruce Wayne.

He had been watching since that very morning, when his ward sat up and abruptly left towards the bat cave. It was fifteen long, silent minutes, considering his options, before Alfred left the doorway and followed into the bookcase. While the bat cave was already devoid of the vigilante and the BatWing, one of the computer screens brought up his live feed. The cowl provided the sights and sounds of the Batman, constantly recording for future reference and analysis.

And at first, Alfred thought he was staring at a video – maybe a picture with static interference. It only took him a few seconds to recognize the scene, however, and for the only time that day, a smile came to the Englishman and a lighter feeling overwhelmed him.

A single bouquet of red roses sat upon the cobblestone ground, its bright plumage contrasting the dark gray surroundings. The brightness in the dark.

Alfred watched as the son of Thomas and Martha Wayne paid his respects in humble silence, as the rain pattered around him, as it was that very fateful night.

There were many, many things that Alfred regretted that night – one of them bringing about his utter dislike for vacations, time off, and other such distractions – but the one thing that he truly regretted was never considering therapy.

It was his fault, he realized, knowing it even then, the dangers of a child exposed to such a tragedy, the feeling of being alone and abandoned, deserted, having his childhood stolen. His life taken away, every bit as much as his parents.

The Waynes had perished that night; all three of them. Young Bruce, unfortunately, had to keep up the façade of living. Of caring.

The young prodigy could handle himself, Alfred remembered that he was sure of it. When he was trying to face his fears – standing on top of the manor to conquer his fear of heights, putting his hand in flames to rid his fear of pain – Alfred had taken it as a logical way to cope with his haywire emotions, to prepare himself for the harsh world around him.
He wasn’t expecting this. No one could have.

Even when Bruce decided to leave home to travel abroad, Alfred saw his eyes. Lifeless – devoid of purpose or meaning. He had tried as hard as he could, but a replacement, he was not. Alfred was almost sure he would never see the young lad again.

He heard voices. The butler reminded himself what was happening and briskly walked to the panel to turn up the volume. It would not do to have Batman kneeling in Crime Alley, the infamous location of the Waynes’ deaths. Before he could go for the headset to alert him, the camera moved quickly, and before he could recognize the swift release of air that was the grapnel gun, Bruce was already planting his feet on the roof.

“…If there’s anything magic taught me, is that everything’s a riddle. I wouldn’t be surprised if the veil is one giant ruddy puzzle.”

Alfred recognized that voice. He had seen it live mere hours ago.

The Warlock.

While the cowl couldn’t see them – and thankfully so, considering what happened the last time he was caught spying – he could only guess that the entire group was there. It was only confirmed as female voices were picked up.

So, there they were, in front of the run-down and closed theater in the middle of the day, mere meters away from the Batman, who had only less than half-an-hour ago had chosen to visit.

Why?

That sobering thought stabbed through Alfred like a knife of ice.

Thinking of the ramifications of what exactly could be happening here – an untraceable tracking device placed somewhere on his suit, or the idea of him dealing with a true psychic being a few of the scenarios – Alfred went to sit down in the chair, numbly staring at the screen.

It was practically a horror movie, watching as Bruce tried to get a visual of the couple, hopping over the stone banister and spying over the ledge, but no matter how he tried, he couldn’t see the trio anywhere, even as they continued talking.

The feed blurred by the time the sidewalk got into view, and Alfred had to squint at the footage.

When Bruce turned away, it went back to normal. As he stayed on the roof, his back against the banister, Alfred assumed that he was simply just listening to the rest of the conversation.

It seemed that they had business there that was completely unrelated to Wayne – business that Warlock was clearly frustrated about, and the women seemed to sympathize with.

Abstract pieces that Alfred had managed to keep up with: He can raise the dead. He and his partners were lovers. They planned on recruiting Riddler to help Warlock get back to his home… ‘dimension’, their words, through a vortex or rift of some sort. He had a crystal clear connection with a woman who seemed fond of him, from his home dimension, and they were killing other government officials for the sake of finding the correct path.

And if he somehow managed to return, he’s planning on starting a mutiny and claiming the power for his own by killing the ‘Dark Lord.’ A King of a sort that he had affectionately named, no doubt.
None of these things managed to get him unconcerned. The only useful information in their favor he was able to gather was this mystery man’s name — Harry — and the woman through the connection — Tonks. And they were planning on finding Riddler.

That was all he could gather before the still invisible trio seemed to have left the scene, and he couldn’t even sink into his thoughts before they returned and entered the theater.

When Bruce followed them in, Alfred stepped away for a moment and took the elevator up. He could only deal with so much.

He couldn’t really explain to himself why he came back, but he knew that for the rest of the day, as he checked in and out on the Wayne heir’s progress, thugs previously associated with the Riddler, formerly known as Enigma, were harassed until they told what they knew.

It was by nighttime when Bruce had heard about the warehouse.

Roman Sionis, a man that Master Wayne claimed that he was nothing like, was also waiting for the insane genius, with several armed men scattered about, ripping through everything in the facility. Before Bruce could logically assess the situation, his cowl focused on her lingering at the doorway, before she stealthily leaped into the shadows, even escaping his intense gaze.

And, even in this situation, he had to admit that things had just gotten a bit more interesting.

It was confounding, really. No matter how much he protested the Master’s nightly escapades, he couldn’t deny that it was at those moments that he seemed the most human. Bruce’s cover as a playboy billionaire, was exactly as it seemed to him — a cover. Even as he brought home foreign models and actresses — not wanting to be closely associated with anyone in Gotham — he knew that they would not stay long. His smile was fake, his laughter was, while not forced, far from genuine, and the genius with the airhead persona and stiff acting usually bored his partner eventually, or he patiently waited until they left him.

Before he met Andrea Beaumont, at least. And that made him happy for a while, until life got in the way once again. Or should he say death, more specifically, of her father. She left him to travel the world, and it went back into routine for him.

But Selina Kyle — or as she wanted to be referred to, the Catwoman, as some sort of sick homage to the man who inspired her to put on a mask — was what made everything so confounding. A criminal with a predilection for taking whatever she wanted, and doing it by any means necessary.

Of course, Bruce was not outwardly fazed by her in the slightest, but Alfred had seen and heard their conversations.

He could honestly say that, in their interactions with each other, their flirting, combined with his desperation for her to reform, that Catwoman was the sole source for Batman’s most human moments. Maybe because she was a woman, or maybe because she had never killed, so he didn’t view her as a true villain, but the results were always there.

And it worried Alfred that maybe one day, it wouldn’t be Catwoman that turned to his side, but Batman that would turn to hers.

Maybe it was a ridiculous suspicion, but stranger things have happened, much like the idea of a woman dressed as a cat and a man dressed as a bat falling for each other on the sides of good and evil. Perhaps, one day, this would become a trivial sentence, but he’d be beholden to say that it wouldn’t happen anytime soon — for the sake of his own sanity.
It took a slight moment to notice the soft glow of the green eyes that stared directly at him. Well, at Bruce. Going by the build, it could have only been Warlock.

And it happened again.

Alfred, the incredibly patient man that he was, gritted his teeth as Bruce antagonized the young man again, and flinched as he began to yell, clearly loud enough that Sionis could hear him.

Watching Bruce swing and leap and traverse his way through a hailstorm of bullets did little to calm his fear, but a swift punch to the head of the Black Mask ended the short battle.

In the confusion, both the Warlock and Catwoman had disappeared. Alfred still wasn’t too sure if it was a good or bad thing. The thugs, taken out of commission, could not have all been taken out by the Batman, and maybe that was a sign of good news – if it wasn’t just confirmed that Warlock now had a hold of the Riddler.

Nevertheless, he knew his duty – the masked villain was being tied to one of the posts, waiting for the pickup by the GPD. It was time to make an anonymous tip.

Really, you think they would have at least tried to triangulate the source of the call by now, given how many times he had phoned in.

And thus, Alfred took the elevator once again, to indulge in his Master’s hobby once more, playing along in a game that had gone on for far too long.

But he had made a promise, just as much as Bruce had. And, perhaps, the promises they made would one day kill the both of them.

The woman known to the most notorious city in the world as Poison Ivy, was usually considered a bit of a tease – and not for no good reason. Her daring choice of dress, her luscious figure, her tantalizing gaze, her exotic skin tone, her dulcet, occasionally breathy voice, and, for a surprising many, her dangerous past, made for the ultimate sex machine – at least, in concept. No one had ever been lucky enough to get a kiss from the mint-green goddess and stay alive, much less explore her body and discover how much of a sultry minx she could be.

None, except two. And Pamela writhed wildly on the Queen bed as her two lovers caressed and nipped at her bare body, teasing her enough to last a few lifetimes.

Oddly enough, the three had gotten into a comfortable pattern quickly when it came to each other’s needs, transitioning with little difficulty and keeping it from getting too confusing when it came to tending to each other. Harley, remembering the previous night, decided to go for her girlfriend’s top half this time, while Harry was transfixed with the vixen’s long, supple legs.

Ivy gasped and moaned as Harley kissed and sucked at her vulnerable neck, taking her time as she closed her eyes and focused on the most sensitive of spots. Harry, lying between Ivy’s legs, skimmed his fingers along her inner thighs, working his unnatural tongue in circles on the tiny lines of blood vessels along her legs.

Her sex was on fire, and her nipples were aching to be touched, but Harley had commanded her not to do it herself – she was at their mercy tonight.

She didn’t really know what to feel about letting them take control, but she knew she wasn’t against it; and now, shaking under their ministrations, her hips rolling and grinding against the cool air, her breasts heaving and wobbling like a candle’s flame, flickering in the wind; she was beginning to like
Then, without warning, Harry gently grabbed her thighs and wiggled his tongue against her clitoral hood, which had long ago peeked out to be noticed. Harry gave his undivided attention with his lips, and Pamela began thrashing underneath them both.

Harley, never the one to be without an impact, seized her breasts and palmed her massive tits with glee, before – finally – focusing her tongue on her dark green areolae and rock-hard nipples.

Ivy’s eyes opened and she let out a gasp as her body was assaulted – her senses ran wild with abandon. Her lips quivered, much like her hungry sex as she was put up as an offering to her two lovers. She was no stranger to the art of self-pleasure, nor was she a stranger to ministrations to or from Harley, but she could more than safely admit that Harry brought a new perspective into their relationship – not detracting, as she had long ago feared, but adding a whole lot more. Granted, ‘long ago’ meaning a bit less than two days, but it had been a hell of some forty-odd hours for her – for all of them.

The trio deserved a little down-time. And luckily, they started on her. And she was oh so pleasantly reminded as Harry gave the tiniest nibble on her sensitive clit, while Harley rubbed her pixyish nose around her nipple in a way that left her whimpering.

They were assaulting her purest pleasure spots, and yet, they still managed to find ways to tease her. Last night aside, she wasn’t a very submissive being, so she felt the need to voice her agony. “S-stop teasing me! Get – ah… on with it!”

Harry and Harley’s eyes briefly met over a horizon of green skin, and with as much as a mischievous grin they could muster with their mouths attached to body parts, they acquiesced to the quivering girl’s demands.

The wizard slowly spread opened her delicate labia lips, like a flower. Her green petals were wet with dew, that looked absolutely beautiful, and he was reminded of what Harley said once about their lover. His tongue began to eagerly search for that sweet watermelon-like taste of the girl under him.

At the same time, Harley’s tongue ran along her long-time girlfriend’s soft skin, somewhat addicted to her taste, and closed her eyes at the feeling it gave her.

In some ways, Ivy was like a plant in itself, and maybe she didn’t even notice it. When she was aroused, her pores released secretions, much like sweat, except it was like no sweat she knew of. It was like a type of honeydew, Harleen figured, having no other references, not as big on plant life studies as her lover.

Still, she sucked on her girlfriend’s skin like a bee to nectar, putting aside the ridiculous thought that bees and flies might actually be attracted to this unique scent with the pheromones she let off. Her tongue flittered and fluttered between the valley of her massive breasts up to her throat, and back again, pausing to grab at the sides of her mammarys and pushing them together, her face trapped in between.

Unintentionally, she was mirroring Harry, his head betwixt Ivy’s thighs and his tongue deep in her slick crevice, wriggling and stabbing into her in the most pleasurable of ways.

Pamela, upon reflection, realized that she had bitten off more than she could chew.

Harleen siphoned her favorite drink off of her favorite gal, motor boating the perfectly big tits that...
she herself was glad she didn’t have, and was ecstatic she’d always have access to. Her tongue slowly rolled across the microscopic imperfections of the green girl below her, Ivy’s pulsing veins tingling her taste buds. Currently clothed in only a slightly oversized t-shirt and a pair of royal blue panties with white stars on them, her own slick womanhood was vulnerable to her encroaching fingers, and she slid a digit smoothly into her underwear to frig herself as she pleasured her girl.

Harry’s tongue continued to slam inside Ivy with a force that she was sure a tongue could never have, with a depth that she was utterly convinced could only be achieved by a spell. He had given them a taste – pun intended – of his Parselmouth abilities, and he had learned to parse out the skill in an intense moment, as it tended to cause unconsciousness. A slow hum in Parseltongue was the most effective technique, since he could avoid closing his mouth for another syllable.

Also, it tended to get messy when he had a vibrating tongue. As it turned out, a lot of girls had a certain spot that made them squirt and spasm harder than they could possibly imagine, and Harry had an uncanny penchant for finding that spot.

Seconds later, that proved to be true with Pamela as well. As Harry’s tongue stimulated every nerve ending inside of her, bumping and vibrating her pussy walls with absurd proficiency, Ivy writhed and came onto Harry’s tongue, screaming into Harley’s mouth as her tasty fluids gushed into Harry’s. She held Harley tight, reaching out and squeezing her ass cheek and marveled at the tight, pliant flesh under her fingers.

Ivy knew her girl’s handful-sized breasts were going to one day turn into something more spectacular than they were already, but she really didn’t want Harley’s ass to ever change.

Harley coo’ed and ah’ed under Ivy’s ministrations when a single digit slipped into her slippery petals, but was grateful for the slow pace, still sore from their last tryst. Her self-healing abilities were stretched thin as much as they both were, so she commiserated with the girl. Though, it seemed that Harry’s magic tongue was at least a partial cure, or at least could give her a different reason to walk funny.

Her legs twitched in spasms as Harry slowly crawled up her body and around Harley, caressing the outside of her stems as his over-achieving oral muscle licked up the left side, taking care to stop at her large breast, picking up where Harley left off.

“F-fuck!” Harley squealed, “So good!” Ivy didn’t realize that she had sped up the pace of her deft fingers, but she didn’t seem to mind. “Keep doing that, baby~~~!”

Harry’s lips finally settled for Ivy’s, which she had no objections to, slurping at Harry’s tongue with a passion. She reached down with her free hand and began to stroke her boyfriend’s massive erection fervently, her body hungry for more, and her lovers fed off her energy like nectar.

With Harley bouncing languidly on her fingers, and Harry beginning to slam into her fist like a fresh cocksleeve against her naturally secreting palms – perks of being ‘more in tune’ with nature – Ivy connected to the two in a way she never felt before. Their first true threesome was underway, and if Harry’s powerful strokes were any indication, they seemed to be in for a long night.

Ivy stared at the tea in a daze.

The previous night was… tiring to say the least. While her body wore the scars in the most uncomfortable places, it was a good hurt. Harley was gentle with her walk to the kitchen table as well, and even Harry discovered a crook in his neck when he awoke. It was the only indication of fatigue he had ever shown so far, and the girls marked it up as a partial victory, even though they
swore that he was the last to fall asleep while they slumbered in unconsciousness. Even he admitted that he felt skittish all day yesterday, insisting that there was always more to do.

She smirked to herself. Perhaps she should consider all options when it came to their lovemaking, and do away with restricted areas.

Still, they had a mission to complete, and if everything went right, a mission to celebrate when they got home.

Though she had to admit, it didn’t seem like one of the greatest crimes in Gotham’s history was about to be committed today.

The morning was calm. There were no cop cars surrounding their house, no nosy cat ladies waiting for the right time to make herself known, nor was there a bat waiting in the shadows for the perfect time to strike – something that Ivy and Harry repeatedly had to promise to Harley that they would warn her of next time that happened – and so life, for them at least, proceeded to be normal.

In a house with a wizard, a plant-human hybrid, an A-grade criminal schoolgirl, a cat burglar, a melancholy prodigy, a reporter, a tiger, a lion, and a snow leopard – it appeared to be a normal morning. So far.

Though, looking around the magically expanded table, Ivy had to admit that this was a bit overwhelming. This ragtag group of criminal masterminds was somewhat... strange, even for her. A sight like this was rare to see, even in Blackgate – being contained together all at once had never happened before. Ivy hoped it never would.

Blackgate’s finest criminal minds were in the room with her: Harleen, next to her, surreptitiously feeding Juliet with a piece of bacon. Eddie, grumbling to himself about his insurance. Selina, drinking a bottle of milk and pouring a small puddle on the floor for Sasha to drink. Harry, inspecting the vine that had taken a liking to him, petting the wriggling appendage not unlike a cat, while Twilight kneeled at his chair. Vale, due to her allergies, had chosen to eat in the living room.

Her eyes rounded the room for a few more moments, before she finally shrugged. This would take some getting used to.

Especially Eddie. If she was honest with herself, when she recommended him to help them out with their problem, she wasn’t planning on him moving in with them, but it was the only condition that he could allow, in order to escape Black Mask’s employment into their protection – well, that, and solve a riddle.

She was rather uncomfortable with another man in her house, and while she was comfortable with the man himself, having been trapped in a prison cell across from his for many months, she didn’t like the idea of him being just down the hallway from her room at all times. Especially if Harleen decided to expand relationship territory again.

She smirked. Her dear Harley. The girl had good instincts, for sure, attracting the attention of Harry Potter. But Pamela would be damned if Riddler was added to the list of men she would have to get used to, intimately, for her adventurous girlfriend’s sake.

Ivy finished her tea and sat back. The vine that was currently catering to them was too predisposed, still letting Harry stroke her. She rolled her eyes with a tilt of a smile and summoned another tendril to flawlessly pick up where the other left off.

Harley nibbled on a piece of bacon. “So,” she inquired, “what’s on the schedule for today, besides
Blackgate? I was thinking of a few more ideas for the house....”

The green-skinned teen shook her head. “We’re already dealing with a mansion, Harley. What did we miss?”

Harry spoke, his attention still on the vine. “Unfortunately, I don’t think I’m quite powerful enough to get all of that done in a day. That boundless energy I had yesterday seems to come and go. I’ll need Hermione’s half on some bits, so I’d have to wait until our connection’s stronger. It’ll be soon enough. In the meantime, I can set up a few things, but it’ll take the whole afternoon and a bit of the evening.”

Edward looked up from his laptop. “Connection problem? Seems fine to me. I’m watching a live feed of our broadcast right now. Still unchallenged!”

Pamela looked at him weirdly. “We don’t have internet, Eddie.”

He smirked as he took a sip of coffee. “You do, now; since twenty minutes ago. I can assure you that you couldn’t get any faster if you wired directly into a satellite.”

Harry blinked. “I’ve rarely been on the computer when I got the chance, in some libraries. But what’s a live feed?”

The man had a peculiar gleam in his brown eyes, and Pam crossed her arms. “Now you’ve done it....”

“Hold on!” Harleen raised up a hand. “Ed, it’s a magic thing, not a tech thing. The connection he was referring to was mental. You two can have your little tutoring session in a minute.” She looked over to Harry. “Blackgate can wait, can’t it? Their security is more lax at night. I’d imagine that the sooner Eddie helps us with our portal problem, the better, right?”

Harry nodded, remembering the conversation he had with Daphne, Tracey, and Fleur. “They’ve almost figured it out, but they need someone on their end. That can wait, too. They’re in class right now.”

The blonde looked towards her girlfriend. “Red? What do you think? Daytime siege? Or should we check in on our new friend at GPD?”

The redhead pondered to herself for a moment. “Perhaps a night attack would seem predictable. I don’t think they’ll be expecting an attack this soon – we never even hinted at a Blackgate outbreak. Plus they seem a bit... distracted at the moment. Though I imagine the prisoners have heard about what we’ve done, and might be planning a mutiny.”

Selina leaned against the table. “Then we start the mutiny before they can; put them in our debt. Make them think that we didn’t forget the little people.”


“I need blueprints,” The green-eyed wizard warned. “And I need the areas marked for the ones that I’m looking for, specifically. You said you had one in mind, Pamela?”

She stood from the table, and retightened her robe, self-conscious of the crowded house. “Two, actually, but one is at Blackgate. I couldn’t tell you his cell number, but he should be in the same block.” She looked around the table. “Ready for your first mission?”

Eddie sniffed. “If it’s Killer Croc, count me out. Or Deadshot.”
“I’d rather we have people on our team that can actually listen to orders. Neither fits our criteria. The person I have in mind will work well with us, I expect.”

“Nice suspense,” Selina muttered. “So what’s the plan going in? Eddie runs interference while I set the distraction? Or are we making helicopters explode and setting more things on fire?”

Harry tickled the underside of the vine, not unlike scratching a snake’s neck, and it wiggled accordingly. “Didn’t realize I’ve become a novelty,” he responded. “I’ll have to change that. Won’t be a one hit wonder.”

“Then it’s time to hit harder than we’ve ever had before,” Harley grinned. “Ready when you guys are.”

“…That’s it?”

She raised an eyebrow at the smartest man in the room. “What? Expecting pay?”

The bespectacled man shook his head, annoyance on his features. “No, dear girl, I was expecting consequences. You’re just going to let us go? Trust us to stay with our designated tasks and help with our fullest capabilities? Not even going to give us a psychiatric exam, or at the very least, some sort of incentive to make sure the mission goes unobstructed and immaculately? Tsk, tsk.”

Harry tilted his head. “That didn’t work for you. You just betrayed Black Mask to work for us. I imagine a reward and a punishment was put in place?”

Edward waved it off, closing the laptop in front of him. “That may be. I did betray him; when faced with three large jungle cats, a bioweapon, a jester with a bazooka, a woman who thinks she has nine lives and nothing to lose, and a man who obviously doesn’t know the basic laws of Physics and Science enough to obey them.” He eyed everyone at the table. “I recommend an explosive collar.”

Selina rolled her eyes. “And let me guess – you’ll be making them.”

Everyone in the room could see his dimples as he smiled. “Of course, my feline friend! In fact, I’ve got the schematics written up in my room. It should only take an hour or so to have a working prototype.”

“And I trust that you’ll be the first subject of the test collar?” Harry asked, almost genuinely. “I’m not exposing anyone to a collar that may or may not work.”

The man adorned in the bowler hat – even at the breakfast table – could only scoff. “All of my inventions work. I can guarantee that.”

Pamela sipped lightly on her tea. “We’re going to have a talk, Eddie, on why you happen to have collar schematics, considering that most of your physical items were destroyed in the warehouse. Did you always plan on using them for this? Or did you plan on enacting some unauthorized domestication?”

Harley scoffed. “Yeah, sure. Like Juliet would let that happen.” At the uncomfortable silence, she looked up from feeding said Sumatran Tiger, in favor of eyeing the self-aggrandizing puzzle master. “I was joking, Riddles. You were supposed to laugh there.”

He chuckled nervously. “Ah, yes, well, I suppose that would be a ridiculous folly, were I to actually try to collar your pet.”

The tiger purred, and Harry chuckled. “Language, Jules.”
Another uncomfortable silence. Harleen tsk’ed. “We still need to talk about the whole ‘I can turn into a cat at will and never bothered to tell anyone’ thing. Still mildly freaked out about the whole thing.”

Harry sat back in his chair, and the snow leopard leaned against his leg. “If you knew, it wouldn’t be as fun.”

She opened her mouth. Then closed it. Then opened it again, holding her hand up to annunciate her words better. She faltered. Then she sighed in resignation. “Yeah, that’s fair.”

Selina rolled her eyes and left the table. “Tell me when you’re ready. My costume’s not exactly made for daytime, and a bikini seems a bit too inappropriate for the job, and, uh… Green’s not a good color on me. You rock it well, sweetie, but black is the best bet for me.” She crossed her arms and leaned against the wall. “So you can heal up gunshot victims like new – thanks for that, by the way – and you’re a hell of a human pyro that’ll make Firefly your best friend. But how’s your taste for fashion?”

“I have green claw marks all over black and red clothes. Fashion isn’t a strong point for me.”

Selina shrugged nonchalantly. “That’s the style these days, isn’t it? Ripped, torn up a little. Sexy.”

“This one’s on me,” Harley acknowledged. “You took away my chance to dress you up, Harry. I’ll make the design, you dress her up.”

“Oh, Harley,” Selina purred, “I’d much rather you dress me up. He’s cute and all, and he’s got magic hands, but I’d appreciate a more… feminine touch.”

She held up a spoon and a fork and held them perpendicular to each other, pointing the makeshift cross at the leering seductress. “Down, kitty. Don’t make me collar your ass.”

The thief showed her teeth in her smile. “You don’t have to tame me. All you have to do is ask.”

Pamela shook her head – aware that she’d probably be doing that a lot more times today – and crossed her arms. “Kyle, you’re starting to sound desperate.”

“Relax, Pammy,” she winked, “it’s just harmless flirting. I imagine that for the next long stretch, we’ll be under one roof for a while, unless Magic Man decides to build a whole city out of Lincoln Logs.”

Harry wrinkled his nose. “You know, I just might. Just to show you I could.”

“So I figured,” Selina continued, pointedly looking away from the wizard, “I can’t bring any guests over. One of these days, this kitty’s gonna need a playmate. Just laying out the groundwork is all.”

“Yes,” Poison Ivy said dully. “With my girlfriend.”

She threw a thumb back at the person she was distinctly ignoring. “Worked out well for him.”

“I’m charming,” Harry quipped immediately. “You’re just horny. And your puns, or ‘pick-up lines’ as you call them, are terrible.”

“Yes, you’re very charming,” Selina drawled in sarcasm. “And nothing’s wrong with my puns. It’s my thing. You just don’t get it.”

Harry nodded over to Eddie. “You could always try him. You two have a lot in common.”

Both sets of eyes narrowed at him. “Take that back,” she growled.
But Nigma more intelligibly let his feelings known. “Excuse me? I have something in common with her? This mentally damaged abomination of a woman? A woman who is half-kleptomaniac, half-crazy catlady! I’m surprised she’s not flirting with the animals.”

She grit her teeth. “I’m sorry I left you out, Eddie. It won’t happen again.”

“The smartest man in the world with the sexiest woman on the planet,” Harry noted. “Quite the vanity affair, don’t you think? I imagine you two could live happily ever after with those delusions.”

“Oh kill each other,” Harley noted, her jaw set. “But if you ever crack a joke about our relationship again, I will tenderize and grind you into cat food, bitch.”

Pamela had been watching her lover closely since Selina’s off-handed comment, seeing how she would respond. On the plus side, it looked very much like she had learned her lesson when it came to infidelity, and she wouldn’t be repeating that mistake anytime soon.

On the negative, this was very poor teambuilding.

“I... I’m sorry, Harls,” the Cat Burglar said awkwardly, seeing the hurt in the blonde’s clear blue eyes. “I didn’t mean anything by it. I was just... just – ”

“Reminding me that it didn’t take much for me to spread my legs and cheat on my girl? Or reminding me that you’re simply surprised that the chick who seemingly just can’t say no is rejecting you?” She stabbed the fork she was holding into the table, making everyone jump. After a chilling silence, she spoke quietly. “Maybe you’re just that terrible of a person.” She nodded her head over to Ivy. “And while I’m sure my lover has been looking at me like she’s afraid I’m ready to fuck everyone at this table, there’s no worry when I’m around you. I guaran-fucking-tee it.”

Selina looked to be legitimately remorseful and hurt stuttering over her words in apologies, and Pamela shut her up. “Harley. We need to talk.”

She eyed her green-skinned girlfriend. “I’m not mad at you, Red. I’d be worried too, if I brought home a guy I met for – what? Two minutes?”

“I followed you home,” Harry delicately reminded her. “After I tied you up. I don’t see you as the guilty one in that situation.”

She gave the appearance of calming herself, though not by much, as she looked down, fiddling with her thumbs. “We had sex, right here in this kitchen, after I told you to get out of our house and tried to kill you.”

Harry sat back in his chair. He looked down for a moment, contemplating whether or not to tell her, before he looked up. “Do you remember what I said about Legilimency? The ability to read minds?”

“Yeah.” She winced. “You actually can do that, can’t you?”

“Just surface thoughts. The things you’re immediately thinking about. I’ve used it on you three times. I did it once to find out who you were, the night we met. I did it again to make sure you were... I did it to make sure you were in the right state of mind about what you... we were doing next. You were... logical about it. All those thoughts in your head were just questions and answers. I saw a pros and cons list. Just a whole bunch of scenarios in why this is a bad idea, and why it wasn’t so bad.” Harry smiled a little. “You could see that I was a good kid. You called me a kid a lot.”

Her eyes were lowered, staring hard into the table. “You looked like a kid. I’ve got a persona to play up, I’m supposed to be over twenty!” She winced as she said that out loud, knowing that she slept
with the ‘kid’. “And then I started feeling guilty about that, too.”

“I’m fifteen, just like you. According to my birth certificate.”

“...Oh. Really? Well, now I know,” she grumbled to herself. “You’d think I’d ask for that information, wouldn’t I?”

Harry fiddled with his thumbs, and Harley cleared her throat to bring noise to the uncomfortably drawn out silence, staring hard into her empty plate. “And the third time?”

“Harley. Look up.”

It took a moment for her to notice. She eyed the frozen room in front of her with a half-gaze, seeing her lover with an admonishing stare, the guilty-looking thief and the angry intellect as still as the table she was staring at.

Only Harry, at the end of the table, was tangibly there, focused on her, staring so intently that he might have been frozen as well.

Until he blinked. “Are you panicking?” he asked with caution.

She bit her lip. She looked around once more. Finally, she settled for shaking her head in the negative.

“Do you trust me?”

She nodded, her reaction much quicker this time.

“It’s an altered Stasis charm,” he explained. “No one can hear this. Full disclosure – the first time I stumbled on this spell, I accidentally stopped my subjects from breathing for a short time. I’ve since fixed that.” He eyed her closely. “I told you that because you trust me, and I don’t want to hide anything.”

He ran a hand through his hair and gave a shy smile – something that she hadn’t really seen on him, and honestly wished she could see more of. “You saw someone you could trust if Pamela had really decided to let you go. You actually considered looking for me to understand where I came from.”

The corners of Harleen’s lips quirked upwards. “But you were already there.” She faltered. “And I was afraid.”

Harry tilted his head. “I believe the words were ‘Why can’t you just die?’ Not the first time I’ve heard that.” His expression turned serious. “A bit of an extreme response to liking a kiss. But that’s the fear, I imagine.”

She blushed. “It was a good kiss. Not good enough to leave Ivy. I needed to gain her trust back. I talked myself into killing you. I needed her back. I don’t... I needed my Ivy back.”

Harry nodded in understanding. “She’s everything to you.” He looked down. “Sometimes – when it’s just the two of us – I’ve called her My Only. For a while, she didn’t like being called ‘Mione, so I started calling her Mine, then My Only. Obviously, the name’s not true, but she had that name before our relationship grew to other girls. But really, I gave her that name for a true and honest reason, I wasn’t even thinking of the literal term anymore. If anything ever happened to her, I don’t know what I’d do. Especially if I think it’s my fault. More especially if she thinks it’s my fault.” He paused. “You didn’t kiss me. I can’t try to convince you what is and what is not your fault. But I take full responsibility for forcing myself on you. Because I read your thoughts and I took action.”
“Then I wanted it.” Her expression was almost sorrowful. “My fault.”

“No. I saw someone in pain who needed to forget. Someone whose life just fell from beneath them. Someone who was thinking about how they would do anything to take the pain away.” He sucked in a breath through his teeth, and loudly exhaled, the noise amplifying in the silent room. “My fault.”

Harleen’s eyes were shining, looking at the still figure of Pamela. Her lecturing speeches, like the one she was likely going to give, didn’t have a looming or encroaching, tedious feel at that moment. “Please don’t tell her I thought that.”

Harry’s eyes glossed over, focusing on nothing in particular. “You know, we like to imagine that we don’t know what we’d do if we lost the ones we love. We do.” He breathed a heavy sigh. “We just don’t even like to think about it. She’d think the same thing. Trust me.”

“Somehow,” she leaned forward on the table, slumping against her palms, “I doubt that. She’s so much stronger than me.”

Harry tapped his fingers on the table, waiting expectantly. Harley stared back. “What?”

He smiled sadly. “The third time I read your thoughts was yesterday morning. You were telling me about your first few weeks living with Pamela, and how you didn’t get along well until you two began to talk. I was rather curious about how you two met.”

Her eyes went wide. She tried to search her words. “T-that was – I mean, she... that’s different!”

“No. It wasn’t.”

A warm set of green fingers cupped the bespectacled blonde’s chin, and Harleen’s eyes were mystified as a halo of red hair surrounded her.

Poison Ivy kneeled on the table, looking directly down at Harley as she held her soft skin, captivating her lover. “Harleen. My dear, sweet Harley.” She used her other hand to stroke her girlfriend’s chin, and the blonde subconsciously leaned into her fingertips her eyes still looked, waiting – wanting. “The days after I met you, I thought I would never be the same again. You exposed and revealed the human part of me. And when you left that message for me... I could breathe again. We’ve been together for over a year, Harls. And I was thinking those dark thoughts when I knew nothing about you but your body.”

She was silent for a pregnant moment. Harley had all the time in the world to wait. “That month you lived here, when we were purely physical with each other. I never told you this, but I never minded that time.” She began to look guilty. “I didn’t love you. I didn’t know if I was capable of that anymore. All I knew was that I loved your body. I loved your energy. I loved your brain. For a time, I even loved your accent, I was so hooked to you.” Harley broke into a grin, for the first time since Harry enacted the time dilation stasis charm. “And I would do anything to keep you. I knew you would fall in love with me. And you did. You told me barely a week into our relationship. And, a part of me lied. I did love you. But I didn’t. Not yet. Not at that level. I was... I was so positive I wouldn’t get there.”

Her eyes burned with intensity. “and even then, I knew I’d do anything to keep you, and I’d never consider hope again if you weren’t here, with me.”

Her breath smelled of fresh lavender today, Harleen barely noticed, when she closed her eyes to stop the tears from falling. “And now, Red?”

“Now,” the redhead smiled, “I’d do anything too keep you. And I’d know exactly what I’d do if
anything happened to you.” She made a sniffle so imperceptible, Harley barely registered it. “From day one, nothing’s changed. It’s just gotten a lot stronger. You make me feel like I’m not a monster. That I can actually feel. And that’s why I made that decision when I first found you. I saw the potential. I saw you. And I was drawn to you like a fly to a Venus.”

Harley chuckled at the irony of her being referred to as the flower. “Me too, Red.”

Her full lips curled. “Then don’t beat yourself up. If there’s anything I love more than you, it’s your instinct. I trust you, Harley. I always have. I’ll let you in on a secret.” She tilted her head over to Harry, who sat on the table next to them at a small distance, fiddling with his thumbs and looking down at his lap. “When we first met, it wasn’t in the best of circumstances. But even I could see the care in his eyes when he took you.” Her smile was mischievous as Harry turned to them in surprise. “I almost began to immediately trust him, too. And a part of me was worried what that would entail. Relationships like this” – she looked back and forth to her two lovers – “don’t last. Or at least, they don’t end well. And when someone tells you they already have a harem, even at his age, you can’t help but think he’s either a liar or a sleaze.”

Harry only shrugged. “I never claimed to not be a sleaze, but I usually only lie for two reasons: to protect the people I love, and to piss off the people I hate.” He looked around the frozen room. “So when I disable the ward, and we all pretend this didn’t happen, I’m protecting our bigger secrets.”

The two nodded. “Good idea,” Harley agreed with a blush. “Because I was planning on saying a lot more than what I was going to say.” She looked up to Ivy, who had leaned back in a kneeling position. “How much did you hear, sweetie?”

“All of it,” the redhead admitted. “I wasn’t affected by the stasis charm at all. But by the time you noticed the rest of the room, I was playing along.” She shook her head. “And apparently, the cradle robber strikes again. That at least explains the teenage stamina.”

The green-eyed wizard rested his feet on the chair as he adjusted his rear on the table. “Magic stamina, actually. The power of the wizard defines the health of the body. My connection to Hermione’s magic gives me another edge as well, but, it’s a bit like a candle burning on both ends. I did leave her with the rest of the girls after all, doing whatever they can to distract her from worrying.” He didn’t have the heart to tell her that it will only get worse – well, better, depending on the standpoint – as he got older.

“You know,” Harley began to inquire, “we never got an answer on how many girls you’ve actually been with.”

“I’ve never counted,” Harry said honestly. “I mean, I can remember all of their names, but I’ve never organized it into a numbered list. Give me a minute.”

Harley whistled. “That many, huh? A guy with perfect memory and total recall has to actually count them out? That pretty much answers my question.”

“Although,” Pamela pointed out, “that was far too noble an answer for a normal human being. I can understand not having a black book, but to not even have an estimate of your conquests?”

Harry snorted. “I imagine that they consider me the conquest. I have to try to separate my memories from Hermione’s and Luna’s. We tend to share a lot of memories. And they’re polyjuiced as me, which makes it even more confusing. I guess that counts.”

Harley nodded in understanding, while Ivy looked confused. “I’ll tell you later,” the blonde promised, remembering that she wasn’t with them the previous morning. “So, what was happening
before everything froze?”

“It was right before Pamela told you that she needed to talk to you. Since she wasn’t affected, she was able to speak.”

Ivy tilted her head at the wording of Harry’s statement, but didn’t inquire further. With a long kiss against her girlfriend’s sweet lips, and a quick peck to her magical boyfriend, she slid back and off the table, as gracefully and quietly as she approached it. Harry carefully directed her back to where she was.

Harley dabbed at the tears in her eyes, tears that weren’t there before time stopped, and embarrassingly muttered thanks to her two best friends. She absently reached down to pet the downy soft fur of her Sumatran, and Juliet was still warm to the touch as she remembered it.

Harry stood from the table, and the blue eyed girl with shoulder-length blonde hair used her other hand to make a come hither motion. Harry leaned in, and her smirk was devious as she grabbed him by his collar and pressed her lips to his.

“You lied,” she whispered knowingly, her smirk still in place after they parted.

“Did I? At what part?”

“Right before that whole lecture on trust, you said that no one can hear us talk. I’m far from mad, but I am curious. Why lie about Ivy being unfrozen?”

Harry stared up at the green-skinned teen, her similarly tinted eyes searching his own. “Pamela needed to hear it all. It would hurt the both of you if she didn’t know.”

Harley blinked a few times at the unsaid message, while Ivy looked ponderous. Harry didn’t dwell on it long, instead moving back to his seat. He placed one hand on the table, and hid his other hand on his lap, out of view.

“Is it too late to slap Selina in the face?”

“I really don’t think she meant anything by that comment, Harls.”

“I know. I just really want to slap her, is all.”

“You two are going to have to learn to work with each other if we want this team to actually succeed. I could kick her out, but doing that might make her an ally of Batman. You know she likes to switch sides.”

“Don’t I know it.” The blue-eyed girl stared at the yellow-eyed vixen, her statuesque apologetic form, admittedly, a work of art. “You said the one thing you loved as much as me was my instinct, right?”

A slight pause, and Pamela slumped her shoulders. “Okay. I get it, loud and clear. She’ll be gone by the end of the day.”

“Nah.”

Ivy raised a delicate eyebrow. “No?”

Harley eyed her girlfriend carefully. “Don’t think I haven’t noticed that no matter how many times she’s asked to room with us, you’re interested in the offer, while she’s always making eyes at me.
Every time she flirts with me, you tell her once not to, and she keeps going, and you ignore it. You even suggested that she join our team before Harry came along. You talked me into stealing the Jade from the museum – the heist that led me to Harry.” She smirked. “And here I thought you weren’t too fond of cats.”

Ivy stood there with crossed arms, and the beginnings of rosy cheeks. “I wanted you two to get along together,” she insisted. “You said it yourself, Harley: Until Harry, I was your only friend. And we did – still do, on some basis – need her help in our team.” She looked away. “And perhaps, maybe I got carried away.”

“Yeah, you trying to hook me up with Selina frustrated me a bit, but not nearly enough as the fact that you were doing it for the purpose of all three of us living happily ever after, knowing that if she managed to get in my good graces, it would be a very easy transition from there.” She sent a cheesy smile Harry’s way. “I couldn’t imagine anyone doing that, huh?”

“Holy hell,” Pamela managed to mutter through a slacked jaw. “That’s what you did with me and Harry?”

“Harry was my Selina,” her sweet little Harleen admitted apologetically. “Except what I did worked. In my defense, Harry’s more immediately likeable.”

Pamela, forced to taste her own medicine, didn’t know whether to feel guilty, or just... betrayed. By herself. “I really tried shoving her into our relationship, wasn’t I?”

Harleen shook her head. “Selina’s hot. And she’s sometimes fun to be around. And she gives good tips on how to rob a joint when you don’t feel like running and smashing things.” She pointed her thumb at the statuesque beauty. “This chick is sex in a catsuit. But she licks her wrist when she thinks we’re not lookin’. The psychiatrist in me sees a giant red flag, and while part of me is curious if she feeds her kittens milk the old-fashioned way in private, another just does not want to go down that path with her.” She was silent for a moment. “But I owe you one. So you keep her.”

Pamela raised her eyebrow. “Excuse me?”

Harleen nodded towards Harry. “You gave him a chance. And I’m grateful. But I can’t promise I won’t abuse your gratefulness. So I’ll let you get me back.” She remembered a few choice words she had mentioned days back, and smirked devilishly. “As long as you promise to feed her and water her, and take good care of her. That’s what I said I’d do for Harry. This is more fitting, don’t ya think?”

At Harry’s stern look, she giggled. “Oh yeah, you didn’t hear me when I said that. The roles have reversed. I got no problem admitting that. Love ya.”

The wizard unsuccessfully hid a smile. “Back at you, Harls.”

Pamela tilted her head. “This is weird. Really, fucking, weird.”

Harleen’s cheery disposition never faltered. “Well, you know I love you enough to start being nicer to Selina. I don’t mind her, I really don’t. Psychologically, she’s a gold mine. A hell of a school project when summer’s over. But she’s a playful, cute little kitty cat. We just have to house train her.”

Harry chose not to let known his feelings on the matter, and Ivy noticed. “Harry,” she eyed him, willing to let him know that he was officially part of this conversation, and everything that went with it.

He chose his words carefully. “This is far from the first time I’ve had to be in this conversation.” He
gave a slight smile. “Frankly, Hermione and I are a bit more liberal when it comes to us, because of our condition.”

She shifted uncomfortably. “This is going to get a whole lot deeper, isn’t it?”

Harley hummed to herself. “The more, the merrier. Enslaving the world is a tall order. Keeping a few level-headed, straight-laced gals for ourselves sounds a lot more obtainable.”

“Girls?”

“Can you think of a man that you like? Or can even measure up to the one we already got?” she smirked.

Ivy wryly shook her head. “I was asking because I felt relieved. So Eddie’s not a candidate, right?”

“Eww, no. He’s old. And sometimes an asshole.”

The redhead’s smile made Harley shiver. “Oh, you are just perfect.”

“I try. And sometimes, I just am.” She looked around the room once more. “You know, we could have some fun while they’re frozen.”

“With Eddie in the room?” Ivy made a face. “He can’t see me, but I can see him. Maybe another time.”

Harry cleared his throat, hiding his embarrassment of what Harley said earlier about ‘measuring up’. “Time is still passing. I didn’t freeze the world, just this house. It’s been fifteen minutes.”

“Oh,” Ivy muttered, looking at her mug. “How was I posing? Do I need to make this steam again?”

“I’ve found that a temporary Confundus charm helps in situations like these. The human mind can be eerily observant when it comes to inconsistencies. A small amount of confusion will take over for a little bit. Since I’ve told you both about it, it won’t hit you as hard.”

“How does that work?” Harley asked, curious about the magical people’s perception on the mind.

“Your brain knows that it will be confused, and what it’s being confused about. The logic returns that much sooner when it can remember what’s going on.” Harry smirked. “According to that book I read a long time ago.”

Harley frowned. She just knew it had something to do with the book she had considered a waste of time. “Ha-ha. Time to go back to the real world.”

With his imperceptible smirk still present, Harry tapped against the table.

As the world around them slowly began to move again, Harry couldn’t help but say one final thing, knowing he was speaking too fast for the ones affected by the ward to hear, but while both girls were affected partially by the Confundus charm. “I suppose we’ll have to talk about Harley’s crush on Vicki later, then.”

Harleen Quinzel and Pamela Isley had only a few moments to try to absorb that information, and Harley could claim that she blushed faster than the speed of time.

” – didn’t mean to,” Selina continued, clearly distressed. She blinked a couple of times, and shook her head. “I didn’t think you were so uptight about –”
“Stop!” Harley commanded, and looked pointedly at the black-haired beauty. “You absolutely suck at apologizing. “Say you’re sorry.”

She could see Selina arguing with herself before finally buckling. “Sorry,” she muttered.

“Like you mean it.”

“Sorry,” she deadpanned. “Jesus. Try some warm milk and calm down.”

In some part of Harleen’s mind, she decided that she didn’t mind the puns anymore. “If I give you a ball of yarn, will you stop insulting everyone in the house?”

She crossed her arms and huffed. “Maybe,” she admitted, looking to the side.

Edward winced. “It’s literally hurting my head watching this.”

“You,” Harley pointed at Selina while looking at the man in the Bowler hat, “Apologize. Or Juliet will have words with you. You two need to get along, or we end this right now.” She nodded towards the fork, still embedded in the table in front of her. “Picture that table as your leg. With bigger prongs.”

Edward Nigma, the genius that he was, apologized for his hurtful words. “But let the record show that he started it,” he ended, eying the wizard at the end of the table.

Harry was still petting the vine at his side, while his bare feet stroked the long back of a sleeping Twilight below him. “The fact that you reacted so violently to being mentioned in the same sentence as your partner is a problem.”

He clicked his tongue in response, but didn’t argue.

“There.” Harleen leaned back in her chair. “We gonna have a problem, people? What we’re gonna do today will be what makes or breaks us as a team, and I don’t have a lot of confidence in us right now. We may not get along now, but we better be best fucking friends on the field. I trust Ivy. I trust Harry. Hell,” she looked pointed at her boyfriend, “I even trust Vale to do her job right when it’s her time.” She looked back at Selina. “I trust you to do your job, and I trust Eddie to do his. You’ve proven yourselves already. What I can’t trust is the idea that we can all do our job together.”

“We will, Harley.” Pamela’s tone was commanding, and deep. “We better.” She eyed the three newest members, including Vicki, who had stood at the door when she heard her name. “If you’re not an ally, you’re an enemy. If you’re a bad ally, you’re something worse.”

Both girls looked towards Harry. And some part of him still felt honored that he was considered an equal partner on the team, considering he had joined only twenty-four hours before. “It goes without saying that it’s too late to turn back. Far too many secrets are in play, and I think we’ve all got a few things that should stay hidden. We don’t need each other to terrorize Gotham. We need each other to take over Gotham and stay there. And we need more than what we have right now to take over the world. So choose any future partners carefully.” He paused. “I have a friend looking into her resources, collecting everything she can about the Batman, but I needed more. The night I introduced myself, I stumbled across the vigilante. You know how much of a threat he is, but more importantly, I know how much of a threat he is. I now know everything about him. I know what he knows. And I’ve processed most of it. On that point, I should tell you he’s getting more brilliant than ever. Don’t think that my knowledge of him makes him predictable; far from it. He knows what I did, and you’ll be seeing a different side of him. A more lethal side. He knows what type of enemy he’s dealing with, and he’s not taking any chances. He won’t kill, but we’re challenging more than him – we’re
challenging his control. I can protect you, and I can take him on when he interferes, but I’m telling you now: provoke him, and I won’t be enough to stop him from getting to you. And considering we’re breaking into Blackgate, I wouldn’t exactly be looking forward to where he could be taking you to lock you up.”

He stood from the table, careful of the resting Leopard below him, and waved his hand.

Harley gasped as her hair flipped up right in front of her, and she could feel her hair tie into knots at her side. She looked down, and sure enough, her signature red and green getup was there, fingerless gloves and boots and all, and as she shifted back in surprise, she felt how comfortable the fabric was, and took note of the different look of her outfit, the shiny spandex replaced with a more breathable fabric. When the fabric began to shine again, she breathed a sigh of relief and looked up to her girlfriend.

Having seen herself turn into another race the previous day, Ivy was more familiar with the rapid transformation, but she was still unaccustomed to the change. As fast as her robe slipped from her body, leaves wrapped and sewn themselves around her twice as quickly. As soon as her robe splashed against the floor, her Elvin slipper-clad feet gracefully stepped over the garment, her body taking in the cool sensations of the leaves that covered her. While her last costume was mostly environmentally friendly fabrics with leaves, this seemed to be completely produced from nature, and when she stretched, she had to admit that they were stronger than she could have expected. She pulled at a leaf, and couldn’t see a hint of stitching. She concentrated, and the leaf turned brown, confirming that it was real. As soon as she let go, the leaf turned a brilliant glimmering green, blending into her suit.

Selina could only watch in a shocked awe as her clothes morphed into something completely unexpected. Rather than the leather her suit was made of, a soft blend of fabrics took over her voluptuous form, creating a pure black bodysuit, complete with the comfortable heels she was accustomed to, only completely connected to the rest of the suit. They even felt the same. Though her eyes were open the entire time, a quick check found that she indeed had a mask on, as thin as the skin it covered. A tentative touch not only confirmed that she had ears, but, with trepidation and a bit of excitement, found that they could twitch under contact. And she could feel them twitch. She could feel her normal ears, but the sides of her mask were completely smooth, no bumps where there should be ears.

Harley turned to Harry, who was now clad in his own black and green uniform. “That was... pretty cool.”

Harry smirked, even as thin metallic coils began to cover his wrists. “Just pretty cool.”

“It keeps you from getting cocky.”

“It’s not working.”

Her smirk rivaled his. “Good. Cuz dude, you’re fucking awesome.”

“Hold on,” Ivy muttered with a frown, twisting and turning in her new outfit. After a few seconds of silence, she turned to them both with a smirk. “It’s perfect.”

Selina opened her mouth, and after breathing out a tiring sigh, silently closed it.

Harley rolled her eyes. “You know what? I think it would be fitting in this situation. Go for it.”

They could all see the sparkle in her golden eyes as she rubbed a hand across the black fabric. “It’s
Harley blinked. “You gotta admit, girl knows how to roll a tongue.”

Selina sniffed. “Tease.”

“Maybe,” she admitted. “But I’m not the one showing off my oral skills. Certainly got Pammy staring.”

The Cat Burglar’s eyes were predatory as they landed on the redhead, who was glaring at Harley. “Oh really?”

The green-skinned teen sniffed. “Let’s get back on track.”

Edward looked around the room. “Can someone tell me why I’m still the same?”

Harry answered, “You’re not going to let anyone see your face. I didn’t see the point.”

Nigma pouted. Harry sighed, and with no hint of a flourish, a green suit was lain on the table in front of him. Red question marks scattered about the green silk glowed inconsistently with each other, giving it a neon feel, and the shoes lain on top of it were made of, if he was correct (and he reminded himself that he always was), alligator skin. Even the Bowler hat that rested on his softly glowing necktie – red silk with green question marks – was impeccably stitched, with a firm crown, made for tipping down over his forehead to conceal his face at public establishments, and the soft red feather that was placed in the ribbon was bent into a swirl. If one were to look closer, they’d see the slight shape of a question mark, but the feather wasn’t big enough to be distracting.

Edward inspected the suit with an appraising eye. “Impressive! Flashy, with just the right amount of subtlety! But,” he turned to him, missing the girls’ looks of incredulity at his last statement, “is there a reason I got different treatment?”

“I have to picture you nude to dress you,” Harry deadpanned. “Sorry, but I’ll always be treating you differently.”

He grinned toothily. “Say no more! I’ll be off to don my new garments. I shall return in a trice!”

The group watched him run off through the hallway, his robe billowing, clutching his clothes to himself like a happy child carrying his books to school. “I think he likes it,” Harley tittered, before tilting her head to Harry. “So, you saw Selina naked? When was that?”

“I pictured her naked,” Harry quickly clarified. “There’s a difference.”

“I knew it,” she muttered, running her fingers up and down her generous breasts. “The bust is a bit too tight.”

Harry blinked. “I, uh, didn’t know they were that... wow. That’s impressive; your dexterity, I mean.”

She shrugged. “You get used to ’em. So, are these bullet-proof?”

Harry nodded. “Even if they aim for your head. Bullet-proof, Water-proof, heat-proof, fire-proof, cold-resistant. I’m afraid that you’d have to be magical for me to try to add anything else.”

Harley’s red eyes gleamed with a passion. “Oh, I think we can work with this.”

Ivy wriggled her hands and ran her fingers – noting the three connected leaves that now adorned her palm, the stem leading directly into a vein in her wrist – through her luscious hair. She frowned as
she reached a snag.

“…… it looks like,” Harley informed her, and Ivy carefully removed the flower to stare at it. “Oh, wow,” the blonde muttered, watching another lily immediately, gracefully bloom in its place.

“A stargazer lily,” she whispered, and she took a whiff at the reddish white petals with closed eyes, savoring the sweet smell.

Harry smiled, seeing her react so positively. “I made the suit to repel insects. So no worry about bees.”

Her smile was soft, and her green eyes sparkled when she opened them. “Why did it take such a long time to fall for you?”

Harley laughed out loud, while Vicki, still standing in the doorway, looked out of place. “Um... Warlock? Is there anything I could do? Any notes I could take for when I go on air?”

“Harry,” he informed her. “Call me Harry. For the moment, we’ve got the video side of broadcasting in Gotham. Now it’s time for radio. I’ll get Riddler to calibrate two of the eight towers back to radio, and once you get a mic, I’m going to need a full broadcast of coverage at Blackgate. I’ll try to reroute the footage from the security room to one of the towers.” He looked confused for a moment. “I guess I already know where that is. It seems that his memories are starting to get clearer to me now.”

“Speaking of Batman,” Selina inquired, hopping up to sit on the counter, “Don’t you think you should tell the newest recruits a little secret?”

“Too much of a distraction,” the wizard cautioned, “and you’re already underestimating him. Could you picture Riddler taking Batman seriously if he found out who he is?”

Vicki blinked owlishly. “You know who he is?”

Harry nodded.

“My shortlist was always Dent, Wayne, Gordon, Luthor and Sionis. Was I close?”

He shrugged. “You’ll have another few hours yet to ponder it, Miss Vale.”

“Vicki.”

Harley had since walked towards Ivy, Juliet following, and her girlfriend offered her the flower. “I don’t think it exactly fits this character,” she murmured, fitting the lily into the green side of her hair, “but fuck it; I love it.”

Pamela was silent for a moment, staring into her radiant girlfriend’s eyes. “Do you think everything will go back to normal after he goes back?”

Harleen’s gloved hands found Ivy’s and traced the three leaves on her palm. She stared sincerely into her best girl’s eyes. “I don’t think it can, Red.”

“I...” she sighed. “I hope not.”

“That it doesn’t go back to normal, or that he doesn’t leave?”

The corners of her mouth twitched upwards. “Both.”

“Where is he going?” Selina whispered, having approached them quietly.
Harley almost jumped. “How did you hear that?”

Selina shrugged. “You two sounded loud enough. I could hear it plain as day. Actually, I can hear Vale talking to Warlock and Eddie right now.”

Harley looked over to the doorway to the den, and sure enough, Harry and Vicki were speaking in hushed tones with the newly dressed Riddler, probably discussing the technology involved and what was needed to get through security.

She didn’t know, she could barely hear a word they were saying.

“Ow! Hey!” Selina flinched away from the redhead of equal height, whom had just poked her right ear. On top of her head.

“You could feel that?”

“I wouldn’t have said ‘Ouch’ if I couldn’t have felt that!” she stressed, her ears twitching in- and outwards.

“It feels like polyester,” Ivy muttered, “but it’s actually... cat ears?”

“And the transformation is complete,” Harley rolled her eyes, “and he’s supporting your habit.”

Selina crossed her arms. “I’m not the only one with an extreme change. You look like a clown, sweetie.”

“Huh?” she asked eloquently.

“Your face is caked in white powder and blush,” Ivy clarified for her girlfriend. “You didn’t feel it?”

“Oh, no. How does it look?”

Ivy tapped her chin. “Like a porcelain doll, actually. Delicate. But the black rings around your eyes makes it look a bit....”


Pamela nodded. “Sure. You look great.”

“Good. I guess we’re kinda like vigilantes, ain’t we? Fighting for what we believe in, and bypassing the justice system to achieve our goal?”

Selina sniffed. “Yeah, but we know that most of the things we’re doing is wrong. Justice-wise and morally.”

Ivy held onto Harley’s hand, stopping her from tracing the leaves on her palm. “Then we’ll have to change the rules when all is said and done.” She frowned. “You are aware that you’ve been tracing actual poison ivy leaves, right?”

“Uh-huh,” she nodded, “and I just know there’s a joke somewhere in that. I’m just trying to decide between ‘stroking’ Poison Ivy or ‘softly caressing’ Poison Ivy. Or maybe I’ll go with ‘gently fingering Poison Ivy until she couldn’t take it anymore.’”

Like an electric shock, an embarrassed Pamela let her girlfriend’s hand go, who continued tracing her palm. The green/redhead smirked. “But she didn’t stop me.”
“I’ll never live this down, will I?” she muttered, helplessly watching as her lover violated her hand, in Harley’s twisted view.

She held onto her arm and hugged it to her. “Nope. You fell right into it, Red.”

Selina chuckled at the interaction, and cocked her head at an approaching Harry. You’re lucky,” she simply noted, her face sincere.

“I know; more importantly, they know.” Soon, he was followed by Eddie and Vicki, and the entire team was there, in a circle. “Any last requests?”

Harley shrugged, while Pamela pursed her lips. “Don’t die.”

Harry nodded solemnly. “Only if you don’t.”

“When we get back,” Vicki spoke out, “is there any chance I could get a wardrobe?” She felt a bit out of place, being the only one still clad in pajamas.

Harry raised an eyebrow.

“I’ll pass along my measurements,” she said wryly, remembering what he said earlier.

“Taking the fun out of it,” he teased, and she smiled. Turning to Selina he muttered, “what about you? Did you need me to fix your, err, suit?”

She wriggled a bit in her costume. “You know, I think this works for me. Constrictive, yet free for me to do more.”

“You just like the push-up feature,” Ivy teased.

“At least someone pays attention around here,” she teased back.

Edward scoffed at the interaction in the room. “I’m eternally grateful that my work and other proclivities distract me from such trivial pursuits as relationships.”

“I’m sure most people say that,” Harley responded. “In smaller words. And they usually say it right before they meet the love of their life.”

The Riddler only harrumphed and straightened his tie. Just in case she was right.

After connecting hands, Harry traversed them to a place where, maybe unsurprisingly, he felt he had been before.

Except this time, he had no intention of arresting anyone.

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Omake by Rihaan

“Fleur?” he muttered sleepily. “It’s good to see you.”

“It is spectacular to see you, Harry,” the blonde smiled brightly, despite her sweaty, flushed form, “as I feared I would not see you again.”

“You could have called me anytime.”

“Oui, I could have, but it would have distracted me from my exams. And I feared that I would be
under too much stress if I saw you while I researched the veil.”

“Any progress?” Harry wondered, now fully awake. He had been on a bit of a tear the previous night, a bit more... energetic than usual. Ivy and Harley were completely out of it, and he stood by the doorway, careful not to disturb their slumber.

“Non, sorry Harry. We have come across a problem.”

Harry furrowed his brow, before a resigned sigh released itself. “What now?”

She spun the mirror, and Harry blinked a few times at the erotically disturbing image.

In what looked like the fully renovated version of Salazar Slytherin’s Chamber of Secrets, naked bodies were strewn about the large room; the floor, the rugs, the beds, and even the tables weren’t safe from the coverage of an endless string of arms and tangled limbs, all connected to fully developed curves of slumbering girls.

There was even a girl sleeping peacefully on top of the swaying chandelier, twenty feet off the ground, and Harry only needed to see a flash of blonde to know who it was. “Fleur, could you please get Luna from down there?”

The mirror moved slightly, and Harry guessed it was a shrug. “I tried. She does not want to come down, so I threw her a pillow.” She turned the mirror back to herself, and Harry noticed how very naked she was. “I woke up first, and this was what I saw. Hermione, she... she was like nothing we’ve ever seen. She saw through our plan to distract her the moment we tried it.”

“Wait,” Harry furrowed his brow, “Tonks said they were going to distract Hermione yesterday. You can’t possibly be telling me that...” he faltered as Fleur’s expression stayed grim. “So she got away?”

“Sincerest apologies, Harry, but she err, épuisé, er, exhausted, everyone. My Veela blood assured that I would wake up first. Parkinson should be awake soon, with her condition. Harry... if you had a pensieve...”

Harry nodded, running his hands through his hair. “I knew I felt a bit antsy yesterday. I guess I know why. Do you know where she went?”

She sniffed. “I could guess. I’m sorry, Harry.”

His mind frantically searched for a clue that there was another presence.

All he got back was a simple message – a picture of a strange apple. Half black and half white. He didn’t know what it represented, but he knew what it meant.

“She’s still alive,” Harry exclaimed, and both breathed a sigh of relief. “So she either got away for a while, or she found a way to get through the veil,” Harry tried to rationalize.

“It has to be the veil. Snape was guarding it, and he refused to tell me anything.” She bit her lip. “You ordered him to follow all of our commands. Someone made him break that order. Only you and Hermione can do that.”

“She ordered him to not tell anyone. If she didn’t want him to say anything, she would have told him to hide.” Harry tilted his head. “Unless he’s not allowed to tell you how she went through.”

“The Hallows,” she exclaimed, and there was a groan out of screen. “Parkinson is awake.”
“If Hermione wanted to find me, she’d be here. She could be somewhere else.”

“But où? Where is she?”

“She only sent me a picture of a black and white apple. It has to mean something."

Fleur shrugged helplessly. “Would it be another world of fiction?”

“Has to be. She wouldn’t have sent a message so simple otherwise.” Harry frowned. “She doesn’t want to be found right now. She’s planning something. And shy of Voldemort and Dumbledore, I feel sorry for anyone in her way.”

The French half-Veela smiled wryly. “It seems she has been slaughtering everyone in her path for the past twenty hours; from ze break of dawn to dusk and back again.”

Harry frowned and rechecked the image that Hermione had sent him.

The apple had craters. It wasn’t meant to be an apple. It was in the perfect shape of an apple, however.

But it was meant to be a moon. One side white, the other side black.

Harry sighed. He had a prison to rob in the morning, but it appeared that he wasn’t going to get much sleep, knowing that his girlfriend might be facing off with the supernatural. “I know where she is.”

~Ch. 9, pg. 195 quote~

About three things I was absolutely positive. First, Edward was a vampire. Second, there was a part of him – and I didn’t know how potent that part might be – that thirsted for my blood. And third, I was unconditionally and irrevocably in love with him.

“That logic seems very flawed,” Hermione muttered, and Isabella Swan jumped up in surprise to see a woman in a simple pale green hoodie and black skinny jeans, looking over her shoulder as she wrote in her diary. “Sorry, didn’t mean to shock you. I’m Hermione. Hermione Granger.”

She backed away as the girl clutched at her chest, her breathing erratic. With an unnoticeable calming charm, her heart settled, and her breathing became relaxed. “W-where did you come from?”

Hermione pointed her thumb back towards the window. “You should really close your windows at night. You may be on the second floor, but your gutter spout is very durable.” She brushed her hair away from her face as she gently sat on the edge of the bed, mere feet away from her. “I’m sorry, but I was, er, running away from home, and you were the only house I saw for miles. The other house was a boy’s and, that would have been uncomfortable, to say the least.” She smiled nervously. “Sorry for the inconvenience.”

“No, no. It’s alright.” She looked intrigued. “You really just got up and ran away? With no bags?”

“Well, I didn’t really have a choice. See, my boyfriend’s gone missing, and I have to find him. I’d like to think that he depends on me, but I can’t say that without saying I can’t do a bloody thing without him. A lot of people are after him, and I didn’t have time to think about anything else. Like clothes.” She bit her lip. “You seem to be one to believe in fairytale type creatures, right? Would it surprise you to know that there’s more out there?”
Even as Bella began to deny that she knew what the brunette was talking about, the pale girl felt her voice dying as Hermione gently placed a finger over her lips, and with the other, a soft glow emitted from her palm to form a small apple, hovering between her fingertips. “Do you believe in fairy tales, Miss Swan?”

“I… how do you know my name?”

“Same way I know that you have a fetish for the weird, Bella,” she whispered, and her smile was predatory – far more sinister than a Vampire’s. “Magic.”

Her breathing was heavy. “Why are you showing me?”

“Because I feel drawn to you, and I’m doing what I feel is right.” She bit into the apple, and took a long swipe with her tongue at the exposed juice left behind. “I don’t think it’s sexual, though you’re a very beautiful girl. You just seem like a good partner to have around.” She wordlessly handed over the apple, and, after only seconds of indecision, she took it.

She was tired of relying on people. The harrowing experience of having three strangers approach her at night, only to be saved by an always watching savior, made her both relish and reject the idea of a guardian.

For all she knew, Edward could be watching her right now.

“He isn’t.” Hermione informed her. “I may sound like a hypocrite, reading your mind and all, but a girl deserves her privacy. My magic allows you to have that.”

“You can… you can read my mind?” She had speculated Edward could do the same thing, but it’s doubtful he’d ever tell her the full truth. “Could you… not? Please?”

“Oh, I’m sorry! It’s just that… your mind is so vulnerable to me, and I don’t see that so often. An open book, and I love books. It’s interesting.”

Her eyes shifted away. “Not that interesting.”

“I’ve read a lot of books, and a lot of minds. Yours is downright fascinating, Bella. So… inventive. Imaginative. Beautiful.” She looked down. “So much more than I expected. I wish you could see that.”

Bella bit her lip, pondering the situation behind and ahead of her, her mind racing. Being saved in the middle of the night by an impossibly beautiful man, and to come home to an even more incredibly attractive creature, certainly made her feel like she was special.

And that’s all she ever really wanted: to feel special. Not to lust after some sense of danger, and not to surround herself with potential cannibals. She just wanted to be… accepted.

I made my decision.

The once-bitten apple was sweet, almost too sweet, I realized as I covered her bite with my own, rather large bite. Edward and I didn’t have a large dinner, as he gave me half-truths and even lesser-fractioned explanations. This girl – Hermione – I had only met her for minutes, and she tells me everything I needed to know. Or, at least she seems ready to.

There were several people in my life I knew were hiding secrets from me: Angie, Jessica, Mike, Eric, Jacob, Tyler (who apparently didn’t let me in on the secret that he’s my prom date), my own father, and of course, the man with the most secrets, the Vampire, Edward Cullen.
I’ve been so desperate for the past few days to find the answers to the things that happen around me, I forgot the feeling of overwhelming joy when the answers are right in front of me.

That logic seems to make sense. Then again, I claimed to be in love with a man I met for a combined – eight hours? One hour outside of class? I like a good mystery novel, sometimes I could love them, but once the mystery’s over, it loses its magic. No pun intended.

This girl claimed that I was an open book, but she seemed to have no secrets she wanted to keep from me. She even pulled a few out of me herself.

So how did I find myself so incredibly attracted to her? How did I find myself, with a mouthful of as-yet un-chewed apple, kissing and holding the only girl in Forks to have any answers for me, and I find myself not caring if I scare her away, if only for a lingering, fleeting moment of this? 

Fortunately, that turned out not to be the case, for when we parted, me staring into her brown eyes, her smile almost eclipsed mine, even as she chewed on a piece of apple that wasn’t there before.

I didn’t apologize, nevertheless. I couldn’t apologize. Even if I could, I didn’t want to.

Love is a fickle thing, I’ll be the first to say that. And perhaps the words ‘irrevocably’ and ‘unconditionally’ were a bit over the top.

But I swear I love this girl by my mortal heart.

It didn’t start then. That would be, compared to the past few months, somewhat ridiculous. But throughout the night, we talked. We did nothing but talk for a good long while, and I didn’t regret it at the time. She was a truly fascinating woman, and explained so much to me about what’s out there. My weirdness for attracting the weird wasn’t an isolated incident, it seems. But I also attracted her, to be fair. An inquiry for another time.

She understood that I wanted answers, and she revealed to me what seems to be a far-fetched tale, even compared to the rest. Her beauty was only rivaled by her mind, which was just as voluptuous and attractive to me, despite my ambivalence towards school. She explained what she knew about me – things that no one else but I knew – before she told me about the existence of other worlds.

But even that couldn’t compare to the wondrous tale of my life being catalogued in a popular book series where she comes from.

She was a fountain of knowledge, and I had no reason to not believe her so far, but there was one thing I needed to know – one thing I needed to hear her say, lest my emotions go unchecked. “Why?”

Her head tilted in the slightest way, and her beautiful eyes sparkled so genuinely. “Because your story is everything short of a tragedy,” she slowly admitted to me. “I didn’t mean to come here, but I quickly deduced where I was, and it would be inhumane of me to not warn you of hard times.”

I tilted her chin, yet again, and sealed my lips on hers. I suppose it was my way of thanking her. No. That’s not true. It’d be far simpler if it was, but that’s not apropos with my life, according to her. ‘Complications’ would have made a far better title than ‘Twilight.’

What I said next, couldn’t be explained as me trying to thank her. It can’t be blamed on me trying to find closure, or at least more answers. I’ve never been one to take a leap of faith, but right now, with this girl, I’d dive head-first, at least until she found what she was looking for. “Your boyfriend,” I asked her, almost surprised that she had never once mentioned his name. “Who is he?”
Her eyes sparkled, and I felt an odd feeling of dread overcome me. It’s utterly reckless to write this down, but I would have never been the same again if she said ‘Cullen’. I don’t imagine my story would go on much longer if I started skipping Biology.

Luckily, she told me an unassuming name, a name that was comfortable to me. A name with no meaning or consequence.

Harry Potter.

But I knew it had to be a special name to be attached to this girl. I’m more grateful for this mystery; it promised much more in terms of simplicity.

As dawn broke over the horizon in the east, my head was lain against her shoulder as we travelled the terrains in a lavish, smoother vehicle that shared some resemblance to my former deathtrap monster truck. We passed the city limits, something I was once confident my car could never do, and her teasing smile at being made right made me shiver, and it was all I could do not to distract her from driving.

I’ve said since the beginning that I’ve wanted to leave Forks, Washington, and the people I’ve met have only slightly spoiled my exuberance to leave - the letters I’ve decided to write and leave next to my diary will express my thanks enough, I think. The rain will still be there when I come back. Someday.

My story can wait; this one seems far more intriguing.

Chapter End Notes

Couldn’t resist. Could you believe that before Harry and Harley was made, a Twilight cross-over was one of my earlier ideas? Using Hermione instead of Harry made it so much better, I think. The most obvious one out the way, future Omakes (Extras) will be very fun. Of course, you can submit your own.

I’m not sure how the action scene will turn out, but I’ll promise... something. I hope this was worth the wait. Got pretty emotional at points, and that’s totally not me. *Sniffles* Oh, um, you didn’t hear that.

Though I am aware that this is very dialogue/substance heavy, and I hope to make up for it with action. Comedy helps dialogue-heavy scenes, though, and I think I put in a fair amount.

It’s good to be back. I graduated on the 17th of July (2015), so I guess I’ll dedicate this chapter to that.

I'm most of the way through New Game+ in Arkham Knight, and Platinum seems like an impossible goal thanks to challenge maps. So, back to writing! In the meantime, My PlayStation Network Username is RihaanShim, because, I stay there more than I do my own Yahoo! Group (group.rihaansfics.com).
Roman Sionis, known to a select few as The Black Mask, was absolutely pissed.

Contrary to popular belief, he was almost never angry. It wasn’t like anyone could tell, what with the wooden façade. Thorns in his side, like Batman, were always roadblocks, but he usually kept on with a relatively positive attitude, or at least had a near-constant source of relief in the form of his girlfriends, or physical relief in his many henchmen. But most times, while he was generally known as aggressive, or even ruthless in the way he conducted his work, he was merely doing the cost of business. And for that reason, business was good. Until now.

Fourteen hours. That’s how long it’s been so far.

“Who in the hell is the Warlock?” The last remaining television in the warehouse could ask, not riddled with bullets. “What does he want? And what will he – ”

‘Bang.’

“ – and the young women beside him,” she continued, unimpressed, “be willing to do to get it? This is Vicki Vale with GCTV News Channel Seven. I hope I’ve enlightened you and informed you. If you haven’t gotten the message yet, then I will sufficiently give you that time. For the next twenty-four hours, this broadcast will be played in its entirety. I urge all of the viewers at home to really consider what is at stake here.”

“Oh, don’t I fucking know it,” he muttered in a raspy voice.

Vale was a dead woman, he decided twelve hours ago, and every hour since was only a reconfirmation of facts; Vale was a dead woman.

Of course, that didn’t mean Riddler wouldn’t also feel his wrath. He certainly hadn’t forgotten the only man who could have given Vale that much access to his towers to be able to broadcast at all. Poindexter was going to die as well.
And the voice in the banisters, the voice he knew to be the Warlock, was also on Sionis’s list. Perhaps he should go after him first. Cut off the head, as the old adage says.

The first hour of being tied up and abandoned in the warehouse consisted of this new kid garnering the crime boss’s respect. Never had he seen such an impact on Gotham in the first few days than whatever the hell this mystery guy did. Frankly, it was all a bit too sanitary for his tastes, but Warlock was clear on his way to accomplishing his goals – according to the constant loop he was enduring from the television, those goals seemed to be the domination of Gotham, or at least the city’s fear and respect.

Roman could admire that. It was foolhardy, but he could admire it. He could even appreciate the method in which he did it; taking his towers, stealing his business associate, and even – somehow – getting Vicki fucking Vale to work for him. If it was some kind of mind control, logic dictated Warlock would have tried to do it to him, would he not? The Black Mask owned Gotham. Actual mystical powers or not, if he wanted control, Roman would be his first and final obstacle.

Maybe he knew he wasn’t ready? That happened on occasion. Some rogue henchman or a thug, or some hotshot from out of town tries to make a name for themselves. They always go after the shark, not even bothering to mingle with the small fish and make their way up.

And over the years, The Black Mask had formed a reputation off of what happens when you fuck with the Megalodon.

Warlock, however, seemed to have an idea of how to do things. He made a smart decision teaming up with Femme Fatale, which even he acknowledged as girls he wanted nothing to do with, and kept his distance, despite the temptation. Fantasizing about what to do with them if he won a war against them, and actually inciting one were two completely different things. He was a businessman, first and foremost, and picking his battles was why he remained on top. Intentionally antagonizing the Bat, for instance, was something he would never do. He’d never send out an invitation to try and stop his dastardly plots, or some bullshit like that.

And here Warlock was, sending out a message, a direct challenge to the entire GPD, and by proxy, the Batman. Paying the police off would have been simpler, but apparently the kid found a more cost effective way.

It was by the sixth hour of him tied in ropes, some kind of unbreakable Bat-Twine, that his respect for the new guy faded, and made a mental note to just kill the kid.

Ten hours in, and Commissioner Loeb was added to the list. He had no idea what was happening on the outside, but no reason would make up for him waiting on the cops to pick him up.

He recognized what could come of this – the leeway he would lose from having the commissioner of the police force in his back pocket. He knew that it would be a heavy, and stupid, blow to his power.

But this was just embarrassing, and no amount of torture he’d inflict would be as humiliating. He’d still torture Loeb, of course.

He might’ve been able to stream his torture to the rest of Gotham as a warning. If he had his fucking towers back.

“I don’t get it,” one of his cronies murmured, and with their masks still on, it was difficult to tell who was talking. “They always pick us up after Batman beats us up. One time, I waited two hours, and even then, they even apologized for the inconvenience!”
“Yeah,” another one agreed. “Warlock must’ve gotten ‘em distracted.”

There was a slight pause. “Or no one knows we’re here.”

“Bullshit,” one of them claimed. “Course they know! They always know! When’s the last time they haven’t picked us up? If ya ask me, I think Batman works with the pigs. For all their high and mighty speeches against the Bat, they haven’t caught him yet! What if it’s one of those superhero plan B type initiatives? Some kind of prototype super suit that the cops wear to take us out, and they’re testing it.”

“Nah,” someone argued, “I doubt it. It’s more likely a rogue cop that don’t like the justice system, and hates paperwork even more. Or at least makes the paperwork more interesting. ‘A Bat tackled the suspect to the ground and left ‘im dangling by his feet.’”

“At least his neck was saved.”

“From what? He was arrested.”

“That’s not what I was... okay, guys. Don’t laugh. I’m working on a theory, here.”

“Oh, here we go...”

“No, no, just hear me out guys! I’m serious this time! This one’s got some weight to it!”

“Did your mommy tell you that, or was she talkin’ ‘bout me?”

“Real mature, Frankie. You wanna hear it or not?”

“Fine, let’s hear it. It can’t be worse than his theory on it being a zombie Thomas Wayne.”

“I’m not giving up on that theory. But this one’s pretty good, I promise.”

“Yeah, yeah. Just tell us already!”

“...I think Batman is an actual vampire.”

“...”

“I’m serious, guys, just think about it! He’s got vampire strength, the senses, quickness, he can fuckin’ fly! When’s the last time you’ve seen him out during the day? It makes sense!”

“...Yeah, but... Charlie, he’s wearing a costume. A vampire don’t need no costume. And, it’s a bat costume. Ain’t that a bit too... on the nose?”

“Exactly! It’s the last thing everyone would suspect, right? What vampire dresses as a goddamn bat! It’s perfect!”

“...But he doesn’t bite people.”

“That we know of. Can you tell me the last time we saw Jerome? Or Kevin? What about Gene? A lot of us have been disappearing lately. What if that’s because they’re dumped in the ocean, nothin’ but flesh and bones, and two holes in their neck?”

“You’re insane, man.”

“...I don’t know. I think you might have a point. Could explain why he disappears into thin air
sometimes. It’s making some really good sense. Compared to a Wayne being the Bat, I mean. Now that was a stupid theory. Have you seen their money? Dude could pay for a hit on every criminal in Gotham, if he gave a damn.”

“Wait; You believe the Vampire story over the Zombie story?”

“We’ve been here for fourteen fuckin’ hours, man – I’m loopy enough to believe a lot of things.”

“You know, I’m not gonna argue.”

“You’re all idiots.”

Perhaps his mind would change once he got out, had a good nap, and re-evaluated what was really important in life, but for the time being, he really liked the idea of putting a bullet in everyone’s head. At this point, who could blame him? Who could stop him?

“I’m more than unstoppable.” Static. “I’m the Warlock.”

Oh, right. First, Warlock dies. Priorities.

“Am I interrupting something here?”

Through half-lidded eyes, even under his wooden mask, he was able to see a simple man in sunglasses walking out of the elevator, looking around with what he could only assume were curious eyes.

“Sherman?” he blearily blinked at the well-dressed man, and shook his head wildly. “What the hell are you doing here?”

“I’m here to clean out,” he calmly explained, certainly used to scenes like this in his field of work. “My crew will be here in moments. Apparently, the, er, obstruction in the intersection of the Jezebel will take longer than expected to clear up, so heavy traffic abound. We’re almost at gridlock.”

“So how did you get here?”

“Helicopter – I parked next to yours. Even though my best customer doesn’t need hideaways anymore, it’s a thriving business.” He looked pointedly at his former best customer. “No little thanks in part to our bat problem. I’m assuming….”

He let out a low growl. “You know what happens when you assume.”

“It seems he has already made an ass of you, Jeremiah,” he taunted, using his alias – his other, made up professional alias. Still, knowing Roman was back on Batman’s radar, he felt that his assistance would lead to a profitable future later, so he went to untie the bonds at his legs. “Unless Nigma did this.”

Even in his state, he let out a weak laugh. “Not alone. He must’ve felt real secure when he pulled that on me. He didn’t even have the sack to tell me why.”

“Then, you would have shot him in the face.”

He stared at ‘The Broker’ with intense eyes – the only part of his face Sherman could see. “He stole my towers and set up a trap for me for Batman. A bullet in his head’s too kind for the bastard, now.”

“Am I to predict that the Warlock is also in your sights?”
Roman didn’t reply, even as he stood and rubbed at his wrists, slowly walking towards one of the
televisions.

“–But hey, since we’re here, and since you’ve got everyone’s attention, why not sprout out a name
before someone else tries to shoot you in the face. Let’s give the people a name for the grave,
y’know?”

“They can try – ”

SMASH!

“Broker,” he began, staring at his fist embedded into the flat screen monitor, “for old times’ sakes,
your services are required. I have a list to go through, and I need a warehouse – this one, preferably.”

“I have a strict ‘no burial’ policy, as you may remember. Bad for business.”

“Of course.” Without any caution for his own gloved hand, he pulled his fist out of the television.
“But I have no real interest in killing them. Not anytime soon.”

The Broker let out a heavy sigh. “I’ll line the house with plastic covering. For the record, I’m doing
this because the new paint is wet. For legal reasons, I don’t need to know what goes on in this
house.”

Behind the mask, held a dark, menacing grin. “Use red paint. Easier to blend in.”

“Noted.”

The best part of battle, Selina realized, was the setup.

It was honestly what all of the real work went into. The best plans could go to waste in the fight, but
there was no reason to fight if the plans weren’t so great in the first place. It was probably why she
put up with Eddie.

So she appreciated a good plan, and she wasn’t a huge fan of battles. Especially gun battles. Getting
shot more than once in twenty-four hours was not something she set to accomplish, and as much as
she appreciated the new suit, she was not keen on testing out the durability of magic. If Harry had
any sense of humor, about eight more hits would do her in.

‘But, damn, do I look good in it.’

So, for maybe not the first time, she appreciated the existence of one Harry Potter, as she avoided
any and all action sequences in their plan. She was on a pure tactical espionage/stealth mission and
she was okay with that.

She knew she didn’t have a good history working with others, but this kitty knew how to play nice.
She had been championing for this job, after all.

And with this morning’s unpleasantness out of the way, Selina figured that she may have to build up
some good faith for their future. She didn’t mind. She planned on acting out a lot, and figuring out
the ratio of acts of rebellion to acts of usefulness was her forte. It let Batman turn the other cheek
once in a while when there were bigger fish she could dangle in front of him.

‘Hmph. Bruce. Go figure.’ Though it would explain why he always let her go, or allowed her to
escape. She expected he enjoyed some modicum of his cover lifestyle, no matter how no-nonsense
he seemed to be with the mask. He probably would have added her to his list of models to the high society functions, given the chance. Trust issues and other complications aside, she considered Batman an ally, and maybe even a friend. She doubted he wouldn’t keep that secret from her for long, or she wouldn’t figure it out herself.

Well, all of *that* was out of the window, now.

With her claws extended – something Harry shouldn’t have known she had, but seemed to work just as properly on her new suit – she dragged her index carefully into the window pane, stroking at the glass like a seasoned artist, her cat irises focused intently on every etch.

She appreciated the sharpness of her new tools, the blade never once catching on the glass, slicing through the pane like air. When she leaned back, she grinned at her work before pulling an item out of one of her pockets and adding the finishing touches. She retracted the claws on her other hand that was affixed into the concrete, and jumped back from the GPD building, somersaulting and freefalling into the lake behind her.

As she quickly surfaced and began to slowly float on the water, she began to lie on her back and crossed her arms behind her head, waiting for her next command. She took cool, calming breaths, trying to ignore her inability to swim. She loved this new suit.

Something tickled at her nose, and she opened her eyes.

There, on the roof, a black-hooded figure sat precariously, legs dangling from the edge, their black-gloved hands around a pair of binoculars.

The figure waved at Selina, and the thief’s eyebrows raised.

‘*Well, this complicates things.*’

She carefully removed her hands behind her head and slipped on her goggles, and in that transition, the black-clad figure was gone.

To be able to escape from a position like that in a second – feet dangling, leaning forward – was admittedly impressive.

It looked like there was a new player on the field. And she didn’t think the plan accounted for that.

“You know, I should put a bullet in you.”

Jonathan Crane looked up from his desk, and was about to retort when another guard spoke up. “I don’t have a problem with that. Three of my friends are stuck in that giant pit in the Bowery. Now we got ourselves some bait for Ivy to get rid of it.”

The other guard snorted. “Not likely. He’s a dude. Just another henchman to do her bidding, and tossed to the side. He’s probably so messed up in the head, he thinks he did all of it. Ain’t that right, freak?”

The suspect the two were escorting – wearing civilian clothes, stumbling along as the guards had his arms hooked and his hands cuffed – remained silent. He almost looked unconscious.

The guards didn’t seem to care. “Let’s just put him in Ivy’s old cell. I’d think he would like that.”

“What? We can’t do that. Sharp says he wants him in a regular cell with the others.”
“Says the guy that threatened to put a bullet in his head? Just do it. We can move him later. He’s not even on record yet.”

Crane’s gaze was steady on the newest prisoner. His long blond hair was dirty and slicked back, and his skin was pale and sickly. When he turned to the doctor, his mouth was pure black, and he could see the veins in his face pulsing out.

He recognized the symptoms. It was a man stuck in mid-poisoning. Ivy.

Without complaint, he was led into the glass chamber, its only distinct label being the sign on the door – ‘BIOHAZARDOUS’. The room was sealed, the only air provided through some one-way filters in the ceiling and on the sides, and there was nothing in there but a mounted down desk and a mounted down bed – same as Crane.

He stumbled into the room, and the door was quickly shut behind him. “I don’t know what you did,” one of them muttered, “or what she gave you to do it, but that powder shit you put in that pit might have killed almost forty policemen today. The only reason we didn’t put you with the rest is because they think you’re a fucking hero to them. I’m gonna give you the treatment you deserve.”

The prisoner sat on the bed and turned to them. “You’d think when so many lives are in danger,” he spoke in a raspy voice, “that whole mess would be protected a little more. I literally just walked up to it and threw the stuff in. Ivy said it’d be easy.” He lifted his cuffed hands and sniffed his palms, the green residue still there, even after they’d tried scrubbing it off, a reminder of the green goddess. “She’s always right.”

The guard’s fist slammed against the glass. “When we take you back to the cells,” he threatened, his teeth bared, “We’re gonna talk to you. Each and every one of us would like a word with you. Branden says he wants some alone time, too. You remember Branden, right? Almost took your head off with an axe earlier?”

“He’s still mad at you for that,” the other guard warned. “He spent all night on one of those limbs, and the powder fixed everything he did. He’s gonna be pissed when you see him. Hope he doesn’t bring the axe with him to interrogation.”

He stood back. “Don’t get used to being here. Your mistress couldn’t take it here, you won’t either.”

The sickly blond shrugged. “She escaped.”

He gave a dark chuckle. “Yeah, like you’re as good as Poison Ivy.”

“No one is.”

“Then you know she’s not gonna save you. You’re stuck here – with us.”

To which he merely shook his head, his brilliant blue eyes shining in defiance. “No. she won’t save me. I don’t want her to. I’m here for a greater cause. I’m here to spread the word about her. Let them know of her greatness, and what she can do.”

They simply scoffed. “I imagine she can do a lot of things. I can think of a few. It’ll probably be easy to convince those guys to work for her.”

“Which is another reason we’re gonna keep you down here.”

“Have a nice nap. Oh, and, we’ve since changed the sheets. No funny ideas.”
As they were walking away, the young man smiled, his teeth very yellow, and very sinister. “Oh, I won’t be here too long.” He eyed the prison cell across from him, and the man inside it. “Mister Crow.”

Crane nodded, and checked to see if the men were gone. “Mister Lock.”

Harry grinned. “So you do have a sense of humor. But how did you know it was me?”

“You’re still alive,” he explained easily, “even after being kissed by Pamela. Only one other has ever lived, and she was given that immunity by the lady herself.” He cocked his head. “But why are you in disguise? You’d be arrested in the same way, and sent here. I must admit, I’m perplexed.”

“The poisoned face is part of the disguise. To them, I’m a weak punk days away from death.”

“And in reality?”

“We’re breaking you out.”

He linked his hands behind his back. “And you had to be arrested to liberate me, I imagine? Find my whereabouts? Pamela must’ve remembered where she was arrested.”

The disheveled blond nodded the affirmative. “Of course. Just waiting for everyone to get into position. There’s going to be quite the distraction.”

Crane looked even more befuddled. “So your powers do have limits, then?”

“Not that I’m aware of. We could both easily disappear right now. But that would spoil the distraction later, and that’s part of our long-term plans. And this is, honestly, more fun.” He seemed to remember something. “How have they treated you here? Overall?”

Crane shrugged. “Better than you would think for Maximum Security. They’re aware that one day, we’ll escape. And sometimes... we’ll look out for our own. And we hold a grudge. And nothing brings us together more than an abusive cop. The low-lives are fair game, but we can’t be touched. A little bit of fear helps. If that answers your question.”

Harry nodded. “Thank you.”

“Nothing has happened to Pamela. You have my word.”

He gave another stiff nod. “She made a good choice with you for a friend.”

“As did she with you,” Jonathan commiserated, leaning against the glass. “But I shall warn you, I’m not fond of working with others, if this is a recruitment attempt.”

“No one on our team is,” Harry reminded him, laying back on his temporary bed. “But that doesn’t stop us. Just give us a moment to prove how capable we are as a team, and you’ll reconsider. Selina should be almost ready.”

“You were able to tame the Cat?” He stood there, his stitched together lips in a frown. “You have my attention.”

Harry suddenly frowned. “You know, I expected them to take me to the cells with the others. I assume there are cameras here?”

He nodded.
“Damn. Then I won’t be able to get to the control room unnoticed. I suppose some electrical interference needs to happen...”

“Or,” Jonathan said quickly, “I have a suggestion. They’ll let you out in a moment, for psych evaluation. On the record or not, she knows that someone else has been admitted into the prison. Doctor Whistler will arrange for a meeting, and you have to go to a different room for that.”

“Oh, joy,” Harry said blandly, but he had to admit that this worked in his favor. “Then I suppose we sit tight until they’re ready.”

“I don’t think we’re ready for this.”

Ivy looked up from her desk, surveying the monitors for the miscellaneous cameras around Gotham. It certainly explained the blackmail material that Riddler always seemed to have. “What’s the problem?”

“A big one. There’s a new vigilante on the streets.”

She quickly inspected the thief. “You okay?”

“He didn’t touch me. He was sitting on the top of the police building, just looking at me. He waved.”

Pamela gave a deep frown. “Well, that’s a wrench. Were you able to follow the plan?” Selina nodded. “Good. They’re supposed to see your little gift, so a warning by whoever you saw is pretty much pointless. They might play in our favor. We have to wait until Harley gets into position.”

“And then?”

“And then... it’s show time.”

Harley slowly drug her mallet through the dirt, whistling a merry tune. Her mismatched boots were in a graceful stride as she sauntered down the road.

The girl with the green and red hair had her eyes firmly set on the magnificent bronze statue of Cyrus Pinkney. The architect of Gotham stood tall and proud, his left arm crossed against his breast, the other at his side, his circle-framed glasses permanently fixtured upon the edge of his nose, forever looking over Gotham – forever surveying his masterpiece.

Well – not quite forever.

At the base of the statue, Harley took a few test swings with her mallet, completely ignoring the on-looking crowd surrounding her.

With one more one-handed flip of her most reliable weapon, she caught it in her hand and used the momentum to spin into a full circle.

Usually, when faced with a fully bronzed statue, a wooden mallet with a good two and a half inches of silver plating around the head wouldn’t do much. In fact, it’s almost detrimental to the attacker, as striking it directly would only rattle her from the extreme vibrations. And shatter her favorite instrument entirely.

Luckily, she had magic on her side. An impervious charm and several attack-based charms later, and she felt confident in her new and improved weapon.
So, as she swung full force into the left ankle of the immortalized vision of Gotham’s architect, she wasn’t exactly shocked to hear the equivalent of shattering bone, but she was surprised to see the shattering of splinters.

As it turns out, the statue wasn’t entirely made of bronze.

And over a hundred people took witness as the statue of Cyrus Pinkney began to lean over, only one partially damaged leg supporting him, until the bronze layer began to crack and whittle away, exposing the wooden support beneath.

Ripe for chopping down. And while she didn’t have an axe, she supposed what she had was close enough.

The screams were nothing to her as she violently struck down a landmark of Gotham. They remembered what Harley and Ivy did before to the statue, simply spray-painting one side green, and the other side red, as a public announcement of Harley’s first crime one year ago; a practice round for things to come, and a message to the people of Gotham. Not a threat, per se, but more a declaration of... fun times coming.

This... this was no cheap crime. This was a true and honest threat. To Gotham. To the GPD. To the Batman. To everyone that stood in her way.

And as the newly face-painted vixen leaped onto the base and swung with all her might at the midsection of Pinkney’s crumbling body, everyone had one thought in their minds – get in her way, and you could be that statue.

Watching a statue fly into the air in the same fashion as SWAT team leader Howard Brandon, was a very scary sight indeed. And she held onto the pose for a few more seconds, as if watching her homerun hit, grinning all the while.

Finally, she turned to face her crowd. She set the hammer down and leaned against it, crossing her ankles. With an imperious look, she only needed to say one word: “Scram.”

The crowd was dispersed more quickly than she imagined. While she wasn’t a fan of the screaming panic, especially the scared kids, she felt a sort of perverse pleasure at the fact that she invoked it.

It was something she knew she could get used to.

Shaking out her arms and jumping in place, she stood at the elevated base of the once proud statue, its bronzed shoes being the only evidence of what once was, and began to kneel, folding her arms against the head of her mallet.

And she waited. She knew it wouldn’t take long.

With one last forlorn glance, Captain James Gordon threw away the communication device. It had been a little over 24 hours, the amount of time the Batman said it would be activated, and since there was no drop-off point in the note attached to the device, he assumed it was disposable.

All of the case files. All of the information the GPD had acquired, or at least speculated. Pretty much everything was placed in his hands.

Gordon prayed that it was worth it. And if it wasn’t, then everything could lead back to him.

Helping and abetting Public Enemy Number One was never a good bullet point on anyone’s resume,
and he knew he wouldn’t survive in prison. He doubted he could make any friends, considering he had arrested over thirty percent of them. The remainder had found a mortal enemy in the man he was working with.

He almost laughed at the thought that in order to escape, he may have to become a vigilante himself.

“Gordon.”

He turned around and faced the man he put in charge the previous night. “Harvey. Report.”

“Nothing on the front of the vine pit. Brandon seemed to make some headway, bringing fire axes and attempting to chop down the pit.”

“Against my orders?”

He shrugged. “Couldn’t do anything else. We tried the fire thing. Made the damn thing stronger, thanks for that. We tried ice, because, you know, it’s a plant. Liquid nitrogen. Zilch. We obviously couldn’t use guns in the thing, but we tried it on the edges. Didn’t do a thing against the big vines, but we managed to make a hole in a little one. All the weed-killing chemicals we brought into it just got absorbed. So we had to try cutting it. Chainsaws and Axes, a fucking C-4 explosive on the edge of that monstrosity! The small ones were gone, but the big ones... the big ones were beginning to shrivel. We were making headway. And then... well, I tried to warn ya when it happened.”

He felt a sinking feeling in the pit of his stomach. “What happened, Bullock?”

Gordon’s fist was tightening at every word. “Where the hell is he?”

“He’s a dead man walking, poison or not.”

“No. Put him in solitary. I need him alive.”

“If you wanna talk, you better hurry. Get to first base with Ivy, you’re usually dead in minutes. It’s been an hour. I had the guard alert me when he kicks it.”

He snatched the gun out of his drawer, and began to load the weapon while blindly grabbing for his coat. “Tell them to put him in interrogation. I’ll be there in ten.”

“One more thing.” He tilted his head over to the window at the far side of the room. “It’s probably a prank, but who do you think could’ve done that?”

Gordon blinked and looked over to as of yet unnoticed window, stopping mid-load. “This is the eighth floor. Who could get to this window?”

“That’s what I’m trying to figure out.”

Jim, despite his logical mind telling him that this should be a low priority compared to everything else happening today, couldn’t shake his curiosity and looked closer.

“Son of a bitch,” he swore, and reached for the radio on his hip.
He gave one last look at the carved-in message to the window – a portrait of a face, one of the most familiar faces in town, with a single thorn-stemmed rose taped across it. “Every off-duty officer get to Central Square! We have a situation! Report to the Cyrus Pinkney statue!”

He hurried his preparations and ran, disregarding the discoloration of the rose taped to the window. A red stem, with black petals.

Bullock gave the appearance of setting up for his own departure for a few more minutes, until he made sure he was in the clear. “Ten minutes,” he said to himself.

“Ten minutes,” Harley spoke into the receiver. “That’s when the cops should get here. Everything ready?”

“Of course,” the redhead responded. “Vicki’s in the – wait.”

“What? What happened?”

“Something’s wrong with the feed. It’s not responding – we don’t have access to it anymore!”

“Where’s Riddler?”

“That’s a good damn question,” she muttered, turning on her monitor on the side. “What the – the regular news is back on. Someone hacked our hack!”

“Check the surveillance. What do you see?”

“Oh. Riddler’s apparently tied up.”

“We’re all in the middle of something. Can it wait?”

“Sorry, but not in that way. He’s been captured, and I can’t tell by who, but it isn’t Batman. It looks like what Selina warned me earlier about.”

“What?”

“And according to the real news, the Monarch Theater was burned to the ground late last night.”

“WHAT?”

“And... there. All better.”

“You shouldn’t be here,” a gruff voice disciplined from the shadows.

The newest vigilante in town turned from the computers directly to the source. “I was tired of waiting for you to do anything about it. I was tired for everyone else to get off their asses. So it’s my turn.” Quickly, the computer became a priority again, and the hardened vigilante lost the new hero’s interest. “Ready to be useful again? Eddie could use a ride to Blackgate.”

“Your work is done here.”

“Oh, to the contrary; my work is just beginning. Don’t lecture me on what’s too dangerous for me. We’re both dealing with something beyond our level. So much so that you’ve even started taking... desperate measures.” The hood flipped back. “But what you need is someone who works so close to the system, breaking it is a habit. The GPD can’t get you the information you need. And you need
more tech support, because frankly, this shouldn’t have been an ongoing problem. It’s been seventeen hours of their twenty-four hour broadcast. The message is already through, and they are winning.”

“No, they’re not. We have the advantage on them now. Quinn is at the Central Square, and you captured Riddler.”

“And that’s just great. Warlock doesn’t need them, and he can break them out anytime he wants. If anything, they could be another distraction.”

“... You need a mask.”

“I don’t plan on being close enough for them to see my face. I’ll do reconnaissance. You can keep the dirty work.”

“If you insist. Name?”

The new vigilante’s hood was raised once more. “Black Robin, at your service.” With a few more keystrokes, the flash drive plugged into the computer network was removed. “Let’s see them try to get through that.” Black Robin looked over to the tied up form of the man in green. “But it looks like you’ll never get a crack at it, doesn’t it?” When the vigilante looked back over to Batman, he was gone, and only a small round device was left in his place – a speaker/receiver type device. “Huh. I should start doing that.”

“I see that you have not revealed your name.”

“Sorry. I’m not exactly part of the system yet. The name’s Dudley.”

“I see. And your last name, Mister Dudley?”

“Vernon.”

The renowned psychologist, Dr. Gretchen Whistler, made a few notes to her pad. “Well, Mister Vernon, I am pleased to make your acquaintance.”

“Can we make this quick, doc? I’ve got an appointment with the Grim Reaper in, like, ten minutes. Give or take.”

“Yes, I’ve been briefed on the situation. And while no one’s ideal position for their last moments is a psych evaluation, it is protocol for anyone that enters the doors of Blackgate facility to have their mental faculties examined.”

“A lot of big words, doc,” the blond teen pointed out with crossed arms. “But I got the gist of it. Everyone else seemed okay with breaking protocol when it comes to me.”

“Ah yes,” Doctor Whistler noted, before she elaborated. “I hope you understand the situation. It is for your own protection.”

“She says to the dead man walking,” he scoffed. “But from what I was told, it’s not for my protection. It’s for theirs. Who knows what vicious inspiration I might incite from the prisoners, after allegedly killing thirty-seven boys in blue?”

“And you feel no remorse from what you’ve done? The pain that you’ve made them suffer?”

“I did say ‘allegedly’, right lady? Don’t go putting blame on me for something I had no real part in.”
“They were close to destroying it. Saving them was only a matter of time. You impeded their progress.”

“Several things in there.” He held up one of his cuffed fists, and began ticking off his fingers. “One – considering I work for Poison Ivy, having her babies destroyed and calling it ‘progress’ isn’t exactly the best way to earn my cooperation. No respect from you people. Two – not once did I imply that any single one of them are actually dead. They could be in stasis, for all we know. Innocent ‘til proven guilty, correct? Three – I do not need to be here, and you know it. I am not a psychopath. I’m a well-balanced teenager, with an imbalanced sense of justice. From your point of view, at least. If you’re holding me here, just tell me. Aren’t you supposed to be building trust with me? And four.” He tilted his head towards the door. “Everything I tell you in this room is confidential. So who’s the cute brunette spying on us?”

It took quite a few moments for her to respond. “That... that is my assistant. Doctor Young. You can come in.”

It took even longer for the youthful brunette to shake her head at the display of confidence the teen boasted, and pushed in the door. “Good morning, Mister Vernon.”

“Do not bother,” the doctor spoke crisply, her German accent getting thicker. “Whatever his name is, it wasn’t what he was born with. At times, you can tell that he’s reading from a script. Pre-planned lines. What’s peculiar is that he looked that way when he told us his own name.”

“Why, doctor,” he gasped, “are you implying that I broke our patient-doctor confidentiality and gave you a false name? How... trendsetting of me.”

“That rule has been terminated; we no longer need to keep secrets, within reason or otherwise.”

“Huh – a lot’s changed since I’ve read up on it.”

“You can thank one of our prisoners, Victor Zsasz, for abusing the rule at every opportunity, in every single way.”

“Oh – alright then. Since we’re being honest with each other – you tell me who we’re all waiting for, and I’ll tell you my name.”

The veteran doctor quickly weighed her options. “Captain James Gordon is on his way to interrogate you about the incident you caused, and to interrogate you about your boss.”

‘Dudley’ frowned. “That’s disappointing. You’d think the Man in Bat would have wanted a word with me.”

“Oh? You think yourself that important?”

“Why, yes. Yes I do. You’d think he’d come gliding straight here when word spreads that you’ve managed to arrest the Warlock.”

He was met with incredulous faces. “Oh, come on, now! You think I’d still be alive if I didn’t have something propping me up? I have magic.”

“My thoughts exactly.”

He looked over to the doorway. “Jimmy! It’s been a while. It’s rude to enter before knocking. I don’t know what kind of rag-tag team of cops you’re running to not obey simple manners.”
“Save it, clown.”

“...Sorry, the reference escapes me. Are you referring to the horribly disfigured black mouth, my poisoned discolored veins, and my almost translucent face due to the lack of blood? That was in terrible taste, Jim.”

“Speaking of; where is she?”

The green one or the crazy one? Oh, who are we kiddin’? They’re all crazy! Women, right?” He shrugged. “Love ‘em to bits, though. In a world where an alien falls from another universe with an overactive magical drive and plenty of free time on his hands ever needed a couple of beautiful lawbreakers to help him out, I probably couldn’t have found better, that’s for sure.”


He took a few seconds to ponder the answer. “Well, here’s the problem. So there we were, in the throes of passion, screaming each other’s name – well, I was mumbling her name, because I’m a manly man – and all of a sudden, my magic is vulnerable for a second, and her poison enters my system. I didn’t even notice until this morning. We had a big plot prepared, too, but I had to sit this out. This is all I’m good for. Mostly because it hurts to walk.”

“It hurts to walk?” Jim asked skeptically.

“No one’s bothered to strip me since I’ve gotten here, Gordo. Trust me when I say that lip contact isn’t the only source of her poison. Her whole body is a weapon, and I was right stuck in the middle of it all. So to speak.”

Only Gordon’s years of professionalism kept him from shuddering, or feeling any sort of sympathy. “So why get yourself arrested? Under a disguise, no less?”

“Well, you’re here, aren’t you? I don’t need you destroying our plans.”

He felt his pulse quicken. “Plans?”

The Warlock leaned in closer to the Captain; as close as the handcuffs bolted to the table would allow. “You’re halfway across town, the entire opposite direction of Central Square. You do know what a ‘distraction’ is, right, bozo? Nice to meet you.”

“You know in hindsight,” Harley told herself, “maybe this would’ve been more fun if Gordon was here. Now I’ve just got the peanut gallery to deal with.”

“Just keep them distracted for twenty more minutes, love,” Ivy spoke through the communicator. “Gordon should be on his way now.”

“Well, there’s nothing left for me to destroy while I’m standing here,” she said, referring to the now useless base, only useful to hold the plaque commemorating the architect of Gotham – which now featured an oddly circular embed in the middle. “But I’m sure I can find something to hold my attention.”

“Well, if you do need something to do, Eddie could always use some help. He should be on his way to Blackgate right now. Though I’ve never seen Batman’s aircraft during the day. He might try a more subtle mode of transportation.”

“Roger that.” She tossed the mallet into the air, and caught it by the handle. “When I’m finished up
here, I’ll extract him with the others.”

“We need him to get back into the satellites.”

“There’s another way. Tell Vicki to start recording. I’ll think of something.”

“Hello, faithful viewers. This is Vicki Vale, reporting live from an undisclosed area, for my own safety. If you’ve turned on the television in the last seventeen hours, you are no doubt aware of Femme Fatale’s warnings, and the Warlock’s debut into Gotham. And while our playback video was recently taken down, no doubt announcing this city’s answer and sealing our fate, the team has been very busy as of late.

“The infamous scene where it all began, at the intersection of the Jezebel Plaza, has taken hostage thirty-seven officers, courtesy of Poison Ivy’s plants. Some notable names include Captain Jack Grogan, Lieutenant Arnold Flass, and Officer Rich DeCarlo, a man recently in the news for pending charges of police brutality.

“Unfortunately, this act of retaliation was to be expected, following the attempted attack that occurred minutes before the ambush, led by one Jack Grogan. This will not stop until both sides agree to each other’s demands. One side can’t hope to achieve everything until both sides agree to listen.

“Allow me this peace treaty – earlier this morning, a mere hour ago, The Warlock allowed himself to be arrested. He has agreed to step into their territory, handcuffed and poisoned – absolutely powerless. There, he will be available to negotiate a deal with the police commissioner, or the mayor. He is only asking for an agreeable party, to talk over the terms of his release, and the terms of the plant life that Ivy champions. According to him, this will be his final warning to the city of Gotham.”

“Ignore it!” James yelled frantically into the police radio, after hearing the message on his own car radio. “Ignore the broadcast signal! They’re baiting us! Everyone continue on your route to Central Square. Essen, call ahead to traffic control to clear a path! He can’t do anything right now – we’ll deal with him later.”

“God help the people of Gotham,” Vicki’s voice was heard over the channels, broadcasting into every home with a radio. “I for one can only hope this ends in a way that is agreeable to every party. If not, then this reporter recommends some cheap apartments in Metropolis.”

Jenkins was struck in the jaw for his foolishness. He had been planning to flank the blond mallet-wielder for ten minutes. Ten grueling, meticulous minutes.

Only problem was, she knew he was there the whole time.

“Stay down,” she warned in a sing-song voice, and he had no problem complying.

Looking over her shoulder, she managed to duck an oncoming axe. “Seriously?!?” she yelled, knowing it came from the nearest SWAT team member.

With a flesh-eating grin, she spun against another oncoming axe to hide behind one of their patrol cars.

Before they could even move to check, they heard a sickening crack, and a tell-tale thud of a body colliding with the ground. When they turned around, all they saw was a heavily armored man, lying
on the ground – a noticeable dent in his helmet.

“You don’t wanna play fair?” a voice echoed – something they were getting very familiar with. “Fine. I’m tired of playing with kiddy gloves anyway.”

“Come out, Quinn! There’s no escape!”

There was a high-pitched giggle. “You obviously got no idea who you’re dealing with!”

“Try us!” another yelled.

She didn’t. Rather, she made them wait. They swore they saw her drifting in and out of the shadows, and covered each other’s backs while they were forced to hold out, their guns at the ready.

To a trained officer, it wasn’t the fight that should scare you. No, it’s not knowing who – or what – you were fighting, and especially not knowing where the fight was going to come from.

And so far, they’ve seen things that Harley Quinn should never have done. Even through the adrenaline, they knew that.

Who did a cartwheel to escape a machine gun salvo?

In the distance they heard a squeal of tires.

“It’s been fun, gentlemen.” The voice was distant, now. “But I must go. My people need me.”

One man chose to walk forward, his hands spread out, one occupied with a Mamba pistol and the other, a submachine gun. “Face us, you coward!” Lacking in decorum, Wilson was known as a hothead. Usually, he let his gun do all the talking. And he did a lot of talking.

Today, he was going to learn a very important lesson.

The mallet flew in from nowhere, and Wilson barely had time to acknowledge its existence and how fast it was going before it brushed past his ear, and the silver-gleaming weapon flew past the group, and slammed itself into the adjacent building.

While the group looked at the damage the hammer did in horror, Wilson quietly acknowledged that the instrument, had it been a little to the left, would have gathered his brain matter on the way to the wall. It still did not deter him from his mission, so he turned back towards the source.

Standing in his way was a man who was supposed to be bleeding from his brain, or at the very least unconscious, but there he was, a heavily armored officer, the dent still on the top right of his helmet, standing as if nothing had happened.

It was only maybe a half of a second of confusion before it clicked into place, and then the officer attacked.

And so, the scene Gordon and the remaining officers arrived at was one of an aftermath of a twisted action movie. There she was, again leaning against her choice instrument of destruction, surveying her work, her dented helmet tucked beneath her arm. The damage surrounding her was something that she could appreciate. It was new to her, and that small bit of hesitancy she had earlier, was now as much as a myth as the people’s hope that the police of Gotham could protect them.

She swung her mallet over her shoulder as she heard the slamming of car doors. “You guys really don’t learn, do ya?”
James pulled back the hammer of his gun, and began to feel an overwhelming wave of déjà vu. “Come with us, Quinn. We won’t hesitate to shoot.”

She looked around. “I’m sure one of these bozos said that at one time.” She smiled, her black-painted lips both complimenting the stark-white makeup and black rings around her eyes, and made her oh so terrifying. “They went back on their word. Besides, we all know you’ll hesitate, Boy Scout.”

He grit his teeth. “Don’t test me, Quinn. I’ve had a bad week.”

“You’re welcome,” she bowed. “And you’ve been a bit of a thorn in our sides. Really, all of you have. But while we were sure Batman wouldn’t fall for our plan, you guys didn’t disappoint.”

His eyes narrowed. “What the hell are you talking about?”

Her watch beeped, and she looked at her wrist. “Oh, would you look at that? I’m glad I got this bloody thing fixed.”

Jim lowered his gun, dumbfounded at what he just heard. It wasn’t the lack of her New York accent that got to him. It was the addition of an entirely different – and familiar – accent. “No...”

Harley Quinn’s eyes shone with mirth, and faster than they could process, slung her mallet straight at the Captain. He only managed to get off a shot, but it easily deflected off the weapon, not even making a dent, and he quickly propelled himself out of the way, taking a partner who was slower on the draw on the way down.

Even before he looked back towards her direction, he knew she was gone. And she was, not leaving a trace behind, other than the battered bodies behind.

That cinched it for him. “We played right into their trap.” As he suspected, when he turned back to the mallet, there was nothing behind but the caved in cop vehicle. He slammed his fist into the dirt. “That wasn’t Quinn! They played us! They just wanted us to be far away from the prison!” He looked up at the rest of the officers. “What are you waiting for? Get back to Blackgate!”

The Warlock found himself back in his cell, Ivy’s old cell, across from Jonathan Crane once again, now sporting a regulation orange jumpsuit. He toyed with the invisible watch on his wrist, thankful that they didn’t locate that. Hearing Vicki’s broadcast from a nearby sleeping guard who left his radio on, he sat up from his temporary bed. “I don’t think they’re good listeners.”

“Perhaps the citizens of Gotham would pay heed to your warnings if you texted it to them?”

He chuckled. “Not enough time. Got about five ’til the spell wears off.” He looked pointedly at the slacking guard. “But I need to get the control room. I can’t just wait until Harry gets here.”

“So you are planning on breaking out, then?”

The blond looked over to see Penelope Young, leaning against an empty cell grate. “You just do not like to ignore conversations, do you?”

“Answer me.”

“Guilty. Are you disappointed in me?”

“No. More curious.” She held her clipboard in her crossed arms. “You don’t have a drop of poison in your veins at all, do you?”
“I don’t know about that. I’ve got a story about a snake to tell you later. When we meet again.”

“You plan on coming back here?”

“Oh course. My psych eval was cut short. I’m kinda curious about my results.”

Her eyes flickered from her clipboard, and back to him. It was subtle, but he caught it. It was something he trained himself to study. “Well, call me curiouser. I’ve got time to spare. Let’s hear it.”

Penny considered the sensitive situation she was put in. She knew that if she refused to, that would give him more time to plan his escape. So there was no chance of alerting a guard, against a wizard who wasn’t poisoned to begin with. That just meant more bloodshed. She’d rather only one casualty happened today; even if it meant her own. “Okay.” She took a deep breath.

“You seem to be normal, at first glance. Your lies aside, you have a dark sense of humor. While that in itself is fairly normal, there was something strange you mentioned: you kept boasting your partners up, while putting yourself down, under the pretenses of sarcasm and the like. You have confidence issues. You feel like you contribute the least to the team, and you make up for it with being the class clown. You use jokes to throw people off, and your wits to turn the tables around. However, beyond that, you overcompensate your abilities to impress others. You believe your rite of passage is to serve as the distraction.”

He shrugged. “Maybe more or less.”

“This would match up perfectly to a man that was once a powerful warlock, who had recently just lost his powers – these doubts of self-worth. However, we’re not dealing with that, are we?”

“Pretty, bright, and observant. I like you.” He pondered the situation for a few moments. “Let me give you a quick outer-body experience. You’re absolutely right. I’m not the most gifted member on my team. I mean, I’ve got my own skill set – perks that’ll make an international spy bow his head in shame – but I’m no superhuman. Just yesterday, I was trying to do magic, of course to no avail. I even had a little bit of a crisis this morning.” He sighed and laid back in the bed. “Until yesterday, I was the smartest in the room. Before that, I was trying to work on my stealth. Sneaking missions go a long way. And then the mistress of sneaking joined our little team. So, all in all, I’ve got problems. For a long time, I’ve been searching to find something all my own. It’s why I made the choice to be what I am today – in this damn place, no less! But I’m not bitching about it. I just needed to hear it from a professional. Though it gives me solace to know one thing.”

“Oh?” Dr. Young took a step back from the chamber – just in case. “And that is?”

“I knew that you were going to say all of that. I knew you were going to jump to that conclusion. And while I didn’t want you to hear that I wasn’t poisoned and powerless, I knew that if I kept that secret, that everything would have made perfect sense. ’Cause, you see, what you’re doing right now; that’s what I’ve always wanted to do. And to see that I could look at myself objectively like that, and be able to nail every bullet point from a trained professional, from a prison that only takes the best – well, suffice it to say, you’ve made me the happiest little girl in the world.”

Penny blinked, not sure if she heard that right. “Excuse me?”

“You know, they say that looking at yourself with a non-judgmental eye is the most difficult thing in the world to do. So a self-diagnosis is never recommended. That’s what makes me proud, doc. And if this entire plan couldn’t work to a T, then maybe my ego would have been a little bit damaged. But you just gave me another reason to like you, doc. Because I don’t need powers to do what I do best. And what I do best is...”
There was a beeping sound, and before he could say another word, his body began to transform. His legs and arms began to grow shorter, and his hair longer. He hunched over, gritting his teeth, the hands gripping his elbows beginning to thin. But what really caught Penny’s attention was his face. The rings around his eyes began to expand and darken, and his pale, pale face began to grow even paler. His blackened veins began to recede, and his sickly, crusted lips took on a slick sheen. Shining, smirking lips – a smirk Gotham was very familiar with, and had every right to fear.

When the change was complete, a new person was in the cell, and while there were many changes – many, very noticeable and obvious changes – the sinister grin was all Penelope could see. “What I do best,” she continued, her bright blue eyes unchanged, “is know how to be me. The name’s Harley. See you soon.” She reached down into her regulation orange slacks, and pulled out a small ball. Throwing it to the ground, she waved at the doctor, before a cloud of opaque smoke filled the glass prison.

Penny shrieked, and ran forward to the sleeping guard. She shook him frantically, not losing sight of the smoky chamber, until the guard collapsed off the chair.

She screamed, and in the massive confusion and bewilderment, she didn’t see the white-faced jester creek open the door.

Within moments, she collapsed next to the guard, joining him in sweet oblivion.

“I thought you liked her,” Jonathan commented for the first time, thoroughly entertained by the entire exchange. “Why kill her?”

“They’re not dead,” she said very casually, approaching his cell. “They’re sleeping. With any luck, she’ll be my co-worker in a few years. I could use a friend here. Seeing as I’m breaking out half the prison.” She shrugged her shoulders. “Coast is clear; you can come out your cell, now. I still need to get to the control room.”

“Let us proceed,” he nodded, opening the door effortlessly and the two headed on, Crane leading the way. “The evidence locker should be nearby. My suit should be there.”

“Meet me in the control room in ten. That’s when everyone should be ready for extraction.”

“The real Warlock?”

“Yup. I may have seemed a little frustrated when I was ‘opening up’ to the doctor, but I really do appreciate him. Him and Ivy... they’re the best thing that’s ever happened to me.”

She said it with as much sincerity as her speech before, he silently noted. “You seem very conflicted about your place.”

She rolled up her now too-long sleeves as she walked along. “Oh, I know my place. Right with those two. And I don’t regret a second of it.” She paused. “Well, maybe the time I almost turned his head to paste. I could probably take that back.”

“A story I’m sure you’ll regale me with when we reunite?”

“Sure, Crow. It’s a deal.”

“Er, If you be excusing me, miss.”

Harley stopped, and eyed the giant man in his cell as Crane went on. “Uh, yeah?”
“You be happening to be Miss Harley, Would ya?”

She leaned against the opposite wall in the hallway, crossing her arms. “Maybe.”

He went to his mattress and slid out a folded piece of paper. “Ya see, miss, I was tasked with the burden of findin’ ya, I was, but I was arrested. Gun shipment gone bad, ya see? But, um...” He unfolded the paper. “You have been cordiality invited to an all-expenses paid cruise aboard the Meredith, and VIP with Mister Oswald Cobblepot, Captain. Bring ya friends. P.S. – I promise I won’t ask ya ta work for me and/or entatain tha fellas. Ya have my word this time.”

“Greedy little bastard finally learned his lesson, eh?” Harley kicked off the wall. “Fine. My team and I will discuss it. When we release you, you can go and tell Penguin that the message was delivered, and we’ll be over there within five days, whether we accept or not.”

“Ya plan to break us out? Thank ya, miss!”

“No problem, big guy!” And she skipped along to the control room, unknowingly making a friend, and building her reputation among the peons in the underground.

Ivy leaned back in her chair, crossing her arms. “You are completely and utterly in the clear,” she whispered into the headset, grinning. “No extra security in the prison. Just the bare bones. Do me proud, baby.”

Vicki, who was now at her side, eyed the security camera of the outside of the prison. “How long do you think it will take to get there?”

“Normally, thirty minutes,” she explained. “While the presence of my babies caused a gridlock, it’s not a main street. So detours are plenty. Unfortunately, there have been roadblocks set up on the road to allow the cops to get to the Central Square, once it was reported that all police needed to get there.”

“Let me guess – the roadblocks have been removed.”

“Of course. The main threat was supposed to be in the Square, right? And the people need to get through, now that the cops are where they needed to be.” She pointed to the streets on a few of the screens on the left – and the many cars that filled all the lanes, including the emergency shoulder lanes. “Blackgate is ours for the taking. But it’s not over yet.”

“Why do I feel that today isn’t over yet?” Harley asked her magical boyfriend once their lips parted.

“Because it isn’t,” he admitted. “Right now, we’re waiting for Eddie. We couldn’t give you a communicator, so we’ve got a lot to fill you in on.”

“Oh, joy,” she droned for the second time that day. “Eh, bright side, I can finally get out of these hideous garbs.”

“That you can,” he agreed, and her orange jumpsuit was quickly replaced with her usual suit – the wonders of magic. “Now – time to see how much of his memories I can sift through to make sense of all of this.” He observed the blinking lights and the black and white monitors in the control room.

“Actually,” Harley reasoned, “I think I can help.” She was aware that he hadn’t dealt with much technology in his world, and at least she knew the universal symbol of the ‘eject’ button. “I’ll get the security tapes. You try getting to the manual override.”
“Flip the red switch.”

Harry paused and pressed his earpiece further into his ear. “Selina? You’ve done this before?”

“No. But it’s always the red switch.”

“And if there’s a few rows of black switches next to it,” Vicky reasoned next to her, “then it doesn’t hurt to flip those, either.”

Harry blinked in surprise. “It’s there.”

“Good,” Harley sighed in relief, her hands full of small black tapes. “Spell in place?”

“Curse,” he gently corrected her. “And yes. We’re good to go.”

“You’re gonna have to explain the difference to me eventually.”

“And you’re gonna have to explain how the hell you can handle that mallet. It weighs at least a Vernon!”

“Skills, dude. The less you think about it, the more it makes sense.”

“That seems to be the overarching rule of Gotham City,” a voice sounded from the doorway. As he spoke, he was fitting his hand into the stitched together glove, the intimidating syringes still in place over each of his fingers, though empty. “Could you believe that they kept my things in a display case? I suppose they expected me to stay a legend – a mere myth, never to return.” He eyed the black and green-clad boy with curiosity. “A pleasure to meet the real Warlock. I’m guessing.”

“We’re ourselves,” Harry assured him. “And a pleasure to meet you, Doctor Crane.”

“Please,” he held up a hand, and the eyeholes cut into his mask, once a pitch-black, began to glow blood red. “Call me Scarecrow.”

“Well forgive my reluctance for handshaking,” Harry said jokingly, looking pointedly at the syringes, “but... welcome to the team.”

Chaos.

Pure, unadulterated, chaos.

Blackgate was on fire.

“And that is why you need help,” a voice said quietly into the Dark Knight’s ear. “You can’t deny it now.”

His silence spoke volumes. But what he said next spoke even more. “I know. Help is coming.”

“Hopefully, you called in the one who can take on a God. Because that’s what you’re dealing with.”

“No. His powers are limited. You have to fight fire with fire.”

“So who did you get?”

“An old friend.”

But of course, the Dark Knight was never one to wait. The crowd of escaping criminals, freely
running out of the front of the notorious prison, grew and grew.

As did his patience. Shaking his head wearily, very aware of the fact that he had not slept in nearly two days – something that, while he was fairly used to, knew Alfred would not fail to remind him – he spread out his arms and began to lean forward, falling into the fray.

It was time to remind Gotham – and himself – who really introduced the concept of fear.

“And here, I was hoping to relax on the ‘coming home’ run of my tour,” Zatanna muttered dejectedly, seeing a billow of smoke from her hotel room window.

“You really expected that?” her apprentice asked, with an unmistakably droll tone.

She sighed again, but this time, there was a wisp of a smile. “I suppose not, Rachel. It is Gotham, after all.” She looked back at the purple-clad teen. “So tell me – what have you learned so far?”

“That you like to play games.” Her voice began to take on an ethereal tone. “And parlor tricks are a decent way to pass time and make money.” Her eyes began to glow an eerie red. “But the mediocrity is over, and you like to test your strength just as much as I do. And I’ve never had much of a chance to be a hero.”

Zatanna lifted the top hat off her head, revealing a fluffy ball of white. “You may want to sit this one out, Bud.” The bunny made the leap from her head to the bed, and began to nap on the pillow. “So I guess we don’t have a choice, do we Rachel?”

For the briefest of seconds, the grey-skinned girl allowed herself a smirk. “Do I have the look of a ‘Rachel’, right now?” Where there were once two glowing eyes, were now four, and they were all staring at her with a burning intensity.

The magician opened the window and leaned against the sill. “Fine, then. Raven. Ready to go hunting?”

When she raised her purple hood, the girl only had three words to say.

Author’s Note: Come on. We all know what the words are. You’d be desperately confused about the entire story if you didn’t know the basics of AMZ.
New GalleryPosted!

For those who needed a visual reference, for the characters I’m drawing from. Of course you can picture the animated versions as well. Except Scarecrow. The Arkham version of this dude is scary. *(Note: I found the picture of Zatanna after I wrote her scene. The bunny under her top hat is ... just perfect. I like it when everything works out.)*

Seriously, though - If you love drawing, and you love my stories, any and all artwork will be greatly appreciated. Make sure you watermark it!

So, I changed some things around, that will become obvious as to why in upcoming chapters. And maybe a little bit in the Omake below. Still taking submissions, by the way. And Hermione, on her never-ending quest to jump through worlds to save her boyfriend, not unlike a plumber would to save a princess, could also use your help to decide on her next adventure, and her next recruit. I’ve been binge watching a certain show on Netflix, and trust me when I say that it would make for an epic finale. Got a lot planned involving that world.

And while I have a list of banned shows/worlds, I’ll take all suggestions into consideration. So, list a few for me. Soon enough, I’ll need to make another timeline to put on my Blog.

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Omake (noun): Extra, or an add-on.

Used in a sentence – This is an Omake by Rihaan:

“So, where is our next stop?”

Hermione frowned. “I don’t know, actually.” She glanced over at Bella, who raised an eyebrow with a curious look. “Well, I wasn’t exactly thinking this through when I started this whole journey. I just looked at the facts, and forced myself to make a decision. I think I’m doing all this for a reason, I just need to figure out what it is.”
“You mean... kidnapping me?” There was a smile when she said it, and a tilt of a laugh.

“Oh, hush you. You chose to come with me.”

“And as long as we don’t run out of gas, I suppose I won’t regret it.”

The brunette scoffed. “We ran out of gas hours ago, Bella. We’ve been running on magic since we left the hotel.”

The pale girl blinked a few times. “Well, that explains the car being so quiet.”

Hermione nodded the affirmative. “As to where we’re going, that all depends on where the wand is taking me.”

“Your wand?” She took a quick look around. “And you’re getting directions from it from inside your pocket?”

“Remember when I said that I looked at the facts and decided I had to go? Well, in the past twenty-four hours, I’ve had a mother lode of information dropped on me. One of which had me stealing something that was apparently very special to me. At least, that’s what my friend Daphne said.” She reached up into the truck’s visor and pulled out a long, thin piece of wood, which Bella rightfully assumed was the wand. “Of course, I trust Daphne. So I have every right to believe that I am in possession of the Elder Wand. And if it wasn’t mine, I wouldn’t have been able to summon it straight into my palm, past all protections.”

“So, what is all of that supposed to mean?”

“There’s a fable that children born into magic would read, like a fairy tale. But most fairy tales are based on facts in a world filled with magic. However, this is one of the few books that was probably a nonfiction. Collect three objects, and you have the power to control your own power, your fate, and death itself. And this was the last piece in the puzzle. Funny, how life works like that.”

“Is that how you managed to get to my, umm... world?”

“As far as I can tell. Had I not unknowingly taken ownership of it minutes before Harry went through the veil, even with two of the objects on him, we likely wouldn’t have survived. Our magicks are tied and his fate is mine. So this wand, should work for the both of us easily.

“The actual problem is finding the veil. It’s hidden in his world. Inaccessible until it’s revealed. We know where it is, but we can’t do anything about it until we use a reveal charm on it - from this wand. And now, I have to get this to him.”

“What veil did you use to get to me?”

“It was in the outskirts of your town, Forks. You didn’t notice, but while you were writing in your journal, I drove through it. The problem is that I drove right through it. It did nothing, like it wasn’t even there. We’re still in your world. The one at my home and the one near you seem quite insistent that I don’t get directly to Harry. I don’t feel positive about the next one.”

“So, is there a giant veil in the outskirts of my town, now?”

“It was a timed reveal charm. Should have disappeared in minutes. What really concerns me is the lack of power I have over these portals.”

Bella tucked her legs underneath her, and leaned against the window. “Well, when you thought of
Harry, and landed here, could that mean that he could actually be where I am? In the outskirts of New York, you said? We have one of those, you know.”

“I don’t remember reading in your books about superheroes destroying and rebuilding your New York.”

Bella pondered to herself for a moment. “Well... in a sense, we do.”

Hermione swiftly turned her head to the teen who was now biting her lip. Damn, they needed to stop at another hotel soon. “Oh? Do tell.”

“They’re not superheroes, per se,” she tried to explain, “but they certainly try to be. Not the world, but they do a pretty good job saving the city. I’d say they are the purest form of vigilantism.”

“I see.” She focused on the road again, her magic temporarily driving for her. “So there are a few of these ‘heroes’. Do you think any of them would like to help me?”

“As far as I heard, they’re dealing with some bad guy.”

“How big of a threat is he?”

“Well, I heard he has a lot of guns and some henchmen more twisted than he is – and that may be saying something.”

“So why is he the boss?”

“Money.”

Hermione shook her head. “That’d do it. Which part of New York?”

“I believe it was Staten Island.”

“I’ve been to a few places: Egypt, France, Japan, Germany. Never the States. So I wouldn’t know how to apparate there. And seeing as I left Harry’s Firebolt at home...”

“Guess we’ve got a ride ahead of us.” She was quiet for a few moments. “So why do you think the veil won’t take you there?”

“It has another name – the Veil of Death. Unless you have the three tools I told you about, unfortunately, coming back through is impossible. The fact that I can, presumably, control death, assures us passage. It all seems to be soul-based. The veil takes your soul, so Harry having ownership of the other two objects keeps me safe. He never takes off the ring, and he always keeps the cloak somewhere on his person or immediately available, no matter what. So the theory I’ve been working on might have some weight if the next veil doesn’t let me through.”

“And what theory is that?”

“That something even more powerful than death itself is working directly against me. And I’m not particularly fond of that idea.”

There was a chilling silence between the two. And as they drove down the path on a cross-country ride, contemplating the perilous journey ahead of them, Hermione headed back to a relatively safer topic.

“This villain. What’s his name?”
The pale teen blushed. “I don’t think I should say.”

“Oh, great,” Hermione muttered. “Another one whose name must not be said.”

“It’s not that,” Bella said quickly. “It just... shouldn’t be said. It’s not exactly the most subtle name.”

“...You’re not sending me to face Beetlejuice, are you?”

“Who?” She shook her head. “No. That name’s very subtle in comparison to... well...” She leaned over, and whispered the name into her ear.

Hermione blinked a few times. “Oh. Wow.” She looked over to the embarrassed teen. “I suppose there’s a fascinating story behind the name?”

“No one I’m interested in hearing,” Bella said quickly, shaking her head wildly.

“You’d think after what you were moaning in that hotel room, you would have no trouble saying his name, now.”

The ebony-haired beauty looked at Hermione with a semi-serious expression. “You say it.”

“The old me would have had a serious problem with this sort of language,” she chuckled, “But that was a long time ago. Arguably, better times. Now,” she smiled, her eyes firmly set on the road, “pardon my French, but what do you say we go help out, team up and vanquish the Motherfucker?”

Bella fully recognized herself as an adult. However, even she couldn’t help but laugh – something the pale teen hadn’t done much of in a very long time, but was now able to do regularly. “I guess that sounds like a plan.”

Chapter End Notes

Apparently, this is more than an Omake at this point, and I’m continuing this and going with this Multi-Crossover story, to which I have titled “Hermione’s Hump Days” courtesy of WhiteElfElder. Hermione is officially off to find Harry pro-actively, leaving Luna and Tonks in charge of the girls back home. Try to imagine how that will fare.

It’s Kick-Ass, by the way. In case of any confusion. Hermione and Bella will be visiting the world of Kick-Ass. The Movie version, preferably. I have a friend who’s a fan of the comic version. And I worry about him.

Huh. I’m just now realizing that what I’m doing is very reminiscent of Kingdom Hearts. That’s AWESOME!

You know, if I were to make this some sort of Super!Story or Harry Potter Crossover Initiative, and see all of the stories intertwine and weave together, like the Harry/Hermione origin story, the main story, or the story Hermione is going through now with Bella Swan, and maybe even more separate storylines in the future, then this would be what I would call... Phase Two? Nah, that would be silly.

Thank you for reading. Please review.
The Setup

Chapter Notes

Chapter commissioned by Alexander Simpson. Thank you very much for your Patronage.

Dedicated to Morgan Patrick Sullivan, Matthew Morrison, Alex Mathews, and AtomicStryker. Thank you all for your Support.

I hope everyone can separate the Bella of the movies with the Bella of the books. I mean, really, I don’t like either. This is a hybrid. Just picture a useful, compassionate version of her. Yay for fandoms! (He didn’t commission this first part, by the way. He commissioned for more of the origin story. This part is for the continuation for the rest of the story.)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

(Patreon Presents: A Parodied Potter Production.)

Omake by Rihaan:

“See!” Hermione squealed with joy. “It’s not so bad!”

“Says the witch who would entrust her life to a broomstick!”

Bella’s once untrustworthy truck, having run through several states on pure magic, covered a new terrain when they hit the snowy mountains – and to Bella’s chagrin, it wasn’t snow.

“Come on! Don’t you trust me at this point?”

She looked up from her hiding place – under the dashboard in front of her seat – and scowled at her relatively new lover. “Don’t test me, Granger! I trust you. I trust gravity more.”

The brightest witch of her age smirked. “And yet, we’re flying. And pretty well, I might add.” She forewent telling her that this was the first time she had done this. “And sit up! Just because you can’t see what’s happening doesn’t mean it’s not happening. We’ll still be flying, whether you’re down there or not!”

“I’m not good at facing reality,” she deadpanned, still from under her seat. “My almost boyfriend was a vampire, and it took me nearly three months.”

“In your defence, your world’s version of a vampire was drastically different from the classic definitions of our own catalogued in the books you’ve read – you couldn’t have known.” Hermione quickly charmed the windshield when it began to frost over. “Trust me, you were clueless when it came to far more things than that.”

The straight-haired brunette poked her head up. “About what?”

The curly-haired witch smirked. “You think I’d tell you while you’re down there? Strap on your seat
belt, it’s not safe.”

The girl mumbled something unintelligible as she trembled up to an upright position, her eyes closed tightly as she fumbled for the safety strap. “You’re incorrigible.”

“And you’re cute when you’re scared. Last time you were this terrified, you said… it wouldn’t fit.”

Normally, it would take a lot to make Isabella Swan blush, and even more difficult in the snowy mountains. But the insulated heating made it easier for her cheeks to noticeably warm up, incidentally letting go of the seat belt before it could connect. “Shut up.”

“Imagine your surprise when it did.”

She refrained herself from clenching. “Shut up.”

“And I didn’t even need lube the time after that. You were absolutely soaking with –”

Her breath was caught as her head was forcibly turned to the side and her mouth was assaulted by Bella’s tender lips. Her hands gripped the steering wheel tightly as a finger gently flicked against her clothed nipple, sans bra.

It was hardly the first time this had happened during their road trip, but Bella’s forcefulness surprised her, nevertheless. Her tongue swiftly began sliding against her teeth, and she, not even on a road to pay attention to, allowed the heavy distraction.

Bella’s hands forced themselves under her loose shirt, tracing up her toned stomach, and Hermione’s immediate physical reaction would have had Bella almost blame it on the cold weather if her magic weren’t so impeccable. Even so, goose bumps rose on her skin as her lover’s nails grazed against her, on her way to what Hermione quickly perceived a while back were Bella’s favourite play toys.

The pale beauty showed little restraint, pulling one hand out of the bookworm’s shirt in favor of cupping the side of her chin, getting in a much more comfortable position. Confirming that her girlfriend’s face was as heated as her own, she smirked into the kiss as she gently, suddenly, pulled on her right nipple.

When Hermione moaned, the pale teen broke up the kiss. “Who’s soaking?” she whispered innocently, the smirk still present.

The witch took a moment to steady her breath. “I didn’t say that was a bad thing,” she defended herself, still feeling Bella’s ghost touches on her breast. “That’s one way to tell me to shut up.”

Bella pecked her on the lips once more. “It’s been proven to work before.”

“It’s also been proven to be a good distraction.” She nodded her head towards the front. “We’ll drive on ground for a bit if you still feel uncomfortable.”

Her rich, brown eyes widened in response, and closed again. Seconds later, she felt her hand enveloped in a comforting squeeze, and looked down to see a hand wrapped around her own.

“Don’t tell me I have to get you to assault me again to take your mind off of things,” Hermione let off a soft laugh, looking over at her, her eyes shining.

Bella looked back down at their conjoined hands. “No,” she breathed, forcing her eyes to look forward, and finding herself entranced at the oncoming sunrise over the horizon. “This is good enough. For now.”
The pair sped on, Hermione subtly swerving through the air with the steering wheel, anchoring their speed and velocity with the fingers of her left hand. The other stayed firmly in the grasp of her newest confidante and partner, tethering onto her with dear life.

Not a moment had passed where she didn’t think about her spiritual other half. And having a distraction was what truly kept her on the sane side, so far. But even she could admit to herself, that Isabella Swan was so much more than a temporary solution.

It was time they had a talk; about the future, their future, and if she were so lucky, the future that should come to pass.

There were very few times in the past that she had ever doubted Luna’s predictions, and for good reason. But out of the thirty-two possible outcomes the blonde presented, there was only one she was interested in fulfilling.

And for what was next to come to fruition, they’d have to crash into the mountains she was currently hovering above. Intentionally.

And Bella couldn’t know about the plan, of course. That part was crucial, Luna had insisted. According to the unusually serious blonde in their last conversation, it was pertinent that their next ‘accident’ would attract the attention of someone who could be very valuable to their cause.

A survivor. Just like her.

However, she was beginning to doubt her own survival instincts, hesitation rampant within her as she tried to consider her options.

It was when she began to steel her resolve and promise herself that she was ready to do what was needed, that a simple hand squeeze from Bella caused a slight blur in her vision. Blinking rapidly, she looked over to her lover.

“Let’s land,” she muttered quietly, her hand grasping the girl beside her tightly. “I have a feeling we’ve got a lot in store for us tomorrow.”

“Hey,” the pale girl looked deep into the girl’s watery eyes. “You okay? Am I squeezing too hard?”

As soon as her hand began to loosen, Hermione reaffirmed her grip. “Of course not,” she assured the older girl, returning the stare. “I can handle much more than that. You and I... we can handle a lot together. I think we’re going to need that soon.”

Swan tilted her head. “That was somewhat foreboding. What? Something I need to be clued in on?”

“Absolutely. But I don’t think I should tell you until we land; for reasons that will become very clear after we land.”

Luna was going to kill her for this.

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Chapter Thirteen – The Setup

or

Harry and Hermione, Part Two

(Part One, ‘The Pre-Veil Saga’, is Chapter 5 of Pure Harmony)
Harry Potter felt incomplete – pun maybe unintended.

His new Nimbus 2000 kept him afloat, cracking through the air akin to the symbol that made him famous, and even as he pushed himself to unholy speeds, he was distracted.

Hermione would not have approved, and that stray thought alone made him feel a smidgen better. He stretched his legs out, abusing the freedom he had without his pads, feeling the powerful breeze rush against him. It was the closest thing he had to apparition, which as he had quickly figured out, he couldn’t do.

Still, the broom proved useful for that conundrum. He could fly off the campus anytime he wanted, heading into Hogsmeade and hiding in plain sight amongst the other witches and wizards due to his disguises. At first he was worried about a ward or tracking charm, but there didn’t seem to be any – not that he could feel, anyway.

His wand was absolutely poisoned with spells and curses, and he couldn’t tell between which made the wand work, and which were supposed to make him weak. It mattered little – it was left in his dorm, locked in his special trunk. He considered simply conjuring a stick to wave around in public as a replacement, but he had a feeling that Dumbledore would know – if there was a tracking charm, he can’t exactly have the caster thinking he was in his dorm room all day, every day. He would need to learn to transfer the spell.

It may not have been Dumbledore, they had both theorized, but rather a number of people. The safest establishment in Wizarding Britain had a number of suspects. McGonagall, Severus Snape, Quirinus Quirrell – it could be some kind of test from Flitwick, for all they knew.

Hermione didn’t like it, but lately, Hermione didn’t like a lot of things.

It was cute, how she used to be. Her loyalty to authority had lessened considerably, especially with a rebellious friend in Harry, and she had learned to stand up for herself. She and Harry received nothing but praises when they helped their friends around the classroom. Her confidence had gone from a timid naivety to assured in her knowledge and skills. She was confident, and positive, and in Harry’s humble opinion, very forgiving.

It was the only excuse Harry had for why he wasn’t a complete orphan.

It was a different Hermione that woke up that afternoon a month ago. It was a girl that had lived the life of Harry Potter, a boy that she had already adored, according to her, and respected the things he had done in his life to make his own way.

She was as much a part of him as he was a part of her. And half of him was now in her.

His life of travelling had been difficult, but not nearly as difficult as being under the care of the Dursleys. He was a very private person, and Hermione knew and, begrudgingly, respected his privacy. That choice was taken away from him, and her, when he made one stupid mistake in killing the Troll.

He had learned of the Prophesy’s contents from his parents, so long ago, and honestly, he didn’t pay it much mind. He had every intention of killing the Dark Lord that took his parents away – who might encounter who first was a non-factor.

Now, it was the only thing she could think about, and thus, it was the only thing he could think about.
He had never seen Hermione so tired – so desperate to find an answer to not only the death of Voldemort, but how to make her best friend whole again.

Their lives were forever mingled together at this point, and the two, even at their young age, understood everything that came with that. Still, when Hermione thought too much about the entire situation, she couldn’t help but feel queasy at the idea of owning half a soul, lingering in her head, and violently ill at the idea of Voldemort’s soul living in her best friend’s head.

And whenever she felt that utterly sickly feeling, it ran through the back of his mind.

He needed a distraction. Which was how he found himself in the skies, gliding over the pitch. He had no desire to sneak away; not today, not anytime soon.

Things were changing, he realized; things that weren’t supposed to be falling apart and coming together, things that weren’t supposed to be happening. The unexpected was becoming even more uncertain.

And perhaps it was the chaotic part of him, the part that put him on his Nimbus to calm his nerves as he performed a Wronski Feint, or maybe it was the self-assured part of the both of them combined, but he was actually looking forward to it.

Or maybe he was looking forward to the aftermath; a future with Hermione. And that was the uncertainty that scared him.

At this point, he half-expected the voice in his head to tell him that he was not alone, but those three days were over – his head was once again his own.

Something told him to look down, and he did.

Hermione stood there, a distant smile on her lips, clutching a small stack of papers. Her eyes followed him until he finished the loop, and landed gracefully in front of her. “Unfortunately, Harry…” she began, breathing deeply, “…I don’t think your head will ever be your own again.”

Harry blinked. “Well, at least I won’t be lonely.”

“Harry, be serious, here – and don’t you dare make that joke! You have actual voices in your head! I won’t use it, but if Voldemort ever comes back, then you’ll have an insane murderer talking to you anytime he pleases.”

“If he knows about the soul piece, you mean.” He dismounted his broom. “You feel my presence. I’ve never felt his. I feel some twitches in my scar, but you saw him. That thing in my head isn’t a threat, if anything it’s a tiny piece. I feel like a lot more of me left my body that night.”

“That may be true, but it’s disconcerting.” Even through the gloomy topic, she managed a small smile. “If we ever want our… future together, as you so put it, I don’t want to read every thought that runs through your head. It’s an invasion of privacy in the highest sense, and I don’t think boys would like that.”

Harry tilted his head. “Huh. Didn’t think about that.”

“I suggest you try not to.”

“So you can read my every thought? Have I been a good boy?”

“Harry!”
“Come on, Mine. There’s a very obvious reason that boys wouldn’t like it. I’m sure you’ve seen some reasons already.”

She huffed and crossed her arms. “I’d say you take far too many liberties in your dreams with my body, but I’d have to say you are incredibly accurate.”

“Well, our minds are partially connected, now. You’ve edited those dreams since.”

“I never want to know what I used to look like.” It only took a few seconds of silence for the image to appear, unbidden into her mind. “Oh, that’s just disproportionate.”

“Give it a few years. You’re not the only one that reads trashy novels.”

“I read it for the entertainment. You read it to fuel your nightly exercises.”

Harry made a face. “How long have you spent in my head?”

“Enough to feel jaded at pretty much everything you do. I practically lived your life, Harry. Looking through your eyes makes it difficult to turn away. So I’m only going to say this, One More Time, for the rest of our lives. No more secrets.”

If anything, the silver lining was that Hermione was indeed independent of her own thoughts, and his presence in her mind didn’t alter her personality at all. Because if it did, he certainly wouldn’t have had her ask for such a promise, and would have done everything in his power to persuade her from such a request. Still, she deserved to know everything, now that she had seen everything else. “No more secrets,” he swore.

She softened. “We all have our own personal woes, you more than most. But I think we’ve crossed that line together. If anything’s bothering you – nightmares about your aunt and uncle, memories of your parents, Voldemort, anything – I’m here for you. You know that. And I’ll do the same.”

He nodded. “Deal. So how should we go about that… the last problem you said?”

“Training. Studying. The usual. We’re getting that thing out of your head. Not much use taking care of a baby that only exists in your mind. If we could get it out here, that’d be perfect, but it’d still be a baby Dark Lord. Do you think it could be a risk we’d take together?”

“I’m… not sure. It certainly feels calmer, less headaches than I recall. Even when Quirrell looks at me.”

“So, this Tom Riddle he seems to be attached to; could he be a servant? A Death Eater, they called them?”

“It’s possible. Or it could be the Dark Lord himself. Not sure how likely that is.”

“I’ll do some research on the name. You can go back trying to kill yourself on that broom.”

He tilted his head. “Actually, I think I’ll join you. There can’t be that much information on Tom, is there?”

“In a library book? Not likely. We need a more current source. Something credible.”

“Oh, ruddy – I shouldn’t ‘ave said tha’. I should not ‘ave said that.”

Harry smiled innocently. Sometimes, it very well could be that easy. “That’s okay, Hagrid. We
won’t tell anyone. Can you tell us anything else?”

“What am I thinking right now?”

“Besides thinking if I can read your thoughts or not? You’re bloody frustrated that there aren’t many books on soul bonds.”

“That was a guess, wasn’t it? Because you’re spot on.”

“I could try to buy Madam Pince’s secrecy for access to the restricted books.”

“No, don’t bother – there are probably compulsion charms and detection spells. She’s Dumbledore’s greatest resource and weakness. I wouldn’t be surprised if that’s how most Dark Lords got their start – through dangerous books.”

“You think Voldemort got to these books as a kid?”

Before Hermione could respond, their friends let out a ‘yip’ in fear, and a loud bang against the table. “Sorry.”

Padma rubbed her sensitive knee, that almost upended the table. “Every time,” she complained. “I barely even hear you two talking when I’m absorbed in my reading. But every time, I hear that word, and it’s all I can hear.”

Harry wordlessly ran a hand over her knee, healing it. “We should probably have a code word. You bring up a good point. If anyone hears us saying his name, their ears would perk.”

“You’re right,” Hermione admitted, closing her tome. “So, if not Vold- well, that, then what do we call him by not making him obvious?”

“Tom.”

“Not too obvious?”

“Better than You-Know-Who. You’re not getting me to call him that.”

“I wouldn’t expect you to. Tom seems so… respectful.”

“Considering he changed his name, I’d think he hates it,” Padma piped up, embarrassed from her earlier outburst.

“It’s an anagram,” Hermione explained. “All very uninspired, really. ‘I am Lord…’ well, you know. An anagram. Tom Morvolo Riddle.”

Padma worked out the puzzle in her head. “Huh. A literal riddle. That takes the magic out of his name a bit.”

“TMR?” Harry pondered allowed, testing the name on his tongue. “Tommy? At this point, I can just call him – ”

“Voldemort!” Susan blurted, before slapping her hand over her mouth.

Daphne blinked in surprise. “Didn’t know you had it in you.”

The strawberry-blondie blushed. “Me neither,” she squeaked. Harry found it adorable.
Hermione only found it somewhat cute. She was beginning to feel the effects of this new relationship they shared. She didn’t know if she was okay with it, or if Harry was okay with it, and she was only having mirror feelings about it all.

“I just wanted to force it out,” Susan muttered, worried about some unknown, unseen force around her. Her eyes shifted around the room – the makeshift study room they were in, the Hufflepuff Common Room. “To see if I could.”

Padma’s lip trembled. “I don’t think I’m ready for that. Or any of our parents, for that matter.”

“Voldemort,” Daphne said aloud. “It’s not like it hurts to say it. It’s just a word. The taboo had been taken off when he died.”

“Taboo?” both Harry and Hermione asked. They weren’t in any of the readings they’d perused.

“A tracker word. When said aloud, the Ministry is alerted to your location.”

“Or, in that case,” Susan continued, “his Death Eaters hear his name pronounced aloud. And that’s how names like ‘You-Know-Who’ and ‘He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named’ began.”

“I suppose that’s something very confusing to those not in our world.” She looked pointedly at Hermione. “It’s very strange. You seem to hold no fears. Fletchley, Thomas, Lavender, Dunbar – they fear the name. Yet they didn’t grow up with the legend, to fear it.”

The small group pondered the logic, and the potentially invasive ramifications of such a seemingly unfitting – and at least, magical – truth.

“Someone’s messing with our heads,” Hermione muttered. “And… the only reason I’m not affected is someone got to mine, first.”

At their friends’ looks of confusion, Harry and Hermione shared a glance – a more innocent look that had been shared over the years, that had now taken on a far more meaningful gesture.

The silencing ward, always in place during their ‘study sessions’, held up well, as they began to explain, well… everything.

Harry and Hermione were both relatively reclusive people. In fact, had they never crossed paths, they likely would have never wanted to cross paths with anyone in their lives. In fact, while it was once discussed in a joking matter, they would have been content in being alone, together.

But from that day forward, they began to see the positives in working in numbers. And, as cheesy as it sounded, the power of friendship. It was as genuine as any other magic Harry had seen so far in Hogwarts.

It was shocking how many eleven year-olds were willing to help him kill a Dark Lord. Really, it was even more shocking how many of them believed him. Hermione, aloud, supposed that it was his charm. The others jokingly agreed, not fully joking, almost serious.

He was Harry Potter, after all. A reputation came with the name.

Hermione, Daphne, Padma, Parvati, Susan, Cho, and most recently, Hannah and Tonks, helped him as friends, not knowing that one day, they’d become part of the legend.
It was by Christmas Eve, when Tonks bought him, and the rest of her new young friends, a set of Chocolate Frog cards, that Nicholas Flamel came up in conversation.

Harry winked at himself in the mirror (or rather, from the mirror), and dropped the stone in his pocket, on Christmas Day. Best present ever, if you had asked him.

“What do we even do with this?” Hermione pondered, panic edging into her voice. “We can’t tell a professor about it. Do we give it back to Flamel? He obviously made a poor judgement call to give the stone to Dumbledore.”

Daphne crossed her arms. “Well, think about this. At the moment, we’re the most powerful children in the world. Most powerful wizards and witches ever, once we figure out how to use the stone. So, suffice it to say, we can do whatever we want. And I’m not saying any of us could figure out how to replicate the stone in some way, but if we did, then we don’t need to ever tell anyone how powerful we are, or, well, could be. So I don’t think a professor, or even Flamel, should have to know.”

Harry thought back to the potion riddle – the last test before the fiery door – that he and Hermione solved in a matter of seconds. “There’s someone we can trust,” he tentatively began, “but I need to test our relationship a little more. Or, better yet, the limits of what could be called a relationship.”

Hermione grimaced. Sure, she didn’t like the man much, but he watched over her for three days, and despite the hard exterior, and the forced servitude, he seemed willing to help them, if only to further his own agenda of being free from Riddle’s reign, and gain riches in the process.

And, of course, there was the fact that he was helping the son of Lily. It would take a long time before she gained his respect, however.

But if there was anyone that they could trust with such an important item, in the field of alchemy, Severus Snape was their best bet.

It was time for them to stop holding back from their friends. Harry agreed.

“Well,” Daphne breathed after she was told of the life oath owed to James Potter, which transferred to Harry after Snape had directly led to his murder. “Now I know why he hasn’t yelled at me for spending so much time in other Common Rooms.”

“Now I know why he hasn’t yelled at me at all,” Tonks muttered. “He still voids the punishments I hand out to his snakes, but at least he doesn’t spin them back on me, like my predecessors.” She let out an evil chuckle. “This should be interesting…”

There was a snort under the table they were sitting at.

Perhaps, in hindsight, Snape had already proven his loyalty, providing the necessary nutrition potions for Harry’s Godfather, sans poison.

“Padfoot likes the way you think,” Harry chuckled, reaching down to stroke the grim’s fur. “But I don’t think we should antagonize the man who’s handing out potential immortality.”

“Fair point,” she conceded. “Maybe after.”

“That being settled,” Hermione tried to redirect the conversation back to topic. “While we can all take an accurate guess as to why the stone is here, considering this school has an unwanted guest, we can only speculate as to what Dumbledore is expecting to happen.”

“Me,” Harry said easily. “He expects me to happen. My parents ‘thrice defied’ him, why not me?
We know what the mirror of Erised does, but we’re not supposed to. The charms on the invisibility cloak only proves that I was ‘required’ to take the stone from his grasp. He’s weak right now. He’s merely a parasite.”

“Yet he still expects you to take him on?”

“He’d expect me to have the cloak on me. I’m willing to bet that after I face Riddle, Dumbledore will just… be there, ready to save me.”

“A safe bet, really. Quite a gamble, however. Could we be sure that’s the real stone?”

“I’d think Riddle could tell the difference,” Susan chimed in. “He can’t afford to take a gamble. He really knows how to endanger everyone in this school when he puts his mind to it.”

Dumbledore probably really wouldn’t like the fact that they were turning their circle of friends against him, but they honestly couldn’t care if this plot were true.

And they had almost doubt in their minds that it was.

“Is it useful to be doing all of this in secret?” Susan continued. “I mean, my aunt is doing all she can under wraps, but she’d be able to exonerate your godfather much faster if she did it through the proper channels.”

“There are a surprising number of people still in the ministry that were there when he didn’t get a trial,” Daphne tried to explain, though even she couldn’t make sense of it all. “We don’t know who to trust. Your aunt Amelia is a lock, but we don’t know who might make a call. Dumbledore has eyes and ears everywhere. If he really did know who was the secret keeper, then we need to keep this as quiet as possible. Not to mention the actual Death Eaters in the ministry, or paying them off to make a few ‘errors’ along the process.”

“Can never be too careful,” Harry agreed. “I never would’ve been sent to the Dursleys if Padfoot was a free, er, dog.”

Hermione rolled her eyes. “Harry, code words don’t work that way.”

He rubbed the back of his head. “If Padfoot was never sent to the pound, those first few years wouldn’t have been so lonely. How’s that?”

“Better. I think.”

“Speaking of which; how’s our rat problem, Susan?”

“As well as could be. Holding cell, with all the right charms equipped. No foreseen consequences.”

“As one would hope for. I just hope a Dementor is guarding him.”

A soft bark of agreement could be heard from under the table.

“Oh, a tale of a boy and his mutt. Would be a shame if he went the way of Old Yeller.”

“Boy, do you know how to hold a grudge, Snivellus.”

“Then again, Yeller was actually missed.” He looked towards the ‘owner’. Technically, I don’t have to help him at all. He was the sole reason the life debt began.”
“You killed the man you owed a life debt to. That goes above everything. Don’t try to catch me in a loophole.”

Sirius stretched his far underused human limbs. “Damn, if feels good to be back. Don’t worry about that ponce, Harry. See, your father was a Transfiguration nut, and your mother had Charms. I, the ever loyal and capable best friend of a werewolf, had Potions. I just need my own little play set.”

“No problem. I have one in the trunk.” Harry pulled out a matchbox and tossed it to the ground. “Go nuts, I have plenty of stock in some of those rooms.”

“I swear, I don’t know how you raised yourself to be such an amazing kid. Sod all that being James’s son; you’re every bit of your mother, clear and through.”

“Hardly,” Severus muttered.

“Once you learn how to behave, Snape, you get access to the goodies. I have some ingredients in here, that’ll make Knockturn Alley look like Madame Pomfrey’s closet.”

“Yes, you’ve threatened that before.”

“Just reiterating how epic the collection is.”

Before he stepped into the suitcase, Sirius paused. “Severus; just so you know. I owe my Godson a life debt as well. He broke me out of Azkaban. So when you wake up in the morning without a very sizeable chunk of you missing, or your boy bits, it’s out of courtesy to Harry. But know this, you slimy piece of human filth; when the time comes, a blood feud can’t even interfere with a life debt, and if you cross that line, I will not hesitate to cross mine.”

Without waiting for a response, he walked on.

“I expected more.”

Harry looked at him closely. Legilimency could hide a lot of emotions, fear being one of them, but his stance had tensed noticeably. “I know you did; That’s all I would have allowed him to say. I don’t have to remind you that I can let him off the leash, so to speak, any time. But you don’t have to worry about that, I just wanted to let him say that to get it off his chest.”

“Are you expecting a plea for mercy?”

“Considering how angry he was when he found out the truth? You practically owe me another life debt.”

Sirius had already taken the stairs into the enlarged briefcase, eyeing the mansion inside with awe. “Bloody hell, it’s almost as big as Potter Palace!”

“It’s the same size,” Harry confirmed, following inside. “In fact, it’s the same building. You just stepped into a portal. I’m surprised you didn’t notice.”

He took another look around, looking embarrassed. “Sorry. Been a while since I could see in colour.”

“I hope my animagus isn’t a dog. I’d like to keep my newly acquired perfect vision.”

“Yeah, seeing is fun, isn’t it?”

“So, have you given any thought about what you were going to say to Lupin?”
“Yeah. I’ll start with the matters of your custody. And why the fuck he doesn’t have it.”

“I do believe that problem started when you handed me over to Hagrid.”

“I need to have a talk with that giant.”

“Half-giant.”

“Wait, how d’you – ?”

“The man knows how to talk. Do you really think you can ‘have a talk’ with Hagrid?”

His godfather grimaced. “Alright. Maybe I’ll talk to Fang.”

“One thing at a time, brave soul. First deal with the werewolf, then deal with the half-giant’s dog.”

“You have a funny way of putting things in perspective. Must be the James part.”

“Oddly enough, I think it’s the Hermione part. The part of me with common sense.”

“Potter!”

Even Daphne groaned with the rest of the group as they collectively turned to the nuisance.

Harry and Hermione, well, they long since learned to detect when they were being followed, and silently agreed to teach their friends some useful techniques, Occlumency being near the top of the list.

But first – the nuisance.

“What do you want, Draco?” It was Hermione, this time. They liked to alternate.

He narrowed his eyes. “No one was talking to you.” It seemed as if he wanted to continue that statement. Fortunately for him, he liked his bladder control. “We settle this. Midnight. Crabbe is my first. Granger is yours. Sound fair?”

“I don’t want you to be outnumbered, Draco. So I’ll tell you what, I’ll be Harry’s first. But only if Goyle’s your second, and Nott’s your third. That should even it up a bit.”

Draco scoffed. “As if you could stand a chance against me alone, Mudblood.”

Apparently, Draco had a great health plan.

“On second thought,” Harry said, in a manner so calm that everyone in the hallway, including Hermione, took a step away, “we don’t need to wait. I’ve got a free period. Let’s do this right now.”

He scowled. “You can’t change the rules, Potter! It’s already agreed upon!”

“I haven’t promised anything, you daft little shit,” he growled, tightening his fist. “I don’t even have to sanction anything. Why don’t we have a proper wizard’s duel, and I just make the next six years at this school a little bit less annoying by killing you.”

If Draco could look at Harry Potter’s green eyes, he would have seen a kid who lived for five years on the street, a boy who scraped for the things he got, a boy who killed a beast just three months prior.
Even then, arguably, he knew he couldn’t have backed down either way. “You can’t challenge to a proper wizard’s duel until you’re seventeen. Shows how much you know about my world.”

“Oh, I know enough. I know that when you challenge for an underage duel, you have to put something on the line. Fifty thousand galleons.”

If anyone had been otherwise distracted in the hallway, their attention had been firmly grabbed now. The blond took a step back. “Y-you’re lying, Potter! You can’t come up with that money!”

“Oh, you’re right. My apologies; maybe I should ask my parents for the money.”

Draco stuttered, while the rest of the gathered audience realized what he was getting at – he must have emancipated himself to get beyond the Potter’s trust account.

“You should be thankful for my dead parents, Draco,” Harry said mockingly. “It’s about time they did something useful for you. A hundred thousand, on the table. Take it or leave it.”

The audience gasped, hearing the number so casually doubled. “I… I accept your bet, Potter.”

“No, you don’t. Not yet. You can’t get that much by tonight. I can. So I’ll need collateral.”

“You just worry about yourself, Potter. You can’t even leave the school! So how will you – ?” he paused as Harry pulled out his mokeskin pouch – the blood red pouch marked with brown runic engravings.

“Goblin-modified. You were saying?”

“I- I need time to gather the money. Give me a few days! It’s not like we all have no family and no one to share our money with, and bloody responsibility, for Merlin’s sake!”

“That reminds me.” Hermione, in her wisdom, always liked thinking ahead. “The heir to the Black fortune. Put it on the line.” She wasn’t completely sure if Sirius had the authority to transfer the heirdom, being both the last remaining Black male and stricken from the family tree tapestry, and she wasn’t sure if the family magic recognized that titbit yet, but if this was on the line, it wouldn’t go to Draco. That would be ensured.

If they thought it was impossible for the blond to pale even further, he achieved the impossible. “You’re crazy! I’d never – ”

“You already accepted my bet,” Harry reminded him, twisting his words back on him. “And I need what you have on hand, or the duel is forfeited. You know what the punishment is to that, don’t you, Draco? This is, after all, your world.”

Of course, Draco knew what the forfeit would consist of – Public admittance of defeat, the handing over of his wand, and everything in his own trust.

It was then that Daphne stepped forward. “Allow me to add on to this ponce’s bad luck.” She grinned evilly, and the people around them swore it was almost as terrifying as Harry’s own grin. “Let’s talk marriage contracts. Mine, Pansy’s and Astoria’s. Total value of a hundred and fifty thousand. I’ll even throw fifty into the pot. If Goyle and Crabbe are in this fight, I see no reason why they can’t put something up.”

His wand almost slipped out of his tight grip, his hands were so sweaty. “You’re all crazy!”
“I’ll take that bet,” Harry pulled his wand. “Shall we begin?”

“There will be no spell casting in these halls, Mister Potter.”

Harry sighed. He was going to destroy whatever portrait reported them. “Hello, Headmaster. The fight has already been made official. As headmaster, the only thing you can do if find us a good duelling platform.”

“Harry, my boy, I must insist that you stop this – ”

“I’m sorry, Headmaster, but the only thing you could insist on is that the Great Hall be cleared out. I could do it myself, if you insist any further.”

“Mister Potter, there is no chance of a duel taking place without an officiator. I’m sorry, but this barbarism stops now.”

Draco had probably never been so relieved to see the Lord of the Light in his entire life. He breathed a sigh of relief, looking ready to hug Dumbledore.

“Hold on,” Hermione frowned. “Nott was your third. It seems all a bit unfair that he doesn’t have anything on the line.” She didn’t even seem aware of the entire exchange that took place. Her eyes shifted towards the taller of the foursome. “What’s your worth?” When he said nothing or rather, stumbled over his words, she turned back towards her friend. “Daphne?”

“One Tracey Davis, if I recall.”

Hermione looked towards the gathered group. “Will Tracey Davis please step forward?”

A meek, dark red-haired girl stumbled out of the group, looking utterly lost at this series of events, not expecting to be involved at all. Still, she smiled shyly at Harry, and Harry smiled back encouragingly.

Hermione clapped her hands together. “Great! Now we just need someone to be a willing officiator!”

“This has gone on long enough, Miss Granger.” Dumbledore made his way between the two groups, acting as the divider. “And you showed such promise as a student, here. Your parents will be hearing about this.”

“I want the Mudblood.”

Everyone turned, as one, to the source of such a statement, and it could have been only one person to have said it in front of Albus Dumbledore and Harry Potter. Hermione spoke first. “Excuse me, vermin?”

“You have no right to call me by anything other than Master by the time we’re done here. After I take out you and your little boyfriend, you’ll be forced to sign a slave contract.”

Contrary to what everyone was expecting, Hermione snorted. “The little inexperienced Draco wants a little practice? Why not borrow a chicken from Hagrid?”

“Because Crabbe and Goyle are too stupid to know what one looks like to get one for him,” Harry explained. “And he obviously doesn’t know how to choke a chicken himself. Besides, story of his life, they might end up taking a cock for him.”

“ENOUGH!” Albus yelled, wand at his throat as he amplified his voice amongst the laughter. “I will
personally see to it that all of you are suspended if this nonsense proceeds further. This charade has
gone too far, and you will all be severely punished after your suspension.”

“You continue this duel or I will transfer.”

He merely raised an eyebrow at Harry. “I beg your pardon?”

“Officiate this duel. Or I will leave Hogwarts. You will hold no authority over me, and Draco and I
can start this duel in the Summer. God knows Lucius holds enough authority over this school to
allow this fight within a few weeks, and take out the front page of the prophet to advertise it, but if
you don’t let this fight happen right now, I have a few headmasters to call. Your choice, Headmaster.”

The wizened old man chuckled. “As your legal magical guardian, Harry, I simply cannot allow that.”

“Emancipated children don’t have legal guardians. And if you threaten to overturn it, I swear I will
transfer to another school, in another country.”

Green eyes met blue, and for once, there was no pain in the back of his mind. Not only did he stand
a chance against his probe now, it was nothing. Hermione’s help, and a very powerful time dilation
ward, did wonders for his psyche.

The man was about six feet tall, Harry being almost five feet, and yet he stood in the gaze of the
headmaster unflinchingly. The lucky boys and girls that have gathered made witness to the Boy-
Who-Lived and the Leader of the Light, the killers of the most well-known Dark Lords in a
millennium, stuck in more than a mere disagreement, but caught in the midst of a threat.

They waited with bated breath at who would make the next move, like watching a chess game.

Harry didn’t expect to make the next move, but his knight took the leap forward.

“Enough of this.”

Billowing robes swept past the students, and a path was knowingly or unknowingly made as they
parted for the professor. “Students, you know the rules. Once you agree to the terms put on the table,
the duel will begin after my count, and not a moment sooner. That would lead to an immediate forfeit
and handing over all items bet. You will have seven days to bring forth all wagered items, or you
will face interest at the winner’s description. Place your terms.”

“Severus, that’s enough!”

Draco gathered himself, while his mates stepped forward, their swagger almost matching that of their
Davis.”

It really helped his confidence that Severus Snape was officiating. If he only knew the rules to his
own game, he’d know that if the head of his house showed favouritism, he’d be forced to give an
equivalent of the wagers and split it amongst the two.

Harry was careful to not show his hand. “Two hundred thousand galleons and a slave contract,
willingly signed by Hermione Granger.”

“The wager is uneven. The average pureblood contract is fifty-thousand. Mister Malfoy must put
forward something else.”
He sneered. “Fine, then. I’ll put ten more knuts on the table. That should even it up nicely.”

“How about you put your own nuts on the table,” she kindly offered, “so I can make sure the Malfoy family never spawns again?”

“Fifty thousand galleon equivalent,” Snape continued, seemingly unconcerned. “Suffice it to say, Miss Granger, that the bloodline of the Malfoy family is worth far more.”

“How much is the inheritance to an ancient House?” Harry wondered – already knowing the answer.

“The Bloodline itself can never be bet on by the head of the family. The inheritance to the family ring, however, can be wagered.”

“Fine, the Black family heir’s inheritance, let’s get it over with!” Draco snarled, looking murderous.

He already knew he couldn’t lose. This was all just a formality.

Everyone was distracted – yet again – by a loud bang.

Dumbledore lowered his wand. “Children,” he began gravely, “it is not your place to alter marriage contracts. It is solely up to your parents. I heavily advise that you all walk away and think about what you have done, and the foolishness you started. I am ending all of this now.”

The tense silence that followed, was one for the books. There was a little bit of everyone that stood in the hallway, that Hogwarts itself had expanded whenever it felt a bit crowded – the Gryffindors, Slytherins, Ravenclaws and Hufflepuffs stood together, not in defiance, or absolution, but confusion. Confusion as to what to do next.

Finally, it was Harry that spoke. And the people got what they never knew they wanted. “I put my magic on the line. If I concede or forfeit after this statement, I give it up as a freebie. So mote it be.”

A powerful glow erupted in the hallway, a huge contrast to the soft, calming glow that would usually come with any magical bet.

Severus cleared his throat. “Per the rules of a duel, Mister Malfoy must present something of equal value, which can only be the magic of himself or someone else.”

“I don’t want his magic. I want an oath. The contents of which will be divulged after the duel, at my discretion and convenience.”

“Acceptable,” Snape droned, knowing that the young Malfoy had nothing else to wager. “Are those terms acceptable to you, Mister Malfoy?”

“You’re crazy, Potter.” He was smiling as he said it. “You lose your magic, you’ll never be able to step foot here again. The second I hit you with the finishing blow and take your wand, all you’ll see is an old ruin. A decrepit old building. No magic, no girlfriend, no friends, and since you can’t come back to my world again, no money.” His smile only got wider, and in all honestly, it made it harder for him to talk, but he couldn’t help it. “Of course I accept.”

Dumbledore, the entire time, was trying to think of a way to stop this entire duel from happening, and have Harry keep his magic, but he knew it to be a fruitless effort. He had no idea how things could have escalated so drastically, and how he had lost so much control so utterly, in front of so many students. He could only frown at all of them – the only thing he really could do – and took his leave, his head held high, but not before mustering the most powerfully sad grandfatherly look he could at Harry.
It wasn’t that he didn’t think Harry could win – in fact, he was absolutely sure the boy could not fail, according to the magical energy that had burst from him, all of his magical blocks destroyed as it was put on the line, defending itself and its host. Or so he thought.

He was more concerned about the ramifications of this day – the contracts broken, the power base that was growing under young Harry Potter and the knowledge he seemed to have absorbed, and while it all seemed so innocent now, according to their weekly meetings, what Harry could be in seven years, or even five, was something he could see growing out of control very quickly.

The boy had so much more to fight for, more than Harry could have possibly imagined. And that, according to his plans, didn’t bode well for any type of Greater Good.

He didn’t have long – he needed to change his plans. Drastically.

Flitwick, unnoticed by all but Harry, Hermione, and Severus, stepped forward into the centre of the controlled chaos. “Severus, I see you have things under control, but after that impressive display of magic, I fear we need someone to maintain the shield while you officiate.”

Draco looked aghast. “What? What display? He didn’t do anything!”

“Oh! Oh my,” he giggled. “This should be rather interesting.”

Severus, doing his best not to shake his head, raised his wand and the floor raised the two groups and the professors up. “All non-participants leave the platform.”

Harry’s mouth twisted into a frown. He had wanted the fight to be in the Great Hall. Still, beggars can’t be choosers. Besides, he had a feeling this would only be the first duel of many, after defeating the scion of the Malfoy family.

Susan glanced towards Hermione. After her nod, she stepped up to Harry, and after getting his attention, kissed him on the cheek. “Good luck,” she whispered with a smile, and jumped off the platform.

His face began to burn, and it only got redder as Padma and Parvati followed in her footsteps simultaneously. Hannah and Daphne were left, and Harry could see the nervousness on her own face. “Don’t, er, don’t feel like you have to show them up.”

She shook her head, and leaped forward to kiss him on the lips. Hermione giggled as he stumbled, and even Hannah needed help stepping off the platform. Daphne stepped up to him, and tilted her head at him. “You’re about to have my marriage contract,” she reminded him. “I don’t think a kiss anywhere would show how grateful I am.”

Hermione raised an eyebrow. “You can’t even flirt with anyone else as long as the contract is active, right?”

She nodded in confirmation. “So no kiss. Until after.”

Harry smiled. “I look forward to it.”

Hermione hid her smile. “I think I am, too.”

Daphne eyed the both of them. “Me three.”

Snape grimaced. The things he would say if he had his free will… “The duel will begin in twenty
seconds. There are still classes to be had.”

Daphne hopped off the platform, while Harry stared forward at the scowling blond. “Then get ready to go to classes in twenty-five seconds.”

“Heh,” Draco pointed his wand up – the customary pose for starting a duel. “You’re really that confident in yourself. What spells have you learned in the past eight months?”

“None.”

“Ready your wands. No lethal spells.”

“Pathetic, Potter. As expected. Your false bravado will lose you everything.”

A golden dome surrounded them. “Ten seconds!” the squeaky voice of Professor Flitwick announced.

“On the contrary, Draco. I didn’t learn anything, because there was nothing left to learn here.”

“Three, two, one!”

Sparks shot into the sky. “Begin!”

“…W-what?”

“Titillando!”

Draco was hit square in the chest by the violet spell – but he didn’t lose grip of his wand, nor did he fall. Purple, tendril-like ribbons began to wrap themselves around him and he let out a squeak. Then another.

Harry began to step forward, and when Theodore Nott stepped in the way, Hermione wordlessly shot past Harry and stunned him, and he fell to the ground. He picked up the wand, never losing his stride, and tossed it back to his best friend, who deftly caught it.

Crabbe and Goyle, rather predictably, ignored their wands in favor of running forward, and Harry simply raised his wand to sweep an invisible wind into them, knocking them down.

Draco began to laugh maniacally, the veins popping out in his forehead, his voice going hoarse, as the ribbons mercilessly tickled his skin. Yet, he did not fall, or drop his wand. That may have had something to do with the sticking charms Hermione had strategically placed on Draco’s person, knowing Harry would want a few seconds alone with him, even without their mental link.

Draco laughed in Harry’s face as the Boy-Who-Lived eyed him carefully, inches away from his nose. He could still see the fear in the boy’s blue eyes.

Never had he seen a boy laugh so much, in so much pain, consumed by so much fear.

After a few more seconds of his very forced laughter, he cast a wordless spell that he had been working on. Draco froze, mid laugh, mid breath, as the ribbons retreated to – somewhere. “When you fall,” he breathed, almost touching noses, “when you lose. I won’t even add to the contract that you’re forbidden from calling my girlfriend, or anyone else, a Mudblood.” He removed his fake glasses and dropped them to the floor. “Rather, I dare you. You want the full Potter? You want me to show off my ‘bravado’? Fine. You get to see what Harry Fucking Potter is like. You’re just a Malfoy. I’m just a Dark Lord Slayer. So woe is me when you lose today.”
He heard two heavy thumps behind him, and he knew that Crabbe and Goyle were taken out of commission for a longer period. “I drop the façade, today. For you, Draco. You should feel honoured.”

“And we’ll take far more than your pride and things your daddy got for you,” Hermione calmly explained, having heard everything from the link. “If you ever feel the need to insult me, or Harry’s parents, or our friends, again. Well… prepare for the worst. And prepare your will – to give to us. All you need is to ask for another duel.” She reached up and gripped his chin, stiff as stone. She gave a disdainful sniff. “I want to see that pure blood cleanse these dirty floors.”

She waved her wand to deactivate the spell, and tipped him over by his nose, and it was fitting that his back hit Harry’s glasses as he thumped on the ground. Harry picked up the unused wand that rolled towards his feet. He handed it over to Hermione, and she added it to her growing collection.

The glasses didn’t crush – the frame bent, and they cracked – but it didn’t make it any less of a symbol of what happened today.

Harry Potter and Hermione Granger stood victorious, and the stunned crowd, having witnessed and heard the entire minute long duel (of which there was about ten seconds of duelling) watched as Daphne, unashamed in her actions, hopped onto the platform after the dome disappeared and kissed Harry, full on the lips.

They were almost as stunned when she turned around and did the same to Hermione.

Hermione responded to the kiss as well as Harry, wrapping her arms around the girl, and when she released her, she grinned smugly.

Harry, having both Susan and Hannah on his arms, looked down at his unconscious opponent, and the surrounding victims. He then looked over to the stunned professors. “So, who won?”

“Do you think we went too far?”

Hermione considered the question. “No. I don’t think so. The funny thing is, Dumbledore thought he lost today. We revealed a lot of secrets today, thanks to that little stain.”

They were situated in one of the many unused classrooms in the school, a rendezvous point in between classes when they didn’t have time to meet on the seventh floor, in the Room of Requirement. Tonks and Cho, being in different years, only shook their heads as their friends explained to them what they missed. “Bloody hell, Harry. I need to stick around more. I knew that being around you was gonna be interesting.”

“It comes with the name, Tonks.”

“No, I think you cause that chaos all on your own, Potter. Do you expect a kiss from me, too?”

Even the memory of that moment that Hermione volunteered to share, “No, I don’t expect one. Since I’m in the business of freeing girls from contracts, are there any unsuitable suitors you’re scheduled for?”

“Nah, I’m a free woman. But since you’re scheduled to take the inheritance to the throne now, and Padfoot can’t do anything at the moment, could you do me a favor?”

“I’ll put you and your mother back in the family, Tonks. No problem.”
She kissed him on both cheeks. “That’s all you’re getting ’til you’re older.”

“You may not have to wait long,” Hermione muttered, figuring she should leave it a surprise to Tonks that Harry was a metamorphmagus as well.

Cho shook her head in disbelief. “I was right; it’s always an adventure with you. I’m still trying to discern whether that’s a good thing or not.”

“It’s not,” Harry freely admitted. “We’re just making the best of it.”

She shook her head with a grin, then leaned over to kiss Harry on the cheek. “Then I might as well, too.”

“That’s the spirit,” Tonks cheered, leaning down to wrap her arms around her friends. She looked down at herself, at her hunched over form. “You know, there’s something I’ve never done before. Your birthday’s still the thirty-first of July, right?”

Harry nodded. “So I’ve been told. Orphan and all.”

“Just corroborating.” She slowly released them. “I think I know what to get you for your birthday this year. Don’t worry, it’s kid-friendly. Literally.”

Harry and Hermione both rolled their eyes, having already figured it out. “Just don’t overwork yourself, Tonks.”

“… He told you, didn’t he? I’m going to kill that mangy mutt of yours.”

Harry, true to the strangeness of his everyday life, walked into the Room of Requirement, meeting the girls of the study group, nodding to each of them, including the newest members, Tracy Davis and Lavender Brown, whose grades were merely average, and upon Parvati’s advice, joined their little group, and took warmly to it.

Harry walking into the room wasn’t the strangest thing all day. What really fascinated them was the purple scarf wrapped around his shoulders.

“Um, forgive me for being new,” Lavender spoke up, never afraid to speak her mind, “but what’s with the fashion faux-pas? Why a scarf in April?”

Harry looked offended. “I’ll have you know, Miss fashion princess, that this is not a scarf.”

Hermione sighed. “It’s a turban, isn’t it? No wonder I sensed you getting a head-ache.”

“A turban?” Susan wondered. “Oh! Is that Quirrell’s?”

Harry nodded, making a show of flinging the cloth around his neck. “He might not have any taste, according to Lavender, but damn if it isn’t comfy!”

Only Lavender was left in the dark at the magnitude of what happened that they missed, and the rest of the girls showed it, sans Hermione.

She picked up on it pretty quickly. “Hermione, did I just hear you say you ‘sensed’ his headache?”

The couple sighed. They really needed an introductory pamphlet at this point.

“Okay, Harry,” Hermione crossed her arms. “Start from the beginning. Remember our promise.”
“Not much to tell, honestly. He wanted to kidnap me, because he didn’t know how to get to the stone. Since the hallways detect spellcasting, he tried to grab me. That didn’t work out as well as he hoped.” Harry looked thoughtful. “When I locked you out to spare you from the pain, it still got through to you as a headache? Interesting.”

“Interesting and terrifying. That means I can feel your pain. I wonder if that works for other extreme emotions? Or is it only because he triggered the Horcrux?”

“…What the hell is going on?” Lavender finally chose to speak up. “I feel like I’m missing out on something.”

“Not much,” Susan admitted. “He killed one of Voldemort’s many forms. He had been possessing Quirrell. How’s the one in your head, Harry? Did it react?”

“…”

“Susan, you have to stop doing that. Luckily, this one was sitting down.”

“”

“Well, let me start with the good news,” Tonks announced on the train home, resting her hands on crossed legs in the compartment. “The good news, you get your present early.”

Harry nodded sleepily, not feeling the best as of late, since his meeting with Voldemort. Hermione and Daphne, at his sides, held him up as he listened to the pink-haired girl. “The bad?”

“The bad is I hope you don’t have any expensive antiques at your manor, because I’m bound to knock it over.”

Harry blinked a few times. “What?”

“Perhaps I should start over. Pettigrew escaped.”

“What?”

“Calm down, calm down,” she tried to placate the entire room, her ears ringing. “That’s the official story. Unofficially, Fudge found out, and he sent out Dementors to handle the little problem. So Madame Bones relocated him, and told everyone he escaped. Meanwhile, now everyone knows he was in custody to begin with, so of course, Fudge is the one looking incompetent. He’s got to be seen doing something. What better way than by helping, well, you. Thanks to your little beat down of the Malfoy heir, daddy Malfoy tried to choose an Auror himself, but thankfully, Fudge saw the error in making a former Death Eater, no matter how reclaimed they are, your bodyguard. So Madame Bones got to choose. Guess who?”

Hermione looked perplexed. “You?”

“Good guess. No. Hestia Jones. I got to request to being the understudy. Helps that I’m the cousin of an innocent man, your Godfather, and protecting you is a nice little piece on my resume, in lieu of Academy training. It helps that I sent in Pettigrew. Thanks for that boon, by the way. So… as said before, please bubble-wrap all your items. Actually, now that I think about it, I could use some training.”

“Done,” Harry muttered, shaking his head free of any cobwebs. “I prefer my bodyguards as good as me. Now, what’s the present?”

“Oh, erm… hold on, I need to go change. I don’t need these school robes anymore, so I could
She made her way through the packed room, and when she closed the door, Susan turned to all of her friends. “I’ll miss you guys.”

There were similar mutters of agreement and sentiment, before Harry pulled out a mokeskin pouch – a normal brown one, this time. “Speaking of surprises,” Harry said cheerily, “if I’m in the need for two bodyguards, then all of us might need each other. That’s my shameless excuse, and I think I’ll stick to it.” He pulled out some empty matchboxes, and threw them to each of his friends. “Hold on to it, and it will activate to you and you alone. It’s part expanded living area, part portal that will take you straight to Potter Manor, depending on which latch you release first. Time distillation runes are available in a majority of the rooms, so your parents will never know you’re gone. Hermione and I have spent years in these rooms. Giant library, great kitchen, perfect places for practical homework. The Trace doesn’t work here. Keep this on you at all times. You can make it disappear anytime you want, so only you can see it. I suggest tapping it now, so you won’t be sensed doing it at home.”

“We bought one for each of you,” Hermione re-clarified, looking around at their group of friends, and potential allies, “because you’re our friends. Over the past year, that’s been made very clear. More importantly, it’s for your safety. The runes built into it, with Daphne’s help, require your magical signature to activate but not necessarily your magic. Just touch it, and it will do what you want. It could become a charm, or a thin silver rope to fit anywhere on you, from your wrist to your neck, or your foot. I suggest wearing it at all times. It can protect you, it can alert you of danger, and, thanks to Padfoot, they can be used for communication. We’ll be working on a little project this summer involving mirrors.”

Susan stared in awe at the tiny, unassuming box, as were the rest of their friends. “Why not give them to us as jewellery? If you don’t mind me asking?”

“It’s getting used to your magic. You’ll know it’s ready when it turns into a charm. When it’s a suitcase, put anything you want in there. Just throw it in, and it will organize itself. Great for emergency exits. It also makes a good Portkey. It... it really does a lot of things. I should have written them down.”

“I did,” Daphne quickly informed them, “but they’re in my trunk. I’ve actually been researching a spell that we can use on the trunk that summons anything we want if we think about it. Sort of like the Room of Requirement, except for things already in the trunk. Perhaps we could all work on it over the Summer?”

“Of course,” Hannah agreed with a noticeable smile, “I’d love to.” While she had gotten a very useful, seemingly very expensive tool, the best news she had gotten was that she wouldn’t be alone this Summer.

Padma and Parvati, from across the compartment, shared nervous glances. Hermione took notice. “Your parents would probably notice any strange, new jewellery, wouldn’t they?”

They nodded. “Father is very strict when it comes to tradition,” Padma explained. “Should anything come to pass, you should probably meet with him.”

“It wouldn’t be a bad idea to have you meet him now,” Parvati muttered, biting her lip. “We’re lucky no one took pictures of us kissing you so far, especially at the same time. Luckily, he doesn’t believe in Marriage contracts, but he makes up for it in other traditions, to ‘even it out’. He’ll be there to pick us up at the station. Perhaps you could say hello to him?”

“Of course,” Harry agreed quickly. “I’ve done some reading, actually. I’ve charmed yours
specifically, to turn into... well, glasses. It was all I could think of at the time. And by the time I got to Padma’s, I thought of a beauty mark. Small, and discreet. Just stick it to your face, and it will find the right spot every time. Trust me, I’ll never mistake you two again after that whole episode last November, but I know you two are tired of never being told apart. You get your identities now. And the glasses actually will help you see better, Parvati.”

She tilted her head at the box, and her sister sighed. “Do you want to trade?”

She shook her head. “No. I don’t think so. You’re a Ravenclaw, already; I’m not turning you into a stereotype with some glasses. Besides. I want to pretend to be the brilliant one, until I actually get there.” She looked up at Harry. “You realize that wearing glasses is a sign of weakness in the magical world? Something to do with our cores. My father would, no pun intended, see right through this."

“I wasn’t aiming to trick your father. Trying to get on his good side, and if anything were to happen down the road,” and he fully intended for a future with all of them, “I can’t start it with trickery. He’s the head of a house, still, and I’m sure he’s willing to negotiate. As for the weakness, you can turn it back into a necklace when we come back for the school year.”

“Hold on,” Tracey interrupted with a frown, “I know you said your dad doesn’t believe in marriage contracts. But it sounds to me like Harry is trying to claim them.”

The room turned to Harry, but it was Hermione that spoke. “That is precisely what he’s trying to do. In case he goes back on his word one day, your fathers own all of you. We know how customs work. One day, it may lead to that. If Voldemort – ” she paused awkwardly, and when no one in the cabin flinched, she tried to hide her smile. “If he were to ever come back, your families might find themselves in trouble, in every sense of the word, including financially. That’s how it is for girls under seventeen in the world. Arrangements need to be made to ensure the continuation of profit or bloodline, no matter how pure that blood may be.”

“With Harry buying my marriage contract,” Daphne continued, “and my sister’s, I now have my own fate. I decide who I want to sign it. Whenever I want.”

“That’s brilliant,” Susan slowly admitted, running the idea through her head. “Buying our contracts and giving them back to us.”

Harry nodded. “I can certainly afford to do it. That duel inspired me that it’s a great chance to help all of you. Tonks was only a free woman because she was banished from the Black family. But you all have contracts, I think. Muggleborns don’t.”

Hannah looked hopefully at Harry. “You’d really do that? Buy contracts and freely give them back to us?”

“I’d do it for my friends. Not random people. And by doing that, I’d be making you all targets. You’re all under my protection, so to speak. Hence the gifts.”

At that moment, in her balled hands, a flash erupted from Cho’s fist. She loosened her fingers, and a silver, lightning bolt-shaped charm dropped, impeded by the thin chain still held by her thumb. Everyone took a moment to stare at the glittery, simple charm, before they glanced back at Harry. “This looks... expensive,” she choked out, scared to even wear such a beautiful looking pendant.

“The pendant wasn’t the expensive part. It was the suitcase. The compartment was bloody pricey. But everything couldn’t be free, could it? I had to go out and buy something nice for my girls, couldn’t I?”
Daphne leaned her head on his shoulder. “Your girls, Harry?”

He wrapped an arm around her shoulder. “I can’t speak for the rest, but your heartbeat makes me assume otherwise.”

“I wasn’t countering your claim. I’m just pointing it out to the rest.”

“Oh, I’m sure most of us noticed.” Padma eyed the newly formed necklace in her hand. “And, hellishly expensive gifts notwithstanding, I’d love to be your girl. I’m not saying I’d sign a marriage contract over to you, but there’s no other boy I’d trust to hold in their possession. It’s why I – well, we – want you to meet father.”

“It’s been blatantly obvious that there are no other boys in this compartment,” Hannah whispered, placing her chain around her neck. “And I feel like this necklace is some kind of branding. Then again,” she took a glance around at her closest friends. “They all call us Potter’s Girls. Is it wrong for me to have accepted that name this whole time? To like it?”

“It doesn’t mean anything,” Lavender tried to defend. “I mean, I was accused of joining the ‘harem’, as Sheamus so subtly put it, when I did. And here I thought it was an all-girls study group, hosted by the cutest boy in the school.” She lifted her hair, and Parvati helped her hook on the necklace. “Not to sound vain, but whatever keeps that going, I’ll be part of your club.”

Cho’s eyes twitched back and forth, fumbling nervously. “Are we just going around the room confessing?”

Susan held up the lightning bolt in her palm, already adorning the pretty jewellery. “I think I’ll pass on trying to talk myself into it. I’m already in. I said I was in the night you let us all in on this.” She looked up at Harry with serious blue eyes. “As you all know, I might have my certain fascinations with your… training. You’re a very powerful wizard, Harry, and I know you’ll one day kill the murderer of my… m-my parents. And I want to help any way I can. I mean, I like you, a lot, but I don’t think I can make a decision like that. Not yet. But I’m leaning there. First things first, I’ve got my mind on far too many things.”

“I think we all do.” The room turned to Harry. “You’re all my girls. You’re all my friends. Whether you want to be more or not, is up to you. I won’t ask, unless you want me to. I won’t pressure you. We’re all just having fun, here. Hermione and I, we set out to make friends, and frankly, we have a lot of cute, smart, dependable friends. Why would I spend all my time around a bloke when I have all of you to spend time with? Why would I want to share my good fortune? I mean, I’m sure you all know a few blokes who could’ve joined us. You didn’t. Because you liked this arrangement. You’ve all decided on a certain level of trust with me. But this isn’t a harem or anything. We’re just a bunch of almost second years, an almost third year, and a graduate, looking to enter a war one day, and win a war promptly after that. Whatever happens between then and now, is your choice, completely. I can only promise to take care of you all the same, if you need it.”

“I’m more than Harry’s girl,” Hermione spoke from next to him, crossing her arms as she smiled companionably at her friends. “I’m pretty sure he’s my bloody soul mate, at this point. Ethereal circumstances aside, I knew that before I stepped foot in Hogwarts. In any case. You’ve seen the choices presented to you as decent partners. Girls are usually more mature than boys, but Malfoy, his goon, the redhead; they’re all a different breed of idiot than we’ve ever seen. I wouldn’t have had much of a choice to begin with. You gravitate to Power, and that’s what we are. There’s going to be a massive change in the Wizarding world, and your logic, and magic, has accepted it. There will be more who will join us. We are all the ‘originals’, should we say. No one will go above you all in our little group, and when the time comes, We’ll never forget our first friends.”
“Thanks for making it sound like bribery,” Harry muttered, giving the room a sheepish smile.
“Hermione likes to think ahead. But like I said, we’re just kids. I gave you those to be safe, because you’re friends with Harry Potter. You may find yourself having some trouble getting along with other people, especially Daphne and Tracey, and any other Slytherins that might join us, like maybe Pansy one day, because you’re associated with Harry Potter, and the politics are only going to get more segregated as the years go on. You can leave at any time. But I can’t tell you how long that mark might last. So keep the necklaces for your own safety. You all have a safe haven in Potter Manor. You’ll all be in very real danger when the time comes, and I’m not talking about just Voldemort’s return.”

“Of course,” Susan nodded. “Rogue Death Eaters, blood purists, people who are just obsessed with blood purity traditions, or angry fathers who want their daughter to be the sole beneficiaries of your will… really, a lot of people might want you dead in the future, Harry.”

“Looking forward to it.”

“Droll tone aside, I’m sure part of you really is looking forward to it. We all care about you, Harry. Sooner or later, something may happen between all of us. Sometimes, our magic may guide us to the most enticing magical that fits us. Powerful witches tend to go for powerful wizards, you and Hermione being the best example since your parents, so my aunt says. In whatever manner that may be.”

“Same here,” Tracey slowly agreed, finally putting on her necklace. “My disengagement from Nott won’t bode well for me in the future. I need protection. You’re to only one that can provide that, Harry.”

He knew he could. Severus’s compliance ensured that. “Of course, Tracey.”

“We’re all, in a way, Harry’s girls,” Parvati pointed out. “And I think I like that. Like some muggle spy organization or something. And we all care for him. And, elephant in the room, there’s a Dark Lord pending. He might not even need our help, but he needs our support. He’s our friend. You’re all my friends – sisters, even. I don’t see how this has turned into a debate.”

“I don’t think it is,” Lavender began to realize, glancing around the room, at everyone’s empty hands. “I think we just all agreed on the same point, here.”

Daphne looked smug. “I love it when a plan comes together. Or rather, a coven.”

Harry found his luck rather changing for the better as he squeezed her and Hermione’s shoulders. “So? Will you be my girls?”

It was Susan – surprisingly – who got up first and leaned over Harry. “I’ll be your girl,” she smiled encouragingly, and pecked him on the lips. “Or at least give you my first kiss. I think he’s earned that out of all of us.”

Cho came next. “Definitely.” She quickly ducked in and kissed the corner of his mouth. “This all feels very awkward,” she whispered into his ear.

“How do you think I feel?” came the response, before he untangled his arms and kissed her full on the mouth, gently reaching up to rest his hands on her waist. Her being older than the others, he felt she deserved more.

There were varying degrees of kisses shared, until Lavender came last. “I wanted to be first. But I figured, why not take my time…”
“I’m always missing the party,” a somewhat familiar voice complained, and everyone turned to a pink-haired little girl, standing at the doorway. “Wotcher, Lav. Mind if I get a spin?”

The dark blonde, still sitting on Harry’s lap, squeaked and almost fell off the boy. “Tonks?!”

“In the flesh. Half-off, same amount of fun!” Her pink eyes and hair, tied in a ponytail, was just as vibrant, but her body, in muggle clothing, had changed radically. She was a waif of a girl, with spindly legs and bony arms, and he was sure it would have been a perfect match for when she was naturally that age. “I think this is the best bodyguard disguise in the world. They couldn’t possibly reject this on their force. Sometimes, changing myself at will can be useful.”

“I’m going to be honest, Tonks,” Harry admitted, smiling at the cute preteen, “I can’t imagine a time where it’s not useful.”

“You say that until you try dating.” She wrinkled her cute little pixie nose. “Actually, you say that until you decide to date like big boys and girls do. Mum warned me not to go be in a situation like that and go through something like it, and that’s given me nightmares enough to not even try. I’ve kept my metamorph abilities under wraps so long, and I haven’t tried dating, yet, for obvious reasons. But I’d like to start fresh with someone I trust.” She looked around the room, her eyes lingering on the only boy in the room. “I don’t know how long I may want to stay in this body, but I’m pretty comfy in this skin. Not a lot of people get the chance to relive their lives the right way, making the right choices. So… any takers? I’m not too picky.”

Harry’s hair flashed green, and the room around him took a sharp intake of breath. “You’ll always be Tonks to me. No one else.”

Harry had no idea what kind of effect that had on the new Tonks, but he got a hint of it as she almost tripped on the way to jumping on his lap, and entered her first snog session.

The other girls in the compartment didn’t know whether to watch in fascination as their hair cycled through a rainbow of colours, or to look away and give them privacy. Daphne merely shrugged and straddled her girlfriend’s lap, and Hermione obliged.

Susan had the sense to lock the compartment door and blacken the window, showing a hint of what she had learned over the year, before eyeing Hannah, her best friend, curiously.

“Is this what it’s going to be,” Lavender wondered, not quite as a question, looking at her seat mates study each other. “Just a bunch of us making out? With Harry? With each other?”

“I suppose,” Tracey guessed, usually being the quiet one of the group. “I mean, for now. I like all of you, you’re really great friends, and I owe Harry a lot.” She shrugged. “We’re young. I don’t know what I want. But faced with the reality of marrying Theodore Nott one day, I would choose any of you. Sorry if that sounded backhanded.”

Padma leaned over and kissed Tracey on her soft lips, and the girl squeaked in surprise, but didn’t back away. “Sorry,” she muttered once she parted, “just wanted to know what it felt like.”

“I think we all do,” Lavender joked, “but none of us actually tried it. So how was it?”

“Wonderful,” Tracey admitted, blushing. “Hermione and Daphne seem to be enjoying it, right?”

The girls silently agreed. Still, no one went for the bait again, willing to instead think about their choices, and their friends’ choices, knowing that they had the entire summer to discuss their future.

Of course, Harry was going to be involved, simply for the fact that he was Harry. Not only being a
great friend, he was a great wizard – one of the most powerful, they knew.

And he, and the girls around them, were a much better choice than the inbred boys who were waiting to be contracted to them by their parents. They at least knew that Harry and Hermione could protect them.

And, being honest with themselves, they knew that they were at least attracted to Hermione. In the Wizarding world, power was a great aphrodisiac. Especially being young, attractive and powerful.

Still, what mattered was that Harry and Hermione were great friends, and they genuinely wanted to return the favour for their help.

They all began to eye each other. Co-existing together? Completely doable. Something more?

It was hard to say. But, as said before, they had all Summer, and beyond, to think about it.

Chapter End Notes

End Part One. I may be able to do the next four school years this way, and stop doing them at random moments in flashbacks, unless the story calls for it. Next chapter will be all Harry/Harley, and their clash with Raven and Zatanna. Don’t expect too much – never tried writing action scenes before. (Makes you wonder why I decided to write a Batman story, huh?) (On an aside… I am seriously starting to resent DC for taking the comic books out of their comic book movies. I tip my hat to you, Marvel. Perhaps I’ll write a blog post one day about Batman V Superman and Captain America: Civil War on my WordPress (rihaansfics dot wordpress dot com))

Trying to make a Harem story and putting it on the long-term, without being goofy, or too PWP, is tough. If you’re worried about realism, I’m surprised you made it this far in the story, honestly. I probably shouldn’t have started this.

Then again, this is fun. Great pep talk.

Please review, I really like it when that happens.

Any artist that finds themselves interested in my stories, please feel free to enhance it with your art and send it to me. I'd be really grateful. Make sure to watermark it!
Upon reflection, Harry realized that there were many reasons the ‘bad guys’ had an easier lifestyle. The first one – no waiting. The good guys usually came to you.

Which was why Harry was starting to get suspicious.

“Who are we waitin’ for again?”

“Eddie, sweetie,” a voice spoke into her newly acquired earpiece.

Harley sighed into the empty cell chamber room, her grunt of frustration echoing off the walls. “This blows. Are you sure we can’t, y’know, pop over to where he is? Or pop *him* over to where we are?”

Harry shook his head, leaning against the control panel. “If I had the foresight to put a tracking charm into the suit, sure. You saw that I was in a bit of a hurry passing him his uniform? Well, I thought he would be safe. Didn’t bother to put any charms on him.”

“That’s Eddie for you.” Ivy’s voice soothed into both of her lovers’ ears from the control room. “Even when he chooses not to be, he’s actively a pain in the ass.”

The Blackgate prison facility was… eerily quiet. Understandable, considering a massive breakout had just taken place, but certainly not tolerable, in view of the enemies coming their way.

Harry, of course, knowing things that he shouldn’t have, took a few precautions in lieu of being surprised by the crusader. Once upon a time, Moody had called him one of his best students, but he had been lacking in his covert skills since he had gotten to this world. His vigilance, as of late, had been more *moderate* than *constant*. That changed today.

“A suggestion?” Jonathan Crane, the once again christened Scarecrow, removed his gas mask. “Blackgate, at the moment, may be temporarily out of business. I find it doubtful that he will be sent here. So perhaps he is in the holding cells at the Police Department?”

“Nuh-uh,” Harley disagreed, crossing her arms as she leaned against the console next to Harry. “They can’t. They’re in a bit of a jam right now. There shouldn’t be a single cop at the station.”

Crane gave them a curious look. “And where do you expect them to be?”

Harry checked his recently repaired watch. “In a half-hour? Here.”

“And this is… part of your plan somehow?”

“We’re still working out the kinks,” Harley muttered in a dry tone. “We’ve got an army of goons immediately outside the prison, and now we have eyes on everything inside and out. Even the Bat’s gonna have some trouble getting through that. If you want to set up a trap, now’s a good time.”

Crane nodded and left the doorway, while Harry glanced at one of the many monitors behind him. “At least the runes are holding well. Usually, I leave the carvings to Hermione and Luna. I had to use a protractor once or twice.”

“You were able to calculate and conjure a perfect protractor?”

“Magic is weird.”
“I noticed.”

“Heads up, you two,” Ivy patiently warned. “He’s here. Camera one four nine.”

Harry blinked. “Camera one thirty-four.”

Then Harley blinked. “One thirty-six, ninety-three, one twenty-eight, one-o-four….”

“Nothing we haven’t faced before,” Ivy reminded her blond companion. If she was nervous, she was a consummate professional at hiding it, even to her girlfriend’s trained ears. “He’s fast, and flawless. You put him in a crowd of thugs, and your chances go down somehow. It’s daytime, and he’s just as good as maneuvering as he ever was. They still can’t catch him. At this rate, they’ll be taken care of by the time the cops get here.”

“Whose side do you think they’ll take?” Harley asked her girlfriend curiously. “The cops, I mean. Will they go after us? Batman? Or are they splitting teams?”

Ivy pondered the situation. “I’m not sure. They can’t afford to split up their task forces. The riot control is coming in full force. We’ve definitely lost his favorite enemy, though. Branden’s coming for you, which means SWAT will make nice with Batman. For now. Gordon, of course, is probably embarrassed right now, and needs some credibility back after two nights ago. And that new hooded boy is somewhere with Riddler. So we know what side he’s on.” She sighed. “On second thought, I am sure. I’m just not sure I want to admit it.”

Harley groaned. “Goddammit, Eddie, look what you’ve gotten us into…”

The metallic coils around Harry’s wrist began to expand, the thin wires spinning and spreading down his arm. “Eddie may have to wait. If he’s not coming here, then we’ll have to get to him. But right now, we have another problem.”

“Oh?” Harley casually scooped up the oversized mallet in her hand, before letting it rest on her shoulder. She looked out past the hanging platform that was the security room and into the jail cell area. She peeked over to the monitors, and sure enough, the vigilante had neutralized most of them, but was no longer in view. “And what’s the name of our problem?”

Clang.

“Not sure. But it sounds like that.”

Clang.

Harley looked towards the sound. The echo was distracting, but she figured the source was coming from the left hallway. “Get ready to turn on the electric floors.”

Clang.

“Oh, there is no need for that, Miss Quinn.”

Clang.

A tall man limped into their view, his metal boot clanging against the steel floor, though minimal effort was shown on his part as he trudged forward. “You are quite safe from me,” he assured them in a whisper, and the quiet prison allowed them to hear it as if he was next to them. “After all; today just isn’t my day.”
Harry quickly searched his mind – or, rather, the foreign mind that he was still gathering information from – for a name of the man in the orange jumpsuit.

“Wait – didn’t I see you on the news?” Harley narrowed her eyes. “Hold on, you’re that guy that tried to blow up a stadium a few days ago!”

“Indeed,” he said, unabashedly. His bald head wrinkled minutely, and Harry saw what he originally thought were scars, were in fact, not – instead, they were letters. Harry’s adept vision picked up the letters A-R, A-P-R, M-A-Y, J –

“Huh.” Harry tilted his head as he looked down at the unassuming psycho. “The first three letters of every month?”

He raised his hands, the shackles separated and hanging independently on his wrists, and wiped his fingertips against the letters on his head. “It’s a reminder,” he explained to them, pride in his soft voice. “They tend to put me in here so very long. They isolate me. They take away my purpose; everything I am. I think they’re trying to make me insane.” He shrugged. “But as long as this is on my head, wrapped around my mind so intimately, I’ll never forget what truly matters.”

Harry had planned out everything from this morning to the late afternoon, even going so far as to arrange another visit to the Jezebel Plaza for more information, and maybe a map. He had seen a lot of strange things in the world, and that was by beast-slaying magical savior standards, so he adjusted his schedule loosely, leaving room for error, and plenty lee-way for any… strangeness.

All in all, the plan was going well. For now.

And there were a few setbacks – Hermione going AWOL before the day could even begin, Riddler being captured, the Monarch Theatre having been burnt down, implying that someone knew about Harry’s past and the portal that certainly wasn’t Bruce Wayne, and, of course, the new threat that teetered on the edge of his mind since that morning; the dark presence that lingered about, watching his every move and giving him an overall sense of foreboding. It wasn’t Voldemort – he was sure of that – but it was something dark. Very dark.

But the man in front of him – what Bruce Wayne’s mind had identified as ‘Julian Gregory Day’ – just confirmed Harry’s suspicions.

He was not ready for today, and everything that came with it.

“How did he get out?” Ivy asked incredulously over the earpieces after remotely adjusting one of the many cameras in the prison. “How did he get out?”

“Uh… we released them, didn’t we?” Harley tried to confirm, unsure. She assumed there was more to the situation.

She was right. “He was kept in isolation,” she informed them, “in a cell practically next door to Waylan’s pen, he’s so far underground. He doesn’t have an electric door. His cell needs old-fashioned keys.”

The implications hit Harley hard. “Crap…”

But Harry tiredly shook his head, his epiphany weighing him down. “He didn’t kill the guard. He may have gotten the keys from him, but he didn’t kill him. Remember, the curse took care of that.”

Julian nodded, like everything made sense. “Ah yes; as to why I’m here before you. I’d like to make a request for my freedom.”
Harley scrunched her eyebrows as she crossed her legs. “You can leave at any time, you know. The designated exits are marked in red.”

But the veteran villain shook his head. “I have the freedom to move, yes. But I can feel that my body has been limited.”

Harley’s first thought was directed towards the brace on his foot. But her mind was quicker than that. “You want to kill again,” she realized, dryly. “Not gonna happen.”

For a brief second, the bald man looked at her, and in that second, she knew that if the curse hadn’t controlled his judgement, the guard that was assigned to his cage would have certainly perished – and without a second thought, either.

She could definitely, and definitively, believe that this was a man who could take an entire football stadium hostage, as he had done almost a week prior. Although she wasn’t exactly sure how, considering his handicaps. He didn’t look like someone who could easily sneak around.

“You knew something was wrong with you,” Harry commented. “You knew something was wrong to the point that you had to hunt down the person who changed you so much. You needed to kill that guard, didn’t you? You thought that there seriously something wrong with you. I bet you thought they went inside your brain and fixed you while you were asleep.”

The man was still, as he leaned against his undamaged foot. “The doctors denied it when I paid them a visit. And even then, I couldn’t touch them. I could not wrap my hands around their necks. They couldn’t suffer when I tried to take a surgical knife to their scalps, make them feel the pain they inflict.” His eyes were intense as he looked up at who he knew was Warlock. “Who are you to play God?”

Harry blinked. “You’re trying to kill people. I’m not trying to play God, but I know I’d be better qualified than you.”

“He’s a sicko,” Ivy warned them, quite needlessly. “But he considers you an equal. Even if he could, he wouldn’t kill you now. He’d wait until a holiday. So, don’t leave the house on the fourth of July.”

“I don’t ask for much,” the man told them, his voice as calm as ever. “And unless you altered my mind further, I’ve never wronged you or asked for a favor before. And I realize the power you have over me is overwhelming – almost biblical. So, I stand before you, in your humble greatness, with a sincere inquiry – what do you plan to do? What is your goal here?”

Harley watched him closely, with a keen eye, and noticed a few things. For one, he was full of shit; he just wanted to keep Harry talking, if only to get a good profile of who he was dealing with. Two; his fingers were twitching noticeably. His eyes were shifty. Even the labored breaths from his lips told a story.

He was aching to kill. In fact, Harleen knew she wouldn’t be wrong in her assumption that he was downright panicking.

She knew he was going to be a problem. Time to nip it in the bud.

Subtly reaching over the console, her hand was steady behind the lever that surged electricity through the platform he was standing on. “Don’t answer that, Warlock. Instead, why don’t you answer me, before I run twenty thousand volts up your aluminum boot and turn it up from there?”

The man looked annoyed, in her professional opinion, but he still held up a calm demeanor. “Ask away.”
She tapped her chin as she looked away, a devious smile on her black-painted lips. “Who the hell let you out of your cage?”

He smiled fondly, and it was one of the creepiest things she had ever seen. “A new friend.”

Still, she pressed; “Oh, come on! We’re all friends, here. If superheroes can build a coalition against us on occasion, why can’t we all get along once in a while?” Her blood-red eyes twinkled as she leaned over the console. “Surely, you can tell us who released you from your cell? It’s obviously someone who’s a fan of your work – someone who might like a word with us for similar reasons.”

He tilted his head. “Maybe,” he admitted with a satisfied grin. “It seems you already have your usual suspects.”

With a nonchalant gesture, she pressed the button.

“Y’know, I would’ve gotten us wherever you’re talking me in half the time already! You vigilantes are all the same – flashy clothes, a smile of valor, a penchant for protecting the pathetically pernicious populace of Gotham.”

“Shut up,” the Black Robin spoke again – not that there was any counting, but it felt like the twelfth time.

“Tell me where you’re abducting me to, and you’ll find me a tad calmer.”

“You figure it out. That’s what you’re good at, right?”

“Charming little sprite, aren’t you?”

“I try.”

“You fail.”

“I managed to get you in my clutches and break your code, now didn’t I?”

He grumbled to himself, and the rest of the trip was relatively quiet. The unregistered junkyard car slipped through the streets with barely a notice, taking advantage of the rather disastrous situation of the jam on the main roads.

At this point, it was a race against the clock, and Robin hoped that everyone was ready to play their part.

The floor turned itself off, and Harley nodded, letting go of the lever. “Finally decided to come save your friend, huh?”

“That scumbag? Sorry, not interested. I’m more inclined to save you.”

It was a decidedly feminine voice, echoing through the room, with absolutely no main source of the interruption.

Calendar Man writhed on the ground, his boot clanking against the tempered floor, but Harley’s attention was elsewhere. “I don’t see myself in any danger right now. Maybe another time?”

“Surrender now, and no one gets hurt.”
“Good guy line number one. You’re winning no points from me.”

Harry winced, his head feeling a brief flash of pain. It was a different feeling from his connection with Hermione, however. It was a familiar pain. “Either we’re dealing with the female Voldemort, or I need some pain potions, or medication.”

“Good thing we’re in the madhouse; we could find you some meds,” Harley reasoned, before she heard a strange dialect echo along the room, and the indestructible glass window in front of them vanished. “Of course, it’s the heroes that would get the Deus Ex Machina effect. How long do you think you could be out of commission?”

Harry wildly shook his head, leaning against the console. “It’s manageable.”

“That doesn’t sound confident.”

The Warlock held his free hand to the side, and she felt a pulse of – something – surround her, whipping by her hair and breezing along her goosebumps. “Let’s make this quick.”


Harry winced as the shield began to contract around them. He had found the headache. “Protego!”

The visible blackness surrounding their protection shattered apart as the shield grew once more. “So you’re legit, huh? This should be interesting.”

“I’m starting to get a fucking headache at this point,” Harley growled, and reached to the side for her bazooka. “Zatanna! Get your ass out here!”

And the lights went dark.

Under a single spotlight, a baton floated in mid-air. It twirled slowly, sparkling in the middle of the room.

Harley aimed her bazooka.

Harry, growing up, learned more than enough parlour tricks to know that this wasn’t something that could be set up in such a short amount of time – he could only assume that this was real magic. Dark magic, he wasn’t sure, but something was damaging his senses in a major way.

But real magic or not, he knew how vital the power of misdirection was.

So he did the only other safe option. “Lumos!”

The room was bathed in a swathe of light, as if the lanterns were never turned off. Even Harley was blinded for the moment. Harry, however, had a clear vision, and wrapped his hands around the jester.

“Hey! What the – !”

Quickly, he put his index finger over hers, and pointed it at the real target.

“Oh. Thanks.” Her eyes still closed, she pulled the trigger.

The missiles were still non-lethal – only filled with Ivy’s ‘medicine’ from the incident the previous morning. However, a missile going approximately eighty meters per second was expected to pack a punch.
Harry saw a sort of black mist materializing around the projectile, a soft glow quickly emanating around it, before it almost seemed to eat up into itself. It didn’t explode – it faded away.

That concerned Harry.

Magic, despite its fantastical feats, could not dematerialize actual items. They could be banished, trasfigured, shrunken, and even dispersed into the air. Items conjured, could disappear by the castor’s hands, or a Transfiguration Master. But a perfect conjuration, as was his, couldn’t be countered.

Either she had sent the projectile into an unseen portal, to an unknown galaxy, or he was dealing with a magic far more different – and powerful – than his own.

Or both.

“True magic, then,” Harry confirmed. Raising his hands, and the razor wire that covered them, he went into an offensive stance. “Sans the headache, I think I might enjoy this.” The razor-sharp coils shot from his fingers, and slipped harmlessly through the shield that surrounded them. “Just keep firing, Harley! Distract them!”

“Aye-aye!”

It was a task she found extremely satisfying. That swift release of wind behind her as she pulled the trigger, and the slight whistling of the missile as it pierced through the air, always made her smile.

Had anyone looked directly at her, they would have seen her black-painted lips curved into a brilliant grin as she fired her favorite toy.

Harry wasn’t one to repeat his mistakes. So as soon as the projectile was beyond ten meters away, one of his wires chased after it. Considering it was the same type of metal that he had used on the missile, he used one thin wire to block its steady, self-propelled path.

It cut clean in two before a giant green blast rushed from the center.

She didn’t stop to survey the damage. She only cackled as she kept pulling the trigger, only stopping to level herself from the kickback.

Sometimes, she had felt that it was possibly too early to say that she loved Harry. Yet most times, whenever he gave her the opportunity to do things like this – firing infinite missiles out of a launcher – she told herself that times like these would have been an appropriate time to say it. Needed to.

“Fuck, I love you.” She emphasized that point by firing again.

The Warlock grinned smugly, reaching out with his extended appendages to strike the projectiles. “I know.”

“This is not a game!” An ethereal voice haunted the large room, and Harry could only assume it was the Sonorous spell that amplified the sound. “And this ends now!”

Then there was a scream.

Harley’s trigger finger steadied. “Took you long enough.”

With a wave of his hand, The Warlock swept away the cloud of green smoke that filled the room. “It’s not over, yet.”

It was Zatanna that lay on the floor, coughing and wheezing out the green mist. Even through teary
eyes, she glared at the villains in the control room.

Harry silently conceded to Harley’s helpful tips she had shared with him; it was terrifyingly distracting, the way superheroines dressed. Had she been faking, and had Harry been within an arm’s reach, he’d likely be in handcuffs. He never truly got used to the beautiful women that surrounded him on a daily basis, and he hoped he never did.

She wiped at the tuxedo jacket she wore with her white gloves, and flipped her tophat back on her head. “You two just made the biggest mistakes of your lives,” she murmured, almost growling at herself in disappointment. “Esaeler eht selbac!”

Harry knew it wasn’t the familiar latin of basic spellwork, or runespeak, or any language he had heard of, from Gobbledygook to Parseltongue. Harley, not having immediate access to subtitles and a tape recorder that plays in reverse, hadn’t a clue what she had just said.

But they both got a hint or her veiled words when the cables that kept the office suspended above the recreational chamber began to snap, and the sudden death box shook and rattled.

Almost instantaneously, the cables made a terrible groan as they snapped, and the platform fell.

Ivy slammed down the headset. “We need to go.”

“How are we getting there?” Selina queried. “He can teleport. We can’t. And we don’t need to worry about him. As mentioned before, he can teleport.”

“Of course; they can handle Zatanna and her friend. What I’m worried about is everyone else trying to get into the prison.”

“I need to reiterate, yet again. How are we getting there?”

Her eyes began to glow an eerie green, and Selina found herself enamoured in her terrifying gaze. “You forget, Selina; Mother Nature is everywhere.”

Zatanna stared at the giant glass and metal case, crossing her arms at the damage. She tried to avoid killing whenever she could, but they had to be stopped. Someone who used a bazooka as a common weapon needed to be stopped by any means necessary. And, according to the news she had seen in the hotel room, they were cop killers. Of course they had to go down, and swiftly. “Raven, do you see any signs of life?”

An ethereal voice echoed through the empty chamber, sans the panting bald prisoner lying unconscious in the middle of the room. “Negative. But I don’t see any signs of death, either.” The giant crushed box began to glow black, and one-by-one, metal began to tear into pieces like paper. “They’re not here. No bodies.”

She tsk’ed. “Shit. So they really do know some magic. Not two scientists gone mad, again. Real magic. I didn’t believe Bruce when he told me.”

“I’ll find them.” Her voice was emotionless, detached. Zatanna knew that she had to lock her emotions away whenever she was in this powerful form. She had unleashed the half-demon of
herself, and now she was going hunting. “Don’t wait up.”

The stage magician bit her lip. True, she may have been out of her league, but she wasn’t giving up that easily. “I’ll go and help out the caped wonder outside, and we meet back up at the hotel tonight.” No response. She rolled her eyes. “Teens…”

“You’re twenty. Stop brooding.”

“You’re one to talk.”

“I’m a teen.”

Zatanna closed her eyes and took a deep breath. While far and beyond more mature than her peers, Raven always knew what to say to get under her skin.

When she opened them, she found herself on the roof, over the ensuing riot. Under her skin or not, the grey-skinned girl always delivered with finesse.

The older witch cracked her knuckles, and began to wave her hand in dramatic fashion to devastating effect, all the while planning the nice meal Bruce was now obligated to pay for after all of this was over.
The Day the Magic Died

Chapter Summary

The Warlock embraces his fairly new title, against the Sorceress and the Half-Demon.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Thank you, all of you, for your support and for reading, wherever you’re reading this.

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Squeezing through a tube, being pulled through space in the blink of an eye, apparently couldn’t account for falling in mid transport. Magic treated the abrupt transformation like a portal – motion followed. Momentum carried. There was a process to apparition for normal wizards – twisting into the nonexistence (in fact, it could be argued that apparition gives you a brief look into another dimension altogether, and humans are just too slow to witness it, but that was neither here nor there) – so recorded history never showed what happened during airborne apparition, though with splinching always an over-loom ing threat to even the most powerful, concentration was key. Harry found that he didn’t need to be on the ground to twist, on the school roof so many years ago.

He also remembered how much it bloody hurt when he did it, too. He still fell off a roof, and while the momentum hadn’t gained yet, he landed hard on the edge of the roof. That was how he stumbled and fell off the roof again. The momentum of following through space carried even through the displacement, and Harry could describe the sensation as ‘incidentally stepping off an awkwardly high stair step, at best.’ It wasn’t a feeling his legs could prepare for, so he had to compensate for Newton’s first law of motion.

At least, that was his speculation.

Harley, however, was not privy to those thoughts and theories, and so, let out a shriek as she saw the ground, fifteen feet below her.

Wincing, Harry quickly caught her as they popped into being in Selina’s old safe house. He rolled her body with his own, his back rushing to the ground. He didn’t have the foresight to use a cushioning charm, instead trusting his natural protection spells, but the wires had a synchronization with his instincts that made it both a danger and a, quite literally, safety net.

The web was being spun even as Harry braced himself for the inevitable crash to the wood floor. His magic, in a sense, worked much like Pamela’s vines, always looking out for the host, before they even knew they needed the help.

The net slowly retreated into his wrists as his feet lowered to the ground, gently putting down Harley as he did so. He was grateful for the subconscious helping hand – he needed it. “That was… odd. I don’t think I’ve ever done it that way before. Not since the school roof.”
“You’re tellin’ me,” she groaned, holding her head. “And to think that one time, I imagined going to Italy with that. I don’t think I like travelling that way.”

Harry pinched the bridge of his nose, more out of avoiding the inevitable pop about to form in his ears than anything – before replying. “I personally prefer flying brooms, myself.” He focused on the communication bud in his ear. “We’re at Selena’s old place. It’s the only secondary place I’ve been to that isn’t swarming with cops right now. Is Crane okay?”

He could hear the relief in Selina’s voice. “I wouldn’t know; I haven’t seen him on any of the cameras since he left the control room. Not that it matters now; the control room is gone, as you well know.”

Harley wobbled her head, shaking off all of her tension. “We can’t afford to break him out again. I wasn’t expecting the plan to go like this.” Her tension was not yet gone, as indicated by her fist smashing into the nearby wall. “When the fuck does Batman show up during the day?” she complained, growling at the hole she left. “Zatanna definitely wasn’t supposed to be here. With a fucking sidekick, no less! And you have a friggin’ ulcer in your brain!”

Harry held up a hand to the right side of his forehead, covering it tenderly. “I’m pretty sure it wasn’t Hermione. It was a different kind of pain. I can’t really explain it. It’s like… when Hermione is pissed, I can feel it from where my scar was. It’s a headache, but… I don’t know, it’s a searing pain across my forehead, and it gives off heat.”

“Don’t remind me.” She remembered all too well the burn that she received from just touching his forehead.

“My forehead is warm at best, right now,” he continued. “That’s not supposed to happen. And the pain is usually sudden, goes faster than it comes up. Right now, it’s fading, but it’s still uncomfortable. I… think it’s a proximity thing. One of them is causing it.”

Harleen Quinzel had heard a lot of things in her life – many of them scarcely believed, and while some had called her bluff, she just absolutely couldn’t understand what exactly he was saying to her. “Wait, wait, wait, wait, hold the hell on – are you trying to say that you have a headache? An honest to God common human headache?”

That gave Harry pause. “Er… possibly? I wouldn’t know what one felt like. I’ve been feeling pain where my scar was all my life. I could always pinpoint the pain, and it was always there.” His hand shifted to the back of his head, and he rubbed it awkwardly. It was sort of embarrassing, he had to admit. He had a lot of things in his mokeskin pouch – a few vials of polyjuice, that Harley had used and executed to perfection, and several trinkets that could surely be of use in the future, but nothing for the common headache.

Not magical in the slightest, but easily recognizing the symptoms, she began to feel one coming on. “Have you, by any chance, ever heard of escalated returns?”

Harry turned to her, slipping his hand off his forehead and down to the metal wire that still consumed his other hand, feeling it ripple beneath his fingers. “No.”

He shouldn’t, it was a term she had just made up, and she was sure that there was a proper term for it somewhere, but she was training to be a doctor, not a theorist. “It’s the idea that… how do I put this? It’s the idea of something big happening, before a brief respite, and then something bigger comes along to eclipse the previous happening. Much like your life. It’s like the Chaos theory on steroids, where instead of a little change to a volatile situation can go out of control – because I’m not gonna lie, you coming here, to Gotham, to this world, changed a lot of things, damn near everything – but
it’s not out of control – it’s just a new, bigger, organized challenge. And it’s so fucking timely. It’s like the opposite of diminishing returns. Instead of the approaching calm – ”

“You get the storm,” Harry finished for her, smiling sadly. He was painfully aware of the concept. “Now that you mention it, it sounds familiar. And there’s a bigger one every single time. It never plateaus. Anything that makes you feel like the calm never happened, and won’t happen again.”

“I mean, it’s possible. I’m apparently in a comic book, so I’ll take anything, but all this…” she looked around the empty, dingy establishment, “it doesn’t seem to want to let up. Frankly, this is the most excitement we’ve had in a few months. You know how to keep us on our toes.”

“You’re blaming me for all of this?” Harry put his forefinger and thumb to his chin and peered down at her. “Last I checked, this is was mostly your plan.”

She shrugged. “I can’t account for the aftermath. And you are the escape plan. We’d all be at home right now if it weren’t for Eddie. Wait, why are we here, anyway?”

“It was the first place I could think of besides the base. You should always have a fake hideaway in case you’re being followed, or accounting for a tracking device. Constant Vigilance and all that. Besides, I’d be too tempted to leave him behind if we were home, celebrating. He’s… he just gives off a sort of vibe.”

“I know, right!” she exclaimed, so grateful for the implied support that she threw her arms into the air. “It can’t just be me, right? I mean, obviously, Selina’s on my side, but can we agree that his desire to work alone makes us all aspire to embrace his desire to work alone? I mean, we have the towers now.”

“We can’t abandon him, Harley. By the way he seems to hate Batman, the man holds a grudge. And secrets.”

“Oh, I know we can’t abandon him. Of course we make the daring rescue. I just think that after, we part ways with him.”

“Seconded.”

“Third.”

Harley giggled at Selina’s and Ivy’s verbal support over the coms, and Harry frowned. He very much believed in the loyalty system, a system that hadn’t wronged him to this day. He had worked with people he didn’t care for, sure, but he needed to have a level of trust to work with them to begin with. He also believed in the opposite. As long as they remained loyal, and he to them, he felt that they could be of immense use.

Severus Snape, for instance. He trusted the man implicitly. Granted, it had almost everything to do with the life debt earned by his father, passed on to him after the ultimate act of treachery by way of sharing the prophecy with his former master. Snape’s magic was forever compelled to follow the son of James Potter to the grave, if asked, and Harry hadn’t had a reason to regret the forced union. Loyalty meant everything. If it was betrayed, then it could never come back.

Which was why he was just itching to have a certain annoying redhead in his grasp. Being pranked by his brothers could only appease Harry so much, but Ron was going to have to answer to him when he made his return. The girls had promised him first blood. Thank goodness Hermione was otherwise distracted, or she would not have held such promises.
Loyalty, to Harry, meant everything.

And if they decided to let go of a man who got kidnapped for them, then he would most certainly lose Edward’s loyalty.

He knew the man hadn’t sold them out or their plans – if he had, Harry would have met this mysterious new vigilante by now. It would also inspire a level of trust to expect that he was going to be rescued by his partners. He had been relieved of a fate worse than death by Black Mask, thanks to their meddling in his affairs. Really, he lost his job because of them.

And, as he had stated before, Edward was a vengeful man with a one-track mind. Harry didn’t need someone like the Riddler working for anyone else, or even worse, on his own. He had taken a major asset from a powerful man, and while there were safe assurances that he wouldn’t return to Sionis, he was sure a man that could hijack radio towers and access security cameras around Gotham into the most top secret and exclusive areas… well, it was safe to say that he’d be the hottest free agent in Gotham’s Underworld.

He needed someone like him on his side.

But, to Harleen’s credit, the man was an asshole sometimes. To borrow from the American dialect.

“We need him. He can be invaluable. He doesn’t have to live in our main base; we have guest houses in the blueprints. And everything he does is behind the scenes. A few protection spells around his workbench, and he won’t be a problem next time.” Harley didn’t seem convinced. “He’s the reason we have cameras to Blackgate, and traffic cameras. I’d rather have him working for us, and knowing everything he’s doing, than have him go underground not knowing who’d made him feel dumber; Batman, the new guy, Roman, or us?”

They heard a sigh over the coms. “He did break me out of prison. He got caught himself, and this was an opportunity to make it up to him. Taking it away from him seems… cruel. Say what you want, but the man loves company. He might claim to love working alone, but you’ll never see him happier when he tells you something you don’t know.”

“Don’t we all,” Harley rolled her eyes, leaning against her mallet. “Fine. He can stay. But he needs some serious housetraining.”

“Don’t we all,” Harry repeated. The disaster averted, he focused on the origin. “So… what now? I doubt he’s being taken to Blackgate, or Wayne Manor. He’s worked outside the law, but not to the point where he’s installed torture chambers or terrorist cells.”

“Perhaps the newest kid is taking him to his own place?” Selina reasoned. “I mean, they’re probably not going to his house. But maybe somewhere abandoned? A home away from home, until the trouble is over?”

“For all we know, he could be tied up in his supercar,” Harley pointed out. “His jet probably got him to Blackgate. The new hero is almost definitely keeping an eye on him. No matter how tied up they think he is, they would never leave him unsupervised. So that’s good news on the one side. We’re taking on enough as it is.”

“They seem to be in high demand right now – Heroes, I mean. Do you think that’s all of them in Gotham?”

Harley considered the question her boyfriend just posed to her. While she had only been in the crime game for a year, she had seen a lot, and researched a lot in response. “In Gotham, specifically? I
think so. Let’s do a role call: we’ve got the Night Vigilante who, for some reason, decided to put on his sunglasses and pretend that the moon is out for a day. We’ve got the travelling Magician, who made the choice to show up earlier than her scheduled appointment. We got her mysterious partner, who doesn’t even have a corporeal form from what I’ve seen – or not seen. And we have another vigilante, who looks pretty much human by Selina’s description, but has already proven himself to be a pain in the ass by kidnapping Riddler, and no, the irony has not escaped me.”

“Let’s just hope the surrounding cities aren’t having slow days, because we don’t want their heroes getting curious.”

Harry pinched the bridge of his nose at Ivy’s pseudo-prayer. “You really shouldn’t have said that.”

Harley rose an eyebrow. “Why? Afraid it’s gonna happen?”

“No… just… more accepting that it will.” The metallic tendrils began to coil around his body once more. “Escalated Returns, remember? We have a different saying in my world.”

“Hm? What’s that?”

“Murphy’s Law.”

“If it can go wrong, it will.” She frowned. “I didn’t mean it like that. I only mean that there can be bad times, and good times. I mean, it usually feels worse when it’s happening, but that makes the next calm all the better, right?”

“True.” Harry stretched out his fingers, and jumped in place for a moment. “It’s a more positive interpretation than I’m used to, but at least it’s not Potter’s Law.”

She knew that he knew that she needed to ask. “Okay, I’ll bite. What the hell is Potter’s Law?”

“Always expect the worst to happen.” The web of microwires covered his face, now. His piercing green eyes began to glow through the holes, and a chill went down her spine. “And prepare for exceeded expectations.”

“… I wouldn’t want a quote like that named after me.”

“I didn’t say it was my law. It was my dad’s. Coined by my mum. Probably during one of the times they faced Voldemort. I’d say they earned that law.”

She gathered the mallet into her hands and stepped closer to him. “Then let’s turn Potter’s Law into a hypothesis. I believe we have a couple of witches to send to the gallows. Shall we?”

She couldn’t see the smirk on his face, but she could hear it in his voice. “Harley’s Law,” he scoffed to himself, muttering. “Fuck Reason.”

“You’re Goddamn right.”

Bruce stood in the middle control room, surveying the wreckage.

At the peak of physical health and fitness, he showed no signs of slowing down, not taking a break since yesterday morning.

Rest wasn’t a priority. He knew the limits of his own body, better than most people knew their own limits. He could time it down to the minute. And while he had adrenaline shots, a serum of his own concoction, in his belt, he wouldn’t be needing them today. That was only for fights that he knew he
couldn’t win. And right now he needed every bit of his brain power for this, and adrenaline could only help for ten minutes, before slowing him down significantly.

He honestly didn’t know if Alfred was on the other end of the connection, but he spoke anyway, if only for his own recording purposes. “The control room was destroyed. The floor has recently been turned on. Ivy’s gas is everywhere.” That was from a first glimpse. His eyes began to glow an eerie white as his mask began to analyse the room. “I need to scan the poison for an antidote.”

Her gas mutates. He knew that. But if he could somehow find the compound that made the gas mutate, then he’d be able to make an antidote that made the evolution at the same pace as the toxin. A living cure to her living poison. She’d be neutralized before she could even become a threat. Only then, could he help those officers, trapped in her web of vines. On his latest scan this morning, they were all alive and healthy, and suspiciously so. He knew there wasn’t a chance of getting them out without hurting them in the process.

But even doing that, if it was possible, would only solve a third of the problem.

There was no cure for a massive hammer to the face, or a boundary to what magic could do.

He looked at the control room box again, and examined the cables closely. The sturdy steel cables, newly installed, all gave out at the same time. There were no outside contaminants, chemicals, or reason for them to give out.

It had to be magic. Something pulled them down at such an unbelievable speed and harshness, it couldn’t have been anything else.

But the prisoners were released. The Warlock had to have gone there to open the cells. Why would he destroy the room? To ensure that no one could close the cells back? To make a statement? Because he just wanted to?

A quick scan of the room showed footprints. A lot of them. But he had managed to isolate the more peculiar tracks. One set showed traces of an alloy that was in Julian Day’s metal boot, who was currently unconscious in the corner, a result of overexposure to the electric floors. The other was a set of heels. Thin heeled pumps.

While it very well could have come from a prisoner, male or female, he doubted it could have been worn during a riot and breakout. Besides, the make and model of the heels, based on the prints, were new, and expensive. Not an employee of the state, and definitely not contraband, unless from a kingpin, and if they cared so much about their inmate, they would have attempted a more focused, singular breakout instead.

So not Black Mask, or Penguin. Ergo, not a prisoner.

Zatanna.

She was here. Or, had just left.

And she had found The Warlock and tried to trap him in the control room.

He considered seeing what else he could find, but he knew what he was dealing with. When logic was thrown out the window, all he could rely on was his instincts.

For now, he had to worry about Zatanna, and work on the prisoners. There was no place to put them, and they needed to be contained. He would have to find her and see if she could fix this mess.
“Why do I feel like all of this is a trap?” Zatanna wondered, her hands whisking through the air, using rudimentary magic that didn’t require her having to speak backwards. “I mean, they have to know that they weren’t getting far from Blackgate, right? There has to be something afoot.”

“Doesn’t matter,” Raven reminded her, finally taking form next to her. “They have to be put back. If this is a distraction, it’s working. This is priority. Everything else can wait.”

One by one, the prisoners fell, their orange jumpsuits serving their purpose as target markers. The Batman had only gone through them, mostly evading. Apparently, he had appointed her as cleanup duty.

She grimaced, lifting a particularly large man and dropping him on his head. “I don’t see how this is our problem.”

“It isn’t. I’m just as annoyed at this as you are. But I don’t like the idea of these assholes roaming free.” A black net spun into existence and covered a decent group of huddled inmates, and began guiding them towards shipping containers she had ‘liberated’ from the docks. “If any of you try to fight it, I’ll shake this damn thing!”

The two stood side-by-side, leaning over the edge of the prison cells. It was much easier to survey the damage and clean up from the skies, rather than running through the muck of the chaos down there.

They still hadn’t seen the caped crusader yet, but judging by the unconscious bodies they had nothing to do with, they assumed he was already inside. He’d be disappointed to find no Warlock, and no Harley. Almost made them even.

“You’re right, of course.” With a flick of her wrist, the opening of the trailer caved into itself when it reached capacity. “We may be trapping them, but I feel like a pawn.”

If there was anything that Zatanna could credit herself for teaching the half-demon, it was that she should always second-guess her instincts. But always follow them if logic agreed. “Let’s finish this up, then go after Warlock and Harley.”

Again, she was very aware that she was out of her element. Even she knew the power she held was limited.

But she found herself very interested in the source of his power. Unless he was a demon-hybrid himself, or sold himself to one, a power of that magnitude – or at least the hype that he was submerged in before she even met him – had to have a source, or a mystical object that tied to him.

She had to have it. Then, just maybe, she would be even with Bruce for getting them both involved in this mess.

Raven, beside her, only huffed. “They’ll find us before we find them.”

“That was… ominous. Why do you say that?”

“I sense him. Or at least, his presence. I sensed him the moment we came to Gotham. The fact that I can’t right now, means that he’s hidden it. I don’t mean that he suppressed it – it’s gone. You can’t suppress a power like that. Either he transformed to something – normal – or he’s got a level of control that meditating from birth can’t compare to. If it was something as simple as taking a ring off
a finger, then I would still be able to sense the ring.”

“You make it sound like it’s hopeless. Please don’t make it sound like it’s hopeless.”

The dusky girl grimaced. “If it was hopeless, I wouldn’t be here. We’ll be ready when they come to us.”

“Oh. Then should I come back later?”

Both women twisted around to suddenly see the man that had caused so much trouble in Gotham City, leaning over the ledge of the roof on the next building, staring them down like it was something he had been trained his whole life to do. It was an imperious stare, arrogance bleeding from his eyes, his arms crossed over his raised knee giving him a cultured, relaxed posture.

The young magi knew she didn’t like him. Not one bit.

However, the half-demon’s eyes – all four of the red, glowing slits of her vision – glazed over the second he had her attention. His eyes were on Zatanna, not even on her at the moment, but she knew he did something to her – something crippling.

And just as soon as the thought came to her, her vision returned. She blinked the pain away, not even having enough time to signal her friend, or cry out. It was just… gone.

What the hell just happened?

Harry flinched, and grimaced, his eyes still on the sorceress. He was leaning on the edge of the roof for balance, not for their benefit. It was something Harley recommended, and he might have fallen over if he wasn’t leaning on his knee. There wasn’t a real chance of falling over the edge in this position, for his other foot was firmly in the gravel.

A slight sticking charm helped. He really didn’t trust himself or his balance at the moment.

Zatanna showed no signs of attacking him, or even knowing that he was there to begin with, so it couldn’t have been her that was doing this to him, so he was hesitant of her involvement. His eyes shifted to the right.

The floating girl under the purple hood showed no emotion; try as he might, her pale lavender face was stoic, even as he saw through the shadow.

The redness in her eyes, however, not to mention the fact that there were two pairs, was a handy giveaway, however.

There were no irises. No pupils. Just a faint, red glow coming out in slits. That, combined with her unnatural color and paleness, sent a shiver down his spine that could have rocked the building he was standing on if he wasn’t in control of his magic.

But it was impossible. It needed to be impossible.

She lowered herself to the ground, taking a firm place next to her friend, and raised her hand, very slowly and deliberately. “This is your last chance. Turn yourself in.”

This was all wrong. He needed to think. “We both know that’s not happening.”

It was Zatanna that spoke up. “So you’re the Warlock, huh? I expected you to be taller.”

Flirtatious comebacks had been his ideal play. Banter was what he had always been good at, having
had to hold regular conversations with world leaders, influential powers, a Dark Lord (though the banter had been far less flirtatious), Veela, a Seer who could see every line he could ever tell and had ever told, the cleverest witch of her time, one who had unfettered access to his mind. And, sometimes, people he needed information from, among other things, by taking on another identity. He liked to think that was how he got to Harley’s and Ivy’s heart, and according to Luna’s vision, Selina’s eventually.

Harry much favoured talking to his opponent, more than actually fighting them, but he excelled at both. He just preferred that sometimes, confrontations could be solved in a simpler, less violent way.

He was still the prophesied saviour, after all. He had a lot of enemies, and if he went to fighting as a first option, he’d have to hospitalize half the Slytherin house on a good day.

From how he had tried to sway Batman from his instinct of ‘punch until we both agree on something,’ and everyone else he had faced in Gotham so far, he thought he had done a decent job.

Well, he hadn’t killed anyone, at least. Subtlety was key in his line of work, and in his way of life.

“I’m not exactly impressed, either.”

Being charming was over. Now was not the time for charming.

Zatanna tilted her head. She didn’t know what to expect from this unfamiliar enemy, but she did expect, at the very least, a connection among mages. “What?” she simpered, leaning forward. “Not pretty enough as your two partners in crime?”

Harry knew the woman was beautiful, and she used it as a legitimate weapon, much like the other women he had met. And as mentioned before, he would never truly get used to the staggering beauty he was continuously surrounded by.

“I’ve lost my manners; my apologies. Let me fix that.”

He raised his hands, and they didn’t notice until the moment passed, but his hands were absent of any metal – his bare hands tilted towards them in a claw, barely calloused fingers reaching out, grasping for their very souls – and the cold wind that suddenly rushed past them almost made it feel like he had taken them.

Both sorceresses had a spell on their lips, before his hand formed a fist, and he swiftly raised it.

Zatanna cleared her throat. Or, at least she tried to. She tried again.

Then she took a breath. Or tried to.

She grasped at her throat, her eyes bugged, and stared up at the Warlock with surprise. One hand reached out, grasping for her floating friend to get her attention, but it was no use.

Raven was looking at her for help as well, and seeing that she was in the same boat, focused all her energy on her shield, grasping at her own neck, and the glowing black pulse tugged at the invisible force like a collar, breathing like she was doing it for the first time all over again, gasping like a guppy.

Her vision blurry, Zatanna looked back at Warlock once more, only to find him standing directly in front of her. She didn’t know when she had collapsed, but she had, and she had to crawl to reach him, to swing at him, to distract him from choking her.
She couldn’t breathe. He wasn’t choking her. She just lost the ability to breathe. She didn’t know there was a spell that could even do that, and he had done it with silly fucking hand motions.

She reared back, and launched her fist at his face, her body following in a lunge towards him.

A gasp of air rushed back in her body, and she found herself stumbling and tripping past him, barely hearing the word ‘Incarcerous’ and a gentle hand poking in her back that sent her to the ground again.

The landing was softer than she expected. But she was knocked out already, so it really didn’t matter.

And then he was in front of Raven. “*What the hell are you?*”

That took about fifteen seconds, and it worked far better than he had imagined.

Harley hadn’t told him much about Zatanna, but from his and her observations, her magic came from her words.

Magic tended to be rather oblique and obvious, so when he saw that she didn’t wear a choker, and there was no special signature on her slender neck, then he could safely guess that her vocal chords were unprotected. She must not have been used to other magics. She must not have been used to other magics.

Harry however, came from a world where there were wizards who knew that if their voice was gone, then so was their power. They would have been lucky to let off a disarming spell. Until he had arrived, everyone had assumed that their wand was the most important source of their power, but they came hand in hand if they weren’t good at silent casting. Sadly, it was almost as rare as wandless casting. You either needed both, or preferred neither. In his world, anyway.

The hand motions were from a set of movies Hermione had introduced him to last summer, and he had liberated them for his own purposes. The film wouldn’t come out in another ten years, anyway, so it wouldn’t hurt.

He tried not to think of the list Hermione had made during the movies on the similarities in their own lives. Some even downright disturbing, and somewhat incestuous, and he was still thinking about it. Right.

Harry wasn’t risking if her neck was protected or not. As the old adage said, go straight for the throat, and he did, with biologically accurate efficiency. There was no pressure on her trachea, he simply blocked the airways. Not only was it more humane than listening to someone’s screams, but he felt that it was helpful to learn from old mistakes. The first time he tried time dilation, that he had done with Ivy and Harley that very morning, his victims couldn’t breathe, because everything was frozen except their own bodies. They were frozen, but he didn’t consider going further than skin-deep. This, however, was improved, focused, and specific.

He could shut down the entire respiratory system if he wanted to. And most times, that thought scared him. So he used that skill cautiously.

He ended it as soon as he got over to her, and it happened to coincide with the attempted punch.

She was too close to put up a shield in front of him, and at the rate she was going, she would have shattered her fist. Contrary to what they thought, he didn’t wish them too much harm.

Fear, however, was fair game.
Her lungs were suddenly, quickly filled with air from an involuntary action, something that just felt right to do since she was born, and the gasping suction was her undoing, in a way. Her mind had access to oxygen again, and the light-headedness that could only come with the head rush of jumping as abruptly as she could, made her dizzy enough to take advantage.

He side-stepped her, and pressed three fingers against her back with a muttered spell. Before she could register it, she was bound in ropes, tumbling to the ground.

One finger for the ropes, another for the cushioning spell on the ropes. The last was a safety measure.

Harry didn’t have the time to rummage around his mokeskin pouch for spell-o-tape, so he settled for the Silencio spell; just in case.

Raven, however, was a different story. He only needed to distract her. He had no idea what she was capable of, but he knew that the only reason she wasn’t attacking him was for two reasons: one, she was distracted by the more traditional act of being choked, a ring of power wrapping around her throat, something tangible, something she could try to throw off because that could be pinpointed.

And two, and this much was rather obvious from the minute or so of observing them before his interruption: she clearly didn’t know what she was capable of.

She was young, of course. She didn’t carry the sophisticated refinement that Harleen manipulated with ease. She didn’t exactly convey a look of playfulness, either. She was pretty, he couldn’t deny that. But Harry saw the raw power in her, something he hadn’t seen since himself and Hermione, a very long time ago.

She had been tested, but never to a discipline that she couldn’t handle, never to a point where it was only herself or her death.

“I ask again,” he muttered, tightening the hold on her neck until it indented her skin, “what the hell do you think you are?”

The eyes that peered back at him through the darkness – all of them – held nothing but contempt. Her fingers gripped the edges of the band, the black glow he associated with her magic being the only thing that made the force visible. She pulled at it mightily and she felt it was beginning to budge. “I am a Titan.”

“Small girl to be considered ‘Titan’. But that’s not what you are.” Surface memories flitted through his mind: a beautiful redhead and her equally attractive ebony-haired sister, their hands aglow just like their purple partner, sparring in battle, more intensely than sisters should ever be: the showman behind him, dazzling her crowd with her magically enhanced parlour tricks: a star-studded statuesque woman, her beauty enhanced by her fierce need for competition and justice…

…and a blonde, a stunning girl, who held a sharp resemblance to Harleen, but noticeably taller. Her innocent smile and self-assured confidence made his heart skip a beat, like Harleen did to him. She felt so familiar, and yet, completely foreign. It troubled him. And somehow, it also delighted him.

These were what consisted of the Titans, according to Raven. Bruce’s memories gave him two names, and he was sure he could be filled in on them sooner or later. Probably sooner.

But that was not what he was looking for. A shield glimmered into place in front of him, a wall of a force he knew she couldn’t break, try as she might. “So we’re not as uncommon as I’ve been led to believe. So you’re an alien?”

She had blocked him out, mentally. The force was draining at her power, so she began kicking in the
air to somehow boost herself into breaking the ring off of her. Her ethereal voice, a voice that wasn’t connected to her mortal body, spoke around him. “You fool. I am a Titan. Now release me!”

Harry’s eyes began to harden. “If you don’t tell me what the fuck you’re doing to my head, I’ll kill you. I don’t want to, but I will.”

The pain was piercing, and Harry was getting agitated. This was what always happened before…and he couldn’t do anything then. His anger only grew and grew, and Occlumency suppressed it, but he had found the source this time. He could end it.

The pain spiked, and Harry winced, before he blinked in confusion. Slowly, he reached for the tears in his eyes. He could feel them, he could feel the pain of having them, the humiliation. He looked at his fingertips and found them dry.

He wasn’t crying, so why did it feel so much like he was? He checked his eyes again, before eyeing his captive once again.

Raven’s tears were not streaming down her cheeks. Not a single drop rolled down any of her eyes. But through the darkness, he could see that they were closed. Strained.

With a heavy sigh, and a heavy feeling that he would regret whatever came next, he lifted the spell. And he waited.

It took a few seconds for any reaction. Two very normal, human eyes greeted him as her hood fell back, and she fell forwards to the ground. He quickly caught her with a levitation charm, and the shield was dismantled.

His headache was barely a phantom by the time he noticed it was fading. He looked at Raven, then turned his head behind him to Zatanna, still captive. “Jesus…” he muttered to himself, seeing the situation he was in. It wasn’t like Merlin was listening in this world.

His headache actually was a phantom. He had gotten into Raven’s head. Or, more specifically, her head had gotten into his.

Intentional or not, he felt the pain that she felt. A blinding, debilitating pain. Only it wasn’t her throat, it was barely choking her, compared to her blonde friend’s playful headlocks.

No, it was her head. She had a headache of massive proportions. Very similar to his.

So at this point, Harry knew he should stop calling it a headache. Because it was clearly anything but.

Gently, he laid her next to her crime-fighting partner. She was out – her pulse and breathing confirmed it – and he was now alone.

He didn’t expect it to happen this way, but hell, it did, and now he had to deal with his actions. Starting with getting his question answered.

With nary a thought, the sorceress known as Zatanna was gone, leaving only him and Raven.

“Harley – I just sent you Zatanna. Just… put her in the corner until we settle all of this.”

“The bunny is in the hat. I repeat: the witch has been hunted.” There was a pause. “Any chance of those naked pics we were talking about earlier?”
“I’d rather she be more awake. And willing.”

“Suit yourself. She might be into the kinkier stuff, though, you never know.”

“How’s Ivy doing down below?”

“She’s gotten open the trailers, and are now dealing with the police cars. It’s pretty funny actually; She’s set up a wall to let the prisoners pass through at random openings, and the police just aren’t fast enough to get to them. You’re really good at distracting them. Or really bad, I can’t tell.”

“Not how I expected to distract these two, but I’ll mark it as a victory for the team.” He turned his full attention to the more powerful of the two. “I’ll send Raven in a minute. I need her to answer my question.”

He took note of the delayed response. “Okay. Just don’t… don’t lose your head, alright? I think I know where your head’s going. But look – if she’s some second coming, or first coming, or some reincarnation of Voldemort, would she really be a good girl?”

Harry had considered it, of course. “Tom started off convincing everyone he was a good guy.”

“Yeah, but he looked human when he did it.”

He was going to argue that she was untrained. He was going to say that she simply didn’t know how to look human, or maybe, somehow, that was all part of the ruse.

But right then, she looked impossibly human to him. The red eyes were gone. The immediate ethereal danger no longer lingered on her frame.

It was a half-and-half effect, and she could suppress the darker half. At the very least, it knew how to go away when her body was too weak to channel it.

“We’ll see,” he agreed. “Thanks for that. Ennervate.”

Violet eyes flickered to life, and was confronted by green, curious ones.

“We need to talk.”

“Where is Zatanna?”

“Somewhere safe. Who are you?”

“I’m a Titan.” The answer was automatic. She still seemed very much pissed at him for what he had done earlier, but he could tell she was holding something back. “Do not harm me. They will hear my cries.”

“You’re too prideful. And I’m a gentleman. That necklace was a size too tight, but you felt restricted. You saw Zatanna fight what you thought was the same thing. You fought for your life against a force that wouldn’t have gotten bigger, or wouldn’t have gotten smaller.”

It killed him to say that. It truly felt like she didn’t fight his power, but everything that happened in front of his eyes contradicted that. Magically, she was exhausted, near-depleted. It wasn’t an act. Her magic didn’t affect his. Not in the slightest.

“You can’t hurt me,” he told her, and cursed himself for the questioning tone. “Your head… it was hurting when I attacked you. You know why. I need to know why.” She could be just as clueless as he was. But if she did know anything, this would have been the perfect time for her to hint at
It was different from Hermione, and even different from Voldemort. It was a dampened variation of their connections. He could even feel her emotions. Could she feel his? Could she manipulate his?

No. She couldn’t. Because she wouldn’t have thought about the Titans. She should have been concentrating on what she wanted him to see. She was thinking about her friends instead. When in trouble, happy thoughts.

He let out a frustrated breath, mustering his energy not to kick at the gravel beneath his feet. Young and untested, he had said earlier. His theory was wrong. She didn’t know anything, and he tested her against something she could have never fought. “Sorry, I didn’t know.”

“Zatanna. Return her to me.”

He shook his head, his eyes deflecting away from hers. “Can’t. You took one of mine. But I am sorry.”

He didn’t see her eyes pinch together in scrutiny. “Why?”

“It wasn’t a fair fight. I wanted answers. It felt like you had a drill in my brain.”

“That… wasn’t you.” It was meant to come out as a question. But she wasn’t used to asking questions to confirm. “Something else is doing this.”

“My head doesn’t hurt. I thought it was mine, but it hasn’t bothered me since before I attacked your friend. The rest of it was from you. You felt that pain.” By that point, he had kneeled down, more than a metre away from her, and she sat up, not having the energy to do more than that. “You said it earlier. This isn’t a game. A pain like that could have devastating consequences, and your magic could have lashed out. My magic could have lashed out. I’m not in your head, but if you were in mine, then I don’t know what I could have done if I wasn’t in control.” He truly didn’t. But he knew it wouldn’t be good. Everyone’s magic tended to rebel if the host is threatened.

With shaky legs, she began to stand up on her own two feet. She put on a brave face, but her micro expressions showed her pain clearly enough to Harry. “I didn’t hurt you. And if what you claim is true, then we still have a problem. My head was on fire when you saw me, here and in the prison. But it was gone. Then it came back again when you attacked me.”

That never happened before. He had never projected feelings into another person before. If that could happen, then Voldemort would have been addicted to mind-numbing potions a long time ago.

He was going to kill Hermione for abandoning him like this. She had gone dark, and he had no way of contacting her, except through images, one-way. He didn’t even know if she could feel the headache he felt today.

“Zatanna,” she repeated, and he looked up at her, blinking at how close she had gotten. “Is she safe?”

“You have my word,” he promised her.

“I don’t know the value of your word.”

“Nor do I have the value of yours. Tell me the truth. Who are you, really?”

“I am Raven. I am a Titan.” She would have ended it there. But the words were carried out of her
mouth. Stolen. “I was once known as a child of Azarath. I am the daughter of Arella. My powers are not of magic, but it is a curse. I am the unfortunate result of the demonic war god, Trigon.”

Her words were forced, gritted against her teeth, but Harry heard them all the same. She seemed to snap out of it. “What the hell did you do to me?”

“I – ”

He paused, abruptly. Did he do that to her? He knew he had a knack for persuasion, but never to the level she was exaggerating. She certainly looked like she didn’t want to say those words.

Then something she said was peculiar to him. “Wait. Demonic war god?”

She stumbled back, preparing to turn.

“Stop! Demonic Wargod? What does that mean? Is he a demon or a god? Tell me!”

Her legs slowed to a complete stop. She turned to him, and her eyes began to glow again. Again, she began to speak, even when he was absolutely positive she didn’t want to. “He is both! He’s a god and a demon! He is the devil! He is death and darkness incarnate!”

Oh.

Oh.

Oh shit.

Bloody fucking hell.

“Go,” he said, and she stumbled into motion.

She looked back at him, and he knew that fear was something she was no stranger to.

Because she looked at him with such hatred, her power rising in her small figure, that she would rather die than to know what could happen next.

“Stop,” he commanded once again, and only then, when he understood the full extent of his power, did he feel like a piece of shit from such a simple word. “Calm down. Don’t be angry. I can explain. It’s not my fault.”

“You have ten seconds.” She took his words to heart. Harry shuddered at the thought. He could even control her emotions.

“I’m not from this world. But in my world, We don’t have… demons. We have Dementors. We have ghosts, a-and Poltergeists. We have Inferi. Thestrals, and Succubae and Incubi. We have the literal concept of death, and an afterlife. But here, there’s so much… more. And I guess… I guess new rules apply.”

Her anger stripped away from her, she saw the confusion in his expression. No, not confusion, it was something else.

Regret? Resignation? Having spent her entire life dealing with her emotions, real tangible bodies that represented each feeling that communicated with each other, she had trouble reading him.

“What does that mean?” Her feet planted in the ground, her face no longer in the shadows, and her fate seemingly in his hands, she never felt so much like a vulnerable, fifteen-year old girl. “What the
hell does that have anything with what you’re doing to me?”

Words escaped him. He didn’t know what to tell her. It was just this morning when Fleur told him, and he didn’t even have time to process it, to fully understand the scope of what he was being told at the time.

If it wasn’t for his impeccable memory, he would have already forgotten it, and he literally would not have known what to tell her.

Hermione had obtained the last hallow, right before he went through the veil. It was thanks to the Elder Wand – the deathstick – that he, and Hermione, were alive today.

It was because of that, he had found himself, and Hermione, the Masters of Death. And everything that came with that.

He had no idea how it was going to sound, but he tried it anyway. “I control death. It has no hold over me. If I truly want someone dead, I can call it and claim it. Death bows before me. So if there’s a God of Death here, then I am the contradiction.” That sounded legible. He didn’t know if any of it was true or not, of course, but it made sense to him, through his readings of the subject. Which, admittedly, wasn’t much. “You were born of death incarnate. You’re the creation of the devil. A Princess of Death.”

As morbid as the thought was, and as untimely as it was, Harry entertained the notion of the existence of a Master of Magic, just as he himself was the Master of Death. Merlin? Le Fay? Probably chaos incarnate, chosen to be his rival for all eternity.

“That’s why you can’t hurt me. That’s why your head hurt when you rebelled.” But it still didn’t explain the initial pain when they saw each other the first time, and what happened in the prison.

Recognition crossed her face. She knew. “Speak. Tell me what you know.”

“I know where you are. I feel your presence. Always, and when you spoke to us, I felt you were there before you turned around.”

That was… concerning.

“Go,” he whispered, and he sighed. “I just needed you to hear that. I don’t plan on doing that to you again. Unless you decide to attack me and mine. This isn’t your fight. Don’t call for your friends. Don’t try to attack me. Just… please… bow out.”

Her body moved, but she didn’t step towards him. She was cautious; he didn’t hand her freedom, he let her borrow it. Her hands tensed. It was an odd emotion. Anger was locked out, it just wasn’t available to her anymore.

It was a blessing. It was the one thing that kept her from control of her powers. Her rage was the most powerful emotion she had in her meditation space, and now that it wasn’t against her…

The possibilities were overwhelming.

Harry held up his hands – like he would have needed them to do anything to her, she thought – and backed away. “Zatanna is safe. I promise. Bruce took my friend, and I would like him returned to me. That’s all I want. Fair is fair. One for another. We’ll talk later.” He blinked rapidly, tilting his head to the side, unfocused eyes looking right past her. He did something with his hands, and –
– and something happened. An entire conversation passed between the two in that split second. They understood each other. “Goodbye, Raven.”

The only warning he got was a faint whistle, before there was a giant CRACK against his spine.

He froze, paralyzed. A gasp of surprise escaped him, and he collapsed to the ground.

Raven stood before him, blinking in surprise. “What the – ?”

And then she saw him.

His wings expansive, something she had only heard legends about but never seen in action, The caped vigilante was gliding towards the building in menacing form, and he slid smoothly along the gravel until he took a knee.

“I’ll take it from here.” He moved forward, and she didn’t think she was ever so smooth in the air as he did walking. “Raven. Diana told me about you. Good work.”

She couldn’t, for the life of her, tell if he was being serious or sarcastic. When he disregarded her, removing a pair of sleek black cuffs from somewhere in the heavy-looking belt, she realized that he hadn’t heard their conversation.

“Where’s Zatanna?” He asked, not looking back. That confirmed her suspicions.

“He has her,” she admitted slowly. “He took her someplace. He wants to exchange her for his friend.”

He reached down and grabbed the earpiece off of the fallen teen. “No deal,” he muttered into the earpiece, and before he could even hear if anyone was listening, he squeezed, crushing the connection.

Raven flinched.

Harley winced at the feedback, pausing long enough to consider what to do next. “Ivy! Where are you?!”

“I heard,” was her reply, and Harley didn’t allow herself to be swept away by small miracles. She desperately needed a big one. “I’m on my way to them. They’re not getting away from me.”

“Hurry,” she whispered, and just sat there, and waited.

She fucking hated it, but she knew one of them had to stay back, if only to keep the order.

It wasn’t lost on her that they left it to the one who was the least in control.

She had taken the chair that Ivy had vacated, and her girlfriend was currently out at the prison, freeing the prisoners from the shipping containers that the witches had dumped them into, while Harry tried his damnedest to distract said witches.

The girl was still bound in rope, asleep in the corner. She was cute when she was sleeping, and not angry.

Everything had been going fine, until Batman was seen in one of the monitors. She had warned Harry and Ivy. At least, she tried to. Batman was aiming his gun from on top of a search tower, aimed directly at Harry’s back. She yelled at him to watch out. But she was too late. The video feed
must have lagged.

“They’re... I don’t see them.” She could hear the panic in the edges of Ivy’s voice. Even in direct danger, her voice never wavered. “I was seconds away! Where are they? I can’t find a trace!”

“I... I... maybe he’ll get out of it.”

“I know he will. He can’t contain him.” She sounded so resolute in her conviction. If she was trying to make up for the absence of her confidence before, she was doing a good job at it. “But we’re getting him back. Whatever it takes.”

“Of course,” she muttered, her eyes closed. “Even if we have to walk up to the Manor.”

A breeze tickled at her hair, and she swiveled around.

Raven, her purple hair in waves, peered at her with curious violet eyes. In her right hand, the arm of one grinning Harry Potter who peered back at her, as if she didn’t look like she was about to fucking cry.

In her left hand, she gripped the cape of the unconscious body of the Batman, lain at her feet.

Now, the jester was really about to cry. “What the fuck?!”

She didn’t really care for an answer. Her feet sent her into his open arms anyway, and he kissed her forehead as she hugged him.

Her chin resting on his shoulder, she could see the purple-skinned girl rush over to her friend, sitting her up and smoothing her hair back.

“Thank you.”

She pulled back and eyed him curiously, not trusting herself enough to talk just yet.

“Your message,” he elaborated. “The second you told me, I did... that thing again. Stopped time.”

“Oh.” She was quiet for a second, and then she punched him in the arm. “And you let me think he kidnapped you!” She could hear Ivy’s sigh of relief on the other line.

He winced, and not at the pain in his bicep. “I couldn’t tell you. You were frozen in time. The communicator works, but you wouldn’t have heard it.” He grimaced. “My back is killing me. I think it was a rubber bullet.”

“It was.” She looked down at the prone man, ridiculous costume and all, and stepped on his chest. She stood atop the man most criminals considered their worst nightmare, and used his bat symbol strewn across his broad chest as a welcome mat. Her eyes were now level with Harry’s. “Did you get taller?”

He shrugged. “You wanna know how I did it?”

“I’m pretty sure I can figure it out.” She pointed behind him. “You froze time, told her you were going to take the hit and let his guard down. Then she’d take this bastard down and wake you up. And now you’re both here.”

Her boyfriend looked impressed at her deduction, and she rolled her eyes. “Come on, that wasn’t so hard.”
“I thought it was a good plan. I needed to be knocked out, because he can sense whether I’m conscious or not. It wasn’t really a risk if I knew he wouldn’t kill me.” He looked back at Raven, who looked back expectantly, holding up her sleeping friend in a silent plea. A deal is a deal. We really will talk later.”

She took one last look at the man she betrayed, a man she was taught to respect, but never met before, under the feet of a woman she was taught to hate, but never met before.

She looked back at the boy who held her fate in his hands. The one that made the most sense out of the three.

This really wasn’t her fight.

She nodded, and a black void circled into life (death?) behind her.

“We better.”

Harry gave a disarming, charming smile. It was much easier to do that when his brain wasn’t splitting apart. “I keep my promises.”

“So you claim. So you did. So you will.”

With a final nod, she backed into the portal with her rope-bound friend, and the void tucked into itself, blinking into nothingness.

Harry kissed the side of the cheek where Harley’s headset resided, and she let out a sigh she didn’t know she was holding. “Come home, Ivy. I think we’re done. Mission Success.”

“So it seems.” She chuckled on the other end. “With rewards. But I think you forgot something.”

“Someone,” Harley chided gently, and blinked innocently. “I don’t see the problem. Mission success if ya ask me. Minus a thousand points for a lost asset, but – ”

“He’s in Blüdhaven.”

The words were said at the same time, but the voice that wasn’t Harry’s was quite the surprise. Selina stood at the doorway, leaning against the frame. She and Harry stared at each other, curiously.

“And we finish the race in a tie!” Harley shouted, waving her arms in a chopping motion. “Now, for the tie-breaker. I know how you know, Harry. Selina, how in the hell did you find out?”

The Cat Burglar smirked. “Technically, I won. I’ve been watching for a while, now.” Her smirk grew, a smile both feral and delightful. “You didn’t notice me this time. You didn’t see me at all.”

That got a chuckle out of the Warlock. “So I didn’t. Raven asked for a drop-off location, and Bruce told her where I couldn’t be sent. Anywhere but Blüdhaven Penitentiary. Naturally, that had to be where Riddler should be. Then she knocked him out. Now your turn.”

“I have sources. I called in a favor.” She gave a nonchalant shrug as she approached them, inspecting the man beneath Harley’s mismatched boots. “Oh, how the mighty have fallen. This was an unexpected twist in the plans. Now, tell me; what in the possible hell could you have promised one of the Titans to make them turn on their master?”

He grinned at her choice of words. “I promised her a less moralistic master. I gave her a new look at life. Probably one she’d always considered, but never had the means, or discipline, to take it.”
Harley’s eyes widened at the implications, almost stumbling off of their newest acquisition. “Are you tellin’ me that you turned her evil?”

“No. I turned her neutral. She could be more helpful that way. She’s too powerful to be on one side or the other. Though I wouldn’t count out her involvement. It’s up to her, ultimately.”

The day was just full of small miracles, Harley acknowledged.

“I’m fortifying the wall,” Ivy told them over the coms. “I’ll pick up Crane.”

“Oh! Scarecrow. I honestly forgot about him.” Harley bit her lip. “Considering half this mission was about freeing him, that’s probably not a good thing. We never actually broke him out.”

“He’s been busy.” She could hear the amusement in her girlfriend’s voice. “He’s in the medical wing right now. He’s been making some crude replacement fear toxin. Give him a minute.”

“We’ll go pick up Eddie,” Harry muttered, gently pulling Harley against him as he directed his statement to Selina. “And then we’re all going to have a talk about these Titans. We’ll meet back at the greenhouse.”

One wave of his hand, the body of the Dark Knight disappeared beneath Harley, and she was left hovering in the air, Harry’s arm around her back being her only support. Another wave, and they were gone, Harley’s sudden shriek of laughter echoing in the suddenly emptier room. It wasn’t a pop, exactly, like Selina was used to seeing. It was more of a fade.

Kyle shook her head at the theatrics. Muttering something about gods and demons and how she was glad she was so normal, she stepped out of the cabin, and made her way back to their base. The Greenhouse, they began calling it.

It was almost nightfall, and everyone would know the difference that set this night apart from the rest before it, ever since the caped crusader debuted.

The Warlock, Poison Ivy, Harley Quinn, the Cat Burglar, the Riddler and the Scarecrow. Their names would never be forgotten after tonight.

“That… reminds me. Time to pay our new mouthpiece a visit.”

‘Dear citizens of Gotham. You’ve been warned.

‘This radio broadcast will not be intercepted. This warning will not be censored. Once again, this is Vicki Vale, reporting on the latest goings-on.

‘The police will tell you one thing, but should you ever want to know the truth, come right to the source. This reporter can tell you, for one thing, that Gotham’s finest aren’t very sure of what exactly is going on, and they won’t tell you even if they knew. But we will.

‘Yes, we. This reporter has, as they say, gone rogue, down a more exciting alley of investigative journalism. I’m as undercover as undercover goes, giving you the scoop and always on the look out for more to share. I have been chosen as the correspondent for the Femme Fatale and have been given the opportunity to share with you the latest news in villainy, and messages from both sides; an olive branch, if you will. If it helps in any way, bridging the gap and working for a better Gotham, despite our notorious reputation, this reporter is the first to sign up for ambassador. It wasn’t that difficult a position for me. I have protection for what I’m doing, and the same couldn’t be said for the job I had before. Journalistic integrity may still exist, but not anymore. Not in Gotham. There’s
actual control here, and on this network, you can’t ignore me. I choose to use this power for good, and you will see examples of this in the coming weeks. Decide for yourself if I’m worth my words.

‘In mere minutes, Jack Ryder, on your local Channel Seven news station, will tell you that as of now, the story developing at Blackgate is ‘in progress’, while in truth the threat has already passed, and the battle has ended. They will try to conceal the truth from you, and they have very good reason to, but here it is.

‘Gotham has never been safer than it has in years. There have been safeguards put in place to ensure such a promise. Let me preface this breaking news at that. Whether you choose to believe it, or not, is up to you.

‘Earlier today, The Warlock, Harley Quinn, and Poison Ivy have been spotted at Blackgate facility prison. Previously, I told you that the Warlock was arrested and detained at the prison, and Commissioner Gillian Loeb, and our impeccably ignorant Mayor Wilson Klass, refused to give him a trial or meet with the Femme Fatale. There has been no response, even now.

‘The sequence of events that followed was exactly how you think it played out. Ivy and Harley, in their own unique way of retaliation, surrounded the prison in thick vines, not unlike the pit that holds the lives of thirty-seven men in blue in the Bowery.

‘A riot ensued in the prison, followed by a massive breakout, and while I can’t give you an accurate number, it appears that more than half has escaped the notoriously understaffed and statistically insecure prison. In the breakout, The Warlock has escaped with Gotham’s most feared couple, and is now at large.

‘He sends along a message, which I will read for you: “I have branded you. Your control has been willed over to me. You will find the consequences of your actions soon enough. I believe in second chances, but you won’t live to see a third if you don’t heed my words. Stand down. Do not fight. And if you have a problem with that, then find me.”

‘An ominous message, certainly. Will you take it seriously, Gotham? Or will you foolishly wait for your third chance to roam around?

‘In other news, the newly christened ‘Catwoman’ has come forth as the thief of the priceless jade jewel, a precious mineral of unknown origin. The gem was a temporary showcase, in the final days of its world-wide tour before returning to the Metropolis Museum. While it was originally thought to be stolen by Harley Quinn according to the APB, the notorious thief Catwoman has not been silent in her inquiries for bidding, and has requested the audience of one Bruce Wayne and one Alexander Luthor. Please contact Channel Seven news if you have any information leading to her arrest.

‘And finally... there are incoming reports of a new vigilante roaming the streets, that goes by the name of Black Robin. His sudden presence in Gotham, while not unwelcome, has come as a bit of a surprise. Established professionals of the craft have been taken in and dealt with, and you stand alone, in a fight against the un-fight-able. My new job description requires me to tell you that what you are doing is unwise, but honestly... if more people were brave like you, then maybe we wouldn’t be where we were today, making our choices and choosing sides. While the rest of us are choosing who to follow, you decided to lead. I hope you’re ready for the responsibility that burdens you now. This reporter has it on good authority that this won’t be a night you’ll forget anytime soon. Don’t expect help.

‘This is Vicki Vale, signing off. Goodnight, Gotham. I hope.’
Meanwhile, a realm was disturbed. Several realms, actually, existing as one and as all. A fully-functioning, simultaneous multi-verse in a single existence.

“It happened again.”

She looked up, her pale features covered by her ebony hair. “Hm? What’s up?”

“Your master. He’s manipulating fate again.”

She harrumphed at the term. “Don’t speak of what you can’t possibly know.”

“Do you believe anything to be out of my realm of knowledge?”

“This one is wrong.”

“It’s not. In fact, I don’t think I’ve ever been as accurate. I feel a draw to him as well. But he was made for you to serve.”

She rolled her eyes, thankful for the long hair, covering her smirk. “Sure. Whatever. Just… leave already.”

“Even Death has a fate. You can’t escape your destiny, you know.”

Deep in the realms of the Endless, the attractive gothic stared hard at her brother, Destiny. “I have not been summoned. Death will come for Harry Potter. And if he leaves before he knows – and I doubt we have crossed paths before – then I have no reason to cross paths with him. So, all-seeing brother, how long until the Veil is opened?”

He was silent for a moment. “Soon enough.” He felt she didn’t need to know that she was the one destined to open it for him.

Or that she would be joining her master in the next realm. Death would be coming for him, indeed.

She smiled. “Good. Better for the kid, anyway. Rules are rules. Be a shame for him to lose everything because he fell in love with sweet Death.” She winked at her brother, and he gave back a knowing smirk. It unsettled her.

Death bowed to no master, human or wizard or god alike. Perhaps another version of her made a deal with the Peverells, but if she could avoid servitude to a sex-crazy child, that’d be fine.

No matter how interested she was in the prospect.

Death of the Endless shivered. Destiny laughed. And had Delirium shown up, she would have thought herself sane at the mere sight of it.

http://gallery.rihaansfics.com for a better vision of my characters, from Harry and Harley.

Chapter End Notes

Please comment, and kudos!

Next chapter: Raven faces her inner demons (geddit?), while The Black Robin is
suddenly thrust into the spotlight.

After 'Project Blackgate' has abruptly turned into 'Mission: Knightfall', The team regroups and tries to capitalize on their initial success. But anything can happen when the Batman is around, caged or not.
End of Day Three

Chapter Summary

What happens when The Great Blackgate Escape accidentally turns into Operation: Knightfall?

“This is far from over, you know.”

“Oh, come on! Don’t be so over-dramatic! I mean, it was just a little – ”

“Betrayal? Borderline treason? What part of that do you consider little?”

“You’re acting like we betrayed God herself. He’s not a world leader. He’s not even legal. He’s just a man.”

“He was our team. He was on our side, our partner.”

“He was NOT our partner! We were HIS subordinate! We are the lowest form of sidekick! We are the reserve sidekick.”

“You know that’s not true. We were the secret weapon.”

“And how is that any different? That still makes us the backup! So tell me! We have nothing but time! Explain this to us. Because somehow, you know something we don’t.”

Raven – the original Raven, dawned in her purple cloak, glared at her emoticlones. “We’re all on the same side, here. I’m just trying to... comprehend what the hell I just did.” She held her head in her hands. “I’m trying to rationalize everything, and you’re supposed to be helping me!”

Yellow Raven shook her head. “What’s done is done. What you need to rationalize is damage control. Soon enough, either we confront the Titans, or they confront us.”

Green scoffed. “We can take them. We’re their secret weapon, aren’t we?”

Purple Raven – the other purple Raven, more on the indigo scale – was vehemently shaking her head at the thought. “Are you kidding me?! We’re not going to hurt our friends! We are not going to lay a finger on our – !”

“You’re letting your initial instincts get the better of you,” Yellow quickly interjected against the most sensitive emoticlone. “We should be ready for it, of course. But clearly, it’s our last resort. Logic would suggest that Warlock would assist us, in whatever peril we face.”

“And you trust him?” Gray’s tone was incredulous, before covering her own mouth, afraid she had said something wrong.

“He returned Zatanna to us. He gave us full autonomy. Why would he give that back?”

Orange Raven snickered. “Not so intelligent, specs. It’s painfully clear that he wants us to be his secret weapon. Have you even heard of a slee-per a-gent?” She accentuated each word, sounding
out each syllable to help make it sink in.

It worked, giving the other Ravens pause, including the one who had the idea. It had crossed their minds at some point, but none of them were so crass as to really consider it as a possibility. “...Maybe,” she finally admitted, and Orange grinned smugly. “But as Yellow just said, what’s done is done.” She closed her eyes, even in her own dream world, finally accepting her situation. “I can’t go back.”

The infinite zone inside her head was never in disarray – years of meditation had reined in her emotions in a way that, according to witnessing other humans, seemed like a miraculous feat.

Today, however, felt different. She felt turmoil. She felt trouble.

Her voices dared not speak. They were quiet. They weren’t designed to be quiet, and yet, they had nothing to say.

Because she didn’t have any idea what to think.

Zatanna would awake in her hotel room, while she herself was farther away than the magician could ever reach.

It felt like a good idea at the time. No one could hear her, or try to find her in outer space. Not even....

“I’m sorry, Kara.”

She opened her eyes, and the white, dusty, dazzling surface of the Moon greeted her.

Raven uncrossed her legs, floating up off the surface. Slowly, the earth came into view – a sight that few mortals had ever witnessed, and taken for granted, and something she would miss dearly.

She let herself drift backwards, before turning around, her tears abandoned as drifting droplets. She had to leave before they got wind.

Gray Raven – Timidity – was the quietest of her emoticlones, and for very good reason. For all purposes, she was her second greatest weakness, as she held her more personal, guarded secrets.

However, while she was sure that Gray didn’t have much to say before, she was surely making herself known now, by the tears stinging in her eyes and the cries she would never scream.

She was a mess, and she knew it.

Her rage – Raven Red, they called her - had been locked away, imprisoned in her mindscape for as long as The Warlock allowed it, so her power was all hers, and all her own. Her inner demon was now her puppet.

And it only cost her the freedom she had fought for all her life.

Trigon, her darkness, The Titans, and now, the one who identified himself as Harry Potter.

His pull reached far, impossibly so, but she was willing to test the limits of his grasp. She would never betray the friends she made on earth. She didn’t know Batman or even his identity. The Titans, though – they were everything she had. Zatanna, and Diana were her friends and mentors. Kori and Komi were her friends. Kara was her friend.

And if her actions had led to their defeat... well, that would explain Gray’s loud, silent outburst.
Her soul was no longer in her own hands – even if it ever was, at some point. And if she had just made a deal with the devil, then she was back to square one.

**Something happened. She couldn’t place her finger on what.**

“Thanks for the warning,” he muttered, looking off to the side before he frowned. “Right. She can’t hear me.” He said it with a wry smile, as if he found the concept of time space manipulation to be a practical joke. He looked up at the grey-skinned hero. “Time dilation.”

She had done that before – accidentally, and when she really needed the sleep – but literally nothing had changed outwardly to tell her that it was happening right now. Everything just seemed a little quieter to her. “Why?”

“He’s nearby. He’s waiting to attack me. And if I go down, I can’t tell you where Zatanna is.” He held up a hand before she could take offense. “I’ll tell you where she is. I’ll take you there myself.”

An indeterminate amount of time passed before she scowled. “Well?”

His face darkened. “I’m done worrying about him. I’m not going to kill him, but I’m not gonna let him catch me like this. You’re welcome to help me.”

“Are you giving me an ultimatum?”

He seemed to ponder it. “Yes. I suppose I am. But you of all people know how magic reacts to a personal threat.” His green eyes narrowed. “This isn’t your fight. This was the fight you were assigned to. You don’t care one way or the other about Batman. You care about your friends. But right now, he seems more interested in the bigger picture. I’m just trying to get one of my friends back. You think he cares if one of yours gets captured? He’ll tell you that she knew the risk.”

She sneered. “She does. But if you want your friend back, I suggest you turn yourself in.”

“I imagine he knows the answer to that. But he won’t tell me, or bargain. And if I turn myself in, you know I’ll just have you break me right back out.”

Raven doubted that. She was positive that he could do it on his own just as easily. He was telling her that simply to remind her that he could. “So, you want me to turn on him? On my friends?”

He tilted his head. “Your friend? What’s his name?” Silence. “Friends know each other’s names, ‘Rachel’. Because when you trust someone with your life, a mask shouldn’t be the only face you recognize.”

His words were grating on her, and even with her anger blocked out, she felt akin to frustration towards the Warlock. “And who do you expect me to trust? You?”

He shook his head. “I wouldn’t. But then again, I’m wearing a mask.”

She lowered her purple hood. “Then trust me. Give me my friend back. Please.”

In return, the darkness began to recede from his face, black wiry webs uncrossing and crawling away from his green eyes. They held a curious tint, reflecting her own look, she was sure of it, before he ultimately nodded.

“Harry Potter,” he finally said, and she blinked in surprise. “Master of Death. Time Traveller. Dimension Hopper. Fate’s Cruel Plaything.”
“Rachel.” She pulled her hood back up and crossed her arms. “That’s all you’re getting until I see her again.”

“But I already knew that,” he grinned, and she found herself less annoyed, somehow. “And that’s not even your name.” He shook his head. “But you don’t have a choice but to trust me. I’ll make it easier for you.”

He moved his hands so quick, she thought he was ready to strangle her again, until sound came rushing back to her, all at once, and his hands stilled.

Time was moving again, and she didn’t think her opinions could change so much in such a short amount of it.

They shared a look. “Goodbye, Raven.”

And then she was treated to the sight of his entrancing green eyes roll to the back of his head, before he collapsed, barely even registering the ‘pop’ of the rubber bullet striking Harry’s back.

When the Batman landed in front of her, his eyes on his target without a first glance back at her, she considered her options.

When he crushed the remote in his hands, ensuring that her only link to Zatanna had been smashed in front of her, she made her choice.

“Where are you taking him?” She asked immediately. When he didn’t reply, she amended her question. “Where can we take him?”

“Anywhere but Blüdhaven,” was his only answer.

‘And Zatanna?’ she almost asked, but she already knew the answer.

‘She knew the risks.’ ‘We’ll find another way.’ ‘I’ll get him to talk.’

Her fists tightened. With nary a thought, a black bubble emerged from her body, and quickly expanded across the rooftop, extending past the skyline, and beyond the ether.

Time was frozen - again.

She crossed her legs, floating atop the gravel, and began to think.

The time she actually gave to herself was more inconsequential than the time that would have passed otherwise. It was an easy decision.

Far easier than she hoped it to be.

Her drifting slowed to a crawl. With a growl, she turned her head, her eyes seemingly roaming earth’s skyline.

Sure, he could possibly use her against her own team. As unlikely as it seemed, she would be an idiot to not take it as a percentage chance. Though it didn’t mean she couldn’t tell them everything they needed to know about it when – if – that day ever came.

‘I can’t fight this,’ she considered, her glowing white dewy eyes focused on the planet she considered her true home. Her voice couldn’t carry through space, but she needed to say it aloud – if only to hear it for herself. “But I will fix this.”
Because Titans never give up. Diana may have told her those words a number of times, but Kara had shown her what they truly meant.

She was not going to let her – any of them – down.

Doctor Jonathan Crane, blissfully ignorant of the turbulent environment around him, hunched over several metal tanks with a grin of pride – if you could call it a grin.

They kept them. The insipid fools had actually kept his gas.

What was even better – they replicated it! They made several more tankards of his Fear juice!

Granted, it wasn’t as potent as his own, but their batches were strong enough for what he had in mind.

A soft tapping on his shoulder interrupted his scheming, and he turned around to see a green tendril, its thorny surface very graceful in the presence of the lab equipment.

Crane nodded wordlessly, and several tendrils of the same size swarmed the room through the same door, each one grabbing a metal tank with a speed and efficiency that no man could hope to replicate.

As she probably intended. And Crane didn’t mind that much.

Working on a team was not something he intended, but he would have been a fool to turn it down, after witnessing the chaos they caused around him.

And they didn’t have to use even the slightest drop of fear. Just imagine how unstoppable they would be if they did?

In any other situation, Lockhaven Prison would have been a fortress.

After what happened to the neighboring city, Blüdhaven would have stepped up the security tenfold. Perhaps, even the new vigilante might have stayed behind to confront them. But no, they, and he, couldn’t afford to let themselves stay behind. They were in too much of an emergency state to ignore the chaos and maintain their posts.

Blackgate was a massive prison – the only one in Gotham, a massive city, the biggest in New Jersey – so if the population of such a prison suddenly shifted to zero, then one could assume that the former prisoners needed to get away as far as they could, if not to their former bosses, then to neighboring cities, such as... Blüdhaven.

Gotham’s problem was everyone’s problem. And if anyone else had a problem, Gotham had the spare resources. It was the life-blood of the community, much like Metropolis to New York.

Gotham served as priority. Just as the team preferred it.

“Took you long enough.”

Harry paused from his untying of Eddie’s feet and sent a guilty grin Harley’s way, but the girl was far too distracted, sending her glower at Eddie like she had heat vision. ‘Hate Vision,’ he named it promptly.

“We could take a little longer, if you want.” She crossed her arms, eyeing the non-descript cell, that
only composed of a bed and a toilet – not even a desk! – and she felt a twinge of pity on him. The new guy didn’t even bother to untie him, just threw him in a holding cell like a sack of potatoes and left. “Really, of all the clichés you had for late rescues, that was the one you chose?”

“Oh?” If his hands were unbound, she swore he would have been puffing out his chest at her in retaliation. Perhaps that was what he was doing in his mind, she figured. He was incredibly gifted at ignoring reality. “And what would you have said?”

Harley fanned her face with her gloved hands in dramatic fashion. “Oh, thank the illogically existing God almighty! Thank you for not abandoning me when I got myself kidnapped. Snuck up on and apprehended like a common henchman! Gosh, you’d think with my sharp mind and wit, I might be able to escape by now, or at least untie myself! I mean Golly Gee Willikers, do you know what they do to smartasses like me in prison? My mind couldn’t have possibly calculated the lack of callouses on my hand relative to the density of soap fast enough!” She crossed her arms – something she knew he wished he could do right now – and sniffed. “Y’know, something like that.”

Despite himself, Eddie grinned a toothy grin. “You know, you may find this hard to believe, but I missed you.”

She leaned against her mallet, smirking down at him. “No, you didn’t, Riddles. You missed the idea of me.”

Harry shook his head, his shoulders shaking with mirth, and turned back to Eddie’s bindings. The wires wrapped around Harry’s wrist was busy spinning like a tiny saw, whirring against the twine that kept Eddie’s wrists and feet bound. It was some very impressive material, keeping the self-proclaimed prodigy incapacitated. He made sure to pocket the stuff as it was cut loose. Considering the wires that Warlock kept wrapped around his body could cut through diamond in a matter of minutes, he found himself envious of the material Bruce had access to. Or could build.

He really needed to find a pensieve, and soon. He was getting bits and pieces of Wayne’s memories, but never the full picture; and he was grateful for that, he didn’t want full access to an entire life in an instant – like Hermione did, four years ago – especially someone as busy and prodigious as The Batman.

He was no stranger to witnessing the deaths of loved ones, so it wasn’t anything too shocking he had seen so far, but an overload was entirely possible. A lesser man would have been easily sorted through in a matter of a couple of days, thanks to his Occlumency training, but Bruce Wayne’s life was rather involved. The mental discipline of the man far exceeded his own, and Harry was more accomplished in his mind magicks than even Dumbledore and Voldemort.

For a man without magic, he had a power that Harry couldn’t quite comprehend.

But now, he had the opportunity to better himself, if he had access to all of the man’s memories – and the man himself.

Edward rubbed gently at his wrists, and popped his shoulders. “Ah, that’s better.” He looked back at Harry, watching the circular wire click around his left wrist. “My sincere gratitude and indebtedness,” he grinned, nodding slightly.

Harley’s eyes searched out Harry in a different manner. “You okay? Any headaches?”

He shook his head and waved in an airy way. “Just twinges. Aftershocks, I suppose.” At the end of his wave, The Riddler’s suit was restored, free of scruffiness. Pocketing the last of the binding material, he smiled at his inquiring lover. “I’m up for freeing another prison, however.”
Harley bit her lip. They now had access to the fifth biggest prison in the northeast, and there was no one around who could stop them.

It was as if they were writing a book, and Chaos was the main character. It couldn’t have been set up any better for them.

“I have an idea,” she muttered slowly. “How about instead of releasing them, we have a little fun, first?”

Selina slumped over the console, resting her head in her hands as the images were splayed before her. Never had she seen so many cars flashing red and blue, all lumped together, stuck in traffic.

Only her mask was removed, something she usually never did until the job was done, but she found herself overwhelmingly frustrated.

Forced into the temporary occupation of ‘watcher’ while the others were out and about wasn’t a problem for her. There wasn’t much she could do at the moment, even she could admit to that.

Help Harry and Harley break out Eddie? No thanks. She didn’t feel an immediate need to run to his rescue, especially after their fight this morning. She could tolerate the man, but he needed a remote control. At the very least, a mute button.

Or an explosive collar. She bristled at the suggestion he made earlier. She had no doubt that he came up with the idea with her in mind, and not Harley’s pets as he had insinuated.

With a delicate gloved finger, she fiddled with the Kevlar-like linings on her suit, tracing back and forth up her arms. She felt every tingle of the touch, as if the suit was part of her body. An extra skin, however creepy that might sound.

She considered the other options given to her. Help the escaping convicts fight off the approaching guards and police? Around a burning building, no less? Simply a waste of time. She didn’t even need to list off the reasons why she didn’t want to do that.

Help Batman escape?

......

It had crossed her mind. Once. Or twice.

She shook her head. It was best not to dwell on those thoughts.

Make that three times.

Help Ivy relocate Crane? The man creeped her out more than Eddie, if it was possible. But he seemed like a nice guy, from what Pam had mentioned. If there was ever a competent judgement of men that Selina could trust, it was Pamela’s. Her own track record wasn’t so stellar, so she depended on Pam’s word over her own.

Her skin tingled under her finger, and she sighed raggedly.

Upsetting Harleen earlier that morning was something she never wanted to repeat. The girl had a way of making her feel guilty, no matter how many times she told herself she was innocent.

Not that Selina had even tried to tell herself that. She knew she fucked up.
Only an idiot wouldn’t be able to see just how much the mature girl loved Pamela, despite the new addition to their relationship. To make fun of that so recklessly was just asking for a beatdown. She was sure it would have come to blows if she persisted, and she wasn’t a hundred percent sure she could take the spitfire. She briefly questioned what Ivy was feeding her. Probably the same thing she was feeding her plants. She wouldn’t ask – she learned her lesson – but it was fun to theorize.

Insulting Harley’s loyalty to Poison Ivy; it just wasn’t something one could do without repercussions. She knew she had been pushing it, with her (harmless!) flirting, but it seemed that the girl had reached her limits with Selina’s supposed insensitivity.

So, that marked off another on the list of people she could no longer tease. And that was what frustrated her.

Selina Kyle was a sensible woman. She had likes, hobbies, a consistent schedule. She loved cats, but that didn’t make her as crazy as people suspected, nor did it completely define her. Before she ever donned any suit, she just had trouble connecting with people. Living most of her life on the streets, she found it difficult to trust people again, especially with her initial ‘agreement’ with her landlord to get her first apartment, until a few hidden cameras settled it. When strays like Sasha came into her life, or rather her window, she was amazed at how personable and friendly the orange tabby was to complete strangers. That was around the time she was transfixed to the television like the rest of Gotham, watching a man escape from police in a swarm of bats, allowing himself to be carried off into the morning sun and out of their grasp.

Only a mask could have allowed him to do something that batshit crazy. Only complete anonymity would remove the sanity of what could have been a normal man, who would have never done that otherwise. It was something she could say for a lot of heroes and villains.

That was how the idea began forming. Well, that, and a need to pay her rent. No one took advantage of Catwoman. Blackmail could only last for so long, and one day, the fat, balding man that was her landlord could wake up one morning, not caring of the pictures Selena had on him, or try to get the pictures himself. Selina wasn’t an idiot. The landlord had to have a key to the apartment, after all.

Sensible Selina Kyle became Cat Burglar. According to Vicki Vale, anyway. ‘Catwoman’ wasn’t much better, but she would’ve liked to have created her own name, and she preferred Catwoman.

Selina Kyle, the sensible one, could admit that Catwoman was kind of a slut. Hence the frustration.

Selina didn’t have friends. Catwoman had a network. Selina worked at Pauli’s Diner for a brief stint, before not conforming to the boss’s questionable sanitary rules. Catwoman was a multi-millionaire, the greatest thief the notorious city’s ever known.

Selina didn’t even have a lover. Catwoman had property.

She considered herself bisexual, but she much preferred the company of women. It was natural for her to trust women more.

Catwoman couldn’t care less. She used her body as a weapon, and got what she wanted. Of course, she had standards, but she knew what was required of her, as well. She merely exchanged one favor for another.

Her eyes hazed over, her finger slowly crawling to the valley between her breasts.

Catwoman was a dominatrix – it wasn’t just some cheap gimmick to make the suit work. She liked being in control – always. That wasn’t a secret, and if it was, her whip would be very quick to point
And if the whip wasn’t a good enough influencer, then the strap-on definitely voiced her intentions.

The landlord didn’t like it at first, but she really didn’t care about his pleasure. Especially when the roles were reversed before the transformation.

Vaginal sex just wasn’t for Selina anymore; not in the traditional sense, anyway. She rarely felt the desire to be filled by a man. There was a distinct lack of power in the act, and she never wanted to give up that control. Power was her aphrodisiac.

And of course, she was sure the moment Harley learned of that fact, a ‘cat/pussy’ joke would come bubbling up in some variation that she was too horny to visualize at that very moment, because she was more focused on the idea of how Harley would learn that fact. Namely, when Selina introduced the strap-on.

Her lazy grin faded.

*Selina* had failed; pretending to be what she wasn’t, pretending to be a predator. Harley had rejected Selina. But Catwoman *always* got what she wanted.

And Catwoman wanted Harleen Quinzel under her. Pleading for her. Screaming for her. *Purring.*

Pamela didn’t seem to mind the proposals at all. In fact, she was almost encouraging. But she wasn’t interested in a chase that she could easily catch, even if it was in the form of the most beautiful and sexiest redhead that she had *ever* met.

Lately, she hadn’t been so responsive, however. The challenge was born anew, but before she could even begin the chase, she might have lost.

And therein lies the problem.

The Warlock. Harry Potter.

He had taken the spot that had been promised to her. Sharing a bed with both women, while she was left out in the cold – like the stray that she was.

She thought that they would at least have the decency to tell her. She thought they were all close enough to at least give her a heads up! Not as close as she wanted, but....

She shook her head wildly, her yellow eyes focusing again on the screen. Not realizing that she had been pinching her left nipple through her suit for the last half-minute.

She had considered Harleen and Pamela her friends.

But Selina had no friends.

Only Catwoman could ever get what Selina ever wanted.

But right then, they both just wanted to *get off.*

Slowly unzipping her suit – with a zipper that Harry ensured could only move by her own hands and gloves – she exposed the bare skin underneath, mildly upset that he had stripped her of her sports bra. Support of that size and strength were not easy to come by, and she wasn’t going to ask him for any.
Perhaps being so exposed in the control room, near a wizard who could materialize at any time was not the best idea she had, but she was a bit of an exhibitionist. Besides, he could appear anywhere at any time at all, including her bedroom. For that, she was always on edge. For just a moment, however brief, she needed to relax her tense muscles.

Her body immediately stiffened as she pinched a pale pink nipple, and she let out a whimper. God, she didn’t know what material her new suit was made out of, but it felt so fucking good on her skin.

Her other hand slipped under her suit to rub at herself, and she didn’t even notice the lack of a thong, her loss of the entire set of matching underwear.

What she did notice, however, was the absolute lack of pubic hair.

‘Well, that’s fucking new.’

She growled, her frustration elevated to new heights, but her arousal didn’t dwindle any. With a grunt, she quickly thrust two fingers into herself, her gloved fingers feeling absolutely exquisite within her.

‘Don’t think about him. Don’t think about him.’

So used to doing this late at night in her usual catsuit, she didn’t once stop to consider the dangers of using a brand new, magically powered suit; the retractable claws didn’t even register as a hazard. She only knew how good she felt, and how much better her digits were making her feel.

Her thumb slid over her newly hairless mound, and glided through the valley of her slick lips. Her yellow eyes hazed over, feeling her own wetness. She was soaked – not a shock, but considering the lack of underwear, she was surprised she didn’t hear her excitement sloshing about in her boots.

She blamed it on the tightness of the suit. She could even blame her arousal on the goddamn suit, if she was creative enough.

Batman never gave her this problem. The flirting that they had done over the two years they knew each other, was harmless. From her side, at least. She had found him a little too... dominant, for her tastes. They wouldn’t clash well, and she knew it.

But on the other hand... she loved the chase. He was an even bigger tease than Harley and Ivy combined. The challenge thrilled her, the hunt excited her.

Harry Potter... That man just confused her.

A sudden whimper escaped her lips as her gloved fingers scraped against her g-spot, and she let out a quick whine.

Fucking the landlord – Tony, was it? – was her first act of a rebel. It inspired her to make the catsuit – or, at the very least, the theme of the catsuit. She could have made a small, cotton number, something thin and breathable and cheap, but that act of taking her power back inspired the leather.

Causing that bastard pain was a pleasure that she had never felt before. It wasn’t the act of penetrating him by force, it was the act of shame as she looked down at him, making him suck her cock.

It was no question, he deserved it. She didn’t think she could’ve ever forced herself on an innocent.
And, according to the law in Gotham, she didn’t even rape him, as men somehow couldn’t be raped by women.

She felt she should’ve been more famous than she was, if someone bothered to look into her a little more.

A new vision crept into her mind. Harry Potter, The Warlock, his beautiful wiry frame bent over in front of her, no longer back-talking and outsmarting, but instead, learning his place, taking her artificial cock in his ‘arse’, as they say, his attitude a mere shell of itself as he whimpered, in pain and disgrace, his long hair barely enough to get wrapped in her fingers as she donkey-punched the most powerful man in Gotham, slamming into him with the grace and elegance of the greatest thief in history.

She could steal the heart of the Warlock. She would take him.

One heel rested on the edge of her desk as she closed her eyes, biting her lip to stay quiet, whimpering into her orgasm. As her slim digits pumped back and forth into her needy quim, rolling her hips forward in Harley’s favorite chair, she took the time to be thankful that she wasn’t a squirter.

She twitched in the seat, slowly lowering herself until she relaxed, slumped over. ‘That was good.’

Dragging her finger up from her sensitive – kitty – up her hard stomach and between the valley of her breasts, she nipped at her gloved fingers delicately.

With Harry Potter underneath her, she could have everything she wanted by proxy. Harley and Ivy, of course; but also, Bruce fucking Wayne, the night vigilante and billionaire playboy himself.

She suckled on her finger, not really tasting herself anymore, trapped in her thoughts. It was a nice pipedream, she supposed. Enslaving an Alien; Making him her sissy boi bitch; Taking his developing harem as her own, until Gotham was hers. Selina doubted the whole idea, entirely. It was impossible, at best.

Catwoman welcomed the challenge. And she always got what she wanted.

She reclined back in the chair, crossing her legs as she pondered. Her barely bound breasts out for anyone to see. Not that she was worried – control rooms, built for monitoring and security, tended to lack actual cameras.

It had been radio silence for a while, and she wasn’t worried about him... popping in or whatever. Though it would jumpstart her seduction process.

No, she decided. She wasn’t ready to handle him – or them, for that matter. With a listless sigh, she zipped back up her suit.

Her frustration was still there, but she was far from bored anymore.

Her nose twitched, and she quickly turned to her side.

Sasha, her curious brown-spotted tabby, sat still on her hind legs, her head tilted to the left.

Selina let out a breathless chuckle, and held out her arms, which the cat easily jumped into. “Don’t think I forgot about you, baby.”

Her most fearless cat only purred in response, forgiving her mistress in favor of curling into the soft leather of her suit, her tail swishing against her hand.
She didn’t question how Sasha got into the room, nor did she hear the door close behind her.

Harry checked his watch. He wasn’t entirely sure if the damn thing was broken or not. Finding himself in Gotham for only a few days, he felt that he had spent half his life in the crime-ridden city.

Actually, he hadn’t seen much crime in his short stay. He hadn’t really met anyone new, either. No robbers, no handlers, no murderers. Sure, the prison should count, but that’s where he expected to see criminals. And, even then, Harley was the one that met them. He was busy taking on the police, disguised as his red-and-green-ette girlfriend.

“Huh.”

Harley turned away from the monitor, tilting her head backwards to see him standing behind her, a curious look on his face. “What’s up?”

He shook his head, stepping forward to look over her shoulder. “Nothing, I guess. I just... I feel like I’ve been missing what this city has to offer. You and Pam and Vicki keep telling me how awful this city is and how evil they are, and how the heroes are always out patrolling and fighting – maybe I’m missing something?”

Harleen pondered Harry’s words. “Well, you’ve only been here three days. There was just a bomb threat a week ago. And you’ve met the guy that caused that whole mess. Were you expecting a super villain?”

Again, he shook his head. “Maybe I’m just too used to all of the... erm, chaos, in my world. We have dragons, you know.”

“Be careful what you wish for... I mean, we have supervillains here. They’re just not here, here.”

“Metropolis, right?” Again, he could only get glimpses of the memories, but they seemed to come to him when it seemed relevant. “And where is that?”

“Across the pond,” she muttered absently, her eyes back on the screen.

“...Europe?”

“Hm? Oh, no. A literal pond. A lake, I guess. We’re connected by a bridge.”

“And there’s never a bit of a crossover?”

“Rarely,” she shrugged, unconcerned. “They all have their own territories. Like fucking drug dealers or something. The Bat has Gotham and the Titans have Jump City. Sometimes, the nearby towns might need some help, but...” she made a little hum, “it’s just robbers and drug problems in the boonies.” She sighed, pushing back her chair. “And we’re in! We should have full access, now!”

Harry nodded, and without a word, faded away, only to reappear with Edward.

Harley narrowed her eyes at her boyfriend. “So how do you switch between the popping and the fading, and why did the popping almost kill us?”

“Almost kill you?” Eddie questioned, before yanking his elbow out of Harry’s grasp and stepping away. “How did you almost die? I didn’t feel anything.”

“The popping is Apparition,” Harry started to explain, ignoring Riddler. “Basic magic. Throughout the years, it’s been taught incorrectly, to encourage the loud popping sounds when someone
disappears and appears. Security reasons, I reckon. Don’t want anyone appearing silently in someone’s home or anything. Most important places have anti-apparition wards, however. Most houses have it keyed to a bloodline and a guestlist. It’s a simpler way to get from place-to-place in a pinch. I guess I’m just more used to it because I’ve done it longer.” He smiled apologetically at her, and dammit if she couldn’t forgive him.

“Okay,” she nodded, “and I guess what you just did is not that? It was completely silent. Is that one of those special powers that only you have?”

“Hermione and me,” he quickly corrected her, and she snorted. “It comes with my Animagus form. Shadow Panther; not a normal creature. As the name suggests, I can travel through darkness. You could find a shadow in the brightest room if you look hard enough.”

“So... you can move anywhere at any time?”

“Not across dimensions, if you’re wondering. And it must be somewhere I’ve been before, or can visualize easy enough. Same rules for Apparition, but some enhancements. I don’t have to contort my body, or getting a running start or anything. And there’s a limit to how many I can take with Apparition, and a distance limit.”

“Shadow Warping,” she clarified, mostly to herself. “You need a trading card system.”

Harry chortled, pulling at his sleeves. “You’re having fun naming all of my abilities. I wouldn’t be averse to you making the cards yourself.”

“I’ll think about it – when we’re less busy, I guess.”

“I think it’s about time to wind down, anyway. I think we’ve done enough.”

“Almost,” she clarified, pushing away from the computer. “How’s the server room looking, Riddles?”

The man in the bowler hat looked amused at his new nickname. “Everything is working as anticipated – of course. Blüdhaven is under our complete and utter control.” He giggled sinisterly – and only Harry and Harley could see the contradiction in it. “No one can break my encryption. Not even that punk.”

“That punk has a name.”

Riddler’s face fell, and Harry looked around for the source.

One by one, the monitors blinked into fuzzy static, and the reception was lost to the live feed to the prison. “Black Robin. Sorry we couldn’t meet face-to-face.”

Harley eyed the monitors with interest, before abruptly pressing the power button.

Instead of turning off, however, she was treated to the sight of a black-hooded person, sitting close to the picture. The film was grainy, so she couldn’t see the face, and she would put money on it that the picture was intentionally choppy and distorted.

“...Monitors ain’t s’posed ta do that.”

“Monitors can do whatever you want it to. Well, whatever I want it to. You’re not the only kid with magic around here.”
Harley winced at the heavily synthesized voice. “You’re a kid? Sounds like ya tried to give yaself puberty! At least turn it down, will ya?”

“Oh, I’m sorry. AM I BEING TOO LOUD FOR YOU!?”

The high-pitched feedback rolled throughout the prison, And Harley felt lightheaded, swaying on her feet as she jumped out of the chair. “YOU LITTLE ASSHOLE-!”


Though he couldn’t see it, he could practically feel the smirk pointed at him. “I allowed you what you wanted to see. These monitors aren’t even hooked up to the prison control.” A dark chuckle seeped through the rooms. “You’re connected to my network. My prison. You didn’t even notice a delay in your keyboard - which isn’t even plugged in, by the way.” The figure leaned closer, only the curve of his hood being seen in the darkness. “I’ve logged every change Riddler made to the servers, so it was no problem changing it back. You sent me a warning earlier today. A threat. Now here’s my promise. Give yourself up, and I won’t take immense pleasure in taking you down and destroying each of you.”

“I don’t know if ya heard, but he already tried that.” Harley rubbed her temples, her head ceasing to vibrate. “They refused his offah.”

“A threat is not an offer. It’s a threat.”

“That sounds familiar,” Harry muttered. In fact, this whole situation was starting to feel like a sense of déjà vu. “Did Batman train you to tell me that, by any chance?”

“No. Common sense did.”

“Did he even tell you what I did? Why you should dedicate your time to hating me?”

“I don’t hate you,” the voice quickly countered, and he couldn’t tell how sincere the statement was or not, due to the modifier. “You’ve only killed almost forty police officers, broke out an entire prison, and destroyed a landmark in the past three days.” Sincerely sarcastic, then.

“That sounds completely reasonable,” Harry nodded. “And completely wrong.”

“...What the hell did you two do in my absence?”

Harley turned to the man in green. “A lot more and a lot less than what he said, trust me.”

“That... that didn’t answer my question in the slightest.”

“Look,” Harry tried to reason, holding up his hands placatingly, expecting they were being watched, “I implore you to check your sources before you go accusing people of murder. That’s all. I’m not a murderer.”

“Oh, I apologize. Kidnapper. Not murderer. They’re not dead, but you have them held against their will in a giant pit of vines, and no one knows how many are dead. Or do you just blame Ivy for it?”

“I don’t know where all this hostility is comin’ from,” Harley shook her head, her black-painted lips in a frown. “Is this because we kidnapped ya boss?”

If there was any surprise, the faceless hero hid it well. “You think you’re amusing, right? Causing a
“Oh?” Harry crossed his arms, a heavy frown suddenly forming. “Put a stop to it? Good. I was looking for a challenge.” Reaching out, his hand found Harley’s, who gave it a firm squeeze. With his other hand, he beckoned for Edward to come closer. “Black Robin, despite your rather crude way of introducing yourself, I am indeed excited to meet you. And I do look forward to seeing you again. But threatening my family will end this little spat quicker than I want. Allow me to show you.”

As soon as the Riddler was within reach, Harry had a grip on his shoulder.

If a pop was an exclamation, then shadow warping, as Harley dubbed it, was barely a whisper. It was subtle, and so natural, Harry didn’t even know that he was doing it the first few times he discovered it, nor did Hermione. It was an art.

Harry stepped back, his eyes fixed on the monitor, before he was against the wall in the well-lit surveillance center.

Eyes glowing, he sunk into darkness.

Raven sat in silence as Zatanna paced back and forth, scowling. A small bunny was in her crossed legs, its little head moving in sync with her gentle stroking. Buddy preened when she tickled behind his ear, unaware and uncaring of the tension in the room.

She felt envy for the small bunny rabbit.

“You gave him up.”

“I did.”

“You let them kidnap Batman.”

“I did.”

“And...” she hesitated, pausing instep. “Warlock controls you? You think he’s got a spell on you right now?”

“I don’t think it works like that. He’s just... he’s my master, now.” It felt far too strange to say it like that, but it was true. “He would have made me give up Batman anyway. I don’t mean this to sound callous, but... what would you have done?”

“I’d save you. Whatever deal I needed to, I’d get you the hell away from him.” She sighed tiredly, looking up at the ceiling of their shared hotel suite. “And that’s doing the exact opposite of my training. I’m supposed to do whatever I can to save the citizens, but our fellow peers are fair game, I guess. Sure, working together, we’re a team, but when shit goes sideways, every super for themselves.”

“Zatanna...”

“I know, I know! I mean, that’s not what they tell us exactly, but... our options are limited. We don’t live by the same rules. I’m not supposed to be a hostage. When I get kidnapped, it’s ‘getting close to the enemy.’ I mean, I should know the risks, right? I’m a soldier. We’re soldiers. But if anything ever happened to you, Rachel, then I’m getting you back. Diana taught me what Batman didn’t want to.
We dedicate our lives to this, that doesn’t mean it’s forfeit. We are not fodder. Titans stand together.”

She turned expectantly towards the violet-haired half-demon, a hand on her hips. “Which – I guess – is why we have to get him back. We need the rest of the team for this.”

Raven chewed on her lip, her hand stilled against the bunny’s downy white fur. “Are you going to – tell them anything?”

“Batman was kidnapped, end of story. I don’t think Diana would be too mad at you, but it’s not something they need to know, yet. Plus it’s – it’s kinda embarrassing, y’know?”

Raven could see the vulnerability in the older girl’s eyes, and felt a tinge of remorse.

Zatanna, for all of her meta-human abilities, was not as powerful as the rest of the Titans – and how could she? She was the only one without natural flight, super strength, speed, teleportation and... well, firepower. She was a girl with a spell book. Never mind she was the only one with the ability to use it, and it was what set her apart from normal people – it didn’t compare to the Titans.

“Diana and Batman saw the potential in me.” It was barely above a whisper, but Raven could hear it easily. It was another thing that Zatanna didn’t have – super hearing. “I don’t have much, but I know I can help. I’m not doubting he would’ve tried to save me in his own special way, but the man’s so goddamn stubborn, it hurts him sometimes. I’m glad you took the shortcut, but there’s no telling what he has in store for him, or you.”

“Do we have a plan?”

“Hey, I’ve got to be good for something, right? I’ve got a plan. I noticed it when he was choking me.” She crossed her arms, her denim clad rear bumping against the dresser, standing across from her. “I told you that he had to be getting his power from something, and he didn't even put a concealment spell on it. That ring. I sensed a lot of power in that ring. I think that’s where he gets all that magic. And we’re gonna steal it.”

“We? You don’t want me to sit this one out? I won't be of much help if he knows I'm there. I don't want to hurt you.”

She shook her head, reaching behind her to run her fingers around the rim of her top hat. “No. If he’s gonna control you, he can apparently just call for you from anywhere. I’ve got a better idea in mind.”

Captain James Gordon was utterly and completely stupefied. Really, he was stunned more than a spell could ever achieve.

The day started hellishly, and it all went downhill from there. He had seen a lot of things on his normal beat, but not quite as bizarre as what he was seeing now.

Or, rather, did not see.

Checking the transceiver every other minute, sending out a signal to the beat cops and getting completely calm reactions back, he wondered, for a few seconds, if all of them were crooked.

It was impossible. It was inconceivable that absolutely everyone that escaped Blackgate – and it was a considerable number – had decided to lay low.

All of them. Not one crime relating to Blackgate had been committed since the breakout, and not one escapee caught.
Well, sure, there were some reports of shoplifting, but even that caused some massive confusion. Blackgate held the worst of the worst, and getting them off the streets were priority, so reports of shoplifting food and other necessities took a backseat.

And then the reports started rolling in. All of them about the same household appliances – utensils, toilet paper, food, clothes, shaving cream and razors – all by nameless, faceless men. Not one detail could be shared by eye-witnesses, except that they were all men. One store employee managed to get out that he could be wearing orange, but it couldn’t be corroborated.

Former robbers, murderers, rapists, gangsters and drug addicts and dealers, possibly armed and dangerous, all planning - what? Bingo night?

With a tired grimace, he stomped out his last cigarette and went down from the roof, ready to take a shower and head home.

Maybe take Vicki up on that apartment offer in Metropolis?

An hour later, his hand was on his trench coat when he paused.

Wait.

“No...”

Abruptly turning around, he marched towards the commissioner’s office. Without preamble, he let himself in, bursting through the door.

“Gordon – what the fuck are you – “

“Save the reprimands for later,” he said forcefully, reaching over his desk and turning on the radio. “You need to hear this.”

“Previously, I told you that the Warlock was arrested and detained at the prison, and Commissioner Gillian Loeb, and our impeccably ignorant Mayor Wilson Klass, refused to give him a trial or meet with the Femme Fatale...”

“Jesus, Gordon. Rub the salt in, whydoncha? You tryin’ to get fired?”

The Captain only grunted, staring hard at the radio broadcast by Vicki Vale. He didn’t know where the specific part of the message was, and it had been playing on repeat since the live broadcast (which they were still nowhere close to finding the source location, and thus, no way to shut it down). “You need to hear this, Loeb,” he repeated, ignoring the bottle of half-finished Jack Daniels on his desk. He could’ve used a drink, too.

"Gotham has never been safer than it has in years. There have been safeguards put in place to ensure such a promise. Let me preface this breaking news at that. Whether you choose to believe it, or not, is up to you."

"Now why would she say something like that?" he questioned, shaking his head. It seemed so obvious, now. "They broke out a prison! Why tell them something like this unless it was just to screw with us?"

“- surrounded the prison in thick vines, not unlike the pit that holds the lives of thirty-seven men in blue in the Bowery.”

“What? You think I forgot, dammit?”
“No. It’s not what we forgot. It’s what we didn’t pay attention to.” He turned up the volume.

“He sends along a message, which I will read for you: ‘I have branded you. Your control has been willed over to me. You will find the consequences of your actions soon enough. I believe in second chances, but you won’t live to see a third if you don’t heed my words. Stand down. Do not fight. And if you have a problem with that, then find me.’”

He looked up at the still-confused commissioner. “That message wasn’t for us. It was for the criminals. He’s controlling them. He’s controlling all of them.”

Understanding finally dawned. “Oh,” he eventually muttered. “So that was what Julian was ranting about.”


“He said he can’t kill. Says he wants to, but he just can’t. Wanted us to give him a knife to prove it.”

“I...” he hesitated. “I think we should. Put me in there with him.”

Harleen fell back into the couch, sighing happily. “That was productive. And exhausting!”

Pamela moved to lay across her lap, resting her head on the expanded couch’s armchair. “I think we deserve a break.”

“Not yet.” With a tired groan, the body of a fully dressed and disguised Batman rolled out of the darkness into the well-lit living room, in front of their couch. Harry followed, fading into the room seamlessly, and leaned against the wall.

The two girls didn’t move, looking at the caped man dispassionately. “Can’t wait ‘til tomorrow?” Harleen muttered, not having the energy to even change out of her suit. “Stop time again or something. It can wait.”

Ivy was compelled to agree with her girlfriend, but she was curious about something. Lazily reaching up to stroke her partner’s neck, she tilted her head towards the unmoving body. “I’ve got nothing to say to him. But we should be prepared for the backlash, and ask him who to expect.”

Harleen yawned, stretching her arms out. “If they haven’t caught us yet, they won’t find us now that we’re laying low.”

Selina, absently kicking out her leg as she plopped herself down on the arm of the chair closest to them, leaned forward. “I wouldn’t mind knowing the identity of our new friend.”

Edward, standing behind the couch, pursed his chapped lips. “For once, we agree on something, my felonious feline friend.”

Vicki delicately wandered in from the kitchen, her posture stiff. “What do you plan to do with him?”

“Nothing too bad,” Harry reassured her, noticing her tense stance, “not torturing him or anything.” He crossed his arms, his trusted holly wand twisting in his fingers. Just in case. “But we need to put him somewhere.”

Biting his lip in thought, he took a glance around the packed room, realizing he was perfectly placed as the night’s entertainment piece. “Perhaps we need a telly as well, while we’re laying low. Keep ourselves updated beyond our mutual friend’s inside information. I think it’s time for some expansion.” He looked at Ivy expectantly, and she nodded easily.
“You don’t need my permission, you know,” she murmured, her voice tinted with humour. “Unless you think it’s dangerous magic, or there’s a sacrifice involved otherwise, go for it.” Her words were sincere, and it showed just how much faith she had in him.

Selina pursed her lips in annoyance. It didn’t seem like Harry had a ‘Knocking Before Entering’ policy, as she was told just the previous day. Hell, it almost seemed like it was his house as well! (An ‘Entering before Thrusting’ policy, she amended with a silent grimace.)

“I’ve really got to work on breaking these stereotypes you folks have on magic,” Harry muttered, waving his wand about the room. “Sure, there’s blood magic. But there is a such thing as too much blood. Trust me on that. Capacious Extremis!”

For the umpteenth time that day, Harley felt like her head was spinning. In an instant, she felt like she was shrinking, as the walls rolled backwards, and the ceiling she was staring at suddenly rose and expanded.

Everyone else felt the effects, absently holding onto the nearest furniture and doorframe as the room morphed and grew. Physically, they weren’t moving at all, the furniture staying the same size, but it was quite disorienting.

Harry lowered his wand, pointedly ignoring Harley’s glare. “Perhaps a heads up, huh?”

She huffed. “Perhaps.”

Jonathan, his blue eyes shifting about, sat stoically in the lone armchair off to the side. “Might have been able to shackle him to the wall before using such a technique.” He grunted under the eyes that fell on him. “Just a thought.”

“As much as I enjoy the idea of seeing if our local vigilante has the same power as Plastic Man, I think we may need him alive. He had a wealth of knowledge that even I have not uncovered – yet.” Edward sauntered around the couch and looked down at the knocked-out hero, scowling. “We’ve not had many run-ins, but he’s always cheated at every altercation. I need to know how.”

“Cheated,” Harley deadpanned. “Sure. That’s how he beats you.” Running her fingers through Pam’s bright red locks, her head fell back again. Her tiredness quickly got her used to the new height of the ceiling fan. “I’ve never looked forward to Summer break ending so much in my life.”

That got a chuckle out of Ivy. “Tired of the rebel game, dear?”

“No... not really. It’s been a lot of fun. But not very mentally stimulating, you know? It’s been a hell of a workout these past few days. More used to a balance. It’s been a little hectic.” She gave a little smile, not that anyone could see it. ”And I kinda miss dance class.”

The green-skinned vixen nuzzled her head against Harley’s stomach, tickling her chin. “Hey,” she whispered, getting her attention. “Any time you want to take a break, you can. We’re all taking a break right now, but you can take as long as you want.”

“Relax, Pammy.” She yawned again, “Just want a little nap, and I’ll be good.” With a peaceful smile, she closed her eyes and drifted off.

A silence settled upon the group of villains. Only the soft slumbering of Harleen Quinzel and Bruce Wayne overtook the sound, both exhausted, both feeling the effects of a war on opposite sides; one in defeat, one in victory.

Both - when fully restored - ready to wake up and start anew, reinvigorated for their cause.
Ivy leaned up and stood from the couch. “Poor girl. The last few days have been adventurous for us.” She looked back and winked at Harry, who let out a quiet chuckle. Turning to the rest of the room, she explained easily, “The Sun gives me the strength I need, and Harry has magic to fuel him. Harley is something special, but she’s still human.” Her smile radiated at Harley like she was the Sun herself. “She’s so much more than that, though. Harry, Selina... you both heard what she said at the prison, when she was in disguise. She didn’t tell me any of that. But I had a feeling.”

~From Chapter 12: Blackgate~

*Doctor Young was confident in her tone; unflinching in her candor. “You kept boasting your partners up, while putting yourself down, under the pretenses of sarcasm and the like,” she explained clinically. “You have confidence issues. You feel like you contribute the least to the team, and you make up for it with being the class clown. You use jokes to throw people off, and your wits to turn the tables around. However, beyond that, you overcompensate your abilities to impress others. You believe your rite of passage is to serve as the distraction.”*

'Dudley Vernon' bit 'his' lip in thought, before nodding. “You’re absolutely right. I’m not the most gifted member on my team. I mean, I’ve got my own skill set – perks that’ll make an international spy bow his head in shame – but I’m no superhuman. Just yesterday, I was trying to do magic, of course to no avail. I even had a little bit of a crisis this morning. Until yesterday, I liked to think I was the smartest in the room, or at least a chance at the title. Before that, I was trying to work on my stealth. Sneaking missions go a long way. And then the freakin’ mistress of sneaking joined our little team. So, all in all, I’ve got problems. For a long time, I’ve been searching to find something all my own. It's just not enough. I'm... just not... enough.” He sniffed, his hand lifting away from the invisible watch on his wrist.

She didn't know at the time, but Harry, Ivy, and Selina had caught every word, no matter how hard she tried to block her communication.

Harry blamed himself. It wasn't in her surface thoughts for him to pick up; it came out subconsciously, and she must've been aware of it to the point where it fit in her plan perfectly. “I’ve been meaning to bring that up. I just... didn’t know how. I felt like that, once, but I didn’t have an answer for it, then.”

“We’ve all felt helpless,” Selina shrugged, “It’s only human. Meta or not, we all have vulnerabilities. I think. That girl you met – Raven, was it? – She seemed pretty helpless for a second. We had Zatanna, and of course, Exhibit C.” Her eyes darted to the Batman, his unmoving form rising and falling with every breath. “We’ve all got our vices.” She looked up to Ivy, smiling tightly. “But out of all of us, she’s got the most strength.”

Pamela reached down, stroking her girlfriend’s cheek. “Yes, she does. And she thinks she’s proven that today.” She giggled, filling the room with her melodious tone even as she tried not to be too loud. "She proved it to me the day we met. She may have forgotten how wonderful she is; I didn't.”

Riddler shook his head at the uncomfortable amount of comfort in the room, removing his bowler hat and resting it in his lap. Being new to the group, even he could tell who kept the team together. It might have been ambiguous on who might be the leader, but the glue was quite clear to him.
Wordlessly, Harley was lifted from the couch, and Harry steadily floated her towards her – their bedroom, following behind her. She curled into a ball in mid-air, her smile a bit wider, her slumber more restful.

Ivy looked down, with crossed arms, poking her bare toe at the unconscious body of the Batman. “She’s certainly stronger than this asshole.”

“So, what do we do?” Vicki questioned to the room, tentatively stepping closer. “You said you weren’t torturing him, and you weren’t killing him. What purpose does he serve after interrogation? What should I report?”

With a lazy snap of her fingers, Pamela stood back from the body, motioning Vicki to do the same.

In seconds, a long green tendril slithered in from the hallway, creeping towards the prone form, while several others followed. They watched with rapt attention, save for Ivy, while the tendrils began to feel out the man in the uniform – slowly digesting him, item by item, sensing and detecting the imminent danger that was an unconscious Batman.

“There is no danger,” Pamela told the room, shivering lightly, “So for the moment, there is no need for him. His associates will no doubt look for him, and... we might make some enemies that none of us have ever faced. As loathe as I am to say it, we can’t kill him. That would be going too far, too fast. But we also need him silenced.” Making a motion, the vines began to wrap around him more quickly. “I recommend a cocoon.”

Edward grunted. “I almost expected an overly sized Venus Flytrap.”

She wasn’t going to give him the satisfaction of telling him that she had considered it. “I’m not putting him in my Garden, and we need to keep an eye on him. For the record, you’ll get a non-lethal shock if you try to remove the mask, so... don’t.” Kicking the belt - yes, the one and only belt - to the side, she left for the doorway as he rose to hang from the ceiling. “Discuss amongst yourselves. Best game plan gets a prize. Don’t stay up too late.”

So in one single room, a thief, a puzzler, a scientist, a reporter, and a cat, laying across the back of a snow leopard, stared at the man dressed as a bat, wrapped in a cocoon.

Finally, Scarecrow laughed, and all nearby cringed at the unusual sound. “I think I just thought of the perfect joke.”

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**Author's Note:** I mean, it's no *Choices, Choices* (And really, what is?), but I like this chapter. It's more of a setup than anything else, but there's a *lot* of setup in this.

Extended Author's Notes (Over at the blog) has been updated. A nice quicknotes guide to the story so far.

Please Comment and/or Review. Please. Feedback is my lifeblood.

And, if you don't mind, check out the major renovations at the website. I've been real busy, and I hope you all like the new look.
Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!