Dominus Mundi: The King of Kings (REWRITE)

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Summary

As Harry's third year begins, a great darkness from the distant past emerges, seeking to engulf the feeble light of the present. Now, it stands on Harry's shoulders the survival of the Anemid dynasty and of the remnants of the old Roman Empire as well.

This story has been abandoned and archived here from FF.net.

Notes

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- Inspired by Dominus Mundi: The King of Kings by DarthImperiusArchive (DarthImperius)
Chapter 1 - The Queen and the Prince

Great Palace, Augustaion, Constantinople

The year was 1993, and the month of August had just begun. This date was of great interest for the woman resting inside the palace, for she knew that soon enough, her grandson would be returned to her at last. For her, it was perhaps the most joyous moment of the last years, and only surpassed by the return of her long-lost daughter. This woman was Maria, the sovereign of the United Kingdom of Portugal, Africa and the Algarves, and Empress Dowager of the Roman Empire.

Her husband Alexander, the emperor, had died several years ago, and she had been left as regent over the empire, a task that while seemingly difficult came with a rather agreeable set of privileges. It had been unfortunate that he had been unable to meet his daughter once more, having died before she had retuned.

When Maria, her daughter, had been kidnapped by those damned revolutionaries there had been nothing she could do, but to hope and pray for her survival and safety. Yet when she discovered that her daughter had been in Britain, and that she had discovered her true heritage on her own, she felt great joy and pride. But now, history seemingly repeated itself, and after the murder of her daughter and son-in-law, their son was also kept away from his true family, or at least what remained of it.

Maria was inside the palace's small library, the old woman sitting on an armchair reading a book while warmed by a blanket. Despite being resilient, the woman's age had made her a bit sensitive to the temperature, and on this cold night it was the only way for her to feel any warmth inside the library. She was fully immersed in the book, old eyes reading and memorizing the words, ignoring the silent surroundings. At least until she heard the door of the library being opened and the footsteps of someone approaching her.

The newcomer went towards the armchair, and when he was close enough, the man knelt.

"Your Most Faithful Majesty, I bring news to you." He said, "From the council."

Maria looked man, carefully placing the book on her lap.

"What do they want?"

"The council wishes to inform you that they have everything prepared for His Highness's recovery, and that if you so wish, they shall act as soon as possible," informed the man.

The old monarch kept her face clear of any expression, but inside she smiled.

"Inform the council that they are not to act rashly. Have them wait for the correct moment to act, and when the opportunity presents itself… Also, tell them that my grandson is to be brought here, as this is where he will be staying," she informed. "Make sure that all of his possessions are brought as well."

The man nodded.

"It shall be done, Your Majesty."
"You may go then."

The man rose and left the library, but not before bowing to the regent, leaving the old witch with her books and the warm blanket. But with her was also a profound sense of joy, and she could not help but smile slightly.

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It had been two days since Harry had ran away from the Dursleys and was rescued by the Knight Bus. The events following his arrival at the Leaky Cauldron had been rather strange, as Harry was not expecting to find the Minister for Magic inside the pub. The fact that the Minister seemingly thought that the escaped convict Sirius Black was after him was alarming to Harry, but the young teen was not stupid enough to go into the streets of muggle London after the warning. Since Black was one of Voldemort's followers, it was clear that he would possibly seek to avenge his fallen master. And if what Fudge had said was right, then the years in Azkaban had perhaps warped Black's mind even more, meaning he was possibly even more unstable than he had been before was captured.

Deciding that spending all the time walking around his room was a waste, Harry decided to visit Gringotts and withdraw a moderate amount of money, enough that he could buy a few things that would allow him to enjoy better his time in Diagon Alley before returning to Hogwarts. One of his stops was Flourish and Blotts, where he discovered a rather neglected section with books of foreign origin, but which had been translated into English. Amongst these books was a collection called the *Encyclopædia Veneficia*, apparently published in 1890 and written by a Prussian scholar called Ernst Dietrich.

Harry realized that there were three volumes, and upon looking at the price he noticed that they were rather cheap, especially for Flourish and Blotts standards. Could it be that the owner of the shop wanted to get rid of them? In any case, it was a deal that Harry could not simply ignore, and he would not help but feel as if he had to possess that collection. Collecting them from the shelf, Harry went towards the shopkeeper to pay for them went to pay them, noticing that the man looked at him strangely, almost as if he was buying a fairy tale book. Harry decided to ignore the man, and simply paid the books, before returning to the Leaky Cauldron.

Once inside his room, Harry sat on the bed, and began to read bits from the three books. The more he read, the more he realized how much information the books had, and despite being clearly outdated, having been written in the 19th century, the three volumes had a lot of information that was not just in text but in images as well, such as using rather detailed drawings to show the fashion used by certain wizard cultures across the centuries, sections dedicated to things such as heraldry, flora, fauna, architecture, and many other topics.

"This must have been the work of a lifetime," thought Harry as he continued to read. "Hermione will love this."

Eventually, he began to notice that many of the topics mentioned and at least directed the reader to the Roman Empire section of the encyclopaedia. Realizing that he was learning more by reading these three books than by attending the History of Magic classes, Harry opened the third volume intent on finding why the Roman Empire was receiving so much attention. And as he reached the page where the topic was, Harry's eyes widened in surprise, for the article was at least six pages long. But still, Harry's curiosity got ahead of him, and so he began to read the article.
The Roman Empire

The successor of the Roman Republic, the entity known as the Roman Empire (Imperium Romanum in Latin, and Basileía Rhōmaíōn in Greek), was for all intents and purposes founded in the year of 27 AD, when the Senate of the Republic gave Gaius Octavius the title of Princeps Senatus with proconsular imperium, thus beginning the period of history known today as the Principate, characterized by a clear attempt at maintaining republican traditions and denying the monarchical situation that the Empire had fell into. It was followed by the period known as the Dominate, started by Emperor Diocletian who declined the use of Princeps and became the first emperor to use the title of Dominus (translated as either master or lord). With the passage of time, this political system would evolve into what may be identified as an Absolute monarchy in the eastern half of the Roman Empire, and would later engulf the entire European and western Asian community of wizards with the Treaty of Ravenna in 801, presided over by Empress Irene due to the machinations of Leo III, the muggle Pope, which led into the eventual sovereignty of the Roman Empire over the wizarding community of the known world.

The capital of the Empire changed places several times, from Rome to Ravenna in the Western Empire, and from Rome to Constantinople in the Eastern Empire. (...) While the Ottoman Turks captured the muggle Constantinople, the conflict did not affect the magical Constantinople due to its location inside the Bosphorus Cavern. (...) The Roman Empire was among the most powerful economic, cultural, political and military forces in the world of its time, and still is today. It was dissolved in the muggle world in 476 AD (Western Empire) and in 1453 AD (Eastern Empire), although it was restored in 1832.

Today, the authority of the Roman Empire is challenged by the International Confederation of Wizards, which was founded after the attempted coup by Pierre Bonaccord, at the time a member of the Regency Council of the Empire. His family connections led to him being assisted by the Ministry of Magic of Great Britain and Ireland and the government of the northern half of France. The public opinion of Bonaccord led to a civil war in France, which ended with the establishment of the Northern French Republic, which became a founding member of the International Confederation (at the time known only as the Franco-British Confederation), and the reestablishment of the Kingdom of Aquitaine, which remained under Roman rule. (...) Two of the main points of the conflict comes from the views on blood purity and religion, the former being regarded with great importance in the International Confederation and having little impact in the Empire, while the latter is an issue which mostly affects the Empire, with little importance in the Confederation.

While the mainstream religion in the Empire is the syncretic Aenean faith, together with many other cults, the common religious practice in nations inside the confederation is what the non-magicals identify as "neo-paganism", and which Imperial theologists describe as "flawed and established without proper research". This type of modern paganism is known to be popular amongst the families which identify as "pure-blooded", and has no known adherence amongst the less conservative population.

(…)

As of today, only the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, the Northern French Republic, the United States of America, and great part of Latin America, excluding Brazil, are part of the International Confederation, while every other magical state and nation is a member of the Roman Empire, and this includes the Goblin Conglomeration in Antarctica, a member since the Pact of Jeddah in 1796. (...) In all, the Roman Empire serves as the spiritual successor to the Al-Antidian
Empire, which once reigned over the entirety of the ancient world.

(...)

As of the publication of this work, the current senior emperor is Romanos V, who succeeded his brother Alexios VI, having his son Alexios VII as co-emperor.

Harry's reaction to the topic was of a tame surprise. He had no idea that the Roman Empire still existed, both in the muggle and wizarding worlds. He heard minor things about Rome back during primary school, but nothing too major. Oddly enough, none of this was mentioned in Hogwarts, or any of his school books. Not even Hermione had mentioned it once. Its existence was a bit surreal, and so was the fact that Britain was in a conflict with it. Still, the books were from the 19th century, so perhaps relations between the Empire and the Confederation had improved since then.

Or perhaps not, considering the stubbornness of wizards.

Harry looked at the clock on the wall, and realized that it was already midday, and that he was getting somewhat hungry. He left the books inside his room, and went downstairs, only to find the pub somewhat empty. Tom was at the counter, seemingly waiting for someone to arrive, and he then noticed that Harry was approaching him.

"Ah, Mr. Potter, already down for lunch?" Asked the old innkeeper.

"Yeah." Replied Harry, "Are you serving lunch already Tom?"

"Quite so." Said the man, "What will you have, Mr. Potter?"

Harry glanced shortly at the menu, before deciding.

"I'll have the Pea soup." He said.

"Very well. Anything else?"

"For now, no." Replied the young wizard, "I'll think about it."

Tom nodded and Harry moved to one of the tables, realizing that there was a discarded copy of the Daily Prophet on top of it. As he sat down, Harry grabbed the newspaper, and the first thing he saw was the screaming face of Sirius Black, a now common feature of the Daily Prophet. Deciding to ignore the main article, Harry moved on to other topics, focusing on the Sports section.

Soon enough, Tom came with his pea soup and warned him that it was possibly hot. Harry thanked the man and continued to read the Daily Prophet for a while. He only stopped when he felt a sharp pain on his hand, and immediately he discarded the newspaper, realizing what exactly had caused him said pain.

It was a pea.

"What the..?" He nearly shouted in surprise.

"It's the pea soup, Mr. Potter." Said Tom rather amused, "You have to eat it before it eats you."

Harry grabbed the pea which was biting him, eating it himself.
"Thanks Tom," said Harry, a bit amused as well.

He began to eat the soup, and it soon became apparent that he was not going to be eaten by the peas. Eventually, more people came into the Leaky Cauldron and the pub soon became full. However, as Harry finished the soup, he noticed that a strange looking man was looking him. He was rather unnerved by the man, and decided that it would be best if he left the pub. Harry went to the counter and gave the money to Tom, before heading out into the alley. As he walked through the near-empty street, Harry was distracted by a poster of the Firebolt broom and stood there admiring it for a while. He was only distracted by his thoughts when he heard someone clearing his throat.

Turning around, Harry saw the same man who had been looking at him strangely inside the Leaky Cauldron.

"Are you Harry Potter?" Asked the man in a rather strange accent.

"Erm, yes…?" Said Harry, in a way that sounded more like a question, his hand slowly moving towards his wand.

"I am Dareios Kyrkos." Spoke the man, "Forgive me for intrusion, but I would like to speak with you."

Ah, so this man was likely Greek. That still brought more questions to Harry's mind. Why exactly did a Greek man want to speak with him?

"What do you want with me?"

"Is important business." Said the man, "Not for public ears. There is café near the bank. We can speak there with privacy magic."

Despite being suspicious of the man, Harry still wanted to know what exactly he wanted with him. He nodded, and followed to man to the small café near Gringotts. Once the two had chosen a table, Dareios cast the privacy spell.

"Now, what exactly do you want with me?" Asked the young wizard.

"As I said, I am Dareios Kyrkos, agent of the Empire. I am here under orders from Regent Maria."

"Regent Maria?" Asked Harry, confused.

"She is the ruler of the Empire," Explained the man, "Powerful witch as well."

"Ok, but what does she want with me?"

"We are under orders from her to recover you."

Harry's eyes widened in shock.

"What!? Why!?" He nearly shouted before his tone turned into a hiss,

"What does she want with me? And what do you mean with recover?"

"I do not know." Said the man, "The reasons were not given to me, only the orders."

Harry was not certain what he was feeling, but it had to be a mixture of nervousness and irritation.
"All I have been told, is that Regent wants to meet with you and she has been waiting a long time for such an opportunity." Said Dareios, "I have the means here for you to meet with her, if you so wish. I assure that no harm will come to you."

The man removed a silver coin from his coat, and placed it on top of the table.

"What's this?" Asked Harry looking at the coin.

"I believe you here call it a portkey." Informed the man "It transports someone from one place to another, and this one will bring you to the Ministry of Internal Affairs in Constantinople, where your identity will be confirmed. After that, if you are indeed the one she seeks, you shall be sent to her current location."

Harry looked at the coin with more suspicion than ever, but something inside him told him that he could trust the man. But still, part of him was still suspicious.

He crossed his arms, looking at the man with a blank expression. "Prove it," he said. "How do I know that you're not Sirius Black using a Polyjuice Potion?"

Dareios turned around, looking at the interior of the café, noticing that it was mostly empty. "Come inside with me," said the apparently Greek man, getting up from his chair. "Do you know what an Unbreakable Vow is?"

Harry got up from his chair as well, looking at the man with a confused expression. "Unbreakable Vow? Never heard of that."

"It is contract made between two wizards, but requires another one to seal it," explained the man. "If the terms of the vow are broken, the one who did so dies."

Harry stopped. "And... you're willing to do that?"

"Of course," was the simple reply.

Harry watched as Kyrkos went to speak with the man behind the counter, and after a while Dareios returned with the shop's owner.

The man's eyes immediate fell onto the boy's forehead and a rather recognizable characteristic there. "Wait, you... you're Harry Potter!"

"Yes, I am," said Harry, already used to having people know who he was. "The vow?"

"Oh, yes of course!" Said the man "Kneel and join your right hands, if you please."

The two did so, and so the shop's owner placed the tip of his wand on top of theirs.

"You have to say the terms, Mr. Potter." Stated the man. "And be careful with the wording."

Harry quickly looked at the man. "Oh, right. Well...do you, Dareios Kyrkos, swear that you are not Sirius Black, or in any way a supporter of Voldemort?"

"I do," he replied as a small red flame erupted from the wand on top of their hands and began to encircle them.

"Do you swear that what you told me outside is nothing more than the truth, or at least what you believe to be true?"
"I do."

Another stream of fire came from the wand and just like the other it began to encircle the two hands.

"Are you done Mr. Potter?" Asked the shopkeeper, to which Harry nodded.

The man removed his wand, and the streams of fire began to contract until they were absorbed by their skin. Harry let go of Dareios hand and looked at his own, seeing if the streams had left any marks. Apparently not.

The young wizard then got up and looked at the shopkeeper. "Thank you sir," he said.

"You're welcome Mr. Potter," replied the old man, who went back to the counter "Have a good day."

Harry left the café with Dareios, and once outside he looked at the man. "Ok then," he declared. "I'll go and meet with your Regent."

Dareios was certainly pleased with Harry's decision and took out the coin he had shown him before. He extended the coin to Harry, and told the young wizard to grab it. And a few moments later, neither Harry nor Dareios were in England.
A Meeting with a Logothete

Chapter 2 – A Meeting with a Logothete

Imperial District, Undercity, Constantinople

When Harry arrived, alongside Dareios, he immediately fell over, not used to magical travelling. The Roman wizard, on the other hand, remained as if he had not even moved.

"First the floo and now this..." thought the young wizard as he got up, assisted by the older wizard.

He looked around, and noticed that he was inside a small chamber, two doors opposite of each other, and one had a golden plaque with strange black letters. Harry looked at it from where he stood and realized that it was not written in English, but a language he did not recognize.

"Leon... Hyaleas." he tried to read, not realizing that he had just read Greek.

"That would be the Logothete of the Household." explained Dareios, before he himself realized that the young wizard had read the golden plaque "You did not tell me you could understand Greek."

Harry looked at him with confusion.

"And I can't." he said.

"You just did." said the agent, pointing at the plaque.

Harry looked at it once more, and it was then that he realized that he had indeed read the Greek words. His eyes widened in surprise, but before he could say anything else, the door he had been looking at opened, and an old man stepped out of the room.

"I thought I heard your voice Kyrkos." said the man, before looking for a second at Harry "Is this the one?"

Right now, Harry did realize that the man was speaking in another language, very likely Roman, and he was somehow understanding it.

"Yes, sir." replied Dareios nodding.

"Good. I'll take it from here," said Hyaleas. "You are dismissed."

The agent simply nodded and apparated to somewhere else, leaving Harry alone with the Roman official.

"Mr. Potter, please follow me." said the man, entering his office.

Harry followed the man, and entered the rather comfortable office. The Logothete used his wand to close the door, and sat at the desk.

"Do take a seat." he spoke, noticing that Harry was still standing.

Harry did so, sitting in front of the man.
"I am Leon Hyaleas, Logothete of the Household of the Roman Empire."

"Logothete?" asked Harry, wondering what the position was supposed to be.

"I am a… minister, of sorts," said the man. "In normal circumstances, you would have this meeting with the Great Intermediary, but he is currently away from the city, therefore unavailable. As such, he requested me to carry out the orders of the regent. I have been informed of the reasons you are here, but I suspect that you have not, am I correct?"

"Yes, sir." replied Harry, somewhat nervously.

"My knowledge regarding education in countries within the Confederation is rather…lacking. But I assume you haven't heard of what many people in continental Europe call the Great Time of Troubles?"

Harry shook his head.

"However, I am sure you have heard of the dark wizard known as Grindelwald, am I correct?"

"Yes, I heard of him." Replied the young wizard "He was the one who was defeated by Dumbledore, right?"

"Albus Dumbledore may have been the one to defeat Grindelwald in a duel, but do not assume that it was the man who dismantled Grindelwald's support base." stated Hyaleas "That unfortunate task fell onto the hands of the governments of Europe. It took a while, but we eventually succeeded in eliminating Grindelwald's supporters and allies. However, what followed was perhaps even worse."

"What happened?"

"As I said before, we call it the Great Time of Troubles. It began when those you call muggle-borns and a minority of half-bloods, with anti-monarchical political views, likely influenced by the communist expansion, attempted to use the period after Grindelwald's defeat to assault the Empire." explained the Logothete "They called themselves the Revolutionaries, and their greatest success, was when they kidnapped the new-born heir to the Roman and Portuguese thrones, Maria Anemas."

"What happened to her?" asked Harry.

"She was taken away to the Confederation territories, and brought to the United Kingdom, where she was placed in an orphanage." said the man "The revolutionaries demanded the abdication of both the emperor and his wife from their respective thrones, but while they were more than willing to do so, the people had a rather different reaction."

"Different reaction?" questioned Harry, rather curious.

"The retaliation against the Revolutionaries was… brutal." said Hyaleas "There were riots, and those escalated into massacres against supporters of the rebellion. Things only returned to normal after the leaders of the Revolutionaries were killed."

It was strange to think that the continental European wizarding world rose against a group of terrorists, while in Britain Voldemort and his supporters were only opposed by the Ministry of Magic and Dumbledore.

"What happened to Maria after that?" asked Harry, remembering the kidnapped infant.
"She only returned years after her kidnapping, having been found and informed in a manner similar to yours," said the man. "I already worked here in the ministry when she was brought to this very building to have her identity checked, and now the same procedure will be applied to you."

Harry watched as Logothete Hyaleas went towards a cabinet, and returned with a set of papers and a rather bland looking quill, before returning to the same cabinet, and coming back with a small wooden box. He sat down, and opened the box, removing from it a strange cylindrical object, with a tiny glass receptacle in the middle.

"Give me your hand, Mr. Potter." said the Logothete.

Harry did so, and the logothete placed the object in Harry's palm, where he suddenly felt a sharp pain, more intense than when he had been bitten by the pea. He looked at the glass receptacle, and noticed that it had been filled with a red liquid.

"My blood?" he wondered, as the logothete removed the object from his hand.

The Logothete took a seal-like object from the box, and connected the two, Harry watching as the blood inside the receptacle was transferred from one object to the other. When the blood had been transferred, the man pointed his wand at the glass receptacle, and used a spell to clean it completely, before placing it inside the box. He took one of the papers, and stamped it with the seal, leaving behind a red symbol which Harry could not recognize.

He then gave the same paper to Harry, alongside the quill which he had brought.

"Sign your full name here, Mr. Potter." instructed the man.

Harry took the quill, before writing 'Harry James Potter' in the piece of paper. As soon as he did so, the feather of the quill turned black, before assuming a yellowish colour a few seconds after.

"What's wrong with the feather?" asked the young wizard.

"I'll tell you after this is over." said the man grabbing another paper and giving it to Harry "Now, write what is there below the name you wrote."

Harry took the paper, and looked at it, realizing that it was a rather long name, longer than that of Dumbledore himself, and conveniently written in English... mostly.

Henry Alexander James Michael Gabriel Raphael Doukas Angelos Komnenos Palaiologos Anemas

It took a while for him to write that name without errors, and when he did so, the yellow feather turned black once more, and this time it settled into a bluish colour. It seemed that this was the intended result, as Logothete Hyaleas had a rather pleased look on his face.

"Well, it seems we got the correct person." stated the man, taking the piece of paper from Harry.

"I'm sorry... but... what exactly was that?" asked Harry "And why did I have to write that name?"

"That, Mr. Potter, was the identity test." explained the Logothete "When the feather turned yellow,
it was because despite the truthfulness of the name you wrote, it was not your real name."

That surprised Harry. So his name was… not his name?

"The second name, on the other hand, was provided to us by the Empress herself." Continued the man "And when the feather became blue, it was because it recognized the name you wrote as your own."

Harry looked at the man as if he had suddenly grown a second head.

"…What?" spoke the young wizard after a moment of silence "Why do have such a long name?"

"I'm afraid I'm not the best person to answer that." Replied the Logothete "I am not exactly knowledgeable in certain cultural naming conventions. I do know however, that one of the reason comes from the last two names."

The man gave the paper back to Harry, and the young boy looked at it.

"Last two names…" he though as he looked at them.

Harry could not see what was so special about the "Palaiologos Anemas", and he simply remained there, oblivious to their significance.

"Sir, could you explain what exactly these names mean?" asked Harry.

"The Palaiologoi were a dynasty which ruled over the Empire centuries ago. Their emperors took on the name of previous diansties to enhance their own prestige. That's where the 'Doukas Angelos Komnenos Palaiologos' comes from," he explained. "The Anemids are a cadet branch of the Palaiologoi who continued this tradition."

Harry was already seeing where this conversation was going, and he could feel himself growing a bit anxious.

"The girl I mentioned earlier, Maria, was adopted by a muggle family, and given the name of Lily Evans." said the man, resulting in Harry receiving something he could describe as a mental punch "As such, you are the grandson of the late emperor and his wife, the Empress Dowager Maria, and their sole heir as well."

Harry was not sure of what to make of that… how to even react. He simply stared blankly at the man, slowly managing to process coherent thoughts and sentences.

"But… but how can that be…?" he managed to say. "I… can't be… I'm just Harry Potter…"

"The test does not lie… your highness," stated Hyaleas. "You are, without doubt, the grandson of the emperor, and that is something neither you, not anyone else can deny."

Harry seemed to drown in his chair, noticing now how comfortable it really was. To Harry, thinking about the quality of the chair, was perhaps the only thing he could do now to keep his thoughts away from the consequences of the sudden revelation. Still, it was better than having to confront Sirius Black.

"What now?" asked Harry, after a moment.

"Now… you are to meet with the Empress Dowager, as per her wishes." said the Logothete "Do you wish to do so now?"
Harry thought about it. He had an actual living relative, and soon enough came the dawning realization that he was not related to the Dursleys, which meant that he had no reason to live with them. The very thought made Harry want to smile, but he was still stunned by the revelation regarding his origins.

"I guess." said the teenager.

"I have been informed that the Empress is currently in the Great Palace, the residence of the Imperial potentate," spoke the man, removing a small empty journal from a drawer "I have been given this portkey to the palace. Take it."

Harry took the journal from the logothete's hands, and examined it. It was similar to the diary of Tom Riddle, but hopefully free of a sentient memory.

"It only activates with a certain keyword." said Hyaleas "Are you certain that you will go there today?"

Harry looked at the portkey once, before deciding.

"Yes, I will."

The Logothete took a sealed envelope from the same drawer and gave it to Harry.

"Once you arrive, you are to give this to the Empress's lady-in-waiting, who is also residing in the palace." spoke the man "The activation word is 'Basileus'."

Harry nodded and got up from the chair. He extended his hand, and the older wizard got up as well, before shaking Harry's hand.

"Goodbye, Logothete Hyaleas."

"Godspeed, your highness." said the Roman.

Harry looked at the journal once more, and then he spoke.

"Basileus."
Chapter 3 – Reunion

Great Palace, Augustaion, Constantinople

When Harry arrived at the Great Palace, the first thing he did was to fall onto the ground. Getting up, Harry looked around and noticed that he had appeared in a small courtyard, and that the weather was rather… unpleasant. He could not see the sun, and the sky was filled with grey and dark clouds, the threat of rain rather obvious. There seemed to be no one around, and Harry began to wonder how exactly he was going to find the Empress's… no… his grandmother's lady-in-waiting.

He was in foreign territory and he knew nothing about the palace's layout. At the moment, the only thing he could do was to enter the palace and search for anyone, but the nervousness within him was beginning to take over. He was so focused on his worries that he did not even notice someone approaching him, only doing so when he felt a hand on his shoulder. Harry jumped in shock, and quickly turned around, only to find a middle-aged woman, dressed in rather normal yet refined clothes, and her hair having lost nearly all its colour.

"I assume you are Harry Potter?" she asked, a soft and almost non-existent accent in her speech.

He nodded. "Erm… yes, ma'am."

"I believe you were given a letter to deliver to me." said the woman in a demanding way.

Harry glanced at his right hand, and gave the sealed envelope to the woman, who took it and opened it. She stood there, reading the letter in silence, before placing it back in the envelope, and looking at Harry.

"Do follow me, your highness." spoke the woman.

Harry did so, still not used to be addressed in such a formal way.

"I am Ana da Silva, Duchess of Benavente, and lady-in-waiting of your grandmother, the Empress Regent of Rome, and Queen of Portugal," she said as they walked. "Your grandmother is yet unaware of your arrival, and will remain as such until I deem you ready to meet her."

"Until I'm ready?" he asked confused.

"Until you are properly… presentable." said the Duchess after a moment, trying to find the correct words.

And at that moment, Harry believed he knew what was coming… and he was certainly not eager for that.

It was at least an hour later when the Duchess had deemed Harry worthy of finally meeting with his grandmother. He had taken a bath and went through a rather small selection of simple but
refined clothes, suited for him. His hair remained untamed, but the Duchess was not much worried with it, far more concerned with other aspects of his apparel. When it was over, the woman stepped away from him, and observed her work, finally nodding after a few moments in approval.

"Now… listen carefully. The Empress is currently in the Eastern Courtyard, resting, and you will come with me to her." spoke the Duchess "Once there, I will inform her of your arrival and you two will be left alone, as that is most likely her wish. Also, are you able to speak Portuguese?"

"Portuguese…I don't think so.” replied Harry.

"Tendes a certeza?"

Harry realized that the woman had just spoken in another language, but he could still not understand how he was able to understand it.

"Yes, but I can understand it." he said, soon realizing he had not spoken in English.

"Well, it seems you can speak it as well, since you are doing so right now." pointed out the woman. "Regardless, your ability with the languages is a certainly a blessing, and I would make sure to use it accordingly. Do make sure to speak in Portuguese to Her Most Faithful Majesty, as it is her preferred language. Also, do make sure to use the second person of the plural when referring to her, do you understand?"

"Second person of the plural?" asked the young wizard.

"Vós," clarified the Duchess.

Harry nodded, and followed the woman, as she left the room they were in. The two walked until they reached a small antechamber with a door opened to the outside, and Harry could see an old woman sitting there in an armchair, drinking something from a cup.

"Stay here, I will go and inform her." Spoke the Duchess.

Harry nodded and watched as the woman went towards the Empress. Harry began to pace around the room, the nervousness within him growing with each passing second.

"Calm down Harry." he thought to himself "It's only your grandmother. It's not like you are going to face Voldemort again."

Eventually, the Duchess returned, a serene expression on her face.

"Go on." she said "The empress waits for you."

Harry nodded, and taking a deep breath, he entered the courtyard, heading towards the mother of his own.

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Hogwarts School, Inverness, Scotland (U.K.)

Albus Dumbledore was not having a good day. He did not know how or why, but Harry had disappeared from Diagon Alley, as if he had turned into mere mist. There was no chance of Sirius Black having caught the boy, but his contacts had affirmed that he had been last seen talking with a rather strange looking man in a café near Gringotts, before the two disappeared.
They had concluded that Harry had left Diagon Alley with the man, but where he was now and why was still a mystery to them. He feared that the man could have been Sirius Black disguised, and had told Harry some sort of lie to persuade him to follow, but that just wasn't Black's style. It had never been.

Out of James Potter's group, he and Sirius Black were the most reckless, with Peter Pettigrew following them like a loyal dog. Not surprisingly, it had been Remus who was the most prudent of them, but still got in trouble quite a few times. If there was anyone who would act in such a way, it would be Remus and not Sirius. The toll of Azkaban on Sirius Black's mind would have made the man far more…unstable that what he was when he betrayed the Potters to Voldemort.

At least that was what happened to the prisoners of Azkaban, when they spent too much time inside that place, in the company of the Dementors.

He was distracted from his thoughts when the door of his office was opened, and a small group of wizards entered. When the protection charms he had applied to Harry warned him that the young Gryffindor had left the premises of Diagon Alley, and could not detect him in the surrounding area, he had sent a small group of Hogwarts elves to call some of the surviving members of the Order of the Phoenix, so that they could help him to search for Harry.

The small group was only composed of Alastor Moody, Remus Lupin, Emmeline Vance, Hestia Jones and Kingsley Shacklebolt. He had not summoned Minerva nor Severus due to their other obligations, but if eventually they were required, he would have no other choice.

"Albus, I suppose there is a good reason for you to bring us here." grunted Moody.

"I'm afraid there is, Alastor." replied the old headmaster "It seems that Harry Potter has disappeared from Diagon Alley."

That got the attention of the newcomers, especially that of Remus.

"You don't think that…" suggested Lupin, thinking of his friend turned traitor.

"It is a possibility which I hope to be false." stated Dumbledore "I'm afraid I don't know myself of Mr. Potter possible location at the moment, but I believe that he can't be far from London."

"This hasn't been made public, has it?" asked Vance.

"Not at all. In fact, Mr. Potter disappeared less than two hours ago." replied Dumbledore "Tom, the Leaky Cauldron's bartender, has even said that he had been there eating."

"Then this is to be kept in secrecy, then." observed Kingsley.

"Indeed. It is imperative that this is not made public, especially now." answered Dumbledore "Not even Minister Fudge knows of this development, but eventually, he will learn of it. And then, the ministry will get involved, much like other unwanted parties."

They all understood what Dumbledore wanted, and they would make sure that Harry Potter was returned to safety. They had to find him before Sirius Black, or something terrible could happen. And Remus certainly did not want for the last link to one of his greatest friends to perish at the hands of a traitor.
Great Palace, Augustaion, Constantinople

Harry approached armchair where his grandmother sat, noticing that she had been reading a book, and drinking a cup of tea. The young wizard came closer, and he soon noticed that the woman was also dressed in a similar manner to that of the Duchess, yet seemingly in more comfortable clothes.

"Approach," commanded the woman, making Harry jump slightly, before obeying her.

He went right next to her, and now he could finally see how the woman looked, and he could see obvious trait that were present in his mother's face. He remembered her from the photo album that Hagrid had given to him, but it now looked as if his mother had inherited little from her own mother. His grandmother lacked his mother's green eyes, instead having brown eyes, so the green eyes were possibly from his grandfather.

"Let me see you closer." She spoke again.

Harry knelt next to her, now face to face with the old witch. She raised one of her hands, and it went straight towards Harry's face, beginning to caress it. It was a sensation foreign to Harry, never having someone doing such a thing to him. There was also a strange hint of emotion on the Empress's face, but he could not recognize it.

"His eyes…" whispered the empress, before focusing on something else. "You look so much like him."

"My father." mumbled Harry, presuming to know whom she was talking about.

"No. Not him." said his grandmother "Your grandfather."

Harry felt a strange sensation inside him. It was different for him to be compared to someone else than his father, and now his own grandmother was saying that he looked more like his own maternal grandfather, which would be an unpopular opinion in Britain. But he then realized that whatever emotion the empress was trying to suppress, was no longer in such a state.

"Henry…" said the woman, her voice trembling "Oh, my Henry!"

The aged woman hugged Harry, with all the strength she could muster, tears falling from her eyes. Harry became stiff for a moment, before melting into the embrace, soon hugging the woman as hell, not noticing the tears in his eyes as well.

They stood like that, both not wanting to let go from each other, but eventually, it was the empress who ended the hug.

"Too many years, I have waited for this." she spoke, clearing her face, but her voice still shaky "Too many disgraces that fell onto me. Your mother was taken from me twice…and now you are the last anchor I have to this world."

She took Harry's hands, grabbing onto them as if he would disappear if she did not.

"Promise-me Henry, that until my last breath, you will not be taken away from me, as your mother was."

He could hear the near-desperation in her voice, and Harry made a vow to himself that he would not let his grandmother alone in this world. She was his last family, as much he was hers.

"I promise… I promise, grandmother."
Chapter End Notes

"Tendes a certeza?" – Somewhat posh sentence which translates into English as "Are you sure?".

Ana de Jesus Oliveira de Sousa da Silva – A Portuguese noblewoman and the wife of the Duke of Benavente. She is the lady-in-waiting of Empress Maria, and during her youth she was a beater for the Braga Broomfleet Quidditch team.
Great Palace, Augustaion, Constantinople

There was little that Harry knew about his grandmother, but the woman certainly wanted to make sure that Harry was integrated into what she referred to as magical and non-magical societies. She was a rather calm person, one who could almost be classified as a pacifist of sorts, but Harry could clearly realize that she was not someone you would want to push around, or place into a corner. She was an enthusiast about the history of her and her late husband's family, and she had been eager to tell Harry everything that she knew about them.

"Why?" he asked.

The woman smiled, her eyes gazing into the skies.

"It is the fate of everyone, Henry." she spoke "And its also due to my beliefs. When my soul is in the hands of the Lord, I only hope that I am deemed worthy to be reunited with those dear to me that have departed from this land."

Now there was a term that Harry was somewhat unfamiliar with.

"Sorry, but…who is the Lord?" he asked in confusion. Was it some sort of deity that she worshipped?

Maria looked surprised at Harry, only to remember that he was utterly unfamiliar with Roman wizard culture. She got up from her chair, and Harry did the same out of respect. She motioned him to follow, and extended her arm. Harry looked at her in confusion, not knowing what he was supposed to do.

"Grab my arm." she commanded "And don't let go."

Harry looked at his grandmother's arm, and grabbed it, not with too much strength.

"Prepare yourself." she warned.

Harry turned to look at her.

"For wha-?"
And once more, Harry felt the same sensation as if he was using a portkey, except this time it was far rougher than a portkey. It was like he had been squeezed inside a tube, and was being pulled into somewhere else.

Galata District, Undercity, Constantinople

Harry landed on the floor, and he made sure to let go of his grandmother, not wanting to drag her onto the floor with him. He made sure to get up as soon as he could, and apologized to her, explaining that he was not used to such methods of transportation.

"We will have to fix that soon enough." she promised "Now, come with me."

Harry followed the old woman, not knowing where he was. He was certainly in a city, but he began to wonder why exactly his grandmother used magic to bring them to a city filled with muggles. Soon, his senses kicked in, and he began to realize that this was most likely one of those hidden cities of the wizarding world.

The two walked little, reaching a rather large and quite magnificent cathedral. The building amazed Harry, and although it was not as large as Hogwarts, it was certainly large enough to occupy at least half of the castle.

"Where are we?" asked Harry.

"This is the Undercity of Constantinople. Above us is the normal city," explained Maria "And we are now in front of the Basilica of Saint Aeneas."

"Saint Aeneas?"

"I will explain when we are inside." she said "Now, do continue to follow, Henry."

Harry continued to follow his grandmother, until the two entered the church, and Harry found himself even more amazed than when he had been before. There were many windows made in stained glass, and the light they brought into the large cathedral gave it a mystical character. Harry followed the woman towards the centre of the near-empty church, reaching an altar with a magnificent baldachin above it.

On top of the altar was a sarcophagus, made of gold and glass, allowing Harry to see the body inside. It was an old man, with a rather long beard, not as long as Dumbledore's, and dressed in rather...regal clothes. His head was resting on a pillow, with a red mantle beneath him. On his left hand was a golden staff, with a cross at the top. And on his head, was a strange hat, which Harry remembered to see on the bishops which appeared on those television programs that Mrs. Figg liked to see, when she was not bothering him with her cats.

In all, the man appeared to be sleeping, but Harry knew better. There was an inscription on the sarcophagus, but Harry was too focused on the body to notice it.

"Who is he?" asked Harry.

"This is Saint Aeneas, the prophet to whom the Lord spoke and gave His Truth," spoke the empress. "In life, he was a muggle Christian monk, who came in contact with our world because of his brother, who, unlike him, was a wizard."
"When did this happen?" asked Harry.

"Saint Aeneas lived in the 8th century, and the church was founded by his followers in 825, right after his death," explained his grandmother.

"But why is his body still like that?" asked the boy. "It should be just a skeleton, no?"

"Some say it is because God wills it to be so. Others suggest that his wizard followers cast a powerful enchantment upon the body to prevent rotting," spoke the Empress. "The first hypothesis means that the body is incorruptible, a sign of the Lord's favour over the deceased, and many believe it to be a sign of sainthood as well. The second too, suggests some sort of divine intervention, as such an enchantment would have faded by now."

Harry looked closely at the body of Saint Aeneas, still finding it surreal that after many centuries, his body was fully intact.

"I, much like many others in the Empire, am a follower of what we call the Aenean Church. It is both a perennial cult and a Christian denomination... a bit older than the muggle Catholic and Orthodox churches, since those only formally appeared in the first years of the second millennium," explained the Empress. "Your mother decided to convert shortly after she returned, and you were baptised after your birth, following Aenean tradition. Your father was... not too keen on that, but he had no choice but to accept."

"So... who is the leader of the Church?" asked Harry "I know that the Catholics have the Pope, and there is something about Queen Elizabeth in Britain, but I'm not so sure..."

"The church is governed by the Pentarchy, a group of five Patriarchs who hold primacy over the other members of the church. Each is the head of their respective patriarchate, and they do not interfere with the business of another, except in certain cases." said Maria "If we were to tell who was the leader of the Pentarchy... then I could not really tell. There is a division of sorts between those who support the Patriarch of Constantinople, while others support the Pope in Rome."

"And who do you follow?" asked the young wizard.

"I acknowledge the authority of the Pentarchy, but I respect the position of Pope Sixtus IX of Rome as a first amongst equals." she replied.

Harry stood there in silence for a few moments, looking at the resting body of Saint Aeneas, before looking at his grandmother.

"Can you... can you teach me about these... things?"

That was a request that certainly seemed to please the old monarch.

"Of course, child." she spoke "But there is much more that you will have to learn. What I told you until now is but a fragment of a much larger whole, but this is not the correct place for us to discuss such a thing. Let us return to the Great Palace, as it is a more appropriate place for us to speak. Also, I believe that we have a few things to take care of, before we can truly begin"

Harry nodded and grabbed his grandmother's arm, and a moment later, the two had apparated back into the palace.
Cornelius Fudge was sitting inside his office, going through a rather ominous stack of papers that he had to review and sign. It was good to be the Minister for Magic, but sometimes it was a bit tiring. Good thing that he had Dumbledore for the more pressing issues. The man certainly knew how to deal with the more…unwanted situations.

But of all the things the he expected to happen today, one of them was certainly not to have a house-elf suddenly appear inside his office, holding a letter on its hands. He nearly jumped in shock at the crack caused by the elf's apparition, but soon regained his composure. In a near instant he looked at the elf, and realized that it was wearing a rather familiar poncho. But where had he seen it?

"I bring a letter to Minister Fudge from Her Majesty, the Empress Regent." spoke the elf, its accent clearly showing.

It was then that Fudge realized that it was one of those house-elves used by the Romans to instantly deliver their mail. If he was not mistaken, they had an actual organization composed of those little creatures, using them for the single purpose of delivering mail.

But what intrigued him was that the elf was delivering him a letter from the Empress. He took the letter from the elf, and watched as it apparated away. Fudge unsealed the envelope, and took out the letter, reading it with close attention. As he read the letter, Fudge became increasingly pale, his heart beating frantically, and the man himself beginning to feel a bit nauseated.

He got up from his desk, and almost ran towards the fireplace, before tossing floo powder into the fire, and creating a connection with Dumbledore's office.

"Albus!" he shouted upon seeing the old wizard.

Dumbledore nearly jumped upon hearing Fudge's voice, but he calmly turned towards the Minister's head.

"Cornelius, what do I owe this visit?" asked Dumbledore.

"I just received a letter from the leader of the Empire!" declared the Minister "You need to come here!"

Dumbledore rose in alarm, and went straight towards the fireplace. He moved past the green flames, and entered Fudge's office, the man already fetching the letter from his desk. Fudge simply thrusted the letter onto Dumbledore's hands, and looked at as if he had received a death threat.

Merlin's beard, what exactly did that woman write here?" he wondered as he began to read the letter.

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To the Esteemed Cornelius Fudge, Minister for Magic of Great Britain and Ireland,

It has come to Our attention that Our heir and grandson, the Prince Henry Anemas, also the Duke of Inverness in the British Isles as granted to his ancestors by the King of Scots, has been, until the present moment, a member of the both the non-magical and wizard communities of Great Britain, and a student of the Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. His identity has been known to you as Harry Potter, son of James and Lily Potter, who is in fact Our daughter, named at her birth
as Maria, and kidnapped shortly after her birth during the Great Troubles. The prince's identity has been confirmed through a few tests performed under his total consent, and as of now he is under Our jurisdiction.

If he so wishes, he shall return to the school of Hogwarts, a possible choice considering his sovereignty over the castle and surrounding lands as given onto him by the Crown, and the laws of the magical realm. As Britain in a territory which is at the moment under the jurisdiction of the Confederation of Wizards, We cannot take part in the chase after Sirius Black, but let it be known that you and your government will be held responsible if something happens to the prince.

Under the all-seeing eye of the Lord,

Maria, by the Grace of God and the Constitution of the Monarchy, Empress Dowager and Regent of the Empire of the Romans, Queen of the United Kingdom of Portugal, Africa, and the Algarves of either side of the sea in Africa, Lord of Guinea and of Conquest, Navigation, and Commerce of Ethiopia, Arabia, Persia, and India, the third of that name in the table of the Kings of Portugal

Had Dumbledore been drinking anything he would have certainly spit it, as the contents of the letter pretty much changed "everything" he and the rest of the wizarding world had thought to be true. He had no doubt that this was an authentic letter from the empress, as the parchment itself had the Imperial watermark, but this was so… surreal.

To think that Harry Potter was in fact the sole heir to the politically most powerful woman in the entire Wizarding World was frightening…and amusing.

"What should we do now Dumbledore?" asked The Minister, clearly desperate for any advice.

Dumbledore sighed.

"I suggest we refrain from doing anything right now, and keep this between us." suggested Dumbledore "If this becomes public knowledge in Imperial territory, then I believe we can also make it public."

"Yes…yes!" said Fudge after a while "That is a good idea…we'll do just that."

Dumbledore simply nodded, already used to this kind reaction from Fudge. He politely said goodbye to the still stunned minister, and returned to Hogwarts when Cornelius had acknowledged his goodbye. But right now, Dumbledore could not help but think that it had been an utter waste of time to gather Moody and the others. Sighing, he prepared to call them back.

He could only hope that Harry decided to return to Hogwarts.

Chapter End Notes

House of Anemas – A dynasty which rules over the Roman Empire, and briefly ruled over the United Kingdom of Portugal jure uxoris. It is a cadet branch of the Palaiologos dynasty.

Aenean Church – Officially known as the Aenean Orthodox Catholic Church, the
Aenean Church is both the largest religious denomination in the Wizarding World, and the largest of all existing Perennial cults. It was founded by the seven surviving pupils of Saint Aeneas, after his death in 825.

Saint Aeneas of Larissa – Born in Larissa, in the year of 741, Aeneas was a muggle Chalcedonian Christian monk who came into contact with the wizarding world thanks to his brother, a muggle-born wizard. Aenean canon affirms that after his first contact with the wizarding world, he was visited by an apparition of the Virgin Mary, which led to his spiritual journey across the Wizarding World. He was later entrusted with the Truth of God, and was given the mission to spread it through the wizarding people. He died in Constantinople, in the year of 825.

Roman Imperial State of Constantinople – A muggle state created after a series of conflicts between the Greek and the Turkish people during the 19th century. Similar to the Principality of Andorra, it was ruled jointly by the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, and the sovereign of the neighbouring Kingdom of Nicaea. It encompassed the city of Constantinople and part of Thrace and Bithynia, but upon the restoration of the Empire, the lands fell under the control of the crown, and the Imperial State was abolished.

Kingdom of Nicaea – Both a muggle and wizard state. In the muggle world, it was formed nearly-simultaneously with the State of Constantinople. It is a constitutional monarchy ruled by the House of Anemas, and borders the republics of Turkey and Armenia to the east. Together with Greece, it is one of the constituent states of the Roman Empire.
The Oath of a Prince

Chapter by DarthImperius, DarthImperiusArchive (DarthImperius)

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Chapter 5 – The Oath of a Prince

Great Palace, Augustaion, Constantinople

Harry's first two weeks in the Great Palace were certainly not calm. He was instructed by his grandmother on several aspects of etiquette, ranging from social to dining, but his non-scholar education was also extended to other subjects, such as the usage of a fountain pen instead of the obsolete quill. The Empress believed that a fountain pen was far more practical and elegant to use, and a sign of prestige, considering its association in continental Europe with richness.

She also wanted to make sure that he was fully ready for when she would reveal to the public that he had "been recovered". The announcement would bring a lot of surprise to both the muggle and the wizarding world, and since she was the Queen of Portugal in both the muggle and the wizarding world, she had to present him at the Cortes so that he would be sworn as the heir of the United Kingdom. But then there was also the problem with the Roman Empire and its constituent states, whose thrones were currently vacant, and Harry was their sole legitimate heir.

Perhaps, when he was a bit more used to his current situation, she would allow him to take the throne, but until then Maria would act as his regent. Beyond these concerns, Maria had also invested quite a bit of her time indoctrinating Harry into the basic tenets of the Aenean Church, explaining to Harry what their beliefs were and telling him a bit of the church's history. She was not a theologian or an expert in the Aenean faith, but she made all that she could to convince Harry to fully embrace Aeneanism.

And soon enough, she had become focused on educating Harry regarding his heritage, and his status in both the muggle and wizarding world. Amongst many things, he needed to know what was expected of him and how to act in certain situations.

His grandmother knew little about his father's side of the family, and only knew that his grandparents had been called Fleamont and Euphemia Potter, and they had died before he was born. Apparently, he was also a peer in Great Britain, holding the title of Duke of Inverness. And curiously, the area where Hogwarts and the village of Hogsmeade were located was part of the Duchy of Inverness, and in the wizarding world it gave him a considerable amount of power over the area.

Apparently, his ancestors ruled over the wizarding population in that area at the bidding of the King of Scots, and while the Ministry of Magic attempted to usurp part of the power that the Dukes of Inverness possessed, the region remained in the hands of the Potter family, having inherited the Duchy from the family which originally held it a few centuries before.

Eventually, his grandmother believed it to be better if they were to use bit of chronomancy so that Harry could have a bit more time to study, making sure to renew the spell whenever it lost effect. And while it made little difference, it was still a method that allowed Harry to study things more clearly, and not in a rushed way.
Eventually, Harry discovered that while the wizards in the Empire also played Quidditch, being a rather popular sport, there were other forms of entertainment such as the Hippodrome in Constantinople. The young wizard quickly became a fan of it, and after a while, Harry decided to support the Blues in the races. But soon enough, came the day when his grandmother decided to make his return public, both in the muggle and the wizarding world.

She had prepared a story for the muggles, discussing it with her Privy Council so that it was as convincing as possible, and one of the claims was that the paternity tests had been made, and showed that Harry was indeed her grandson, which he, in fact, was. On the other hand, such a thing was not required for the Wizarding World, and so the procedure there would be far simpler.

But now, it was time for Henry to be presented to the Portuguese Nation and to be formally sworn as the heir of the Portuguese Crown.

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**Lisbon, Portugal**

When the news had been received across the country, the reaction had been mostly the same. The Portuguese people knew that the former heir and her husband had been murdered while in England, and while they were aware that they had a child, it was not known what had happened to him. At least until now.

The people who were in their homes, watching the whole ceremony on the television, upon seeing the young Prince Royal could not help but see a younger version of the late King D. Alexander I, but with clear traits that he had not inherited from his maternal side of the family. The most recognizable trait were the green eyes that the late king had, and had been passed down to both his daughter and grandson.

And as Harry and his grandmother entered the Palace of Saint Benedict, better known amongst the populace as the Palace of the Cortes, where both the Chamber of Deputies and the Chamber of Peers gathered to legislate the country. As the two entered, a group of journalists and photographers not too far from them, Harry and Maria were greeted by Cavaco Silva, the Prime Minister. Shortly after that, the Queen went to a secluded room, where she placed the Mantle of the Constitutional Kings at her back, before exiting the room, and joining Harry once more.

The young wizard was dressed in a dark coloured court uniform, which made him stand out amongst the others. The two continued on their way to the room where the Chamber of Peers gathered, and once there, Harry began to feel rather nervous and intimidated. He was once more in foreign territory, and he felt more uncomfortable than ever. Still, the young teenager made sure to present himself as calm, and attempted to keep his emotions hidden from the public.

Once inside the large chamber, his grandmother moved towards a platform where two thrones were, one smaller and on a lower section of the platform. His grandmother had informed him that he was supposed to sit there, while she sat on the main throne, and once there he would only need to get up when the special session of the Cortes was over.

Once the two were sitting in their respective thrones, Harry began to look around discreetly, and noticed that his grandmother had made a gesture towards a man, as if indicating him to do something. He quickly looked at the direction which the Queen had gestured towards, and noticed an old man there, wearing a special court uniform, who nodded to the Queen and quickly turned around and left the chamber. Said man was Armando Leal, the Castellan of the Palace of the Cortes, to whom had been assigned the task of summoning the Chamber of Deputies to the
meeting room of the Chamber of Peers.

Leal made his way to the Chamber of Deputies, and upon entering, the room fell into near-absolute silence.

"Honourable ladies and gentlemen of the Chamber of Deputies, the Queen commands your presence in the Chamber of Peers."

Upon saying those words, Leal turned around, hearing only the sound of the deputies getting up from their seats and making way to the gallery of the Chamber of Peers. Once both the Chamber of Peers and the Chamber of Deputies was in full presence, the doors were sealed, and the Queen addressed the members.

"My Lords, pray be seated." she spoke.

The members of the Chamber of Peers did so, and Harry began to feel far more nervous than before. He felt as if all eyes were on him, and he was not far from the truth. And much like those who were watching at home, those present in the chamber could not help but see the resemblance between the young prince and his late grandfather.

"We have convoked this most special session of the Cortes, as following the traditions instilled upon the Portuguese Crown by Our ancestors and predecessors, to present Our successor to the Crown of the United Kingdom of Portugal, Africa and the Algarves." her voice, although old, was still powerful and was heard through the entire chamber "As such, We present onto you Henry Alexander, sole and legitimate son of Our late daughter Maria and her husband James Potter, the late Duke of Inverness."

Harry now knew that all eyes were certainly on him.

"Is there anyone that objects to the legitimacy of Her Majesty's heir?" asked the Prime Minister.

No one spoke, and the Prime Minister continued.

"The oath shall now be sworn," he announced, to which Harry rose.

"I do swear to maintain the Roman Catholic Apostolic Religion, observe the Political Constitution of the Portuguese Nation, and be obedient to the Laws and the Queen."

The Minister nodded, and as Harry sat down, Maria proceeded with her small speech.

"As the heir apparent to the United Kingdom, the title of Prince Royal of the United Kingdom of Portugal, Africa and the Algarves is officially bestowed upon him, as well as that of Duke of Braganza and other subsidiary titles," stated the Queen.

Harry knew now that the ceremony was nearly over, but after this, there would also be other events that both he and his grandmother would have to attend. Luckily, it was only today, as they would return to Constantinople right after said events. Shortly after leaving the Parliament, Harry was taken by his grandmother to the Royal Pantheon of the House of Braganza, where his and his grandmother's ancestors were buried.

Amongst the tombs inside the Pantheon, he gave special attention to those of his great-grandfather, the King Manuel II and his wife, Augusta Victoria of Hohenzollern, the two having married during Manuel's exile.

He made sure to pay respects to his deceased ancestors, and when he asked his grandmother where
his parents were buried, the old woman told him that they were most likely in Britain, and that soon enough she would make preparations to find out where they were buried, and to transfer the bodies to a more appropriate resting place.

It was almost night when the two returned to Constantinople, and the two only wanted to eat dinner and to rest. There were things to do tomorrow, and the day had been rather exhaustive.

Chapter End Notes

This story followed a rather strange version of history where the Second Portuguese Republic (Estado Novo) under Salazar (who was a wizard in this story) went through a procedure similar to that of Francoist Spain, where Salazar made sure that Portugal would return to the state of a monarchy after his death. As such, there was no Carnation Revolution and there was a more moderate transition from Salazar's regime into that of a Constitutional Monarchy under Maria III.
Before Hogwarts

Chapter by DarthImperius, DarthImperiusArchive (DarthImperius)

Chapter 6 – Before Hogwarts

Constantinople, Roman Empire

As the days went by, Harry was constantly reminded by his grandmother that he soon had to choose on whether he would or would not remain at Hogwarts. His grandmother knew that despite being in Confederation territory, Hogwarts was still a somewhat acceptable school, despite lacking a few things that were present in the Educational programs in the states and nations of the Empire. But it was nothing that could not be solved during the summer holidays.

And to the muggles, for all they knew, Harry was frequenting a highly private and isolated school in Great Britain, known only amongst a few select people. This also allowed Maria to somewhat improve relations between the two United Kingdoms, considering that the Anglo-Portuguese Alliance was still extant, both in the muggle and the wizarding world.

In the end, Harry had decided to remain at Hogwarts, having developed a fondness for the school his parents had attended, not to mention that's where his friends were. He still had to buy the rest of his school supplies, something which he had neglected to do during his stay in the Leaky Cauldron, and his grandmother had decided to take him there, the two secretly accompanied by two members of the Varangian Guard, disguised as normal wizards.


Harry and his grandmother arrived at the Leaky Cauldron by floo, Harry having improved his balance when travelling by magical methods, only stumbling when he arrived at the inn. Both he and his grandmother were wearing normal clothing, as appropriate for wizards, so nothing that would express royalty or nobility.

Their two bodyguards were mixed amongst the patrons of the pub, and discreetly watched the royal pair, seeking out any possible threats to them. Harry, on the other hand, looked around, trying to find anyone he knew. Upon realizing that the only person there that he knew was Tom the Innkeeper, Harry told his grandmother that they should head to the alley.

Receiving a nod in reply, Harry guided them to the small courtyard where the entrance to the alley was, and he tapped the bricks in the correct order, allowing the wall to reveal the actual entrance into Diagon Alley.

"How obvious…" mumbled Maria as she observed the wall.

They entered the Alley, joining the multitude of wizards that were either shopping, or simply walking around.

"Where do you need to go first?" asked his grandmother.

Harry took out the supply list from his robes, and began to look at it. He had removed the "Monster Book of Monsters", already having it, and so Harry began to wonder why exactly he had not bought
the school books when he had been at Flourish and Blotts the last time. Dismissing said thoughts, Harry made his way to the shop, and entered it with his grandmother, the two guards remaining outside.

When Harry approached the shopkeeper and told him his school year, the man automatically assumed that Harry also wanted the Monster Book of Monsters, but Harry quickly pointed out he already had a copy, greatly relieving the man. He soon had all the books that he required, but as he prepared to leave the store, Harry crashed with someone that had come from one of the shop's corridors.

"What the…?" he hissed, a bit confused and irritated, before noticing whom he had collided with. "Hermione!"

His old friend and Gryffindor colleague was also stunned upon seeing her friend, and a bit confused by the clothes Harry was wearing. She could be wrong, but that wasn't Harry's muggle style… was it?

"Harry!" blurted out Hermione after snapping out of her stupor. "It's good to see you. You know, I've been hearing strange rumours about you…"

Both Harry and his grandmother raised an eyebrow.

"Rumours?" he asked.

"Yes. Did you really blow up your aunt?" she asked, her voice suddenly becoming rather serious.

"Well, kind of. She didn't really blew up. Became more a balloon, really," he admitted. "Besides, she's not my aunt. Just Uncle Vernon's sister."

"And that man isn't your uncle either, Henry," stated Maria. "On another matter, you haven't introduced me to you friend here. And neither have you introduced her to me."

"Oh, right… sorry," spoke the young wizard. "Grandmother, this is Hermione Granger, one of my closest friends and another student at Hogwarts. Hermione, this is my grandmother, Maria of Braganza."

"A pleasure to meet you, Miss Granger." spoke Maria, now knowing personally the young girl whom Harry had mentioned when he told her about his life in Hogwarts.

"A pleasure to meet you as well, ma'am," replied Hermione, before something registered in her mind. "Hold it, Harry. Your grandmother? I thought that the Dursleys were your only living relatives. And do have any connection with the Portuguese royal family?"

The last question was directed at Maria, and the old woman was slightly impressed with Hermione's insight, but she waited for Harry to reply to his friend first.

"It's a long story Hermione, but no. The only relation I have with the Dursleys is an adoptive one. My mother was Petunia's sister only by adoption," he said. "My grandmother here is her actual mother, but as I said, it's a long story. I can explain it to you later."

Hermione nodded. "Okay, then. And my other question?"

"You would be correct, Miss Granger." said Maria "I am indeed related to the Portuguese royal family. In fact, I am its head."
Hermione's eyes widened in total shock.

"But… but that means you their queen!" said the young witch, the last words falling into a whisper. "Harry, am I missing something here?"

"As I said Hermione, I will explain later," affirmed Harry. "This really isn't a good place to talk about that. Besides, are you here alone?"

"Huh? Oh, my parents are here as well. They went with Ron's family to buy the rest of my supplies." She replied. "I came here to buy the books we need for this year."

"The Weasleys are here?" asked Harry, wondering how he had not seen them.

"They returned from Egypt two days ago." revealed Hermione before looking as if she had just remembered something "Sorry Harry, but I need to go to the Menagerie. I'll see you later. Goodbye, ma'am."

Maria nodded in return, and the two watched as Hermione left the shop almost running, leaving Harry to wonder why she had to go so urgently to the Magical Menagerie. Internally shrugging, Harry turned to his grandmother.

"Curious young lady," commented the woman. "Shall we go?"

Harry nodded to his grandmother, and the two left the store. Harry's next stop was Madam Malkin's shop, as he had ruined one of his cloaks last year when he had fought the basilisk, and the other two alongside the winter cloak, were now a bit small for him. The procedure was almost the same as in his first year, the only difference being the time Harry had to wait for his new cloaks, as Madam Malkin had finished most of her orders.

Knowing that they would have to wait for a while, Harry and his grandmother went to the Leaky Cauldron, intent on eating something. Entering the inn, Harry realized that Hermione was already there, alongside the Weasleys and her parents. And it seemed that they had noticed him.

"Harry? Harry!" called Ron.

arry went towards them rather quickly, his grandmother quite amused at his sudden burst of speed.

"Hermione said that she met you at Flourish and Blotts, and so my mother decided to wait for you here," said Ron before grinning. "Is it true you blew up your aunt?"

"That's not funny Ron." said Hermione "He could have been expelled."

"Well…but he wasn't. That's what matters, right?" shrugged Ron "Dad told me that Fudge had let you off."

That was a bit weird. Why exactly had Fudge pretty much ignored the whole "underage magic" thing?

"Your dad doesn't know why Fudge did that, does he?" asked Harry curious.

"That's easy isn't it? I mean, you are Harry Potter, the Boy-Who-Lived and all that." replied Ron "Imagine what would happen if the Ministry expelled you because you blew up your aunt. If I blew up Aunt Muriel, I would not even have the chance to be expelled, because Mum would have killed me first. Anyway, where are you staying tonight? We'll stay here at the Cauldron."
"What about you Hermione?" asked Harry.

The girl beamed "I'll stay here this night too. I convinced my parents to let me stay here for tonight."

"I think that I'll return to Constantinople with my grandmother for this night," said Harry. "I guess I will meet you tomorrow in the Express."

"Your grandmother?" asked Ron confused "I didn't know you had a grandmother. I thought those muggles were your only family."

"It's a long story, but the Dursleys and I are not actually related," explained Harry. "My mother was adopted when she was a child, so she grew up with the Evans family. My grandmother here, is actually her true mother, Maria of Braganza, the Queen of Portugal."

"Erm, pleasure to meet you, ma'am." said Ron, a bit stunned by the revelation, before Harry's last three words registered in his mind "Wait, what? Bloody hell Harry, your grandmother is a queen?"

"Language, Ronald Weasley!" nearly shouted Molly Weasley, who was nearby, turning around to greet Harry "It's good to see you, Harry. How was your summer?"

"Good to see you too, Mrs. Weasley. And it was far better than the others, Mrs. Weasley," replied Harry before introducing his grandmother to the Weasley matriarch. "Grandmother, this is Molly Weasley. Mrs. Weasley, this is my grandmother, Maria of Braganza."

The two women exchanged greetings, and Molly soon placed one of her thoughts into words. Much like Ron and Hermione, she asked Harry about the Dursleys and his relation to Maria, and Harry answered in the same way, although neglecting to mention the "royal" part. Satisfied with the answer, Molly returned to her previous task, not being aware of the older woman's status.

"Anyway Ron, how was Egypt?" asked Harry, making sure to shift his friend's attention.

And it seemingly worked.

"Brilliant! It's got loads of old stuff." beamed Ron. "Mummies, death masks, tombs…"

"You know, the ancient Egyptians worshipped the cat goddess Bast," said Hermione, now holding an orange cat which Harry had not seen before.

Harry noticed that Ron glared at Hermione, before taking a wand from his robes.

"And I have a new wand!" he continued excitedly, before Arthur stepped in.

"Hello Harry," greeted the Weasley patriarch. "I wonder if I might have a word."

Harry turned to the man. "Of course, Mr. Weasley."

Harry followed the man to a corner of the inn, and he noticed that Mr. Weasley was eyeing a fugitive poster, with Sirius Black's face on it.

"Harry, there are some within the Ministry… and Molly as well… that would strongly discourage me from revealing what I am about to tell you," he said very seriously. "But I think that you need to know the facts. Because you're in danger. Great danger."

"Is this about Sirius Black, sir?" asked the young wizard.
"What do you know about him, Harry?" asked Arthur.

"That he killed someone and escaped from Azkaban…"

"Harry, thirteen years ago, when you stopped He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named, Black lost everything," explained Mr. Weasley. "But he continues to be his loyal servant to this very day. In his mind, only you stand in the way of You-Know-Who's possible return."

"Is that why he escaped?" asked Harry "To come after me?"

Mr. Weasley nodded.

"Harry, I want you to swear that, despite what you might come to hear, you won't go looking for Sirius Black."

Harry looked with confusion at the older man.

"But…Mr. Weasley, why would I go looking for someone who wants to kill me?"
**The Express**

Chapter by [DarthImperius](https://www.darthimperiusarchive.com), [DarthImperiusArchive (DarthImperius)](https://www.darthimperiusarchive.com)

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**Chapter 7 – The Express**

**Hogwarts Express**

Despite the time zone difference, Harry was still able to arrive at King's Cross, early enough that there were few people there. After his grandmother had arranged for his departure, Harry was transported to the station by one of the guard, using side-apparition. Maria had been a little sad upon seeing him go, but she knew that he would be well, and that he would return.

Harry had also been quite unhappy upon going to the station, but the thought of returning to Hogwarts improved his spirits. Now, as long as Sirius Black remained away, then he would have a normal year for once.

"*Although the chances of that happening are very slim, aren't they?*" thought Harry, looking at Hedwig in her cage.

He approached the Hogwarts Express, and managed to load his possessions onto the train. He first went to the Owl Carriage, placing there the cage with Hedwig. But now he would have to find an empty compartment. Not that it would be a hard task, considering that the trait was almost empty of students, but he now had the liberty of choosing a compartment, unlike in First Year, where he simply stumbled across a miraculously empty one, and occupied it immediately.

The young wizard walked to the first carriage with compartments, and noticing that only one was occupied, Harry entered one of the other free ones. Once inside, Harry immediately changed into his Hogwarts robes, and took out one of the volumes of the Encyclopædia Veneficia. He stored away his trunk, and sat right next to the window, before opening one of the three books. Harry remained there for a few minutes, reading random articles, and occasionally discovering some which sparked his interest. He did this mostly out of boredom, hoping that his friends would arrive soon enough to improve what could turn to be a rather bleak voyage.

Soon enough, Harry noticed that the noise coming from outside was increasing, which meant that more people were arriving at the platform. He was proven correct as he soon saw people walking in the corridor of the carriage, and the sounds of people as they entered their chosen carriages. Harry began to wonder when his friends would show up, but as the minutes passed, he began to wonder if it would not be best to look for them. However, Harry's was already accommodated to his spot in the compartment, and so his body and mind were quite unwilling to leave the seat. Besides, they would be reunited at Hogwarts and there were also a few years before finishing Hogwarts, so travelling without Ron and Hermione for once would not hurt. Besides, he had come to the Express first, so they were the ones who had to look for him, not the other way around. And so, Harry once more focused in the book he had on the small table in front of him, reading it with undivided attention.

However, Harry was distracted from his thoughts when the door of the compartment opened, and Harry looked at it, only to find there a boy with brown hair, possibly of his age as well. He was familiar, but Harry could not remember which house the boy belonged to.

"Potter?" spoke the boy. "I'm surprised you're not with Weasley and Granger at the back of the train."
"I arrived earlier," he replied dryly. "Erm… I'm afraid I don't exactly know you."

"Must be because you spend too much time focused on Malfoy and his loyal pets," replied the other teen, extending his hand. "Theodore Nott, Third Year Slytherin, and future Marquess of Averdale."

Harry approved Theodore's introduction, and moved to shake the other's hand.

"Harry Potter. Or according to a shortened version in official records, Henry Anemas," he introduced himself. "Duke of Braganza and Inverness, future Roman emperor."

"Oh, I know," said Theodore. "You're all over the muggle news with your grandmother. My father nearly had an attack when he saw your picture in that muggle newspaper he reads."

"Your father reads muggle newspapers?" asked Harry.

"He is entertained by muggle accidents." shrugged Theodore.

Harry raised an eyebrow. "Right…"

"Do you mind if I sit here?" asked the Slytherin "I don't exactly want to get into a compartment with First Years."

"I guess," said Harry, rather surprised by Theodore's politeness.

Harry watched as Nott stored his trunk away, and sat right in front of him. Harry returned to his book, reading the article about Paracelsus. A few seconds later, Theodore spoke again.

"You've got to be kidding me…" he said, nearly a whisper.

"What?" asked Harry.

"Is that the Encyclopædia Veneficia?" asked Nott, who was looking at the book as if hypnotised.


"What!" nearly squeeked the Slytherin. "But… but that's one of the rarest book collections in the entire world, especially the Third Edition. How in Merlin's pants did you even get it in Diagon Alley?"

"It was in an isolated section of the shop." revealed Harry "I stumbled upon it by mere accident."

Theodore looked at him as if he had grown two heads.

"You have no idea of how lucky you are Potter," said Theodore, shaking his head.

Harry simply snorted, and returned to his reading, but not for long, as Theodore once again interrupted him.

"Did you know that we are related?" asked the Slytherin.

That however, had also attracted Harry's attention.

"We are?" asked Harry, genuinely curious.

"Yeah, my father and yours were first cousins. Your grandmother was my grandfather's sister. She
was called Euphemia, if I am not mistaken," revealed Theodore. "It's all in the 'Nature's Nobility: A Wizarding Genealogy'. That book is constantly updated, so you can find your parents there, except you'll find the information regarding your mother to be… well, wrong, I assume."

"So, you and I are cousins as well, right?"

Theodore nodded. "Yeah. And you know what the best part is?"

Harry shook his head in negation.

"Do you know anything about how wizard aristocracy in Britain works?"

"Not really," he admitted.

"I can't really give you many details, but father said old families, such as the Blacks, follow some sort of system called 'generational seniority'," he revealed. "The current family head is… old. I mean, really old… older than Dumbledore. Compared to Malfoy, we are higher in the generational tiers of the Black family, meaning we have primacy over him in affairs of the family."

That system was a bit confusing, but there was something that Harry did not certainly miss.

"Woah, wait! I'm related to Malfoy?"

"Distant relatives," clarified Nott. "His mother was a Black. We are part of it because of our great-grandmother, Elladora Black. I was told she is famous amongst the Blacks for starting the tradition of beheading the house-elves when they got too old to carry the tea trays."

"She's a charming one."

"She was, wasn't she?" replied Theodore, oblivious to Harry's sarcasm.

Harry rolled his eyes, and returned to the book. It seemed that people were still boarding the Hogwarts Express, and Harry began to wonder when it would start to move. Soon enough, Harry began to hear the train starting to move, and thought it strange that only he and Theodore were alone inside the train. Although, he looked at the corridor and saw some other students at the windows, waving at the people in the platform.

Soon, the people at the windows returned to their compartments, and strangely enough, none came to his and Theodore's. And Harry rather enjoyed it this way.

It was dark outside, and it would soon be night-time. Harry had allowed Theodore to read from the encyclopaedia, and shortly after that, the young Anemid began to doze off. But as Harry was almost enveloped by sleep, he began to feel the train stopping. This change of atmosphere was enough to wake him up, and Theodore too was aware of the train stopping.

"That's odd," said Theodore. "We're not yet at Hogsmeade. Why have we stopped?"

"Maybe it broke," suggested Harry, starting to feel a bit cold.

The lights began to flicker, and the lantern on top of the table ceased to work. In seconds, all the lights inside the train died out, leaving it in almost utter darkness. Both Harry and Theodore began to feel cold, and Harry watched as the window appeared to freeze, almost as if the glass was being transformed into ice. He saw a shadow moving outside, but he could not see what it was.
"Oh no..." whispered Theodore, fear evident on his voice and face. "Not them..."

"What?" asked Harry confused, worried by Theodore's reaction. "Who?"

Suddenly, the train jerked, as if it had collided with something. The problem was that the train was still unmoving.

"What the hell was that?" hissed Harry.

"I think it's a Dementor," whispered Nott.

"A Dementor? What's a Dementor?"

Harry was unable to finish his question, as from the corner of his eye, he saw a figure emerging from the corridor. He could see a billowing dark and ragged cloak, and skeletal and putrid hand reaching out to the door's handle, opening it without even touching the door. He could see Theodore attempting to get closer to the wall, as if he was doing everything possible to remain as far away from...whatever that thing outside was.

Harry watched silently as the cloaked creature entered the compartment, and as its hand was lost within the billowing cloak. It turned towards Harry, and he could only watch in horror as the creature came closer towards him, its hand returned from the black cloak, now reaching towards Harry. And then, whatever it was, the creature drew a long breath, and Harry began to feel as if the very air around him was being sucked by the creature.

An intense cold fell on the two boys, but Harry felt something far more extreme than Theodore, as the creature came even closer towards him, its head standing a few inches from his own. Harry's breath was caught in that instant, as the cloaked creature stayed there, silently staring at him. Theodore watched in horror, fearful of what could happen to the other teenager, and to himself.

In that instant, Harry felt a cold sensation wash over him. His eyes rolled up onto his head, and from that moment he was unable to see. It was a terrible sensation, for he was still conscious, but it was almost as if he was slowly drowning in cold water. He felt his pupils close, and when he finally opened them, Harry realized that he was indeed in water.

His mind completely out of rationality, Harry tried to swim upward, only to find himself on a stormy ocean with nothing above but dark clouds. Harry realized that the current was dragging him towards a small jutting rock. He managed to grab part of it, before climbing the stone formation. He didn't know why he was there, as he was supposed to be on the Hogwarts Express. But he was soon diverted from his thoughts by the most terrifying sight in front of him.

Far away from him, the ocean's water was rising to the dark sky, taking the shape of a thin spire. Harry watched with his mouth open, but was unable to do anything else, as a wave came towards him, and the only thing he felt, was another strong cold sensation, followed by blackness and someone calling his name.

"Potter! Potter!"

Harry opened his eyes, finding himself back at the train compartment, Theodore next to him. Harry rose, realizing that he was lying on the compartment sofa. He got up, realizing that his glasses were not on his face.
"How are you?" asked Theodore. "I'm surprised you're still with us, considering how close it was to you."

"W-What was that thing?" he asked, noticing his glasses on the table.

"You don't know? That was a Dementor, one of the guards of Azkaban," explained Nott. "Must have been looking for Sirius Black. After it left, I went to look for someone to help, and I found a professor. I think he's called Lupin or something, our new Defence Against the Dark Arts teacher."

Nott reached out for something on the table.

"He told me to give you this," he said, giving Harry the package. "Chocolate. He said it would help."

Harry took the chocolate. "Thanks. So… where is he?"

"He went to speak with the conductor." replied Nott. "But seriously, you are seriously lucky that that Dementor didn't kiss you."

"Kiss me?" he asked with repulsion. He certainly didn't want to be kissed by that…thing.

"Yeah. The Dementor's Kiss." explained Theodore. "That's when they suck their victim's soul through the mouth."

Harry began to feel a bit nauseated. He now had another reason to keep himself away from those things.

"Anyway, we are almost at Hogwarts. I guess I better change into my robes."

And as he did so, Harry could only eat the chocolate, and remember the strange dream he had while unconscious. And why was the Dementor so interested in him?
Chapter 8 - Arrival

Hogwarts Express

The train was almost at Hogsmeade, and Harry began to place the books inside his trunk. He opened the trunk, and placed the three volumes inside it, before closing it and placing it near the entrance of the compartment. It was only then that he noticed the strange expression on Theodore's face.

"Something wrong?" asked Harry.

"Huh? No, not really," replied the older boy, before adopting another stance. "Say, Potter, what would be the best way you would refer to your relationship with Draco Malfoy?"

That was a strange question, but Harry still decided to answer.

"I'm not sure. Enemies... rivals... something like that, I suppose," he answered "Why?"

"Just wanting to make sure." replied Theodore. "I don't like to associate myself with associates of Draco Malfoy."

"Why not?"

"All talk and no brain," said Theodore. "Everywhere you see him, he's accompanied by Crabbe and Goyle, the best examples of inbreeding our society has produced in the last few years. If anything bad happens to him, he goes running to his father. It really doesn't help someone to be associated to the likes of him."

Nothing new to Harry.

"And you would rather be associated with me?" asked Harry. "I, whose best friend is a muggle-born, and the other is... what do people call him... a blood traitor?"

"You are also to become the most powerful individual in the wizarding world, at least politically," pointed out Nott. "I don't think Malfoy can trump that."

So to Theodore, he was a possible ally to have in Hogwarts, mostly due to image. Considering they were entering their third year, a somewhat early phase in their Hogwarts education, it was still a good time to expand his circle of friends... or allies. He could be on good terms with anyone who despised Malfoy and held little regard for pure-blood supremacy, although on Theodore's case, he was it was more due to pragmatism, instead of personal ideologies.

"Then what do you want to do?" asked Harry. "Start to hang out with me?"

"Maybe. As long as your friends tolerate me, I can tolerate them," said Theodore.

"Don't expect any miracles," said Harry. "You know how stubborn we Gryffindors are, especially when it comes to Slytherins."

"Oh, I know. It's the same to us. However, I suggest you be careful in your approach to Malfoy and
others," suggested Theodore. "I'm sure you don't want people scrambling to your feet because of your status, do you?"

Oh dear. Now that Harry thought of it, that was a very high likelihood. That is, unless people suddenly became intimidated by him, when they found out what he was, and decided to avoid him even more. To be honest, he wasn't really keen on that as well.

Time would tell. It always did.

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**Hogwarts School, Inverness, Scotland (U.K.)**

Soon enough, the train came to a stop, arriving at its intended destination, the Hogsmeade Station. Harry got out of the compartment with Theodore, each carrying their respective possessions. Harry knew that Hedwig's cage would be brought to the castle, so he simply continued on his way, looking around to see if he could find Ron and Hermione. They were most likely amongst the other students.

"First years, this way!" boomed a very familiar voice.

Harry looked to see Hagrid there, calling the soon to be sorted first years. Harry noticed that they looked a bit terrified, and wondered if he and the others had looked the same back when they came to Hogwarts for the first time. There was also the factor of Dementors, so that may have influenced their current behaviour.

"Hello Harry!" yelled Hagrid over the crowd.

Harry waved but was unable to speak, as he realized that it had started raining. He ran to one of the carriages and entered, placing his trunk inside. Harry watched as Theodore also entered the same carriage, and pretty much ignored the others who entered. The two remained in silence for the rest of the journey into the castle, and when they finally arrived, Harry and everyone else ran as fast as they could to the Clock Tower Courtyard, passing by Hagrid's hut and through the Wooden Bridge.

Once inside the Clock Tower, Harry began to look around, trying to finally find Ron and Hermione. Almost deciding to give up, and seeing them only at the Great Hall, Harry suddenly heard a voice calling for him.

"Harry!"

Said teenager turned around, seeing Hermione and Ron heading towards him. The two looked seemingly tired.

"Where have you been? We didn't see you in the train," asked Ron.

"I arrived at the platform early, so I sat in one of the first compartments," he explained.

Ron and Hermione came closer to him, as if wanting to talk privately.
"We heard that you were attacked by a Dementor," said Hermione. "A boy came into our compartment, and since a new professor was there, he went to help you." said Hermione "We wanted to follow, but he told us to stay there."

"What's his name?" asked Harry.

"His trunk said R. J. Lupin," spoke Ron, remembering what Hermione had said when they entered their compartment. "I guess he's our new Defence teacher, considering what happened to Lockhart last year."

Their conversation however, was interrupted by a much unwanted arrival.

"Hey Potter, you fainted? Is Longbottom actually telling the truth?" asked Malfoy, clear malicious intent behind his words. "You actually fainted?"

"Bugger off Malfoy!" said Ron.

"Ron, don't," warned Harry, before he turned at Malfoy. "Unfortunately, I did. Bit of a shame really, cost me a few minutes of my time. Oh well, nothing to do now. Tatty-bye!"

Harry waved his hand in dismissal, walking away and leaving behind a stuttering Malfoy, before he was quickly joined by his two friends. However, upon arriving at the Great Hall, they were surprised by the sudden appearance of Professor McGonagall.

"Potter, Granger!" she called. "Do follow me."

Noticing the worried look in their faces, she reassured them that they had done nothing wrong, and took them away from the crowd that headed towards the Great Gall. They followed her until they reached her office, and she motioned them to sit down.

"I received an owl from Professor Lupin, mentioning your encounter with a Dementor," said the Professor.

Before he could reply, Madam Pomfrey suddenly entered the office, Harry realizing that she had possibly been altered as well. The woman had been intent of taking Harry to the Hospital Wing, but after a quick examination both she and McGonagall allowed Harry to go the Great Hall. He was told to wait outside by McGonagall, and after a while both she and Hermione emerged from the office. Harry noticed that his friend seemed rather happy about something, but he decided not to pry. Before they entered the Great Hall, however, McGonagall stopped him one last time.

"One thing Potter. The Headmaster has requested your presence in his office after the feast," she said. "The password is 'Toffee Éclair'."

Harry nodded to his teacher, and the three entered the hall, just in time to see a choir finish their performance. Harry and Hermione quickly went to the Gryffindor table, and sat next to Ron, who had saved them seats.

"What was all that about?" he muttered to Harry.

He told Ron what McGonagall wanted, but was unable to speak further as Dumbledore began his usual speech.

"Welcome, welcome to another year at Hogwarts! I have a few things to say, before we become befuddled by our excellent feast..." said Dumbledore, Harry noticing that the headmaster was no longer wearing his usual robes, but a new set. He also seemed younger, for some reason.
"Must be from the trimmed beard," he thought.

Dumbledore began to speak about the presence of the Dementors, advising the students to keep away from them. After that, he introduced Lupin as the new Defence Against the Dark Arts teacher, and Hagrid as the new Care of Magical Creatures teacher. After that, Dumbledore deemed that there was nothing more important to speak of, and so he declared the feast started, and in an instant, the food appeared on the tables.

An hour later, the feast was over, and while the others went to their common rooms, Harry made way to the Gargoyle that gave entrance to Dumbledore's office. After saying the password, Harry climbed the staircase, eventually reaching the door which led into Dumbledore's office. He entered it, and inside was not just the headmaster, but the heads of the four houses of Hogwarts.

"Ah, Harry! Glad you could join us!" spoke Dumbledore, who was eating some random muggle candy.

"Good evening professors," he said, wondering why the other four were there as well.

Dumbledore motioned Harry to sit down, and Harry did so, watching as Dumbledore took a letter from a small drawer.

"Several days ago, Minister Fudge received this letter," Said Dumbledore, handing it to Harry. "Take a look at it."

Harry looked at the letter, realizing that it had been written by his grandmother, and taking interest at its contents. He remained silent, as he gave it back to Dumbledore.

"I have already informed the staff, but now we have a small problem," spoke Dumbledore.

"A problem?" asked Harry.

"Yes, Harry. That would be your name." spoke the old headmaster "Since Harry Potter is not your true name, we can only assume that it was a way for your parents to hide your… lineage until the war with Voldemort was over. Unfortunately, I am sure you know the rest."

Harry simply nodded.

"I have called you here so that I, and the four heads of house, can know personally what name you currently refer to, as they will transmit it to the other professors." spoke Dumbledore.

"I've been lately using Henry Anemas as a shortened version of my name, so I guess that would be fine for now," replied the young wizard. "But If you want, you can keep calling me Harry Potter."

Snape blinked. "Shortened version?"

Harry turned to Dumbledore, asking him if he had a piece of parchment and a quill he could use. Once the headmaster had given them, Harry wrote his full name there, before passing the parchment to the professors, who looked at it with wide eyes.

"Merlin's underpants!" whispered Professor Sprout.

"As you can see, I think a shortened version will do," affirmed Harry.
"Indeed. Well, you may go Harry," said Dumbledore, returning the paper to Harry.

Nodding, Harry took the paper and left the office. Yet as he walked past the gargoyle, he heard someone quickly approaching him. Turning around, he saw it was Professor McGonagall.

"Mr. Potter, the password for the common room is Fortuna Major," she said.

"Oh," he said, remembering he had no idea of what the common room's password was this year. "Thanks, professor."

He would need to rest, for it had been a rather eventful day, and tomorrow there would be classes. Harry could only hope that the first one would not be Potions.
Chapter 9 – Shadows Cast by the Tower

Palace of Necessidades, Lisbon, Portugal

"What!?"

Maria was furious. It was not even a day, and something had already happened to her grandson. To her advantage, she had a portrait of Georg von Rheticus inside her office in the palace, and it was connected to another portrait of his which was inside Hogwarts.

"I am afraid that the rumour around the portraits of Hogwarts, is that your grandson was seemingly attacked by a Dementor." repeated the portrait in its 'native' language "Some say he even fainted. Still with his soul though, at least according to Damara Dodderidge."

"That's not surprising, considering...," spoke the aged witch. "But still, what were those foul things doing inside the train?"

"I do believe they were searching for the criminal Sirius Black." said Rheticus "It seems that the current Minister believes that he will try to infiltrate the castle."

"That won't do." affirmed the monarch "I have to send the Varangian Guard there."

"You are certainly aware that the youth of these days are not so pleased to have people following every single one of their footsteps, are you not?" asked the portrait.

"Then I shall simply tell them to keep their distance." replied the Queen "And either both the Minister and the Headmaster allow this, or I shall remove my grandson from that school."

Rheticus simply shrugged, and returned to his portrait in Hogwarts, leaving Maria to make preparations alone.

Hogwarts School, Inverness, Scotland (U.K.)

The next day, when Harry and his two friends entered the Great Hall, they were met with a glaring Draco Malfoy, who had seemingly forgot the warning Harry had given him the previous day. The blond Slytherin pretended to faint, and some of the Slytherins around him sniggered. Harry noticed that near them was Theodore Nott, who was seemingly looking at him waiting to see how Harry reacted.

"Potter! The Dementors are coming!" shrieked Pansy Parkinson, before making a rather weak impression of a ghost.

Instead of the reaction they had been expecting, Harry… clapped.

"Well done Parkinson! Excellent recreation of a Dementor!" he said merrily. "In body and mind, you really have all the qualities a Dementor impressionist should have."
There were only a few who understood what Harry had said, Theodore amongst them, the Slytherin silently sniggering. Harry quickly went towards the Gryffindor table, before sitting down next to the Weasley twins.

"You three, here's the new third-year schedules." said George, giving them to the trio "I see that Parkinson gave you little trouble."

"Little tosser," mumbled Harry, grabbing a slice of bread.

"Don't think too much on it," replied Fred. "Malfoy himself came running down to our compartment last night, when the Dementors were at our end of the train, didn't he George?"

"He actually wet himself, but he obviously changed onto his robes." revealed the other twin, glancing at Malfoy.

The rest of breakfast was spent with Harry listening to the twins talking, before finally looking at his schedule, and seeing what his first class would be. Apparently, he would start the year with Divination, which meant that he would be having classes in the North Tower, close to the Gryffindor Tower. Harry soon got up and headed to the Gryffindor Tower with Ron, Hermione having disappeared from sight.

Once at the common room, and went a got the books for the classes he would have today, and soon he headed to the seventh-floor corridor, where the Divination staircase was. Climbing the staircase, Harry and Ron entered the room where they would have their first class, and found it rather...odd, compared with the other classrooms where they had been. The majority of the other students was already there, but there was no sign of their professor.

Harry and Ron went to one of the empty tables, each with a small cup with something inside them. Neither had the time to focus on their respective cup, as a soft and dreamy voice came from the shadows of the room.

"Welcome, my dears." it spoke, a voice clearly female "How nice to see you in the physical world."

The woman came out of the shadows, and Harry, alongside the others, was finally able to see who their teacher would be. And it seemed that she was perhaps one of the strangest professors they all had until now.

"I am Professor Trelawney. Together, we shall cast ourselves into the future..." she said, with a strangely maniacal smile "But know this, for one either has the Gift...or not. A book is not enough for one to divine...no. Books only cloud the Inner Eye!"

"What a load of rubbish." whispered Hermione, who had seemingly arrived.

"Where did you come from?" asked Ron, a bit alarmed with Hermione's sudden appearance.

"I've been here all along." she insisted.

Trelawney continued to talk about Divination, and what they would be focusing after their current subject. She then told them to open their books and to take the tea cup from the person next to them. With Ron's cup on his hand, Harry waited for Trelawney's next instructions. She began to predict things related to the other students, and only after that did she tell them which page they were supposed to read, and what to do with the cups.

After looking at Ron's cup, it seemed that he would have trials and that he would suffer, but apparently Ron would also be happy. Harry was not sure what exactly that meant. But then came
Ron's turn.

"I... can't exactly say," said the boy. "Looks like... a line, or something?"

Ron examined his copy of *Unfogging the Future*, before coming to a decision that there was seemingly nothing there.

"Unless this thing is some sort of tower, then I guess you don't have a future." he said, making Harry snort.

Trelawney came towards them at an alarming speed.

"Let me see that, my dear." She said, giving a condescending look to Ron.

She looked at the cup, narrowing her eyes, before they suddenly widened.

"Oh dear..." she said weakly "Your cup shows one way only. You are marked to have only a single path!"

Harry suddenly became a bit curious, and the rest of the students who were hearing did so as well.

"My dear, this is a rare sign, one which only appears when the stars will it." claimed Trelawney "You have the Tower."

"*The Tower?*" wondered Harry.

"Do search for it in the book." spoke the professor, her voice drawling "And read it loud."

Harry looked at the book, and opened the page with the description of the tower.

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*The Tower* – *the apex of the universe; the secret name of the House of God; the lighthouse of Fate; the Gate. It is associated with sudden, disruptive and potentially destructive change, but it is also an omen of danger, crisis, destruction and liberation. It is rare for the Tower to appear in the tea leaves, and only those who have a single, predestined fate, are known to have been bestowed this sign.*

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Harry looked at his cup, and what he saw, almost made his hear skip a beat. It was the same spire he had seen in his dream, the one in the storm. But it had to be a coincidence...right?

"As you can see dear, the Tower has marked you!" spoke Trelawney, her voice excited. "But know that your fate is still uncertain... perhaps, you are destined to meet your end."

Harry looked again at the tea cup, and the more he stared at the Tower, the more he could see the spire from his dreams.

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Transfiguration class was evidently better than Divination, not having anyone telling him that he could possibly die due to some tea leaves, together with McGonagall's reassurance that Trelawney
usually predicted the death of a random student every year. Nevertheless, unlike Divination, Harry and the others had now their first share of homework. But it was still better than dying, at least on Harry's mind.

What followed was the class Harry and his two friends were most eager to go. It would be Hagrid's first time teaching, but knowing Hagrid's usual tendency to be involved with dangerous and huge creatures, the three could only hope for something not as vicious as Fluffy and Aragog. Their luck however, came in the form of a mostly harmless Hippogriff, which Hagrid called Buckbeak. What followed was something that Harry's mind did not register very well, as one moment he was on the ground, bowing to the Hippogriff, but the next he was flying over Hogwarts and the Black Lake.

When he returned to the clearing where Hagrid and the other were, Harry was met with cheers and applauses by most students. However, Harry noticed that Malfoy was approaching Buckbeak, and he immediately became alerted. Harry got away as fast as he could from the other students, and went towards Buckbeak.

"If Potter can do it, it must be easy." sneered Malfoy "You're not so dangerous after all, are you, you great ugly brute?"

Harry only saw as Buckbeak prepared to attack Malfoy, and he pointed his want at the idiot who though it would be a good idea to insult the Hippogriff.

"Depulso!"

A while jet of light went towards Malfoy, and upon impact the Slytherin was throw away a few meters, right into a tree, while Hagrid tried to calm down the enraged Buckbeak.

"You…bloody…muppet!" said Harry in the most irritated tone he could conjure. "Are you deaf? Do you spend so much time existing that you neglect other body functions? Didn't you hear what Hagrid said about approaching Hippogriffs?"

Malfoy snarled, and got up pointing his wand at Harry.

"Flipendo!"

As Harry saw the orange jet of light heading towards him he simply slashed his wad, using a spell he had learnt from his grandmother.

"Protego!"

Malfoy's spell impacted with Harry's invisible shield, creating an orange flash of light in front of Harry, who then proceeded to point his wand at Malfoy again.

"Expelliarmus!"

In an instant, Malfoy was disarmed, leaving him only able to snarl at Harry, who had a smug look on his face. Hagrid was not very pleased with Malfoy's behaviour, both towards Buckbeak and Harry, removing twenty points from Slytherin. The Slytherin began to mutter that his father would "hear about this", but other than that, he remained quiet, just like Harry liked, and the young Anemid could see the amusement on Theodore's face.

"He's really a lost case," thought Theodore as he glanced at Malfoy.

But as Harry and the others returned to the castle, he was met with a most unwanted surprise, courtesy of his grandmother.
Having just reached the Viaduct Entrance, Harry was intent on going to the potions class. Yet he had not been expecting to find a small group of Varangian Guards there, waiting for him with Professor Dumbledore.

"Ah, Harry!" said Dumbledore upon seeing him, and attracting the attention of the students nearby. "These gentlemen and I have been waiting for you. It seems that the events in the Express have attracted your grandmother's attention."

As Harry approached them, one of the men came forth, bowing and scrapping as soon as he was close enough to the young Anemid.

"Your Highness, your grandmother, the Empress Regent, has commanded our presence here in this school, for your protection," spoke the leader of the group. "I am Narses, assigned by the captain of the guard to oversee the force sent here."

Narses was a man who seemed to be on his early forties. He and the other Varangians were wearing their usual armoured uniform, their wands holstered, and each also had a small axe on their belts. As with its original incarnation, the modern Varangians were loyal to the reigning monarch of the empire, and although that position was technically of Harry, he had not yet been crowned as emperor, therefore, they served the regent. And all those in the wizarding world had to swear an unbreakable vow, that they would not attempt to harm either the emperor or his heir, both directly and indirectly.

"Greetings," replied Harry. "I hope that your presence here does not annoy you much."

"Not at all, your Highness," said Narses. "That the regent, and our captain, have entrusted us with the safety of our future emperor, it is a great honour."

"Can you explain exactly how you will act while you are here?" asked Harry.

"There are a few more guards than those you see here," explained the commander. "We have some who are patrolling the castle and the inner grounds, making sure that the one who is after you does not infiltrate it. We have an agreement with the British Minister for Magic, and we now… well, work is not the word I would use, so… we 'cooperate' with the Dementors. At all times, when convenient, you shall also be accompanied by some of us as well."

Harry nodded, before turning to Professor Dumbledore.

"Are you okay their presence, professor?" he asked.

"Certainly. In fact, this improves the security of Hogwarts, and certainly grants a far more… human sense of security to us and your fellow students," replied Dumbledore.

Harry nodded again, before turning to Narses.

"I have to go now." he said "I have a Potions class in a few minutes."

"Very well, sir. I shall assign two of the guards to be stationed at the entrance of your classroom."
"Ok." he said before turning to Dumbledore "I'll have to go now, Professor. Have a good day."

"A good day to you as well, Harry."
Chapter 10 – Potions and a Boggart

When Harry first arrived at the corridor outside the Potions classroom, he was met with glares by Draco Malfoy and his gang, and he noticed that Theodore was talking with a Ravenclaw, which he recognized as Padma Patil. Upon noticing him, Theodore beaconed Harry to join them. Harry turned to Ron and Hermione, telling them that he needed to speak privately with Nott. They looked at him strangely, but he said that he would explain later, when the time was right.

Ron simply shrugged, and Hermione nodded, still wondering why exactly was Harry, someone who was known for being an opponent to the Slytherin house, speaking with a student from said house.

"That was quite an impact you made Potter," praised Theodore. "Shame it wasn't me, but you know… I have to keep appearances. Oh, have you met Padma here?"

Harry nodded. "Sort of. You're Parvati's twin, right?"

"Quite observant of you, Potter," she said. "Was it the hair, that gave it away?"

"Ah, ah, very funny," he said dryly. "I didn't know you two were friends."

Theodore chuckled. "Oh, Potter, if lack of knowledge equalled purity of blood, you'd have people begging you to donate you blood to them. But that can all be solved with enough time, my fellow wizard."

Harry was not sure if he was supposed to be amused, or not. "Sure…"

Theodore turned to Padma. "So, it was hardened by the poison, right?"

She nodded. "Mother says so."

"And it became white?" he asked once more.

"Yeah."

"Then that's exactly what I'm looking for," he exclaimed. "How much?"

"I'll have to send a letter to my mum first," said Padma.

"Fine. Tell me when you have more news."

"Will do," said Padma. "I'll see you around Theo."

She turned to Harry.

"Potter."

"Padma," he replied.

She left the dungeons, heading to somewhere else. That whole conversation had been rather strange
to Harry, and without context at all.

"What was that all about?" he asked.

"Padma and I have an arrangement of sorts. See, I'm a collector, and according to Padma, her mother has something which would make a fine addition to my collection."

"What exactly?"

Theodore smiled. "Wood."

"Wood? You collect wood?"

"Not just any type of wood, Potter," declared Nott. "Specifically, I collect anything related to wands and wandlore, wood used to make wands amongst these. Padma's mother, who's in India right now, may be able to acquire a certain type of wood I've been looking for."

"Oh… that makes sense."

So, Theodore was a collector. Not something he expected from the Slytherin, if he had to be honest.

"Of course it does!" he claimed. "I even have a branch of wood from the tree which spurted from Salazar Slytherin's wand. How cool is that?"

Harry snorted in amusement. The older boy was certainly an enthusiast about his collection. Although, if he had to admit, if he was a collector as well, it was likely he too would have the same enthusiasm Theodore had. Their conversation had to be interrupted, as the other students began to enter the room. Entering it as well, Theodore dragged Harry towards one of the tables, insisting he was to sit next to him.

Seconds later, Snape entered the classroom, and all the students took out their summer homework, something which Harry did during his stay in Constantinople, which helped from his grandmother. Harry noticed that Snape was looking at him with a passive face, lacking the usual sneer that he possessed when looking at him. What Harry did not know, was that the fact that he no longer used the round glasses that were exactly like the ones used by James Potter, but a pair of rimless glasses, which diminished the facial similarities of both Harry and his late father.

For Snape, that was a much positive change. At least he no longer needed to stare at the face of his long dead rival, apparently mocking him from beyond the grave by using the face of his son. But the fact that he was the son of James Potter remained.

"But he has her eyes…" he reminded himself, a thought that was normally easily squashed by his hatred towards James Potter. But he now knew that he could not simply act the same way towards her son, considering what had been revealed about him. Not even he was prepared to face the wrath of Lily's true mother. But Snape noticed that something was not right in his classroom. It was almost as if something had changed…

It was then that he realized that Potter, or Anemas, was sitting next to one of his Slytherins.

"What in Merlin's phials?"

That was not normal. He was certain that it was impossible for a Slytherin and a Gryffindor to sit next to each other willingly. And why was not Potter sitting next to Weasley or Granger?
Mentally narrowing his eyes, Snape decided to begin the lesson, not taking any time for the usual introductions that the other professors liked to do every year.

"Let's see if any of you had the decency to look at the books during the summer, shall we?" asked Snape, the sneer making its first appearance, making the Gryffindors dread how much points they would lose. "Potter, name three ingredients of the Antidote to Uncommon Poisons!"

Harry, having read bits of the Third Year book before returning to Hogwarts, at least remembered part of the recipe for said potion.

"Billywig stings, Fire Seeds, and powdered graphorn horn, Professor." replied Harry.

"Unexpected, but correct," replied Snape. "Now describe the first four stages of the brewing of the Wiggenweld Potion."

Harry did so correctly, surprising all inside the room, especially Snape.

"It seems that Mr. Potter has finally deemed the books worthy of his attention," commented Snape. "Two points for Gryffindor."

It was as if someone had stolen all sound from the classroom. Severus Snape never awarded points to Gryffindors, especially to Harry Potter. Many were gaping at what was an "historical" event, making quite some of them think that Harry's current status protected him against Snape's usual attacks. But still, what exactly had caused this change in Snape's behaviour?

Snape asked more questions to other students, and in the end Slytherin had been awarded a total of fifteen points. The Potions professor then decided to begin the class, making them brew their first potion of the year. He then waved his wand, and a set of instructions appeared on the board.

"Today you will brew the Antidote to Uncommon Poisons," he stated. "The instructions are on the board, and I want a phial with the potion in my desk when the class is over. Also…"

This last part was said while he glanced at both Harry and Theodore.

"…you will work in pairs today. Begin."

In the end, both Harry and Theodore had succeeded in brewing a near-perfect potion, to which Snape simply gave an approving nod. It was certainly an improvement over his previous behaviour towards him. But as the potions class ended, Harry and the others made way to the Defence Against the Dark Arts classroom, atop the Turris Magnus staircase, where they would have their first class with Professor Lupin.

Oddly enough, the tables and chairs had been moved next to the walls, generating a large empty space in the middle of the classroom. Professor Lupin was sitting behind his desk, while next to him was a large wardrobe, who was shaking, almost as if something was trying to get out. When all the students had entered, Lupin got up from his chair, and came forward.

"Come closer. The wardrobe is secure," he finally spoke, watching as they moved, still glancing at the shaking furniture. "To those who were not paying attention in last night's feast, I am Professor Lupin. Place your bags next to the tables, as today our first class will be practical."

The students moved to do so, whispering amongst themselves, before returning to where they were
before.

"Now, can anyone tell me, what's inside that wardrobe?" asked Lupin.

"It's a boggart, sir." replied Dean Thomas.

"Correct, Mr. Thomas," replied Lupin. "But can anyone tell me what a boggart does?"

Out of nowhere, Hermione answered.

"It changes shape to assume what the nearest person to it fears the most."

"A short but precise answer, Miss Granger," spoke Lupin. "Five points to both you and Mr. Thomas. No one knows what a boggart truly looks like, since it immediately shifts into what the person closest to it fears the most, but there have been exceptional cases where a boggart has assumed a constant shape, such as the Screaming Bogey of Strathtully, famously known to have taken the shape of a black shadow with glowing white eyes."

The students were hearing Lupin with undivided attention. They were learning more in this class which had barely started than what they had learnt in the previous year with Lockhart.

"To our luck, there is a very simple charm which exists to repel a boggart temporarily," He revealed. "Let's practice it now, without wands, shall we? Riddikulus!"

"Riddikulus!" repeated all the students.

"Very good," he said. "But the spell won't be enough, I'm afraid."

Lupin then proceeded to explain how the boggart could only truly be defeated by laughter, using Neville and his Snape-boggart as an example. Most of the students though it had been funny to see Snape wearing the clothes of Neville's grandmother, but the Slytherins were not so amused.

Lupin then pointed towards Ron.

"Ron! Your turn now!"

Ron stepped forward uncertainly, already knowing what the boggart would turn into, much like Harry and Hermione. And as the Snape-boggart turned into a giant spider, all the students took a few steps back, collectively unnerved by an arachnid of such a size. Still, Harry could not help but notice that it was still smaller than Aragog. They watched as Ron raised his wand, and pointed it at the approaching spider.

"Riddikulus!"

A crack was heard, and suddenly roller skates appeared on the spider's feet. The creature still unnerved Ron, so he moved away as fast as he could.

"Parvati!" said Lupin.

The girl moved forward, the boggart turning into a mummy with bloodstained bandages. And as it began to slowly shamble towards Parvati, the girl also used the Riddikulus spell, making it trip over its bandages. She was followed by Dean Thomas, and his disembodied hand-boggart, which was then caught by a mousetrap.

"Very good Mr. Thomas!" praised Lupin "Next!"
And as he turned around to see who stepped forward, Lupin realized that it had been Harry, who was looking at the trapped hand expectantly. He began to feel worry, fearing that a certain someone was going to materialize in the classroom, but he was certainly not expecting to see what the boggart would turn into. And neither was Harry, who became stunned when the boggart assumed the shape of a Dementor.

He was preparing to cast the spell, but suddenly it was as if the Dementor-boggart had been pulled backward, attracting the attention of everyone in the room, especially that of Professor Lupin. Harry took a step back, and watched as the Dementor-boggart dissolved into black smoke, which began to take a rather strange form. It was as if the boggart had turned into a pile of dark clouds, and in their centre a miniature tornado was formed. However, the tornado was upside down, and it was then that Harry noticed that the clouds around it were of a grey colour, while the tornado was far darker.

And then he realized that it was supposed to be.

"The Tower…” he whispered.

"Harry…?” spoke Lupin, watching the actions of the young wizard.

Harry was prepared to use Riddikulus, but once more he was stopped as the Tower-boggart collapsed, and now it was instead just a mass of dark smoke. Lupin's concern grew, as a boggart was not supposed to behave this way. Suddenly, from the smoke emerged what seemed to be a feminine figure, all her features darkened by the smoke. This one reached out to Harry, but it was soon replaced by another one.

Two glowing red orbs appeared in the dark smoke, and they came forth, serving as the "eyes" of a figure which seemed to be made of hot coal and near solid lava, tattered robes following it, mixed with the black smoke, and something which looked like a cracked mask on its face.

Harry took a step back as the figure raised its right hand, and began to walk slowly towards him.

"Harry…” it spoke, in a near whispered and raspy voice.

Lupin was prepared to step forward, but Harry was faster, pointing his wand at the dark figure.

"Riddikulus!"

A crack was heard, followed by as flash of light, as the figure and the smoke turned into confetti, slowly descending towards the floor. Harry quickly moved towards the back of the room, near Neville, ignoring the looks the other students were giving him. Lupin decided to continue the class, and when all the students had faced their boggarts, he told them that they could go. But as he looked towards where Harry was, he realized that the son of his deceased friends was no longer there.
Chapter 11 – Seeking Answers

Harry left the classroom was soon as he could, ignoring all other students. Heading quickly to the Gryffindor Tower, he took hold of the three volumes of the Encyclopaedia Veneficia, and placing them inside his bag, Harry left the common room. He had first thought to head to the Great Hall, but right now, he really wasn't keen on having too many people around. The noise didn't help either.

He roamed the hallways a bit, finally settling on going to the Training Grounds near the Greenhouse walls. There were virtually no students there, and the area was littered with ruins and rocks. Of course, there were the hidden Varangians and the others who patrolled the area, but they did not seem keen on bothering him with anything. He sat down near the walls, and took out one of the books, searching for something that could give him an answer to whatever was haunting him. He searched for the letter "T", and within it articles that were related to towers.

He found little.

There were articles dedicated to specific structures, such as the Tower of London, and the legendary Tower of Babel, and one telling what a tower was, but nothing that shed any light on that dark spire which followed him around. He had no idea where it came from, in fact. There was nothing from his past that involved any tower, or a storm in an ocean… much less a strange woman and a figure which seemed to come out of a muggle cartoon.

"Oi, Potter!"

Harry looked at the source of the voice.

"Nott?" he asked in surprise.

"Nah, I'm Sirius Black under Polyjuice," said the Slytherin as he approached. "No Weasley and Granger?"

"They don't know I'm here," said Harry, turning to another page.

"Seeing as how they're making wonderful imitations of… cats seeking out a rat, it was bit obvious they don't know where you are," said Theodore as he sat on a fallen column near Harry. "Care to explain why the Boy-Who-Lived is sulking in this corner of Hogwarts?"

Harry said nothing, and simply handed over the opened book to Theodore. The older boy took hold of it, and glanced at the pages Harry had been reading.

"Towers… Potter, what are you expecting to find here?"

"I don't know… answer's maybe?"

Theodore sighed. "Potter, I'm sure the answer to your problem isn't in a book written more than a century ago. Especially in an encyclopaedia. Besides, what are you so worried about?"

"Didn't you see my boggart? That tower, or spire, or… whatever it is called… it's not the first time
I saw that thing. And now it follows me, like a… dog follows his master, or how Crookshanks follows Hermione around," said Harry. "Not to mention those other things that appeared."

"It was odd, yes… but still Potter, perhaps it's just the boggart reacting to your fears of that thing… or something that happened years ago, and you don't remember," suggested Theodore. "Maybe a nightmare."

Theodore raised a good point. Never in his life he had seen a tower rising from a stormy ocean, nor that strange woman or the terrifying figure which followed her. Perhaps this had been all caused by the encounter with that Dementor, which had messed up his mind enough for him to become paranoid.

But then again… there was also the appearance of the tower in Trelawney's class. A coincidence, perhaps?

"Come on Potter," called Theodore as he got up from the column. "I think you better go and prove to Granger and Weasley that you're not dead, before they start to believe that Black got hold of you."

Harry nodded, getting up. Theodore handed the book to him, Harry storing it inside his bag.

"Hey, Nott," said Harry as the two walked towards the castle.

The Slytherin made a hum of acknowledgment.

"You're a Slytherin… and I'm Harry Potter," he pointed out. "Won't your housemates… what's the word… ostracise you for being seen with me?"

Theodore stopped walking for a moment. "Ostracise me, Potter?" Heh, do you know anything about the Notts?"

Harry shook his head, knowing only that he descended from them and that Theodore's father was Marquess of… some place he could not remember.

"No. Why?"

"Amongst the Notts, there is one rule that has never changed. You don't approach a Nott, you are approached by a Nott." asked Theodore. "There's a reason I'm usually alone, Potter. I follow the example set by my ancestors, and those who know us are smart enough to keep themselves in line."

"And you approached me."

"Yep. They'll see it as a sign of personal approval, and have to do nothing but accept it," declared Theodore. "Even Malfoy."

"How powerful is your family?" Harry asked, wondering how the Notts had gathered such influence. "Do you have more power than the Malfoys?"

"Unlike the Malfoys, and as far as history can tell, my ancestors have their roots in the old kingdoms of England, before William the Bastard invaded," said Theodore. "The majority of pure-blood and some half-blood families you see today still descend directly from the native populace. Father says that unlike the muggle nobles, we kept our power amongst our fellow wizards, while the invaders held little. Lucius Malfoy may have a bit of terrain in the south, money, and the ears of the minister, but beyond that… he has little hold over the old pure-blood families of Britain. My father calls him, the 'exception of the century'."
For Harry, that was quite interesting to hear. The fact that the current influence of the Malfoys was merely due to Lucius Malfoy's own work was rather… curious. Although, considering how Draco acted, it was very likely it would not last when the man died.

"What about my family?" asked Harry. "Do you know anything?"

"All I know, is that the original Potters came from England, and a branch inherited their titles due to a smart marriage with a Scottish noblewoman," said Theodore. "You lot also had a long blood-purist phase, which ended a few generations ago."

To Harry, that was certainly not a good thing to hear. If what Theodore said was true, then some of his ancestors had been blood-supremacists, just like Draco Malfoy and his kin were. Then again, those were very different times, and something must have changed for them to stop with all that blood purity nonsense.

Perhaps one day he would learn about it.

The days began to pass, and soon Harry came to have Defence Against the Dark Arts as his favourite class, much like the other students. He spent much of his time with Ron and Hermione, but also quite some with Theodore, finding the Slytherin a very interesting person to have around, compared to the others of his house that he know.

And there was also the matter of Quidditch, and since it was Oliver's last year at Hogwarts, the Gryffindor Keeper wanted to win the Cup at least one time. And so began the trainings, at least three evenings a week. But soon enough, came something else which made Harry want to slap himself. In the excitement of meeting his grandmother and all that followed, Harry completely forgot to ask her to sign the paper which would allow him to go to Hogsmeade. Now, he was stuck in Hogwarts, while the majority of the other students, excluding the First and Second Years, were heading towards the village.

So, there he was, sitting on a bench in the Clock Tower courtyard, doing nothing and wondering what exactly he could do to pass the time. Perhaps he could visit Hagrid, if his old friend could be found inside his hut, that is. He got up from the bench, and began to walk towards the wooden bridge. It was then that he saw something strange on the floor. He knelt and grabbed the object, noticing it was a quite peculiar piece of parchment, possibly something that a student which went to Hogsmeade lost.

He opened it, realizing that it unfolded into several different sections, but it was completely blank. Using his wand, Harry made the parchment return to its original state, not remembering the exact state in which he had found it.

Wondering if it had any hidden words, Harry pointed his wand at the map once more.

"Aparecium."

For a while it was as if nothing happened, but suddenly words began to appear on the parchment, much like what had happened with Tom Riddle's diary.

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*Mr. Moony would like to inform that the Revealing Charm will have no effect on this.*

*Mr. Prongs agrees with Mr. Moony, and would like to know who used the charm.*
Mr. Wormtail advises the one holding this parchment to not use any more charms on it.

Mr. Padfoot agrees with Mr. Wormtail and the others above.

Harry looked at the parchment with his eyes narrowing. He rose from the floor, and walked back towards the Clock Tower courtyard, sitting back on the bench, before pointing his wand at the parchment.

"I'm Harry Potter," he said.

He waited, and watched as the sentences disappeared, only to be replaced by a single one.

Mr. Prongs wishes to know if you are related to James Potter.

Harry's was surprised at the mention of his father, but answered nonetheless.

"Yes. He's my father."

The sentence immediately disappeared, replaced once more by new ones.

Mr. Padfoot congratulates Mr. Prongs on his achievement and wishes to know who the mother is.

Mr. Prongs concurs with Mr. Padfoot's question and would also like to know your house in Hogwarts.

The way these two... individuals spoke, suggested that Mr. Prongs was in fact his father, or at least an imprint of his personality which had been left in the parchment. So, if Prongs was his father, then who were the others?

"My mother was known as Lily Potter, but before she married my father she was known as Lily Evans," answered Harry, "And I'm in Gryffindor."

Mr. Prongs is delighted with both the mother and the house and would like to introduce his offspring to the Marauder's Map.

Mr. Wormtail finds it incredible that Mr. Prongs succeeded in his quest to marry Lily Evans and asks Harry Potter on how this map was recovered from its previous two owners.

"I found it on the wooden bridge," admitted Harry. "The owners must have lost it. And what exactly is the Marauder's Map?"

Mr. Moony advises Mr. Potter to head to a secluded location.

Mr. Prongs affirms that when in a secure location, you are to tap the map with your wand and say 'I solemnly swear that I am up to no good'.

Mr. Padfoot does tell Mr. Potter that to hide away the map, you must say Mischief managed.
Harry looked at the words, memorizing them before placing the parchment, or the Marauder's Map as Mr. Prongs had called it, into one of his pockets. His original plan of visiting Hagrid would have to wait, as he was now intent on heading to the common room. Yet as he entered the clock tower, Harry was stopped by the sudden appearance of Professor Lupin, the man exiting the hole behind the portrait of Damara Dodderidge.

"Good afternoon, Harry!" said Lupin upon seeing the young wizard.

"Good afternoon, professor," He replied.

"I see that you didn't go with the rest to Hogsmeade," spoke Lupin.

"I forgot to ask my grandmother to sign the permission," he admitted. "There were just many things on my mind at the time."

"From what I heard and read, I can believe that," said the professor. "Care to take a walk with me?"

"Sure," agreed Harry, having nothing more to do, excluding the whole map issue.

Harry and Lupin walked towards the wooden bridge, coming to a stop near its middle.

"I would have invited you for a cup of tea in my office, but I'm heard that you may be quite tired of tea leaves."

Harry looked at him, his expression clearly inquiring how the professor knew that.

"Professor McGonagall told me," said Lupin at the unspoken question. "But I assume you are not worried about it, are you?"

"No."

"Really?"

Harry hesitated before answering.

"A bit… I guess," admitted the young wizard.

"You know Harry, when we had our first lesson, I had no intention of allowing you to face your boggart."

"Why?"

"Well, I assumed at the time, that your greatest fear would be Lord Voldemort." Said Lupin "I was proven wrong, but at the same time, of all the boggarts yours was the most intriguing."

Harry looked down, observing the birds passing below the bridge.

"I thought of Voldemort at first, but then I remembered the Dementor on the train," he said "I just don't know why that tower appeared. And those things… I don't know what they were as well."

"Perhaps your subconscious was alerted by Professor Trelawney's predictions." suggested Lupin "But I'm afraid I myself don't know why the boggart behaved like that when you faced it. Perhaps, you have hidden fears, something that your mind has mostly forgotten. A childhood nightmare, for
example."

Professor Lupin too, was of the opinion that his boggart had been conjured due to a childhood nightmare. Perhaps, it was exactly what it had been. Still, he would have much preferred the Dementor instead.

"Still, if you dismissed Voldemort so easily, thinking instead about the Dementors... then that would suggest that what you fear most... is fear itself," said Lupin. "A wise choice, especially since it was you who thought about them, and I assume that the Dementor was not a surprise."

"No. But that night on the train, when I fainted... I was too confused to understand what was happening. But now, I think that I heard someone," responded Harry. "I'm not sure, but I think I heard someone scream my name - a woman - before I fainted."

"Dementors force us to relieve the worst memories of our lives," explained Lupin. "Our pain, no matter how small it is, becomes their power."

"I'm not sure, but I think it was my mother... when she was murdered."

Lupin looked at Harry, as if examining him.

"You know Harry, the first time I saw you, I recognized you immediately. Not because of your scar, but because of your eyes, and I can guess you know who they belong to."

Harry looked at Lupin, wondering if he knew his mother, to which the professor answered once more, without hearing a single question. The man turned around, and went to the opposite side of Harry's, looking at the Black Lake in the distance.

"Oh yes, I knew her. She was there for me at a time when no one else was. We used to talk for hours, you know. Not only was she a much-gifted witch, but an uncommonly kind woman," said the professor. "She could see the beauty in whoever she met, even when that person couldn't see it in themselves."

Harry smiled fondly at the description of his mother.

"Which may explain the affection she had for your father," continued Lupin "James had... a certain talent for trouble. A gift, rumour has it, he passed on to you."

Harry wondered how many rumours there were of his talent for trouble. Perhaps it was something Lupin had learnt from the other professors.

"I imagine my surprise when I discovered that you and your mother were part of a royal family," said Lupin. "James must have certainly known though."

"My grandmother told me that my mother wanted to keep it a secret," said Harry. "At least until Voldemort was defeated."

"Understandable. It would have attracted more attention to you three," replied the Defence professor. "I could tell you stories about them, and trust me, there are many, but know that they lived. Every moment of every day, and that's how they'd want to be remembered."
had been speaking with Narses.

"Ah, Harry! Care to join me in my office?" asked the headmaster upon seeing him.

"Erm… did something happen?" he asked nervously, considering the reasons for his last few visits to Dumbledore's office.

"Not at all," replied the old wizard. "It's something related to your parents and the current day."

Harry's eyes widened, and he silently followed Dumbledore to his office. Once there, he sat behind his desk, and invited Harry to sit as well.

"I received a letter from your grandmother," said Dumbledore. "A rather exceptional witch, although I only met her personally a few times. Your grandfather, I met a few more. Still, I trust you are aware of the significance of this day, am I correct?"

"Yes, sir," replied Harry, knowing that it had been on this very night that many years ago, Voldemort had killed his parents, and attempted to kill him as well.

"Your grandmother and I have been discussing over these last few week the transfer of your parents's remains to Constantinople, your mother and grandfather's birthplace," explained Dumbledore. "They have already been exhumed, and were already sent to the city, where they are currently lying in repose, waiting for the ceremony to be held."

That was surprising to Harry, as his grandmother had not mentioned anything related to the reburial of his parents in Constantinople. Still, it made sense, considering that had his mother been alive right now, she and his father would have been rulers over the empire, both in the muggle and wizarding worlds.

"I know bits of Imperial culture, and I know that they do not celebrate Halloween as we do." said Dumbledore, eating a small sherbet lemon. "I always thought that they have a much religious approach to things, especially in the east."

Harry snorted, knowing exactly how his grandmother was when religion was involved. She was zealous in both their practice and defence, but did not persecute any which did not hold the same beliefs as she did, both in the muggle and wizarding world. But he was very aware of how seriously the citizens of the Empire regarded their religion.

"I am allowing you to join your grandmother for a somewhat extensive period, as per her request," said Dumbledore. "There are a quite large amount of ceremonies that will be held, from what she told me."

Harry sighed, knowing that he would have little rest during the next few days.
Great Palace, Augustaion, Constantinople

Having been accompanied by Dumbledore and the Varangian to outside of the anti-apparition protections of Hogwarts, Harry took the portkey given to him by Narses, and was immediately transported to the Great Palace in Constantinople. He appeared in one of the rooms, where his grandmother had been apparently waiting for him. Luckily, Harry managed to keep himself standing after the instantaneous voyage, heading straight towards the woman.

"Grandmother," he greeted the old woman, who was fully dressed in black, a veil covering her head.

"Good afternoon, Henry," said Maria, getting up from the armchair where she sat. "Follow me."

Harry followed his grandmother, until the two reached the master bedroom, his bedroom. On top of the bed was a black suit and a white shirt which would be what he would wear for the time until his parents were entombed.

"This suit is for you to use," she said. "Wear it, and meet me in the room where you arrived."

Harry nodded, and watched as his grandmother left, leaving him alone inside the room. Harry quickly undressed, before dressing the black suit. He left the room, heading towards the chamber where his grandmother waited. She looked at him, seeing if he looked well in the suit, and after a few seconds, she mentally approved, and beckoned him to follow.

"Where will we go?" asked Harry.

"For today, we shall head to the Basilica of Saint Sophia, where your parents are lying in repose," she said. "Tomorrow, we will travel to Mozambique, then Angola, and finally, Portugal. Then, we will return here for the proper ceremony."

Harry nodded.

Basilica of Saint Sophia, Augustaion, Constantinople

Harry and his grandmother were under tight security, much like the cathedral itself and the coffins of his parents. Upon entering the cathedral, Harry immediately saw the muggle Varangians inside, and a group of them were near the centre of the structure, where the coffins were. Harry walked towards the coffins, and there were some people sitting in the wooden benches there, paying their respects to the late daughter of Emperor Alexander and her husband.

One of the few who was there was a familiar face to Harry, the Prime Minister of Portugal, Anibal Cavaco Silva. But before greeting those present, both Harry and his grandmother went towards the two coffins.
Each was covered by the flag of the Anemid dynasty – a red flag adorned with a thrice crowned double-headed eagle, and a shield on the eagle's chest, with a white background and the tetragrammic cross of the Palaiologos dynasty, yet blue and not golden, alongside the fire steels as four Bs, representing the family motto of both the Palaiologoi and the Anemids.

King of Kings, Ruling over Rulers.

He watched as his grandmother approached the coffins, making the sign of the cross, praying silently. As she did this, Harry sat nearby, and looked around, trying to see who was already present. There was a man there which he did not recognize, but was speaking with Cavaco Silva. But beyond them, there were very few people inside.

He turned towards the coffins, a strange sensation assaulting him. It was strange to be in the presence of his parents' remains, and to have them so close and so distant.

It was a sensation that he found to be unpleasant. He could only hope that these ceremonies would end quickly, for right now, despite knowing that he had to be present and pay his respects to his departed parents, the only place he wanted to be right now was Hogwarts.

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**Hogwarts School, Inverness, Scotland (U.K.)**

"You think he's in the common room?"

"I have no idea Ron," replied Hermione. "He could be in the Astronomy Tower, for all I know."

Ron and Hermione, much like the rest of the students that went to Hogsmeade had just returned from said village. Expecting to find Harry in the great hall, the duo was disappointed at the fact that he was not there.

"Why are there so many people in front of the Fat Lady's portrait?" wondered Hermione aloud.

"You think Neville forgot the password again?" asked Ron.

"Hey!" protested a voice from behind them.

Ron turned around, only to find Neville standing behind them.

"Oh, you're there…"

It seemed that more people were gathering around the portrait, and even the portraits around them were interested in whatever was happening. Ron and Hermione could hear Percy's voice, but with the noise they could not understand what exactly he was saying.

It was then that Ginny who was near the Fat Lady's portrait, came straight towards them, an alarmed look on her face.

"The Fat Lady… she's gone!"

And as the people began to step away from the painting, Ron and Hermione could see the gashes on the portrait, as if someone had slashed it. It was then the Dumbledore appeared, accompanied by Filch. The headmaster observed the damaged portrait, closely observing the gashes.

"Mr. Filch. Round up the ghosts," he commanded. "Tell them to search every painting in the castle
"There will be no need for the ghosts, headmaster," said the caretaker, pointing at an upper section of the Grand Staircase. "The Fat Lady is there."

The students gasped, and began to run as fast as they could towards the painting that had been highlighted by Mr. Filch. Dumbledore had also moved towards the location fast enough that he outran some of the students. They reached a portrait with a hippopotamus, and behind it was a cowering Fat Lady.

"Dear lady, who did this to you?" asked Dumbledore to the woman.

It was clear that she had been affected by the attack, as she did not even rise from her hiding spot.

"Eyes like the devil he's got, and a soul as dark as his name!" she said terrified and half-sobbing. "It's him headmaster, the one they all talk about. He's here, somewhere in the castle. Sirius Black!"

The students gasped, and Dumbledore's expression grew more serious.

"Secure the castle, Mr. Filch," he said in a stern tone. "The rest of you, to the Great Hall!"

"Has the Owlery been searched and the Clock Tower sealed?"

"Yes headmaster," replied Filch. "No sign of Black there or in the cave below."

Dumbledore nodded.

"The boathouse and the road connecting it to the paved courtyard are empty as well," Said Professor Sinistra, who had just entered the Entrance Hall.

"There is no sign of Black in the dungeons as well." said Snape who had arrived as well, accompanied by his fellow heads of house.

"We have found nothing as well." said Professor Sprout.

"Are all the students in there?" asked McGonagall, glancing at the Great Hall.

"Yes, and they shall remain here until tomorrow." declared Dumbledore "They can return to their common rooms then."

"Professors!" said a panicked voice, coming from the Great Hall.

The professors turned to see a group of Gryffindors heading towards them, amongst them Ron Weasley and Hermione Granger.

"Is something the matter Miss Granger?" asked McGonagall.

"Harry is not in the Great Hall!" said Hermione, clearly alarmed with the situation.

"What?" nearly yelled McGonagall in panic as well.

Dumbledore then decided to intervene.
"There is no need for concern," he stated "Mr. Potter is safe."

"Albus?" questioned McGonagall.

"Mr. Potter has travelled to Constantinople, to attend the funeral and reburial of his parents," he explained. "Their remains have been removed from Godric's Hollow, and were sent to Lily's homeland."

Both the professors and the students were relieved at the news, not being aware of Harry's temporary departure from Hogwarts.

"Regarding that, I would like to speak privately with Miss Granger and Messrs Weasley and Longbottom, in my office if you please," said Dumbledore.

The three Gryffindors looked at each other, before nodding and following Dumbledore into the Entrance Courtyard, and from there towards the headmaster's office.

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**Basilica of Saint Sophia, Augustaion, Constantinople**

It was early in the afternoon, and Harry and his grandmother were already inside the cathedral. Over the last few days, Harry and Maria had participated in quite a few ceremonies, and now they had finally returned to Constantinople, for the final one before the burial of his parents. The coffins had been brought early in the morning from the Lisbon Cathedral, and had been sent to a chapel where the first phases of the ceremony were held, but Harry wasn't sure when they would arrive at the basilica.

Inside the church were faces which had become familiar to Harry during the last few days. One example would be the constant presence had been Crown Prince Otto of the now defunct Austria-Hungary, his wife Regina and his son Karl. Others who made their first appearance were Charles, the Prince of Wales and his wife Diana, representing Queen Elizabeth II. There were many others, both members of noble and royal families, but important politicians were present as well.

The most important religious figure there, was, of course, the Ecumenical Patriarch, Bartholomew I, who would lead the final funerary ceremony.

He was taken out of his thoughts by his grandmother, who was sitting right next to him.

"**Henry, it seems a group of people you know have arrived,**" she said motioning towards a group of newcomers.

Harry looked towards the entrance of the church, and he immediately knew who they were, at least the majority. Harry got up from the bench and went towards them. He would certainly remember this as the most peculiar moment of all the ceremonies he had attended until now."

"Good afternoon, Mister Potter," greeted Dumbledore. "My late condolences."

It was a strange sight, to see Dumbledore wearing something other than his usually extravagant robes, but for a situation such as this, it was only appropriate. With Dumbledore were also McGonagall, Flitwick, Lupin, and, surprisingly, Snape. There were other three other adults with them, one which Harry recognized as Neville's grandmother, and one which was uncannily similar with Theodore. The last one, Harry could not recognize.
Other than them were also Ron, Hermione, Neville and Theodore himself. Harry noticed that the three were a bit uneasy with Theodore's presence, something which the Nott heir was certainly enjoying.

"Thank you, professor," he replied, still a bit stunned by their appearance. "But why are you all here?"

"We knew you parents very well Mr. Potter," said McGonagall. "Not only were we their teachers in Hogwarts, but we also developed a friendship over the years."

"I can understand that with you and professors Dumbledore and Flitwick, but I am certain that Professor Snape did not teach my parents."

"Your mother and I were once friends," said Snape. "It is only right that I pay my respects to her."

"Oh." was Harry's only answer, before looking at the younger group.

"It was your grandmother who invited us," explained Hermione, she knew that we were friends, and thought that you would like our presence here today.

Harry then looked at Neville and his grandmother.

"James and Lily… or Maria, were Neville's godparents," explained the Longbottom matriarch "In turn, Alice was made into your godmother. May I ask where your grandmother is?"

"She is over there, in the front row," said Harry, pointing at the location.

Augusta nodded, and went towards the woman, the professors following and Harry's friends as well, leaving him alone with the two Notts and the old man.

"You are Marquess Averdale, I presume. I'm surprised by your presence here," said Harry. "I thought you and my parents were not exactly on… good terms."

"You would be correct, but proper pure-blood protocol requires my presence in the funeral of your father," explained the man who was certainly uncomfortable to be in muggle territory "After all, we were cousins."

"Unfortunate that only you were considerate enough to follow the protocol," said the old man, who moved towards Harry, extending his hand. "We have not met before, have we Mr. Potter? I am Cygnus Black I, the current Duke of the Settford Isles, and head of House of Black. Your great-great-grandfather on your father's maternal side as well."

"A pleasure to meet you, sir." said Harry shaking the old man's hand, surprised that he was still alive. The man had to be at least 160 years old or something, and he looked to be less old than Dumbledore.

"For all intents and purposes, I am a close relative to your father," he said. "I know that the muggles are not used to wizard longevity."

They way Cygnus had spoken pretty much leaked of wizard supremacy, but he nodded regardless. Changing the mind of someone who could reach his third century was not exactly on his plans.

"Now, if you'll excuse me, I will greet your grandmother," said Cygnus, heading towards the Empress Regent.
"I shall do so as well," said Theodore's father, following Cygnus, and leaving Harry alone with Theodore.

"Harry," greeted Theodore, extending his hand. "My late condolences."

"Thank you, Theo," replied Harry, shaking Theodore's hand.

"I admit I am impressed with this place." he said "Hard to believe that the muggles managed to build this whole thing centuries ago, especially without those weird machines they have that make a lot of noise."

Harry snorted at the comment.

"Anyway, shall we join the others?" asked the Nott heir.

"Sure."

At least an hour later, both Harry and his grandmother were informed that the coffins of Harry's parents were already being brought to the cathedral. Soon enough, the sound within the church had diminished when the entrance gates were closed, only for everyone to rise from their seats when they were opened again.

And so, with the two coffins, covered in the dynastic flags, finally inside the church, the final funerary ceremony of Maria Anemas and James Potter began.
Chapter 13 – Consequences

Hogwarts School, Inverness, Scotland (U.K.)

After the funeral, this had returned to normal. Harry had returned to Hogwarts right after the burial of his parents, and Hermione had helped him to catch up to all the classes he had missed when attending the ceremonies. But as it is obvious, the magnitude of the event was also felt in the British wizarding world, and the day after the burial, the Daily Prophet, which was delivered to most of the inhabitants of Hogwarts, had said ceremony as the topic of its front page.

JAMES AND LILY POTTER FINALLY LAID TO REST IN A GRAND CEREMONY

BY I. LAWRENCE

Yesterday, the bodies of You-Know-Who's staunch opponents, James Potter and his wife Lily were buried after a ceremony realized in Constantinople. This event is certainly related to the recent discovery of Lily Potter's true identity, who was born as Maria Anemas, sole child of Maria III, Queen of Portugal and her late husband Alexander IV, Emperor of the Roman Empire, and joint King of Portugal due to his marriage with Maria III. The events around Lily Potter's real identity go back to the Time of Troubles, a conflict which was solely restricted to mainland Europe, and her kidnapping as a new-born infant by the now-defunct terrorist group known as the Revolutionaries. Murdered by He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named, the bodies of James and his wife were taken from their resting place in Godric's Hollow, and brought to Portugal, where they remained lying in repose for several days, and at the same time, several funerary ceremonies were held in the countries which Lily, or Maria, would have inherited upon the death of her parents.

Young Harry Potter, his real name being shortened as Henry Alexander Anemas, according to the spokesperson of his grandmother Maria III, attended the ceremonies, always accompanied by his grandmother, the Queen of Portugal, who is also the current regent of the Roman Empire. Also present in the last ceremony were British figures such as Albus Dumbledore, Cornelius Fudge, Cygnus Black, Amelius Nott and his son Theodore. Amongst them were also people who were close to the Potters and his son. Public figures, both amongst wizardkind and the muggles included Charles, the Prince of Wales and his wife Diana; Henry VII of Aquitaine and his wife Marie; Otto von Habsburg (current pretender to the Austrian throne) and several other members of the Habsburg-Lorraine family; Grand Duke Jean of Luxembourg and his wife Joséphine, and several others, including representatives from the Brazilian and German Imperial Families.

With the death of his mother, Henry Alexander is currently the head of the House of Anemas and is bound to become the next Roman Emperor, both in the wizarding and muggle worlds. After the death of his grandmother, young Harry will also become the King of Portugal to both the wizard community and the muggles. He is already the Duke of Inverness, inheriting the title from his father, a location in which the school of Hogwarts is curiously located. Speculation has risen over
what regnal name the young prince shall take, with people already making bets over the names. The favourite being his own birth name, with others such as Alexander and Manuel not far behind. Curiously enough, the name of his father, James Potter, does not appear in the betting lists.

(to read more about the Potters and You-Know-Who, go to page 3)

(to read more about Harry Potter, go to page 7)

Harry could feel the eyes of the student body upon him, as they read the Daily Prophet. The Hufflepuffs looked at him with curiosity, much like his fellow Gryffindors, while the Ravenclaws either glanced at him or simply continued to read the newspaper. Slytherin on the other hand, either stared at him with blank looks, or were occupied with keeping themselves away from Draco Malfoy, for reasons unknown to Harry. However, Malfoy sometimes glared at Harry with a little more hate than usual, confusing the young Anemid.

Other than that, he had not yet seen either Ron or Hermione, but that was probably because he had woken up earlier than usual. And so, by curiosity, and while he still had time, Harry decided to check the pages indicated in the main article, yet those regarding his parent and Voldemort mentioned those things that were already known, while the ones who talked about himself were filled with speculation and rumours, facts being a rather absent trait.

"But why were they singing?" asked Ron to Hermione "I mean, wasn't that supposed to be a funeral?"

"Oh Ron, that's just how Christian funerals work…well, at least some of them. By the way, how exactly are funerals here?"

"Wizards just gather and speak a bit about the dead person," said Neville. "Then they are buried."

Hermione looked a bit surprised.

"Really? Just that?" she asked quite incredulous. "It seems… too simple."

Neville and Ron simply shrugged.

"You're a muggle-born, so you may know what they were singing, right Hermione?" asked Neville, who was curious as well.

"I actually have no idea," she admitted. "I don't know Greek."

They, who were approaching Harry, jumped at a sudden gasp.

"No! Can it be!" said Harry in a dramatic tone. "There is something Hermione doesn't now? You must be an impostor!"

Ron sniggered, while Neville snorted before calming himself. Hermione looked to be both amused and annoyed.

"Very funny, Harry," she replied. "But I, am the real Hermione."

"Really?" Then tell me something only the real Hermione would know."

Hermione looked around before speaking in a way that surprised the three boys.
Only Harry and Ron understood what Hermione was mentioning, while Neville remained oblivious and confused.

"Yep, this is the real Hermione," said Harry jokingly. "Anyway, I want to thank you three."

"Huh? For what?" asked Ron.

"For being there yesterday." replied Harry. "I didn't even know that you were coming."

"Oh, Harry, you don't need to thank us. We're friends." said Hermione.

"Yeah mate." spoke Ron. "Dumbledore received a letter from your grandmother, inviting us to the funeral. He told us the day you left."

"Professor Dumbledore, Ron." corrected Hermione "No one knew where you were, and when the Fat Lady was attacked by Sirius Black…"

"Black was here?" interrupted Harry "Is that why Sir Cadogan is in her portrait?"

"Yeah. You were lucky to have missed him," said Ron. "Everyone discovered about the attack after we returned to Hogsmeade."

"The Fat Lady's portrait was ripped apart," said Neville. "As if it had been attacked by an animal."

"Well, Black's an animal, isn't he?" said Ron. "I mean, he killed twelve muggles with a single curse. Not to mention that man… Pedigew?"

"Peter Pettigrew," corrected Neville "I was told that Black blew up the street with Pettigrew and the muggles."

"Yeah, that's the one." spoke Ron "I heard only a finger was left of him after Black killed him."

"What?" asked Harry. "How is that even possible? There should have been bits of him scattered around."

Ron and Neville both were looking at Harry in confusion, while Hermione was seemingly in thought.

"That's true…" she said. "Even in aeroplane crashes there are body parts amongst the wreckage."

"What an aeroplane?" asked Ron.

Hermione groaned in annoyance at the ignorance of wizards.

"Harry!" said a voice coming from behind them.

They turned around, allowing Harry to see who it was.

"Theo," he replied. "What is it?"

The others tensed at both the presence of a Slytherin, and at Harry's odd familiarity with one.

"I need to speak with you about something," he said. "Not here."

Harry nodded. "Where?"
"The usual place," said the Slytherin. "I'll see you there."

"Yeah," replied Harry as the other departed.

Yet as he turned to his Gryffindor friends, Harry was met with questioning looks.

"What?" he asked.

"I didn't know you were on speaking terms with Nott," commented Ron. "When did that happen, mate?"

"I met him during the travel from London to here. We shared a compartment in the Express," explained Harry. "It sort of went from there… not to mention we're cousins, so…"

"You two are cousins?" asked Hermione, quite surprised. "How?"

"My father's mother was the sister of his grandfather," explained Harry.

"Oh… that makes sense," muttered Ron. "But Harry, you and that muggle are… well, were cousins as well, and you were not exactly friends."

Harry had to agree with Ron on that one.

"You think Nott can be trusted?" spoke Ron again. "He's a Slytherin, after all. They're not exactly friendly with us."

"Well, until now he hasn't insulted any of you, or my parents, so he's in my good book," said Harry. "Besides, he dislikes Malfoy. A lot, from what I understand. Sometimes I think he wants to topple him from whatever… what's the word… hierarchy, that Slytherin has."

"You won't have much trouble with that," said Neville, surprising those present, who briefly glanced at the Slytherin table.

"Why?" asked Harry.

"You noticed that only Theodore, his father, and the Duke of Settford attended the funeral, at least on your father's side of your family, right?"

"Yes…"

"Traditional protocol of the old pure-blood families requires for all the living relatives of the person who died to at least attend either the funeral or the burial." explained Neville "Since your father was a descendant of the Duke of Settford, it means that all living descendants of Settford are required to attend the funeral. Well, at least those who have not been disinherited or are incapable of that."

"Ok, but what does that have to do with Malfoy?" he asked.

"You are related to him by your Black blood. His mother is a Black." stated Neville before looking at Ron "You too Ron, but I think your Black relative was disinherited or something."

"Gran Cedrella." said Ron "Dad told me that she was cast out of the Black family for marrying into my family."

"Lovely family we have," said Harry, his voice dripping with sarcasm, before realizing something. "Wait, that means we're… cousins too! Of a kind, at least…"
"Yeah... wicked!" replied his red-head friend.

Harry began to think about what Neville had told him, and he soon realized what had happened.

"Oh, I see," said the young Anemas. "So, by not appearing, they breached the protocol."

"What will happen to them?" asked Hermione.

"The Malfoys and the Blacks are known for being great supporters of pure-blood supremacy and tradition, and to them, not attending the funeral of a relative is nearly as bad as marrying a muggle-born or a muggle."

"That's...wow..." said Hermione.

"So that's why the Slytherins are away from Malfoy..." mumbled Harry.

At that, Ron turned to the Slytherin table, wanting to confirm what Harry had just said.

"Oh, yeah... they are."

Time seemed to pass slowly to Harry and the other students of Hogwarts, but soon enough, the Christmas season came. Although they had been reluctant to do so, Harry had introduced Ron and Hermione to Theodore. Interactions between the three had been quite a bit tense, but he had been there during the initial phase to make sure nothing escalated into unwanted territory.

While that effort was seemingly successful, disaster still stroke him, as during a Quidditch game the Dementors had decided to pay a visit, and his Nimbus 2000 had a devastating encounter with the Whomping Willow. His first and only broom was now just a pile of wood. On the bright side, Snape now treated him neutrally and Harry began to see how useful the Marauder's Map was. Had he been a spy or something similar, it would be the equivalent of finding a gold mine. But it still was a valuable find, not to mention that it had belonged once to his father. So now he had two things from him – the cloak and the map. Well, three if he counted the Duchy of Inverness.

And with Christmas close, he made sure to sign his name on the list of students that would spend Christmas at home. It was rather pleasant and strange to think that this would be the second Christmas he would spend with close blood relatives, but it mattered little right now. Soon, the last day of school came, and while Ron and Hermione remained at Hogwarts, Harry was amongst those that left the school on the Hogwarts Express, accompanied by Theodore. While the majority had remained at Hogwarts, a small group of Varangians were inside the train, yet all were still on the lookout for Sirius Black.

And when the train had arrived at the platform, the young Anemas was met with his grandmother personally waiting for him there. And so, the two departed from London, their destination being not Constantinople, but another location which Harry had not yet visited.

**Anemas Palace, Imbros, Nicaea**

Maria had brought Harry to another property of the House of Anemas, which was also one of the major touristic points of people that travelled to Nicaea. It had been constructed in the 17th century
as an attempt at fusing Byzantine, Ottoman and Baroque architectures, producing a rather interesting result. It had been the second residence of the Anemas family, built after the fire that destroyed the first palace in the city of Nicaea, and they would only return to the mainland after the war for Nicaean Independence, building then the second palace.

There were a few exaggerated features, but that was to be expected, at least according to his grandmother. The one who had ordered its construction, Symeon II Anemas, the Bey of Anatolia, had been a rather eccentric man and a close friend of Sultan Murad IV, and the last Anemas to have good relations with the Ottoman Sultan.

Maria was not new to this palace, having spent a few weeks there after her marriage to Alexander, before she had been allowed to return to Portugal due to the restoration of the Portuguese monarchy. She decided to take Harry for a tour, showing him the important locations of the palace, and after showing him sections of the palace such as the library, the dining room, the throne room, the mausoleum and the chapel, she took him to perhaps the most important chamber of the palace.

The room was enormous, and while the floor was decorated with rugs and there was also furniture there, the walls were completely free, for they had what Harry deemed as the most magnificent frescoes he had seen until now. There were several full-body representations of men, women and children, each with a banner bellow them showing a name, the date of birth and death.

"What's this place?" he asked mesmerised by the scenes painted on the walls.

"Your grandfather called it the Chamber of Kings, and this section of the palace is restricted only to members of the House of Anemas, and those authorized by them to enter. Not even servants can enter this room without our authorization," explained Maria. "Here are represented all the members of the House of Anemas. The wizard who made this was a genius, for the magic within the walls can generate new frescoes based on a new-born in the family or a member by marriage. You and I are here, much like your parents."

Maria walked towards a section of the circular room and Harry followed her, the two approaching one of the representations.

"That's… me," whispered the young wizard.

Surrounded by leaves and tree branches, much like all the other characters in the mural, was a representation of Harry, dressed in a rather simple regalia. He was sitting on one of the branches, his right hand resting on his lap, holding his wand, while his left hand was holding some sort of scroll. The branch he sat on had 'Enrikos Alexandros Anemas' carved in golden letters, the name written in the Latin alphabet, and below it was the year of his birth.

Harry looked where the branch he sat on went to, and as his eyes followed it, they finally reached the painting of his parents. His father's hand was on top of a shield which was right next to him. The shield was blue with a golden boat and the heads of a bull and a stag above the boat. His branch read 'Iakobos Potter', followed by the date of his birth and death. The fact that his father's name showed as Iakobos and not as James probably meant that the wall was enchanted to show only the Greek version of the names.

Next to him was his mother, who much like him sat on a branch, her wand on the right hand, although her left hand was also resting on her lap. The branch bellow her read 'Maria Anemas', and just like James it also had the date of birth and death. The branch then went towards his maternal
grandparents, who were portrayed as younger versions of themselves, and both dressed in their respective regalia – Maria with the Portuguese one, and Alexander with the Nicaean one. It was then that something caught his attention.

"Grandmother, why don't you have a crown here?" he asked. "I mean, grandfather has one, and you are a queen... so, why don't you have one?"

"It's supposed to reflect a tradition of the House of Braganza," she replied. "Nothing too important, but I'll explain it to you later."

"Oh," said the young teenager.

Harry then focused once more on the mural, looking at the branches and the representations of his ancestors.

"I'll leave you to your... examination of this room," said Maria. "I have to take care of a few things. Oh, and if you want to look closely at the frescoes above, tap the wall with your wand and say 'ascend'. To reverse it, just tap it again and say 'descend'."

Maria left the room with the smile of someone who knew something, but would wait for the other person to find out what the "something" was by themselves. And Harry, now alone inside the large chamber, took out his hand and tapped the wall.

"Ascend."

The section of the floor where he was rose from the ground, the platform floating without any support and out nowhere appeared stone railings, protecting him from falling off.

"What the - ?"

Harry looked downward, and noticed that he was now on a height above the furniture of the room. Turning around, Harry looked at the wall, now in front of Symeon II Anemas, who died in 1659, and his wife Leontia Trichas, who died two years later.

"I think I'm a bit too high."

The three days after his arrival at the Anemas Palace were spent almost entirely in the company of Hedwig alone, as his grandmother was out doing... something. She had said that there were certain things regarding the government of Nicaea that she had to take care of important matters. She normally returned before dinner, and would leave as soon as it was morning, leaving Harry to his devices.

Harry took this time to enjoy a rather pleasant privilege he had – the lack of a ministerial trace applied to him, which was something that went against the privacy of the Royal family, and was a trait shared by the other royal families of the wizarding world – at least the reigning ones. The British ministry had been quite reluctant to remove Harry's trace in Britain, but they eventually had no choice but to avoid a diplomatic scandal.

And so, without the trace, Harry now could practice spells without any threat of expulsion from Hogwarts. But out of all spells he had searched and practised, there was one which stood at a high priority - the Patronus Charm.
The books in the library were too vague on the spell, and most only spoke of how the spell worked, not how it was cast. In all, Harry couldn't simply care about Andros the Invincible and his giant-sized Patronus, he wanted to know how the spell was used so that he could defend himself against Dementors. Perhaps his grandmother could be of help.

But as he was lost in thought about the Patronus Charm, and owl suddenly entered the library through an open window, and landed right in front of Harry.

"Hello there," said the young wizard, noticing that it had a letter on its beak.

Harry took the letter, and as soon as he did so, the owl flew away, leaving Harry to unseal the letter on his hand.

To Henry Alexander Anemas, Despot of the Romans, Prince Royal of Portugal, Duke of Inverness, etc.

Due to your status as a member of the House of Black through your great-grandmother Elladora Black, I hereby invite you to a general meeting of the Black family, to be held in the Aphotic Tower, located in Aldencroft Isle, which is in turn located in the Settford Archipelago. There are several topics to be discussed in this meeting, amongst them the problem of inheritance in the Black family and the severe breach of protocol regarding your parent's funeral.

I strongly advise you to attend, and if you chose to do so, then tap this letter with your wand and say 'I plan to attend'. If not, then say the opposite.

Awaiting your answer,

Cygnus Black I

Duke of the Settford Isles

Grand-Magister of the Great Council

Harry looked at the letter, and began to wonder if he should go or not. He then had an idea, and grabbing a piece of parchment and a fountain pen, Harry began to write a letter of his own. Upon finishing it, Harry summoned a messenger house-elf, and sent him with the letter to his grandmother, telling the small creature to wait for a reply.

A few minutes later, the elf returned with two letters, one of them being the one Harry had sent. Harry took the two and dismissed the messenger elf, before reading the letter his grandmother had sent. There, she gave him authorization to attend, but only accompanied by at least two Varangians. He placed the letter on the table, next to the one sent by Cygnus, and the young wizard proceeded to tap the first letter with his wand.

"I plan to attend," he declared.

The words on Cygnus letter disappeared, only to be replaced by a new text. Harry grabbed the letter, and began to read.
As you have accepted, you are to head to the Leaky Cauldron on the twentieth day of this month, at 1 PM. There you shall meet your fellow peer Theodore Nott, and I believe you two are well acquainted. His father, Amelius, shall be there, and he will take you two to the Aphotic Tower, where the meeting shall be held.

And I would suggest that you come well dressed to the meeting. If I was you, then I would wear the traditional regalia of the Dukes of Inverness, which, if I am not mistaken, is stored in the Inverness Castle. A place your father seemed to dislike, for unknown reasons to me.

Awaiting your safe arrival,

Cygnus Black I

Duke of the Settford Isles

Grand-Magister of the Great Council

It seemed that Inverness Castle was his next destination. Still, he could not help but wonder why his father disliked the castle.

Well… perhaps he would find out soon enough.

Chapter End Notes

*Duchy of Inverness - Created by the King of Scots, the Duchy was originally under the control of the now extinct Irving clan, and was eventually inherited by Elizabeth Irving, who married Nicholas Potter, a great-grandson of the famous Linfred of Stinchcombe, and of the also famous Ignotus Peverell (most known due to the Tale of the Three Brothers). Nicholas and Elizabeth's son Antonius Potter soon inherited the title, and after several generations, it was inherited by James Potter.

*House of Anemas – Founded by Stephanos Anemas, a bastard son of Roman (Byzantine) Emperor Andronikos III Palaiologos, the Anemas family was given control of the western region of Anatolia, and kept hold over said region for many generations. The Anemas would betray the Palaiologoi Emperors, siding with the Ottoman invaders, who would in turn allow them to remain as masters of the region of Anatolia. The lines of Anemas and Palaiologos would unite with the marriage of Symeon I Anemas and Theodora Palaiologina, daughter of the then exiled Andreas Palaiologos (son of Emperor Constantine XI) and Infanta Beatrice of Coimbra (legitimate granddaughter of King John I of Portugal).

In a repetition of history, the House of Anemas would too betray their Ottoman masters as the instigators of the Nicaean Revolution (1790 - 1796), which would give way to the foundation of both the Kingdom of Nicaea and the Imperial State of Constantinople, both under Romanos I Anemas (who did not claim the title of Emperor, merely that of Co-Regent, alongside the Patriarch of Constantinople). It was
the Greek War of Independence that allowed the Anemids to gain control over Greece, in turn allowing them to restore the Roman Empire in the east.

* Symeon II Anemas – Born in 1595, he was the Bey of Anatolia in the muggle world, and the Doux of Nicaea in the wizarding world. The son of Theodosios III Anemas and Anna Agallon, Symeon would marry Leontia Trichas and would have a single son with her, who would succeed him as Basileios III (or Basil III). He was also a close friend of Sultan Murad IV, and was the one who ordered the construction of the Anemas Palace.
Chapter 14 – Inverness Castle

City of Inverness, Inverness, Scotland (U.K.)

There was a whole history behind Inverness Castle, and some of its most memorable moments involved Mary, Queen of Scots, and centuries later the shocking sight of the old and senile Thaddeus Potter running from the castle into town naked while his son Henry followed him, attempting to bring the old man back into the castle. The castle had passed through different hands, but eventually it ended up as part of the possessions of the Potter family, who also held the title of Duke of Inverness. The old castle had been the seat of the Dukes of Inverness since its acquisition, although the current duke's predecessor decided to instead buy a small cottage in England, finding the castle to be rather eerie.

No muggles were allowed inside the property, not even to visit, as while the castle's exterior was very well normal, its interior decoration was very much wizard. There were protection charms around it, and so it was protected from robberies and unfortunate events of the sort. When receiving any visits, the Potters usually used a special and small house in the outskirts of the city of Inverness, which was now little more than a ruin, after centuries of neglect, which began during the "blood-supremacist age" of the Potter family, which began when Elizabeth Potter, better known by her maiden name of Elizabeth Burke, became a widow, leaving her with the regency of the Potter possessions and her young son Zacharias Potter, at the time still an infant.

Said blood-supremacist ideals would die out several generations later when the enlightened Valerius Potter became the new Duke of Inverness. However, by then the Potter family had but abandoned some of its former practices, such as using the meeting house, and adopted new ones. Said new practices were introduced into the family by the blood-purist Potters, and would only die out when James Potter became the new duke.

Having been born in a generation when Voldemort was on the rise, it was not surprising that James Potter had tried to distance himself from anything that would possibly identify him as either a blood-purist or one of their sympathisers, and many traditions of the Potter family were usual amongst blood-supremacist families. In fact, there were many people that believed he had married Lily Evans just to make a statement. Nevertheless, James Potter only lived in the castle until he reached majority, using money from his personal vault to buy the cottage in Godric's Hollow, something which was supposed to be temporary, but a certain self-proclaimed Dark Lord got in the way.

And now, with the death of James Potter and the destruction of his cottage in Godric's Hollow, the de facto seat of the Dukes of Inverness had once again become the Inverness Castle, under his son Harry.

To the young Anemid, the castle had a rather simple but elegant appearance. It wasn't too extravagant as the Anemas Palace, or Hogwarts, and that appealed to him for some reason. He wanted to visit the castle alone, and while the Varangians had to accompany him to the castle, they didn't have to follow him inside. Ordering them to stay on guard outside, Harry entered the
building, being the first living soul to step into Inverness Castle for more than a decade.

However, his first sight upon entering the castle was not a very pleasant one, as on the floor of the entrance hall was a tiny skeleton.

"Is this… a house-elf?" he muttered as he approached the skeletal remains.

The skull certainly had a similar shape to that of Dobby's head, which indicated that this was most likely the skeleton of a house-elf. That meant that there could be more inside, and as Harry moved further into the house, he began to observe the dark lit rooms of the mansion. The dark clouds outside didn't help, and Harry had to use Lumos so that he could see things more clearly. The hallways had many portraits and tapestries, some of them empty, while others seemed to be normal portraits.

He walked past another house-elf skeleton, before entering a somewhat lit room, filled with many portraits, who unlike those in the hallway, were either awoke or out of their frames. However, not even his quietness made him invisible to the portraits which were awoke.

"Huh? Who are you boy?" demanded the portrait of a man with a rather interesting moustache and beard.

"Better not be a mudblood," said a woman focused on a book, which Harry recognized from several portraits at Hogwarts. If he was not wrong, he had seen a portrait of hers inside Dumbledore's office as well.

Harry glanced at her before answering the man. "I'm Harry, son of James Potter," he stated.

The man narrowed his eyes.

"Approach," he said.

Harry fully entered the room, approaching the portrait as the man scrutinized him.

"The features seem to be all there… something unusual about them though," he mumbled. "Still, there's no doubt that you are one of us."

"I know you…" spoke the woman once more.

Harry turned around to face her portrait. "Excuse me?" he asked.

"You're in Hogwarts… a Gryffindor, unfortunately," she said with casual disdain. "One of Dumbledore' favourites, just like your father. Still… he half-redeemed himself in the end."

"What?" asked Harry rather confused.

"What dear grandmother Elizabeth is trying to say, is that while you father married a woman he and everyone thought to be a mudblood, it turns out she wasn't one," said the portrait of another Potter. "Wonder of wonders, turns out she was royalty."

"Hold on, you're him?" said the man which had analysed Harry before.

"Who do you think he would be Henry?" questioned another woman. "He's the last one alive!"

"I don't know Elladora, perhaps one of Charlus's spawn?" replied the man.

The name Elladora reminded harry of his conversation with Theodore, him mentioning that their
great-grandmother was called Elladora Black. But what would a portrait of hers be in the residence of the Potters? It was her daughter who became part of the Potter family, not Elladora herself.

"Perhaps my grandmother placed her mother's portrait here?" suggested Harry to himself.

"I guess Fleamont and Euphemia would like to meet their grandson," mused Henry Potter, before turning to a pair of portraits near a window. "Fleamont, Euphemia! Your grandson is here!"

While Fleamont had been asleep, Euphemia's frame was empty, but soon the woman appeared returning from who knows where. Harry looked at her, and recognized some features that had been present in both Theodore and his father, and the two which stood out were the nose and the brown hair.

"Harry… you've grown since the last time I saw you," she said smiling before turning to the frame next to her. "Fleamont, wake up!"

The old man was struggling to maintain himself asleep, but the stern voice of his wife had been enough to fully wake him up.

"For goodness sake Euphemia, can't an old man sleep?" protested Fleamont.

"I believe that our grandson is more important than your day long nap," retorted the woman.

Harry looked closely at the two, his memories from the Mirror of Erised resurfacing. The two had been there, although Harry was unable to see Fleamont's knees, since the man's cloak covered them.

Fleamont's eyes widened before moving his head to stare at Harry. "Harry! Dear child, it's been a long time since I saw you!"

"How long?" he asked.

"We last saw you that night when your parents were attacked by that freak," revealed Euphemia. "Our frames in that house were destroyed so we became restricted to this place and a few others. I've been hearing a lot about you from my nephew and his son."

Harry immediately assumed she was talking about Theodore and his father, which possibly meant that there was a portrait of Euphemia in the residence of the Nott family.

"So, you've had your lovely reunion. Marvellous," said the portrait of another man in a dry tone. "May we know why you decided to visit this place just now?"

"I concur with Symmachus's question," said Henry, entering the portrait of his son. "Where in Merlin's name have you been?"

Harry however, was unable to answer, as another voice did so for him.

"Muggles," stated Elizabeth, her voice filled with disdain. "He was placed with muggles by Dumbledore."

Why in the name of sanity would you be placed with muggles?" demanded Henry. "Especially considering who you are! And how exactly do you know that?"

The last question had been directed at Elizabeth, and the woman turned towards Henry.

"I have a portrait inside his office," she reminded him. "Are you forgetting that I was headmistress
of that school and died holding the position?"

Henry huffed at Elizabeth's statement.

"Dumbledore said there was some protection that involved blood and required me staying with
them," explained Harry. "But he never elaborated on that. But since we are not related, I have no
reason to stay with them anymore. Especially now that I live with my other grandmother."

"Dumbledore has the irritating tendency of keeping many details secret," commented Fleamont
"But still, we want to know why exactly you came here."

"I was invited to a meeting of the Black family, and Cygnus Black advised me to go dressed using
the regalia of the Dukes of Inverness," said the young Anemas. "He said that it was stored here, in
the castle."

"Cygnus would be correct, although I'm surprised that he's still alive," said Thaddeus. "Since you
are the current Duke of Inverness, you are free to use it and this castle as well. Unless this place
has been robed, which I am sure it hasn't, you will find the regalia inside the armoury, in the
basement."

"How do I get there?"

"The door next to the empty vase leads to a stairwell," answered Thaddeus. "Use it and you'll find
the armoury."

Harry nodded. "Thank you," he replied.

Harry followed Thaddeus's instructions, and he soon discovered the armoury. True to its
designation, there were many armours and other old weapons inside, many of them sporting marks
of use and damage. It was clear that many armours had been used in combat, but they were not
Harry's reason for being down there. Inside a small chamber, behind a metal gate, was the regalia.
There were three sets, which Harry unable to recognize, which led to him returning to the portrait
room to ask for help. His grandfather had explained it to him, and so he returned to the armoury,
now somewhat capable of distinguishing between the three sets.

The one on the left, was the one used in the coronations of the British monarch, so using that one
for the meeting was out of question. The one in the middle was the main regalia of the Dukes of
Inverness, pretty much just there for display, although it was usually used when attending events of
great importance, such as marriages. The last was the robe used in sessions of either the House of
Lords in the muggle world, or the Wizengamot in the wizarding world.

"Why wasn't Black more specific in the bloody letter?" grumbled Harry.

Eventually, Harry decided to use the regalia in the middle, thinking it to be more appropriate for
the whole affair. And Cygnus did suggest the "traditional regalia", so he was most likely referring
to the one in the middle.

But then, a thought came to his mind.

"Hold on…I'm too small for this thing!"

Harry looked at the clothes, and he decided to try the Inverness regalia. As soon as he was fully
dressed, the regalia began to shrink, until its size was perfect for him. Needless to say he was surprised.

"Well, I guess that's convenient."

Chapter End Notes

Elizabeth Potter (née Burke) – Daughter of Acateon Burke and Flavia Malfoy, she married Andronicus Potter and was headmistress of Hogwarts. An outspoken blood-supremacist, Elizabeth was also the mother of Zacharias Potter, and it was her actions that made her son and the Potters that followed to be blood-purists as well, which led to the shift from Ravenclaw house, by then the main house at Hogwarts to where the Potters were sent, to Slytherin house.

Symmachus Potter – Son of Pelagius Potter and Margaret Slughorn, he married Catherine Selwyn and the two had a son, called Procopius Potter. A member of Slytherin house, he was the great-grandson of Zacharias Potter.

Valerius Potter – Son of Ignatius Potter and Agatha Longbottom, he married Helvia Crouch and the two had a single son, Thaddeus Potter. Ignatius's carelessness in the raising of his son made Valerius seek out other sources of learning, which led to his lack of blood-supremacist ideals. A Slytherin student at Hogwarts, he was Grand-Magister of the Great Council, and upon his death his successor-elect was Cygnus Black I.
Chapter 15 – The Aphotic Tower


The day had finally arrived, and so with his grandmother's blessing, Harry had travelled to the Leaky Cauldron, fully attired in the Inverness regalia, accompanied by two members of the Varangian Guard.

Once inside the pub, Harry looked around, noticing that it was somewhat empty, despite being lunch hour. The people who were inside glanced at him, and while the majority recognized him, they simply returned to their own affairs. But from the kitchen of the Leaky Cauldron came Tom, and as soon as his eyes fell on Harry, he gave a small jump and hurried towards him. He recognized those clothes, having seen old Fleamont wear them a couple of times.

"Your Grace, welcome to the Leaky Cauldron," he said. "I assume you are looking for the Marquess of Averdale."

Harry was a bit stunned by the sudden formality, be he immediately recovered.

"Yes," said the young Anemid "Is he here?"

"Indeed," replied the barkeeper. "His Lordship is inside the basement. He arrived a few minutes ago."

Harry was somewhat relieved, as he thought that he kept Theodore's father waiting for too long.

"Thanks Tom."

"It was nothing, your Grace," said Tom before returning to the counter "Have a good day."

Already knowing where it was, Harry went towards the basement, followed by the two Varangians. Upon entering the antechamber of the basement's storage room Harry saw both Theodore and his father Amelius. The older Nott was dressed in his own regalia, which, in Harry's humble opinion, was not as impressive as his own. Theodore on the other hand, simply wore a set of aristocratic-like robes.

"Your Grace, we meet again," greeted Amelius, extending his hand.

"Marquess Averdale," replied Harry, shaking the man's hand. "I hope I didn't kept you waiting."

"Not at all," said the man.

Harry turned towards his classmate. "Theodore," he greeted, receiving a nod from the Slytherin.

"Your Grace," said the young Nott.

"I would take you now to the Aphotic Tower, but a problem has arisen," declared Amelius.
"A problem?" asked Harry concerned.

"Not of great importance, but Cygnus had the foresight of this eventuality," said Amelius. "It is dangerous to side-apparate with more than three persons, and as you may have noticed, you are accompanied by your bodyguards. Cygnus realized that your grandmother would want you to be protected by them, but when he did so, the letter had already been sent."

"Oh… So, how exactly are we going to get there?"

Amelius grabbed a scroll from a nearby table. "With this," he said, handing the scroll to Harry. "A portkey to Aldencroft. It will transport you to a location near the town, but close enough to the meeting place."

Harry eyed the scroll. "How do I activate this?"

"Simply say 'toujours pur'," replied the older Nott.

Harry simply nodded.

"Theodore and I will apparate now to the meeting area," stated the Marquess of Averdale "We shall meet again there."

Theodore grabbed his father's arm, and Harry watched as the two disappeared with a crack. Harry turned around, and presented the scroll to the two Varangians.

"Sire?" asked one in confusion.

"This will bring us to the place of the meeting," explained Harry, also in Nicaean Greek.

The men nodded in acknowledgement, and took hold of the scroll.

"Toujours pur."

Aldencroft, Aldencroft Isle, Settford Archipelago

When Harry arrived at Aldencroft, he made sure to examine his surroundings. His current location was…strange, to say the least. He could see a small town in the distance, but the road which led there was distorted, almost as if it had been designed by a drunken architect. But as he continued to stare at it, Harry came to realize that that was not a road, but a natural path. There were stone railings, placed there for protection, and as he looked downwards, he noticed that below him was the sea.

"What kind of island is this?" he wondered out loud.

"A landmass affected by magic storms," replied a female voice, making Harry and the Varangians turn around, their wands pointed at the woman, who raised her arms in defence. "I mean no harm, so if you don't mind, please lower your wands."

Harry looked at the woman, before telling the guards to lower the wands, who did so reluctantly.

"Who are you?" he asked.

"Andromeda Tonks, a former member of the Black family." She answered. "I work for the Ministry
as part of the Department of Magical Research. And I was also sent here by the Duke of these isles to direct you to the tower."

"Former member?" asked Harry in confusion.

"My dear parents disinherited me because of my marriage to a muggle-born," she explained as if it was something normal, which in the British wizard society, was in fact normal. "Still, the old Black, as conservative as he is, still decided to invite me for this meeting, for reasons he kept to himself."

"Oh… And where exactly is the Aphotic Tower?"

"If you follow me, I'll take you there," she declared.

Harry nodded deciding to follow the woman. But there was something that was still on his mind.

"You said something about magic storms before," he spoke. "What exactly is a magic storm?"

"There are places where there is a high concentration of unfocused magical energy. Sometimes, that unfocused magic gathers and an event known to us as magic storm happens," explained Andromeda. "Magical storms are highly dangerous to both wizards and muggles, and standing too close to one can have drastic consequences, such as fading in and out of existence."

"And this place still has those storms?" asked Harry worried.

"The concentration of wizards in the islands around this one made it so that the unfocused magic was slowly absorbed by the wizards who lived there. They all had a temporary increase in the potency of their spells, but eventually the unfocused magic became stable, and it became mixed with the background magic present within the wizards."

"But there are other places with storms, right?"

"Of course! The centre point of the Bermuda Triangle houses the oldest, most dangerous and potent magic storm in all of this planet." said Andromeda "There is a colossal pillar of blue magical energy in the exact middle, very similar to a tornado. It's pretty when you first see it, but then you only want to get away from it and never return. The muggles can't see magical storms though."

Harry snorted, remembering the words of Stan Shunpike.

"They don't see nothing, do they….?"

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**Aphotic Tower, Aldencroft Isle, Settford Archipelago**

Eventually, they arrived at a secluded area of Aldencroft Isle, where the twisted paths united into a single one, which went straight towards a cave entrance. Harry and the guards followed Andromeda inside, all of them casting Lumos.

They soon reached a cylindrical-like section of the cave, and Harry's eyes fell on top of the structure in front of him. In the middle of the pit was a thin, tower-like building, its architecture mimicking that of ancient Egypt. Looking down at the pit, Harry realized that part of the tower was submerged, yet he continued to follow Andromeda, as she descended through a stone stair case,
also with railing to prevent anyone from falling into the water pit below. There was a single hole in the cavern ceiling, from which the sunlight came through.

"Welcome to the Aphotic Tower, your Grace," said Andromeda. "A mausoleum for the Black family, but also where the Blacks meet in certain occasions, such as this one."

"It's... incredible... but, a bit small for all those things," he commented.

Andromeda smiled and went towards the stone door of the tower, the coat of arms of the Black family represented there. She touched the door with her wand, and recited the family's motto. As soon as she did so, the door became transparent, and Harry's eyes widened upon seeing Andromeda pass through the transparent stone. He hesitantly moved forward, half-expecting to meet a solid wall, but instead he passed through the transparent wall, entering tower.

The interior was rather magnificent as well, despite the small size of the tower, and Harry soon realized that he was simply in the entrance of the actual Aphotic Tower, as in the middle of the chamber was a stairwell, giving access to the depths of the structure. The Varangians entered the tower, and as soon as they did so, the door became solid again. The four descended through the stairwell, reaching a small corridor with false doors, decorated with hieroglyphs, and a small section with names and dates, written in English. This either meant that those false doors were memorials, or behind them were the remains of deceased members of the Black family.

"Is this where they are buried?" he asked.

"Yes," replied the witch. "But this is just one section of the tomb. There are many others in this level and below."

Harry looked at her in confusion.

"How many levels are there?"

"Too many."

They had reached another chamber, except this one was not as empty as the others. Inside were the Nott family and two other people Harry didn't recognize. However, it seemed that the other two were not very pleased with Harry and Andromeda's arrival.

"What are those two blood-traitors doing here?" shrieked a woman.

"Hello to you as well Walburga," said Andromeda dryly. "Much like you, I was also invited to this meeting by old Cygnus himself. As a member of the Black family, the Duke of Inverness was invited as well."

"But you were cast out of the family," stated Amelius. "Why would the head himself invite you to this meeting?"

"Perhaps Duke Settford will reveal his intentions to us when the meeting starts, no?" suggested Harry.

"I agree with His Grace, although the meeting has already started... There's no use in insulting both my wayward daughter and the young duke," said the man next to Walburga, who the approached Harry. "Your Grace, I am Cygnus, brother to Walburga here."

"Greetings sir," replied Harry. "I think you were mentioned in the Wizarding Genealogy."
"Me and the rest of the family."

It was then that Harry realized something that the man had said.

"What, the meeting has already started?"

"Of course, but as per tradition...we are fashionably late," declared Cygnus Black III.

Amelius went towards a door and knocked two times, before stepping away. The door opened, and from inside came a man with a scroll on his hand.

"The last ones, I assume?" he asked.

"Perhaps, perhaps not..." said Amelius.

"Well, in any case...your names?"

"Amelius Nott and my son Theodore."

"Check."

"Cygnus Black III and Walburga Black."

"Check."

"Andromeda Tonks."

"Check."

"Henry Anemas."

"And...check," declared the man. "It seems that you are indeed the last ones. Oh, and Your Grace...the most excellent Duke of Settford said that your bodyguards cannot enter the meeting room. They'll have to stay out here."

Harry huffed, but he could not simply go against the rules of this place.

"Fine," he said, before turning to the Varangians.

"Stay here, and guard this chamber," he ordered, before following the others inside.

It was time for the meeting.

The meeting room was basically a miniature arena, and to those members of the Black family that had been inside the courtrooms of the Ministry of Magic, they could see the resemblance between the courtrooms and the meeting chamber. On the highest platform, sitting on a wooden throne-like chair was Cygnus Black I, silently observing the members of the Black family which had already arrived and were doing their best not to look at his apathetic gaze.

The doors opened, and the announcer entered the room, a scroll on his hand, attracting the attention of all inside.

"Announcing the arrival of the Marquess of Averdale, Amelius Nott, and his son Lord Theodore"
The two entered the room, receiving nods of acknowledgement from those inside.

"Announcing the arrival of Mr. Cygnus Black III and Madam Walburga Black," he spoke.

The two Blacks entered the room, also receiving nods of acknowledgement.

"Announcing the arrival of Mrs. Andromeda Tonks," he said, followed by gasps of surprise and shock.

Why in Merlin's name was she here? Andromeda had been cast out for her treachery to the blood of the Blacks, so why had Cygnus invited her? Still, those inside were smart enough to remain silent as the woman entered the room as well.

"Announcing the final arrival, His Imperial and Royal Highness, the Despot of the Romans, Crown Prince of Greece and Nicaea, and Prince Royal of Portugal, Henry Anemas, the Duke of Inverness."

Many heads suddenly snapped towards the final arrival, not quite believing that Harry Potter was there, especially a certain member of Slytherin house that did not exactly have a good relationship with him.

"Why is Potter here?" demanded Draco Malfoy, outraged by Harry's appearance.

The voice of Cygnus Black I resonated through the chamber, making the idiotic Malfoy shiver with fear. "He is here, because I invited him," he stated. "I advise you to keep your spawn silent Narcissa, or I shall personally take care of that."

"I apologize for my son's imprudence, your Grace," said the woman.

Harry could not remember if he had seen Narcissa Malfoy before, so he treated this moment as their first encounter. And as he looked at mother and son, he noticed that there were very few visible physical traits of Narcissa on Draco. It seemed that the little bastard was truly a near-clone of his father.

"Be quiet Draco!" hissed the woman at her son, who simply looked down in embarrassment.

"Now...it's time to arrange your positions," declared Cygnus. "Duke Inverness and Marquess Averdale, your seats are on the row below mine. Young Theodore shall sit next to you, Averdale."

The three nodded, and moved to their respective seats.

"Now, the rest. As both the second and third generations counting from mine have all died out, then the fourth generation shall occupy the row below that of Duke Inverness and Marquess Averdale," spoke Cygnus Black I. "Dorea, Cassiopeia, and Pollux, if you please."

The three nodded, and moved to the seats in the row indicated by the Black patriarch.

"Now, Walburga and Cygnus, the row below is yours," he declared. "Followed by Narcissa and Andromeda on the row below...and finally Draco Malfoy in the row below yours."

The rest moved towards their seats, and Harry noticed Narcissa give a nod to Andromeda, which surprised the other woman.

"Let the meeting begin," declared Cygnus, as a small hole appeared in the middle of the room, and
as a small table with a large book emerged from said hole. He waved his hand, and the book opened on a blank page. "Now… I maintained the reasons of this meeting in secrecy from most of you…but I assume that the majority knows exactly the main reason you are here… am I correct?"

They remained in silence, and both Harry and Amelius watched the situation carefully.

"Never in my life… have I witness such a blatant, profound, and repugnant disrespect for the sacred traditions of our society!" bellowed Cygnus, resulting in a near-collective flinch. "You have always claimed to follow the 'old traditions' of our community, you even supported that murderous lunatic who destroyed countless pure-blood lineages during his so-called purification of our world… and because of a simple grudge… you failed to attend the funeral of a member of this family?"

Harry noticed that while many of the Blacks looked terrified, Malfoy looked both confused and terrified.

"In this room, excluding Duke Inverness, for obvious reasons, only Amelius, Theodore, and I, had the decency to appear in the funeral of James Potter and his wife," he spoke. "This obviously doesn't apply to Andromeda, since she was cast out from the family. But why did you not attend? Was it because of the muggles there? Because James Potter and his wife were key instruments in the defeat of the Dark Lord you idolized? Because the woman known to you all as Lily Potter was believed to be a mudblood?"

Theodore was certainly enjoying the whole affair, Harry noticed. He did not know why, but the future Marquess of Averdale had a rather strange sense of humour and enjoyment.

"The Daily Prophet may have shown your lack of action to the world, but while some would believe that a simply humiliation is enough, I want you to be reminded that I am not a simple man. I want you to be reminded that unlike Albus Dumbledore, I am not so lenient with people… especially with traitors of blood."

Harry saw the paling faces in those on the rows below him, and he could understand why. Even Amelius, Theodore, and Andromeda were surprised at what Cygnus had just done. The old man had just declared the present Blacks to be blood-traitors, perhaps the greatest insult amongst the wizarding community, next to that of "mudblood".

"As of now, you and your progeny are all barred from succession in the headship of the Black family, as well as the inheritance of the title which I currently hold, alongside its subsidiary ones," he declared. "The position of Duke Settford as of now is only eligible to be inherited by either the descendants of my deceased daughter Elladora, which means that as of now, only Amelius, Theodore, and Henry are eligible to inherit the position."

If the situation did not so mesmerize Harry, he would have laughed in amusement at the look of horror in the face of Draco Malfoy.

"In fact, out of you all, I am most disappointed in you Dorea," said Cygnus. "Your own husband and child were Potters. Both murdered by that lunatic, and yet… you did nothing. You did not even had the decency to contact your grandson, so that he could come to the funeral!"

The old woman looked down in shame, more disturbed by being reminded of Charlus and Alfred, than having been removed from succession.

"Now… I can see the outrage, shame and terror in your faces… so I believe it is time to increase them a bit," said Cygnus, who received looks of unwanted anticipation.
He looked at Andromeda, and the woman could only gulp in nervousness. "I know how we all were affected by Andromeda's decision to marry a muggle-born. I allowed your parents to banish you from the family, but knowing how much this will irritate you and your relatives, I henceforth declare your reinstatement in the House of Black, but the privilege of succession is also revoked from you and your descendants."

Oh, Andromeda was irritated, but not because he had removed her as well from succession. She was irritated because of that man's decision to place her back amongst the Blacks, something she had been happy to leave behind after marrying Ted. And Cygnus knew it very well.

"Now we move to another topic…who will be my successor," said Cygnus. "In normal circumstances, Sirius would have inherited the title, as per the male-preference primogeniture laws of succession. However, since he has been incarcerated, he was immediately disqualified for the title, much like Bellatrix. As such, the condition also falls to any children they may have."

It appeared that Cygnus was making sure that there were no loopholes that the Blacks could try to use.

"Therefore, as I stated before, only those who are descended from Elladora can inherit the title, and since we are still following the laws, the upon my death, the title of Duke of Settford and all its subsidiary titles will be inherited by the progeny of Elladora's first son, Demetrius Nott."

Harry noticed the pleased look on both Amelius and Theodore.

"It seems that someone's getting a promotion," thought the young Anemid.

"Amelius, as of now, you are officially my heir apparent," said Cygnus to the Marquess "In the event of your line coming to extinction, the position will be inherited by your Aunt Euphemia's descendants."

"Thank you, your Grace," said Amelius. "It is an honour."

Cygnus simply waved his hand, and many jumped as suddenly the book in the middle on the room close shut, although Harry saw for a moment that the blank page had been written on.

"This meeting is over," declared Cygnus, before turning towards Harry. "Inverness, I would speak with you in private."

Harry simply nodded, wondering what Black wanted.

"I assume you were surprised by what happened today?"

Harry and Cygnus had entered a small room next to the meeting chamber, each sitting on a chair.

Somewhat," admitted the young prince. "When you mentioned that you would speak about them not going to the funeral in the letter, I thought that they were merely going to be scolded or something. I'm more surprised about that woman, Dorea. I didn't know that she married into the Potter family."

"Ah yes, quite a few decades ago," said Cygnus. "They only had a single child, a son called Alfred, named for his great-grandfather, Alfred Potter, the youngest son of old Thaddeus. The two were killed during the war against the Dark Lord, although Alfred did have a son called Matthew, named
after his own great-grandfather. He was born a few months after you, if I am not mistaken."

"They died because of us then," thought Harry bitterly.

"Their deaths was what led to your parents resorting to the usage of the Fidelius Charm…"

"The what?" asked Harry.

Cygnus sighed. "It is a powerful and much complex spell, which culminates in the concealment of knowledge inside the soul of someone, this someone being what people call the Secret Keeper," he explained. "It is impossible to force someone to give up the secret, and it has to be done willingly, without any kind of outside pressure. And as I am sure you may have realized, it seems that both James and your mother made a rather poor choice in their secret keeper."

"Why? Who was it?" asked Harry, wanting to know who exactly had betrayed his parents.

"None other than the one who escaped from Azkaban and I mentioned in the meeting," replied the old Black. "Sirius Black."

"H-He… he was the one who told Voldemort where we were hiding?"

Harry noticed the lack of flinch upon saying Riddle's chosen name, and in turn, Cygnus noticed that Harry had just said Voldemort's name without any problem.

"Why… why would they chose someone who was a follower of Voldemort?" asked the young wizard confused.

"Because Sirius kept his true allegiances secret. But that was just another mistake from your parents regarding him."

"Another mistake?"

"Quite so, but… don't you know what Sirius is towards you?" questioned Cygnus with alarm. "Has no one told you?"

Harry simply shook his head, and he heard Cygnus grumbling something he was unable to understand.

"Sir?"

"I hoped you were already aware of this," said the old man. "Inverness, Sirius Black was chosen by your parents to be none other than your godfather."

Chapter End Notes

Settford Archipelago – Also known as the Settford Isles, the Settford Archipelago is a mostly unplottable region of Britain, located near the coast of Yorkshire. It consists of several islands, and is one of the few places in Britain solely inhabited by wizards. A few uninhabited isles are not enchanted, in order to give the muggles a way of knowing that Settford exists. It was granted as the Duchy of the Settford Isles to an ancestor of Cygnus Black I, who is now the current duke.
Magic Storm – An occurrence that involves a large amount of uncontrolled magic, not in tune with the background magic that wizards draw their power from. A magic storm has catastrophic results to the affected area, and much like normal storms, it occurs only under certain circumstances. An exception would be the one in the Bermuda Triangle, which is constant and has no foreseeable end.

The Aphotic Tower – An old structure created in the 12th century by the Black family, with the intent of housing their dead inside. It suffered several changes in its architecture, and eventually the Black family settled into the Egyptian style. A heraldic version of it is featured in the Settford Coat of Arms.
Chapter 16 – Ancient Remnants

Nicaea

If there was someone Harry hated more than anyone and anything else, right now that mantle would have belonged to none other than Sirius Black. Less due to the fact that he had been a follower of Voldemort, but because he had betrayed his parents, and by doing so he had allowed them to be murdered. Worse was the fact that he had been chosen to be his godfather, and was actively trying to kill him.

But Harry was not stupid. He was not foolish enough to think that he would be able to engage an older dark wizard in combat, especially one who had an actual body and was very well capable of harming him. But if for whatever reason he ever got his hands on Black, he would first get a confession from him. He wanted to know why exactly the man decided to betray him and his parents. But there was something else he wanted to know from the man, something which had been bothering for a while.

After all, if Sirius Black had killed Peter Pettigrew, then why did he appear on the Marauder's Map?

In the days before Christmas, Harry made sure to ask his grandmother about the Patronus Charm, and after explaining why exactly he was interested in such an advanced type of magic, Maria demonstrated the spell to the young teenager, casting it non-verbally. Harry was amazed, never having seen such a thing before. A spectral animal came from her wand, some sort of bird, and flew around them for a moment before vanishing.

"That was a corporeal Patronus, the most advanced form of the charm," she explained. "The Patronus itself is a...manifestation of a positive force that emanates from within the caster. Using it to defend oneself against creatures such as Dementors and Lethifolds is but one of its uses. A wizard skilled with the spell can also use it to send messages to someone else, but today it's rarely used in such a manner."

"And...what's the incantation?" asked Harry.

"Expecto Patronum," she said. "But the incantation is not enough to use the spell. To conjure it, you need to concentrate on a single and very happy memory, and only then speak the incantation."

Harry nodded, making sure to remember the instructions. Not that it would be too difficult to do so. The young Anemid took out his wand, and thinking of a happy memory, Harry decided to cast the spell.

"Expecto Patronum."

So, if Sirius Black had killed Peter Pettigrew, then why did he appear on the Marauder's Map?
A weak silvery mist came from the tip of his wand, soon vanishing mere seconds after it appeared.

"I assume your memory wasn't exactly appropriate Henry," commented his grandmother. "What did you think of?"

"My arrival at Hogwarts," he said.

Maria nodded. "You first full contact with the wizarding world, I assume."

"Not exactly my first contact, but…yes," admitted the young wizard. "So I need something happier?"

The last part was more of a grumble than an actual question. But then Harry had an idea.

"Grandmother, what memory do you use?"

Maria smiled, and Harry noticed that her facial expression seemed to be distant, as if she was remembering other times.

"You may find it strange, but it has nothing to do with your mother. Obviously, her birth and when she returned are happy memories that I could use…but there is something else."

Harry looked at her inquisitively, something that the old monarch noticed.

"Your grandfather once took me to Venice, during the last days of November. It was in total secrecy, almost no one knew that we were there, and so the two of us made sure to enjoy it to the maximum extent," she revealed. "It was one of those scenes that many people fantasise, but your grandfather was able to provide. And it was in one of those nights that he asked for my hand in marriage. It was…very romantic, a bit too much in fact. But we were young back then. Your great-grandfather Philip was still alive back then, so Alexander did not have to worry about things in Constantinople, despite being co-emperor."

"So, it has to be something very emotional?" asked Harry.

"And happy. The stronger the emotion is, the better. But you have to concentrate fully on the happiness that your memory provides, and then allow it to flow through you. Open yourself to the memory, and then cast the spell."

Harry nodded, and looked at his wand. He began to think about strong memories that he had, and there was one which stood above them all. Taking a deep breath, Harry concentrated on the memory and raised his wand.

"Expecto Patronum."

This time, the mist that emanated from the wand was far more solid, almost taking the appearance of a shield. It remained there far longer than before, but it soon disappeared much like his first attempt.

"Well done, Henry! It's a good start for someone of your age, but remember that this is very advanced magic. It's normal if you don't fully succeed in casting the Patronus Charm," said the woman. "Most wizards take several months to fully master the Patronus Charm. I suggest you keep training in your free time, and make sure to concentrate fully in the memory you are using to cast the spell."

Harry nodded, and thanked his grandmother for her help. Now, he had another thing to occupy his
time with. Thankfully, he no longer had the restrictions of underage magic.

With the death of Bey Symeon II Anemas of Anatolia and Sultan Murad IV, the relations of the Anemid dynasty with their Ottoman overlords soon began to decay. Eventually, the tension between the Ottomans and the Anemid dynasty and its allies led to the obscure War of Nicaean Independence. It was a campaign which had been preceded by countless works of sabotage against the Ottomans, allowing the future King Romanos I to conquer great part of Asia Minor, leading to the isolation of Ottoman territory in Eastern Europe, which facilitated the eventual Greek War of Independence.

Romanos had adopted a modernized variant of the old Byzantine autocracy as the Nicaean form of government, yet he never proclaimed himself as Emperor and Autocrat of the Romans, merely adopting the title of Despot, a clear claim to the imperial throne. The very Constitution of Nicaea stated that its people were not simply Nicaeans, but above all, Romans. Even with Constantinople in his grasp, the founder of Nicaea decided to create a separate state ruled by both himself and the Ecumenical Patriarch. The time that followed was filled with many acts of diplomacy towards the European powers, yet carefully making sure that Nicaea would not enter the sphere of influence of any of them, especially the German states for obvious reasons. And with the resurrection of the Roman Empire, said diplomatic efforts were doubled.

But times had changed, and to a foreigner, the government of the empire would seem both outdated, and strange. The imperial government had assumed the old bureaucracy of the Roman Empire during the medieval era, adapting it to the modern era, and dispelling many elements which had been critical to the existence of the countless factors which led to the inevitable fall of the empire. The problem of succession, was one of them.

To deal with the rise of modern democracy, the Roman Senate had been restored, the old Magnaura being used once again as its headquarters. Of course, much like the rest of the government, the senate was not modelled after the one in Rome, but instead after the one many called the "Byzantine Senate." Yet behind the complex bureaucracy, the true power was kept in the hands of the Council of Logothetes and their leader, the Great Intermediary, who was also the head of government of the empire. However, elections did not appoint the Great Intermediary, for it was the emperor himself who did so. The senate mostly debated on new laws and topics regarding the current budget of the empire. Laws which, of course, could not remove any power from the emperor, or even limit him in any other way.

Both Greece and Nicaea had their own governments, both subservient to the one in Constantinople, and in general, the people were satisfied with how things were made, and became most irritated when the politics of Europe tried to creep into their carefully established system.

Foreign relations were also improved by the marriage of Alexios VII to Princess Marie of Hesse and by Rhine, youngest daughter of Ludwig IV, the Grand Duke of Hesse, and by the marriage of Philip III to Archduchess Sophie Klementine of Austria. But the peak of improvement in foreign relations through marriages was when the late emperor married Maria of Braganza, the heir apparent and main claimant to the Portuguese throne during the Portuguese Republic. With the restoration of the Portuguese monarchy, and the acclamation of both Maria and Alexander as the two reigning monarchs of Portugal, their deaths would cause a third personal union for Portugal, this time with the Roman crown under the progeny of Maria and Alexander. With the death of their single child, the personal union would still be fulfilled, this time under their grandson, Henry.

And with Harry's return, that topic had been the most discussed, not only in the empire, but also in
Portugal. Opinions were varied, but the majority was composed of both people who were indifferent and of those who saw the union in a positive light. And on Christmas Eve, Harry had been brought to the city of Nicaea, the capital of the Kingdom itself. Over the years under the hand of the Anemids, it grew from a simple village with an interesting historical background into a bustling metropolis, with the Palace of Nicaea and the Palace of Alexios serving as the primary governmental buildings in the city. There were others of course, but these two were the most iconic amongst the Nicaean population and foreigners as well.

Greece, had also been a target of Harry's travels, specifically its capital, the city of Thessaloniki, historical and current co-capital of the empire. Politics in Greece were very similar to the ones in Nicaea, except with a bit of western touch, but nothing too extreme. Their final destination had been Constantinople, where Maria gave both her Christmas and New Year speech to the population of the empire, before travelling to her homeland to do the same. Harry had accompanied her all the time, allowing the people to see him and to interact with some. He did his best to give a positive impression to the Roman and Portuguese people, not exactly wanting for those people to think badly of him, their future monarch.

But soon enough, the next year arrived, and it was time for Harry to return to Hogwarts.

Albania

No matter how many creatures were in Albania's forests, most would try to keep themselves away from a certain newcomer. Despite their undeveloped minds, they knew that whatever that thing was, it was certainly an abomination. But snakes had been the most affected by the thing's arrival, many gaining certain traits, before succumbing to the draining aspect of their possession.

The one who possessed them called himself Lord Voldemort, having in time being known as Tom Riddle, a name that he now associated with his past, something incompatible with what he was now. Yet his current state was also inappropriate for someone like him. Had Quirrell succeeded in stealing the Philosopher's Stone, he would have returned to a corporeal form, but he was merely a disembodied essence...a spirit still anchored to the mortal world. But Harry Potter had to interfere in what had been the most critical moment of the last decade, and in doing so he had prevented his rightful return. And still, the boy refused to die, much like he did that night in Godric's Hollow.

But now... he was weaker than ever. His followers either believed him dead, or were locked in Azkaban. Right now, there was nothing more he could do but hope for a miracle. Something that was virtually impossible. But as the snake that he possessed moved through the wet ground of the forest, Voldemort became aware of another presence. Yet it was not a simple animal.

"A human?" he thought. "Perhaps a muggle?"

The snake turned towards the general are where the presence seemed to be, and in the distance, was a shape, somewhat camouflaged by the darkness of the night. Voldemort moved towards the trees which were near the newcomer, but stopped in his tracks when he saw a flash of light, followed by a silvery beam directed towards himself. Neither he nor the snake he possessed were fast enough to avoid the sudden spell, and immediately the snake's body became unmoving in the ground. Voldemort was still conscious, yet it was as if the ability to move had been removed from the snake. For all intents and purposes, he was paralysed.

He began to hear footsteps, the one that had attacked him approaching. Unable to move, Voldemort could not turn to see who it was, but he knew that he would find out soon enough.
"Out of all the places in the world where you could be, why in the Eternal Queen's name did you choose Albania?" spoke the newcomer, a clear male voice that shocked Voldemort.

It was a voice that he knew very well, and one that he believed to remain unheard by his ears for many more years.

"I assume that these actions are mere manifestation of Tom Riddle's own personality, but that should have been extinguished long ago," commented the man. "I admit I am impressed with your unwillingness to make the full transition, but no matter. We are reunited once more, Lord Voldemort. But you don't need to worry with any punishment due to your failure during that night. The Queen believes that the last years were enough punishment for you."

The man crouched and took hold of the snake, allowing Voldemort to finally see his face, immediately recognizing the man. He seemed to be middle-aged, wearing strange robes that were oddly similar to the coats used by some muggle doctors. There were strange markings on his face, but the most prominent feature was the calm expression that was always present in that man's face. This man, if that term could even be applied to him, he only knew him as 'the Professor', and not even he knew his true name.

"I believe that this form is unsuitable for you, and so does she," said the Professor as the hand holding the snake began to glow.

Voldemort soon realized what the Professor was doing, and before he could react, the snake was fully engulfed in a golden light before disintegrating, the only thing remaining a small orb of light that floated on the Professor's hand. The orb then disappeared, revealing a small hexagonal bipyramidal-shaped crystal, a smaller orb emanating a bluish light within. The Professor grabbed the crystal, only for him to disappear from the forest almost immediately.

Hogwarts School, Inverness, Scotland (U.K.)

"Malfoy seems to be… seething."

That comment from Hermione was by itself a euphemism. Malfoy wasn't just seething, he was a bloody volcano ready to erupt.

"He's a ticking bomb… waiting to explode," said Theodore calmly.

"That's good, right?" asked Ron.

"It depends… on whether you want a bloodthirsty Malfoy seeking to rip your throat out… or not," replied Harry.

"Maybe being branded as a blood-traitor will humble him," suggested Hermione.

Theodore snorted. "I doubt it. He's too stubborn. Only something even greater would be enough to 'humble' him, as you say. Image he's a branch in a storm… we need a bit more of wind for it to break from the tree."

He then glanced at Harry, a rather unnerving smile appearing on his face.

"And I know the perfect way to snap the branch."
"What…exactly are you planning?" asked Harry.

"Have you ever heard about the Bonaccord Plot?" replied Nott.

"The what?" asked Ron.

"I think I read about that." Spoke Hermione. "It was an attempt made by a man called Pierre Bonaccord, who attempted to take the throne of the Empire to himself."

"Granger is correct. At the time, Bonaccord was not just part of the Regency Council, but he was also its leader," explained Theodore. "If not for the actions of the Anemids and many other states that belonged to the Empire at the time, Bonaccord would have successfully usurped the vacant throne."

"And what has that to do with Malfoy?" asked Ron, not seeing the connection.

Quite frankly, neither did Harry nor Hermione.

"Simple. One of the families that assisted Bonaccord, both in the plot and in the civil war that followed were the Malfoys. Later, Bonaccord's descendants married into the Malfoy family," he said. "Which means that…"

"That little bastard's family betrayed the Empire," said Harry, irritation clear on his voice. "What can we do with this Theodore?"

"It's easy. Use a bit of your influence so that the Daily Prophet prints a little article revealing this lovely piece of information that most wizards don't know," explained Nott. "Since you stand quite above the Malfoys, they can't use their remaining influence to prevent you from exposing their ancestry. And believe me, not many wizards are happy with our…erm, 'Franco-American overlords'."

"You think that will work?" inquired Harry.

"The sins of the fathers shall be visited upon their children," said Theodore. "A very appropriate saying."

Harry knew exactly where this was going, but he could only wonder if it would work. He then noticed that a small group of Varangians were approaching them, leading to Harry rising from the collapsed column where he sat.

"Your Highness, please follow us," requested one of them. "Your presence is required within the castle."

"Did something happen?" he asked worried.

"Yes, sir," said the guard. "Sirius Black has been captured."

Varandill Aanor

Lost and forgotten were two adjectives that described well the ancient Al-Antidian city of Varandill Aanor. Legend says that in the last years of the Bronzean dynasty, it was the state for many atrocities committed by the wife of Anipheon IX, the last Divine Sovereign of the Bronzean
dynasty, who was deposed by a distant relative who then became Cloteias III, founding the first Clotean Dynasty. Said legend also said that much like his wife, Anipheon succumbed to madness, and what had been one an empire of enlightenment and culture, became an empire of terror.

Yet despite the deaths of Anipheon and his wife, Varandill Aanor survived, and today it had a new purpose. Within its near empty walls, the strange man known as the Professor walked towards a secluded chamber within the depths of the old Temple of the Ancestors. Reaching his destination, he approached a large cylindrical container made of what seemed to be glass. Inside was a blue translucent substance, the light emanating from it being enough to illuminate the chamber.

The Professor approached the container, his right hand touching the glass. As it did so, the palm of his hand began to glow, and from it came the crystal-like object he had extracted from the snake that Voldemort had been possessing. The crystal seemed to ignore the glass completely, entering the container and becoming submerged in the blue liquid. It pulsed a few times, a strange power originating from the liquid seemingly affecting the crystal. Moments later, the crystal had disappeared, and one could only see the shape of an orb-like entity within the liquid.

"The process of regeneration will take quite a while, as your very being needs to become adapted to the Eitr," said the Professor to Voldemort's submerged essence. "In a few months, if everything proceeds correctly, you shall have a new body."

The man turned around, eying the small containers which were also inside the chamber. Inside of each was a crystal exactly like the one he extracted from the snake, all seemingly in repose.

"In the meantime, I'll see about bringing your… Death Eaters into the fold… maybe," he commented. "Perhaps, amongst those that remain loyal to you, there are some compatible with the dormant Nuclei."

Suddenly, the Professor felt a pulse in power coming from another section of the citadel.

"I have to go now. I do hope you don't mind being left alone," said the Professor, before chuckling a bit. "I have matters to attend to, I'm sure you're aware of that."

And so, he left the chamber, inside being only the submerged Nucleus of Voldemort and many others which remained dormant.

Chapter End Notes

The Consortium - A secret organisation formed from the remnants of an old faction within the Al-Antidian Empire. It commanded by the Eternal Queen, having as her second-in-command the man known as the Professor.

The Eternal Queen - The true leader of the Consortium, the Eternal Queen is amongst the last living remnants of the ancient Atlantean Empire, a feat which many would believe to be impossible.

The Professor – A commander of the Consortium, this wizard holds great knowledge related to the ancient Atlantean Empire. He is the factual leader of the Consortium, but is fully loyal to the Eternal Queen.

Nucleus (pl. Nuclei) - The whole of which the soul is part of. When physically
manifested, it takes the shape of a small hexagonal bipyramidal-shaped crystal.
Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Chapter 17 – The Eyes of the Blind

Hogwarts School, Inverness, Scotland (U.K.)

"It doesn't matter Minister Fudge. I was given express authorization for this by Queen Elizabeth herself."

In a strange set of events, Sirius Black had somehow been captured and was now awaiting his fate inside a secluded cell in a rather obscure tower of Hogwarts. However, whatever plans Fudge had for Black were now null, as a visit from the Magical Prime Minister of Portugal, Carlos Delgado, was done with that very purpose.

"B-But…" stuttered Fudge.

"As the Supreme Mugwump of the Confederacy, I agree with Mister Delgado," spoke Dumbledore. "As a matter of fact, I believe that Sirius Black's actions were far more damaging to them than to us."

"But what's the difference then? By that reasoning then we should simply place Black in Azkaban again and be done with this," said Fudge.

Delgado frowned. "I thought you were aware of the general opinion that the Empire has about your prison and those…demonic abominations that guard it. Never mind the fact that he escaped from that place as well. Wasn't escape from Azkaban supposed to be impossible?"

The mockery in the question was well disguised, but it was still clearly there.

Fudge scowled, but knew that this was a lost battle. "Fine then, take Black! But what will happen to him there?"

"Since he aided the murderer of the Princess Royal and her husband, but also conspired in the attempted murder of the current Prince Royal, he will be tried in Constantinople and be executed afterwards," said Delgado.

That solution was a bit definitive, but Fudge could not even protest against it. Dumbledore on the other hand, frowned a bit, not quite pleased by Imperial methods. Still, Black could have a worse fate. He knew what happened to certain types of criminals in the Empire, and most of them ended up begging for death.

Suddenly, there was a knock at the door, and Dumbledore assumed that it was Harry.

"Enter," he said.

The door opened, and Harry entered the room accompanied by two Halberdiers. As soon as he did so, he was quickly approached by Delgado, who extended his hand in greeting.
"Your Highness, it is good to meet you," he said to the young teenager. "I am Carlos Delgado, the President of the Council of Ministers of Portugal."

Harry shook the man's hand in greeting. "It's good to meet you Mister President. I believe that my grandmother has mentioned you quite a few times."

"Mr. Potter, we meet again," said Fudge, moving to greet Harry as well. Harry also shook the hand of Fudge, still wondering why he was wanted here. "Hello Minister."

Dumbledore must have sensed his confusion, for he immediately answered his unspoken question. "Your grandmother wants you with her, when they place Sirius Black on trial," explained Dumbledore. "Mr. Delgado came here to make sure that he was transferred to Imperial territory properly."

"I was once a member of the Imperial delegation of Iberia," said the man. "I know personally how these things are handled. And this was a request from Her Majesty."

"Indeed… However, I assume that this won't take long. After all, Mr. Potter still has to attend classes," said Dumbledore.

Delgado shook his head. "Not at all. Judicial issues are normally solved quickly and efficiently in the Empire. By tomorrow Black's trial will be over, and hopefully the man executed."

"How?" asked Harry, a bit curious.

"Assuming we go by the normal method, he will be Submerged," said the Portuguese man. "If not… well, there are several options to choose from… unfortunately. In any case, we should be going. I believe that apparition and the usage of portkeys inside Hogwarts is impossible, am I correct."

"Yes," replied the headmaster.

"Then I hope Minister Fudge doesn't mind we use his office to travel to Constantinople."

"Not at all, of course!" replied Fudge.

"Good. Then we should make haste," said Delgado. "Farewell, Professor Dumbledore."

Dumbledore said goodbye to the man as well, and watched as Fudge, Delgado and Harry disappeared in the green flames of his fireplace.

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**Constantinople**

The whole issue with Black would be soon solved, but Maria had faith that whatever happened, it would be the best for her young grandson. Distracted by such thoughts, she only returned to her senses upon hearing a knock on the door.

"Enter."

The door opened, and one of her maids entered.
"Your Majesty, one of the Blind Priests is here," she informed. "It is Abd-El-Qadir."

Abd-El-Qadir? If he was visiting her, then it meant that the Blind Priests had experienced some sort of prediction. And most times, it was not exactly one very favourable. That cult had the tendency to foresee trouble.

"Let him in," she ordered.

The maid nodded and left the room. Moments later, the door opened once again, and this time a bearded old man, clothed in black robes and his eyes covered by a blindfold entered. He walked towards Maria, and knelt before her.

"Precious empress of these lands, may you be blessed by the Sacred Ones," he said.

"It is good to see you again as well Abd-El-Qadir," she replied. "What brings you to this place?"

"In our meditations, we were assaulted by a terrible vision of the future. We saw a threat from the distant past, slowly entering the world of the present," he said. "As the guardian of the One, we saw it fit for you to be given this knowledge."

This was certainly not good. "What kind of threat?"

"It is best if I show you," he said.

Maria nodded, and watched as the old man removed the blindfold, revealing two empty eye sockets. The monarch stared onto them, and her vision soon became filed with mist, as if all around her was dissipating. The eyeless sockets glowed brightly, before fully disappearing. In mere moments, the mist disappeared, revealing a ruined city.

"We were shown the Future of all things...the ruin brought to this world by the return of the Cursed Ones."

"The cursed ones?"

Suddenly, the ruined landscape became filled with charred corpses, and floating above each was a small faint light.

"Life itself is used to fuel their ambitions...the spark of life extracted from many, and in their place...others rose."

Maria watched in horror as the lights faded and the corpses rose, before quickly kneeling before an invisible figure.

"Who are they kneeling to?"

"To their master in this world...she who planted the seeds of evil into the minds of the old people."

Out of nowhere, a shadowy figure appeared. It seemed to be feminine in appearance, towering above the kneeling figures.

"The Eternal Queen of the Seven Cities, the Harvester of Souls, the Demoness of Temptation, the Black Mistress, the Sleeping Messiah, the Adversary... all these are titles that refer to her alone. And she... she is stirring in her sleep. And her servants tend to what remains of her in this world, waiting for the right time..."

"But her cult was wiped out," spoke Maria.
"Yet their ideas…their teachings still survive. If they remain unchecked… then the future we saw will certainly come to pass. The visions do not lie."

The scene disappeared, and Maria realized that she was no longer observing the vision, and she noticed that the old man was covering his eye sockets with the blindfold once more.

"By the Sacred Ones… all those deaths… Ioannes's sacrifice… all of them were for nothing." she said after a moment of silence.

"They succeeded in preventing her return at the time. Had Herpo and his cult succeeded in their endeavour, we would not be speaking here today," affirmed the priest. "But this is not the only of our concerns. The imminent resurrection of the Eternal Queen will be the final catalyst for the Awakening."

Maria paled, knowing very well what Abd-El-Qadir referred. It was not exactly something that many people knew, and only those truly versed in the teachings of Aeneas knew what the Awakening was.

"When it comes to happen, he needs to be prepared," spoke the man. "He needs to face it as its sole master, and that of the world as well, much like the Divine Sovereigns of old. Otherwise it will turn to the other candidate."

Maria nodded sombrely.

"It knows and it sees…the apex of creation" she said. "And he will soon as well."

Chapter End Notes

**Order of the Blind Priests** – A religious order within the Aenean faith, the Blind Priests are devout worshippers of Ayavan, one of the Sacred Twelve. While an initiate in the order is still fully capable of using his eyes, upon becoming a full-fledged member of the Order, their eyes are plucked out and burned as an offering to Ayavan.

**The Sacred Twelve** – A group of twelve deities and widely acknowledged to occupy the third tier of the Divine Order. Each of the Twelve embodies an attribute (sometimes more) of God (also known as Aion), the main deity of both the Aenean, and Al-Antidian faiths.

**The Eternal Queen** – Once the wife of Anipheon IX, the woman known in history as the Eternal Queen was in her time a powerful sorceress and one of the first documented dark wizards (or in her case, witch). While not a human-perennial hybrid, the Eternal Queen descended from one, which may be the cause for her immense power. In the Aenean faith she is regarded not just as the as an Adversary, but also as the messiah of the end of days.

**Ioannes Anemas** – Born in 1829, he was the son of Emperor Alexios VI, and was crowned as co-emperor. He became involved in the conflict against the resurrected Herpo the Foul and his cult to the Eternal Queen, but would die in 1846, in battle against Herpo, but not before killing the Dark wizard as well. With his death, his uncle Romanos was crowned as co-emperor, and would later become Romanos V.
Carlos Cabral Delgado da Cunha e Castro – Widely known as Carlos Delgado, he was born into nobility, his father having been the 13th Count of Sousel. After his death Carlos inherited the title, becoming the 14th Count of Sousel. He is the leader of the Regenerator party in the wizarding world of Portugal, and became President of the Council of Ministers (Prime Minister) of Portugal for the first time in 1987, having been re-elected with an absolute majority in 1991. As such, he is currently the leader of the 93rd Constitutional Government.
Chapter 18 – Endeavours of the Hidden Cult

Magnaura, Imperial District, Undercity, Constantinople

As a near-replica of the city above, within the Undercity of Constantinople also stood a Magnaura, the headquarters for the government of the empire in the Wizarding World, and seat of the Senate. Before the restoration of the Empire, it had been also the seat for the Regency Council, which unlike the Senate, actually held power over the governance of the empire. Before its end, it had been composed by twenty-three member delegacies, and in turn, each was composed by a total of fifteen members, five which were the deputies within the Council.

And while some had pressured for the restoration of the Regency Council in the period after the death of Alexander IV, his wife remained as sole regent, having been Alexander's choice for the position for quite a long time before his death. But even as Maria ruled over the empire with a firm hand, recent events and discoveries were starting to worry her deeply.

It was common knowledge that the Blind Priests' visions were not mere hallucinations, but actual events that would occur, and if they had foreseen the return of the Eternal Queen, then the Empire needed to prepare itself. However, it was certain that she would not just affect the wizards, but the muggles as well. Yet her first target was rather obvious. And there was also the cult…which right now stood as their main adversary.

That would be soon solved as well.

Hall of Cultivation, Varandill Aanor

The darkly illuminated chamber was mostly empty, excluding the presence of the Professor and the many Nuclei that were contained within special receptacles. He stood in front of a strange device, a Nucleus in front him suspended by an invisible force.

His wand was pointed at the Nucleus, a thin blueish beam emanating from its tip, connected to the glowing crystal in front of him. After a while, he moved the beam towards another section of the crystal, and continued like that for a few more seconds, before deciding on another spot. However, as he changed the direction of the spell, the crystal suddenly glowed even more, surprising the man, who took a step back, yet keeping his composure, as if already expecting the outcome, but with a disappointed expression on his face.

"Oh dear…"

The glow diminished, and soon the crystal was empty of light, a small crack visible on its lower side. The Professor's reaction to this was a simple sigh.

"Another failure… Such a waste."
As he thought about the failed experiment, the Professor heard footsteps coming from behind him.

"Professor, sir. I brought your tea," said a female voice.

"Ah, my dear Petra, thank you," said the man in a rather happy tone. "Put it here, near the broken Nucleus."

She nodded, and placed the tray next to the device.

"Petra, look at this," he said, motioning towards the Nucleus he had been experimenting upon. "Such fragile little things, breaking at the most insignificant of changes. Of course, there are those special ones which manage to survive the procedure, but it is a shame that not all of them are capable of possessing such a high level of resistance."

"They look good on the garden," commented Petra.

"That they do, dear Petra...that they do," he said. "However, to my joy, the successful experiments outnumber the failures, which means that we can now continue with...live experimentation."

"Sir?"

"Follow me, dear."

She nodded, and followed the Professor into another secluded sector of the citadel, eventually reaching what seemed to be some sort of dungeon. She could see that inside the cells, were what seemed to be human shapes, and glints which appeared to come from eyes.

Eventually, the professor entered another chamber, and she could see two people restrained and unconscious in the centre of the room. A man and a woman, both rather young and seemingly uninjured.

"I took the liberty of preparing this demonstration while you prepared the tea," said the Professor before pointing his wand at a cupboard near them. "Accio Nuclei."

From within it, two Nuclei emerged, a pale and blueish glow emanating from them. The stopped right in front of the Professor, and he eyed them with a prideful look on his face.

"These two specimens survived the procedure, no longer possessing any sort of emotion, dreams, memories and other unnecessary components," declared the man. "As it stands, these mutated Nuclei possess only the soul, the mind…and the sense of loyalty towards our Queen. Now, observe this dear Petra."

The Professor took a step back, Petra doing the same. The man raised his wand, as if preparing to strike someone with a blade. He slashed the air with his wand, and the two Nuclei began to shine brightly before being projected towards the unconscious captives at high speed. As they entered the prisoners, their bodies began to emanate a bluish aura.

"You see Petra, when a Nucleus enters a body which is already inhabited by a Nucleus, then the two begin a fight for dominance," spoke the Professor. "The most powerful of the Nuclei would obviously emerge victorious, but since we are using Nuclei belonging to non-blessed humans, the power level is the same. Well, it would be the same if the Nuclei I inserted were unchanged. And since I made a few alterations..."

The man motioned towards the two captives, their bodies surrounded by the aura which was now becoming diminished.
"…this happens."

The two captives suddenly began to glow brightly and both the Professor and Petra felt a great heat coming from them as well. When the light had vanished, the two looked at the prisoners, and in their place, were now two humanoid figures, their bodies apparently made of a stone-like material, with thin cracks from which emanated a red glow. Several sections of the bodies also had a reddish tint, as if inside was something like lava. Their heads had nothing, no mouth, nose, ears, hair or eyes. Instead, there were two empty orifices where the eye sockets were supposed to be, from which also emanated a strong red light.

The two were no longer restrained, and their stance was rather animalistic, as if they were waiting for orders.

"I have no idea what to call these things, but the process of their creation is amazing," said the Professor. "These creatures obey only our commands, and will serve as the... low tier soldiers of our forces. What they lack in intelligence and mind, they make up in brute strength. And they are rather useful for our secondary goals right now."

"Secondary goals, sir?"

"Indeed. Our supreme leader has ordered me to test our enemies' level of strength. And I do not refer solely to the Empire and its allies," declared the man. "The supreme leader has once more expressed interest in the child known as Harry Potter. Ever since Voldemort failed in his task, and had his body destroyed by a mere infant, our great sovereign's doubts towards whether he is the One or not have but vanished."

"What do you require of me, Professor?" asked the young witch.

"As you are one of our highest ranked members, you are to travel to the village of Hogsmeade in Scotland, near the school of Hogwarts. Remain there until the boy appears, and when he does, assault the village. It will be the perfect moment to test his strength," commanded the Professor. "Once his true nature emerges, the final phase of our Queen's resurrection will begin, and the dreams of Al-Antidia shall once more become reality."

"It shall be done, sir," declared the Professor.

The Professor simply smiled.

"Oh, I don't doubt you dear Petra. Just make sure that no one dies there. At this moment, deaths are quite unprofitable to our goals."

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**Magnaura, Imperial District, Undercity, Constantinople**

The gallery of the main courtroom of the Magnaura was not just filled with high profile citizens of the Empire, but also with many journalists and the lucky few of the common people how managed to enter the gallery. Amongst those in the gallery were Harry and Dumbledore, both there to observe the oncoming trial of Sirius Black. It was an important event, for the Imperial government had finally got their hands on one of the most infamous criminals of the last few decades, not to mention that this one had been heavily involved in the murder of Emperor Alexander's sole daughter and her husband, alongside the attempted murder of her current heir apparent.

As regent over the empire, Maria held the full judicial power on her hands, and so the final
decision was hers alone. Despite that, there was a whole body of officials that were conducting the trial, allowing the monarch to focus on the main aspects of the event. Next to her, was Victor Wright, a Canadian man whose name was known to the majority of Imperial wizarding world. Those that lived during the war against Grindelwald and the Great Time of Troubles would have certainly be familiar with him, considering that he had been the Minister of War during those two periods, and had now returned to the re-established office. He was old, but his features showed a man on his fifties, not exactly what one would expect from someone born during the first decade of the twentieth century. Harry knew that the man had been appointed by his great-great-grandfather, Emperor Alexios VII, and remained in the position even after Alexios's death.

As Minister of War, Wright held many duties which would have belonged to the Imperial Commander-in-Chief, and had effectively placed the army in Wright's control, turning him into the second most powerful individual in the entire Roman Empire, a position he now held once more. Harry noticed that he and his grandmother were talking about something, perhaps about the trial. But he still could not understand what exactly the man was doing in the trial. After all, this was out of his jurisdiction, right?

"Albus!"

Both Harry and Dumbledore turned towards the source of the voice. It was an old man with a large overcoat and a very eerie magical eye that seemed to be examining the room.

"Alastor, I wasn't expecting to see you here," said the headmaster.

The other man, apparently called Alastor, simply grunted. "I was curious about this whole affair. I have a few contacts here in the continent, so I managed to get myself here without any problem."

Harry then noticed that the man's magical eye had stopped, and was now staring at him.

"I assume that's James' son," said Alastor.

"Erm, yes sir," replied Harry.

"Alastor Moody, former Auror," he introduced himself, shaking Harry hand. "You father and I fought together in the war. Black down there too, at least before he turned traitor."

Harry looked at the central chamber, noticing that they had brought Sirius Black in. Azkaban certainly seemed to have had a great effect on the man, as he seemed to be more of a husk than a healthy human. He seemed to be disconnected from everything around him, and Harry noticed that he seemed to be mumbling something. He was placed on a chair made seemingly from stone, his hands and legs being bound the moment he sat on it. Once Black was fully restrained, the guards that had brought him in moved towards the door, sealing it.

"Silence!" shouted the Minister of War, the whole room falling into absolute seconds after. "With the prisoner now present, I declare the session started. This is the trial of Sirius Black, presided by the Empress Regent, Maria of Braganza, the Minister of War, Victor Wright, and the Great Intermediary, Loukas Kamateros."

"I wonder why the Minister of War is in this trial?" mumbled Dumbledore, loud enough for Harry to hear.

He continued to observe the trial, and watched as the man took hold of a piece of paper and began to read.
"The charges against the accused are the following," he announced. "Conspiracy against the Imperial and Royal House of Anemas, involvement in the murder of Princess Maria Anemas and her husband James Potter and the attempted murder of Henry Anemas, association with the clandestine group known as the Death Eaters and its leader, the self-entitled Lord Voldemort, the murderer of Maria Anemas and James Potter. Other charges include the massacre of twelve non-blessed humans and the wizard Peter Pettigrew."

Wright gave the paper to the Great Intermediary, and left the podium, walking towards the central area of the room, where Black was restrained.

"Administer the truth serum," he commanded to an official. "Due to the foreign nature of the accused, the interrogation shall be performed in his native language."

The man nodded, and proceeded to forcefully give the potion to Black. The man's eyes seemed to suddenly glaze, almost as if his mind was in a completely different world.

"What is your name?" asked the Minister.

"Sirius Black," he answered, his voice rough and almost gravelly.

"Your date of birth?"

"The third of November, 1959."

"Great Intermediary, is this information correct?"

The man nodded, having been observing a record with information regarding Sirius Black. "It is."

The Minister of War turned back towards Sirius Black, and resumed his interrogation.

"Are you familiar with the organisation known as the Death Eaters, and their leader?"

"Yes."

"Were you ever involved, both directly and indirectly, with the Death Eaters?"

"Were you ever involved, both directly and indirectly, with the Death Eaters?"

Black's following answer was rather unexpected, especially to those familiar with the whole case surrounding him.

"No."

Those that understood English, and it was a large majority, were caught by surprise. Under the influence of Veritaserum, Black had just denied any association with the Death Eaters, yet that seemed to have no effect on the Minister of War. The man's expression did not change a bit.

"Are you involved, or were once involved with the self-entitled Lord Voldemort and willingly assisted him in any shape or form?"

"No."

Harry could pretty much feel the excitement emanating from the journalists in the gallery, and their quills also reflected that very much. He himself had to admit that he was not expecting Black to give those answers.
"Did you kill twelve non-blessed and the wizard known as Peter Pettigrew?"

He remained in silence, an outcome rather strange.

"Mr. Black, why aren't you answering the question?"

"I don't know what a non-blessed is."

"Of course," mumbled the Minister, remembering that he would not be familiar with Imperial terms. "Did you kill twelve muggles and Peter Pettigrew?"

"No."

"Then who did?"

"Pettigrew."

The outcome of the trial was surpassing everyone's expectations, especially that of Harry, Dumbledore and Moody.

"Do explain."

"He blew up the street with those muggles and then he escaped as a rat."

"Your statement implicates that Peter Pettigrew is an animagus. So, you claim that he is still alive?"

"Yes."

"Then would you please explain why exactly that confrontation happened?"

"I tracked down Pettigrew after finding out about James and Lily's deaths," explained Black. "I intended to kill Pettigrew after what he had done."

"And what exactly did Peter Pettigrew do?" asked Wright, rather curious about it.

"He told Voldemort the location of James and Lily's house."

The silence that penetrated the room was haunting. It took Dumbledore seconds to realize the implications of Sirius's statement, and soon enough all those who were familiar with the story, slowly began to do so as well.

"By your declaration, you are suggesting that the role of Secret Keeper belonged not to you, but to Peter Pettigrew."

"Yes."

There were many gasps of surprise, and the shock was felt across the Empire, as many of those who had been hearing the trial on the radio also became stunned by the revelation. But once more, the Minister remained calm and in control of the situation.

"Then why was it publicly divulged that you had been chosen as the Secret Keeper of the house in Godric's Hollow?" inquired the Minister of War.

"It was our way of making sure that Voldemort would go instead after me, thinking I was the Secret Keeper and not Pettigrew," answered Sirius.
"So, resuming. You have absolutely no affiliation or loyalty to Voldemort and his Death Eaters, did not reveal the location of the Potter residence in Godric's Hollow, and did not kill both Pettigrew and the twelve muggles on the first of November, year 1981," spoke Victor. "Is this correct?"

"Yes."

Victor nodded and turned towards Maria. "**Madam, the interrogation is over.**"

"**Very well,**" said the monarch, motioning for Wright to return to his seat. "**The evidence is conclusive. The accused has been found not guilty of all accusations as is henceforth released. However, due to prolonged exposure to Dementors, Mr. Black shall be immediately admitted to the Imperial Institute for Deficiency and Mental Injuries. He shall remain there until he returns to a stable condition.**"

Maria commanded the guards to remove Sirius from the chamber, declaring the session to be over. Shortly, after doing so, she immediately addressed Dumbledore.

"Mr. Dumbledore, I would speak to you," she said. "In private."

Dumbledore nodded, and left the gallery to meet with Harry's grandmother, leaving Harry alone with Moody.

"Well Potter, or whatever surname you have right now, we better leave this place," suggested Moody. "After this, I believe we all need a bit of fresh air."

Harry, whose mind was a bit numb after the trial, simply nodded to the former auror.

"Yeah…"

"I can assume that you were not expecting this outcome, were you?"

Maria looked at her guest, waiting for his answer. Needless to say, she was certain of what the old man would say.

"Indeed. Even I was told that Sirius had been chosen as their Secret Keeper," confirmed Dumbledore. "I still find it hard to believe that it was Pettigrew who betrayed us. He certainly didn't seem to be the type."

"Appearances can deceive," replied Maria. "Nevertheless, as you are the leader of the Confederation, I assume that this whole affair with Sirius Black will be dealt with in your territories."

"I need the record from the trial and a full recognition made by yourself," said Dumbledore. "Only with those I will be able to proceed with Mr. Black's pardon back home."

"You shall get them, be assured of that. Also, since this whole affair is now dealt with, I believe I can authorize my grandson's visits to Hogsmeade, am I correct?"

The headmaster nodded. "Yes, of course. You are, after all, his legal guardian. However, we now need to search for Peter Pettigrew, considering that he is still alive. I believe that he might have been hiding all these years, and now with Sirius's release, he may very well fear that Sirius's search for him will be relentless."
"Not just him. I want that lowlife to pay for what he has done!" declared the monarch, her words dripping with cold fury. "It is because of him that I no longer have a daughter, and my grandson lacks his parents. The traitor…being Submerged is too good for him."

Maria took a deep breath, attempting to calm her thoughts.

"Anyway, there are other matters I must discuss with you," she stated. "And Henry is involved in them."

"Is there something wrong?" asked Dumbledore, noticing the change in tone.

"Very wrong. Just before the trial, I held a small meeting with the Council of Logothetes. The Empire is now at war," declared Maria. "And my grandson stands at the centre of said war."

"A war?" he asked dumbfounded. "Against whom?"

"I would not be surprised if you didn't hear about them. They're a… cult of sorts, whose origins date back to at least the period of ancient Greece. It was formed by the dark wizard known as Herpo the Foul. I am sure you have heard about him."

"Yes. It is somehow related to his return a few centuries ago?" asked Dumbledore.

She nodded. "Despite his final death, it seems that Herpo's cult, or at least its ideals, managed to survive, and have now re-emerged. And their goal is the same as before. The resurrection of the entity known to us as the Eternal Queen."

Dumbledore was both confused and curious. "Who?"

"According to the records we managed to recover from the old cities, she was an important figure during the Eighth Dynasty. A ruler on her own right, but also the wife of the reigning Divine Sovereign, Anipheon IX," explained Maria. "Legend says both became mad with power, and brought Al-Antidia to ruin. A rebellion rose against them, and ended with the death of both Anipheon and the Eternal Queen."

"The dead can't be revived," said Dumbledore. "Magic can't do such a thing. It is impossible."

"Not to the Atlanteans. Their whole society and culture was devoted to the advancement of civilization… to break the limits of humanity and reach beyond the limitations imposed by the divine. With this mindset, they managed to unlock the secrets of the incorporeal, and how to give it shape," she stated. "They seek to restore the Eternal Queen to life by using the methods developed by her contemporaries."

"And why haven't they managed to do it yet?" asked the headmaster. "And how exactly is Harry related to all this?"

"We have no idea. All information that my predecessors managed to extract from captured cultists was not enough to reveal to us the exact procedure of the resurrection, and why they haven't managed to do it," she admitted. "And Henry… he is the key for something they want."

This was very confusing to Dumbledore. He knew that Harry was destined to battle against Voldemort, as indicated by the prophecy, but it appeared that he was also involved in some far greater.

"What exactly?"
"There is a prophecy which speaks of a great event, of when a Lord of the World, in this era, the Roman emperor, shall ascend and bring forth a new age," revealed Maria. "All described in the prophecy indicates that my grandson is the one. The cult knows of this as well, and so they seek something related to him. To the cult, he is the key to something… something related to his status as the Lord of the World, yet we don't know what exactly it is."

"Isn't this too much of a burden for him?" asked Dumbledore.

"No. He was divinely elected for this role, and he shall eventually rise to the station," she said. "I have, however, one request for you. I am aware of an organisation you once formed during the conflict against Voldemort."

Now that was surprising to the old headmaster. "May I ask how exactly you are aware of the Order?"

"You may, but I won't answer," she replied. "The point here is, since my grandson attends your school, I need to ask you if you can revive your group, to protect him there."

"But he has the guard."

"True, but don't forget about the Death Eaters," she said. "I need something in Britain that has eyes and ears everywhere, and right now, the only person who hails from there that I can trust is you, Chief Wizard Dumbledore."

"I will see what I can do, ma'am." Said Dumbledore. "Be assured that your grandson's safety is one of my priorities."

"Thank you, Mr. Dumbledo-"

She was suddenly interrupted as the door of the office burst open, one of the guards bursting in.

"Your Majesty, we have a security breach in the Magnaura!" said the guard. "We are under attack!"

Chapter End Notes

Great Intermediary – A translation of "Megas Mesazon", the Great Intermediary is the chief minister of the Roman Empire, and as such, is its Imperial Head of Government, directly below the Roman Emperor. Nevertheless, the Emperor still holds absolute power over the Empire and all its officials.

Imperial Institute for Deficiency and Mental Injuries – A department of the Imperial Ministry of Health, the Institute for Deficiency and Mental Injuries is focused on the mental healthcare of wizards across the entire Roman Empire. Its headquarters are in Constantinople.
Chapter 19 – The Shattered Song

Magnaura, Imperial District, Undercity, Constantinople

If the heart of the Empire was Constantinople, then the heart of Constantinople would have to be
the Magnaura, both in the muggle and wizarding worlds. Having entered the building by side-
apparition, it was the first time that Harry set foot on the entrance hall of the colossal building, and
the young wizard became astounded by the mass of people that made up most of the working
population of the Imperial District. Many of these people were simple pieces of the massive
bureaucratic machine that was the Empire, the minority being visitors, mostly tourists. And as
he walked alongside Moody, the two passed by a corridor filled with fireplaces, each lit with green
flames and people coming out of them, while others entered the flames, disappearing moments
after. While being reminded of his experience with the Floo, Harry could have sworn that he heard
the former Auror mumbling something about the British Ministry.

The main chamber which was the entrance was heavily decorated, although one could claim that
said decoration was heavily austere. The walls were decorated with Imperial banners, and many
statues adorned the room. At its centre stood a fountain, having as its centrepiece a sculpture of
Empress Zoe, holding a wand and a scroll. There was an inscription beneath the statue, and as
Harry and Moody approached it the young teenager was able to read the text.

Zoë Porphyrogenita, in Christ faithful, Empress and Autocrat of the Romans
Daughter of Emperor Constantine VII and his wife, the Augusta Helena

After the Great Fire of 1032, Her Majesty ordered and funded the reconstruction of the entire
Imperial District, rebuilding both the complex of the Great Palace and the Magnaura.

And while Harry observed the statue, Moody seemed to be focused on something else.

"It seems that your bodyguards are scattered around this area."

Harry turned around and managed to recognize one of the Varangian Guard, who was clearly
observing him. The others were most likely doing the same, wherever they were. Moody seemed to
know, though. Nevertheless, Harry decided to sit down in a nearby bench, Moody accompanying
him. The young prince made sure to keep his wand at the ready, not exactly being comfortable in
the middle of so many people, especially since he didn't know them.

"That whole mess back there will certainly shake people back home," said Alastor. "Especially the
pure-blood sods. I wonder what old Cygnus's reaction will be to this."

Now that he mentioned it, Harry was curious as well about what Cygnus Black's reaction would be
to the fact that Sirius had been proven and declared to be innocent. He doubted however, that the
man would change his decision about who would inherit his possessions after he finally died. Speaking of the Blacks, Harry suddenly had the urge to ask something to Moody.

"Erm, Mr. Moody, you said before that you fought alongside my father against Voldemort," said Harry, getting the former Auror's attention. "How was he like?"

"Your father was a rather talented wizard, and could easily take down a group of Death Eaters without problem. However, he also had the tendency to charge without thinking into battle," said Moody. "Not just him, but Black as well. Unlike those two, your mother seemed to have more tact. But when she became pregnant, she ceased to actively participate in our efforts against Voldemort. Your father also became a bit more...restricted. After you were born, the last I heard of them was when they went into hiding. I'm sure you know what happened after that."

Harry nodded.

"What about Sirius Black?"

"Black was very similar to your father," replied the former Auror. "Somewhat more reckless though. I suppose that's the best way to describe him."

Harry did not ask the man about anything else, leaving the two in silence. However, the moment of silence was stopped by a rumble that was felt by all those inside the entrance hall. There was the sound of a distant explosion, followed by another rumble, this time stronger. The guards, Moody, and many other wizards had their wands out, and Harry soon noticed that the green flames in the fireplaces had all been extinguished.

There was another explosion sound, followed by an even louder rumble. Harry also took out his wand, but much like all other wizards, he had no actual target. But in moments, cracks began to appear near the entrance, the people there quickly moving to another area, all pointing their wands at the cracks. However, instead of spreading, the area where the cracks were suddenly collapsed, forming a small sinkhole. The heavy dust covered most of the area, leading to several non-guard wizards to quickly leave the entrance hall.

"Potter, run quickly towards the fireplaces, and then get out of here," said Moody in a low tone.

Harry quickly looked at the older wizard. "What, why?"

"Because something is crawling out of that hole."

It was then that Harry noticed that Moody's magical eye was fixed on the floor, leading to the young wizard quickly turning around and running towards the Fireplace Corridor. Yet as he did so, a bluish jet of light came from behind him, hitting the centre of the corridor. Whatever the spell was, it caused a massive explosion, rendering the fireplaces useless and blocking much of the way to the other side. Harry had been thrown to the ground due to the force of the explosion, having been unharmed. The boy quickly turned around, seeing a strangely dressed man pointing his wand at him.

With a slash, the man conjured a horn-like sound, and from the hole came out strange creatures, which began to attack all those in the Magnaura. At the same time, three guards had shifted their attention towards the wizard who had destroyed the corridor, engaging him on a duel.

The man however, seemed to have the upper hand, dispatching the guards with ease, before turning his attention towards Harry. He raised his hand, ready to cast a spell at the near-defenceless teenager, but before the curse could hit him, an invisible shield made the curse rebound, hitting a
nearby wall. One of the Varangians had managed to reach Harry, now being the only one between
the prince and the dark wizard.

"Your Highness, I suggest you leave now!" said the Varangian.

Harry nodded, getting to his feet and running towards an unblocked way in all of the rubble.
Behind him, he could hear the sound of spells, and as he ran in the empty corridor, he glimpsed a
green light emerging from behind the rubble, quickly disappearing. His wand was already pointed
at the rubble blocking most of the corridor, but his concentration was broken as an explosion
unblocked the path, revealing the dark wizard from before. Harry noticed that next to him was the
Varangian, unmoving on the floor.

"Flipendo!"

The man easily deflected the spell, countering with a spell of his own. Harry was not fast enough to
move out of the way, nor to block the spell with any kind of shield. And as the red light hit him, all
he knew was darkness.

As he saw Harry running away, Moody became immediately focused on the strange creatures
which had emerged from the hole on the floor. He had never seen anything like them, and from the
reactions of the other wizards, it seemed they shared his ignorance on what the things were.
Having much experience from his years as an Auror, Moody had little difficulty in fighting against
the savage creatures.

One of them had jumped and landed right on top of one of the defenders, its touch seemingly
burning its victim, the skin boiling and turning into a dark brown tone, like it was burnt meat. The
creature was banished by another wizard, being sent straight into a wall, yet the man it attacked
was no longer alive. As he fought back against the creatures, Moody had enough time to see the
burn mark expanding to cover the whole body, the fallen wizard taking an appearance similar to
these beasts.

A Reductor Curse from Moody almost missed its target, blasting part of its upper body instead,
revealing something which seemed to be a mixture of lava and hot coal. If the body of these things
was at a high temperature, then perhaps there was a more efficient way of dealing with them.

"Glacius!"

A cold mist was projected from Moody's wand, hitting the creature nearest to him. In a moment, it
froze, the body quickly collapsing into small fragments. Those around Moody imitated the former
Auror, quickly dispatching the creatures. Taking note of the area where Harry had previously been,
Moody quickly moved towards the ruined corridor, the wizard who had summoned these things
having disappeared. If his gut was right, then the bastard had gone and chased after Potter.

He passed by the rubble and the corpse of a Varangian, and as he turned around Moody saw the
dark wizard approaching the fallen form of Harry Potter. Pointing his wand at the man, he cast a
powerful spell which sent the man flying beyond Harry, before falling on the floor.

"Rennervate," he said, pointing his wand at Harry who woke up with a jolt.

The teenager quickly became conscious of his surroundings, and grabbing his wand he ran towards
Moody, before turning his aim towards his attacker, who had now recovered from Moody's spell.
The man's expression was that of a raged maniac, which led to Moody and Harry attacking the man instantly. The exchange of spells that followed was mostly defined by the savage attacks of the dark wizard, and the more careful but still aggressive style of both Moody and Harry.

"Expulso!"

Harry's curse hit the man, who was blasted back once more and fell on the ground, his wand a few feet away from him. He noticed that some damage had been caused, mostly due to the blood on the ground.

"Alastor! Harry!"

The voice of Dumbledore startled the two, who had been too much focused on the dark wizard. From a nearby corridor, both Dumbledore and Maria appeared, their wands pointed at the wizard on the floor.

"You're a bit late Albus," said Moody. "There's a massacre occurring up there in the entrance hall. And this one here is the cause of it!"

"He can't be the only one," said Maria. "The defences of the Magnaura were all deactivated. He must have an accomplice."

"If he has one, then they must be inactive," said Moody. "When those creatures attacked he was the only one there."

Maria looked livid.

"Then I guess we'll have to extract that information from him," she declared. "Forcefully."

The man, unfazed by the threat, simply smirked, and then looked at Harry.

"To thee, my Divine Sovereign."

His hand moved quickly, and before the four wizards could react, there was a flash of green light. The man's hand fell limp on the ground, his eyes vacantly staring into nothingness. The wizards stared at the corpse, shocked at the sudden event.

"Bastard…" grumbled Moody.

Maria suddenly ignored the man and rushed towards her grandson.

"Henry, are you all right?" she asked.

Harry was still stunned by all that had just happened around him. The chaos in the entrance, having been knocked unconscious and this man's suicide were not very good combinations.

"I-I don't… I don't know."

Moody addressed Dumbledore and Maria.

"Perhaps we should head to the entrance," he said. "The lack of noise suggests that the guards must have dealt with the creatures there already."

They walked cautiously towards the destroyed corridor, Moody being the first to glance at the entrance hall to verify if it was safe to enter, and upon seeing that inside were only those who were fighting against the creatures, they entered the entrance hall.
"Your Majesty," said one of the guards who approached Maria. "We have secured the entrance hall. Some have descended into the hole to seek the invaders."

Maria nodded. "The defences were all taken down, and leader of this force is dead," she said. "The one who deactivated the defences must have escaped, or is infiltrated amongst us."

"My Lady, these creatures… we have never seen anything like this," said the man. "All our dead have their bodies… burned. And just by having been touched by those things."

Harry took advantage of the conversation to observe one of the fallen creatures. At first glance, it seemed to be a broken statue made of coal, or some other material. The corpse also seemed to be a bit too fragile looking. In his curiosity, he went to touch the body, yet it fell into dust at his touch, its fragility becoming very factual. But as it did so, a strange glowing object appeared from the ashes. Harry looked at it, a strange crystal with a glowing red orb within it. It began to float, stopping when it was at his eye-level.

"Grandmother," he called out. "Look at this."

Maria turned her attention towards her grandson, finding it strange for him to be crouched down next to a pile of ash. She want to see what he was looking at, and upon noticing what it was, she stopped dead on her track.

"A Nucleus," she whispered.

Harry looked at her strangely, before looking back at the strange crystal.

"A what?" he asked, before reaching out to touch it.

"Harry, no!"

Maria's warning came too late, as Harry's hand had already touched the Nucleus. It was in less than a second, and his mind was assaulted by countless horrifying visions. All around him seemed to shift as if projected by the crystal, the life within the Nucleus being etched onto his own mind, corrupted fragments of memory passing before his eyes as if a film. What he felt was not consciousness, but utter rage and anger, as if suppressed by countless millennia and eager to be unleashed into the world. Past the viciousness, he saw the beginning of something... different, beyond such primal urges. Something very small, which grew with the passage of time, and the darkness that followed. It was weak... consumed by a foreign and ancient rage, and now lost forever. And it called out to him, seeing freedom to destroy and corrupt.

There was much noise around him, and it did not stop until he was pulled away from whatever was binding him by an invisible force. As all around him returned to normal, he felt pain on his throat, and a strong dry sensation as well. It was as if he had been screaming. And he was, for Harry soon realized that he was still doing so, a scream of horror and pain.

"Harry!"

He felt arms around him, his name being called by someone. He did not listen, still trapped in a world of horror by what had been shown to him. He could now even understand what happened next, as suddenly all became silent and dark, his body falling into unconsciousness once more, soundless words echoing within his mind.
I am the Dreamer

My Dream is the Song

The Song is the Memory

The Memory is what I bring
Chapter 20 – Words of the Sleeper

Varandill Aanor

Within the depths of the ancient city of Varandill Aanor, the Professor continued his endeavours to fulfil the millennial plot of the cult.

"Well, well. This is rather interesting!"

He was eagerly reading a report from one of his many subordinates, the information within very valuable and possibly critical to the advancement of the goals of the Consortium. He analysed the information within compiling it with that of other reports, wondering what to make of these discoveries.

"So... Xibalba, huh?" he wondered within his old mind. "Out of all places why would it be there? Still, no wonder why we couldn't find it."

As he kept pondering on the whereabouts of something, the ground suddenly began to shake, almost as if it was an earthquake.

"What?" he spoke up alarmed.

As it stopped, there was strong rumble, seemingly coming from the depths of the city. And then, there was absolute and eerie silence. Yet despite the silence, he could feel a strong and familiar presence all around him.

"It can't be..." he whispered. "Already?"

In an instant, he apparated from the Sanctum into the Hall of Cultivation, right outside a small chamber. As he entered it, he eyes immediately fell on a large receptacle, filled with Eitr and a glowing crystal within it. He approached it, kneeling before it.

"My Lady, this presence... it's..."

Whispers began to emanate from within the Eitr, the Professor knowing their meaning, but only within his mind. The whispers confirmed his thoughts, and a smile crept on his face.

"What should be our next step?" he asked.

More whispers crept onto his mind, the voiceless words of the Eternal Queen telling him how the Consortium should proceed now.

"Very well, my Lady," replied the Professor. "And what about Voldemort?"

He listened once more, being given more instructions by the Black Mistress.

"I can attempt to further his restoration, but I will need to develop the Eitr even more," said the Professor. "The consequences of such a mutation are unknown to me."

The whispers were that of pondering, the thoughts of the Eternal Queen being projected from her
broken Nucleus.

"Then I shall let the process continue naturally," declared the Professor. "I assume he will be restored in a few months, assuming what he did to his own Nucleus doesn't hamper the process. If that doesn't work, then I must take more drastic measures."

What followed was a strange silence, the being within the Eitr seemingly in thought.

"And what of the boy?" asked the Professor.

His answer was quick and simple, the man nodding in response.

"Very well," he replied. "It shall be done."

This time, the Queen remained silent, her Nucleus returning to a deep slumber. The Professor got up, quickly leaving the room and heading to his chamber in the hall of cultivation. As he did so, he heard footsteps, someone approaching him.

"Sir, I have returned from the Magnaura," said the male voice.

"And?"

"The creatures managed to kill several of the guards, before being destroyed by the defenders," said the man. "Davide killed himself after being defeated in a duel against the Prince and a British man."

"As it should have been," replied the Professor, knowing very well what the actions of the deceased agent would be. "Anything else?"

"Yes, sir. When killed, the creatures seem to release the Nucleus," said the man. "The Prince made this discovery himself, but when he touched the Nucleus something happened."

Well, now that was very interesting information.

"And what exactly happened?"

"The Prince became paralyzed after touching the Nucleus, and then he began to scream," revealed the agent. "He became unconscious after a few seconds and has been sent to a secure location by his grandmother."

"Did you feel anything strange after that?" asked the Professor. "A presence of sorts?"

"Yes, sir. There was a heavy pressure in the room after the Prince fell unconscious, but I think the others did not notice it."

Of course, they would not feel it. The Professor knew very well that those who were not in touch with the Ancient World as they were, would not feel what those in the Consortium did. He was sure that if the Prince had been awakened and fully conscious of himself, he would have felt it as well. But in this, he wondered how he would have reacted to it. But with this, their plans would have to change.

"I want you to travel to Hogsmeade, and seek Petra there," ordered the Professor. "Tell her that her mission had been aborted, and that she is to return here. I have other uses for her now."

The man nodded. "Very well, sir."
The man apparated away, and the Professor returned to his previous task. It had been unfortunate that his creations had caused several casualties, but now he was aware of their aggressive nature even more.

It was time to return to experimentation.

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**City of Inverness, Inverness, Scotland (U.K.)**

Of all places, which were possibly safe for Harry, Maria had decided that the Inverness Castle would be the best. The residences in the Empire, and Portugal, were too obvious, not to mention that the cult was more active in Imperial territory. And now she sat near to Harry, who was sleeping inside the main bedroom of the castle.

When she saw him reaching out to touch the Nucleus, she immediately knew that something terrible would happen, the feeling itself generated from her gut. His screams had made her panic in a manner she had not since the disappearance of her daughter. To their luck, he quickly became unconscious, and the Nucleus was taken into custody, alongside the others which had been recovered.

She heard the door being opened, and glanced to see who had entered. It was Dumbledore and Moody, the two having just arrived at the old castle.

"How is he?" asked Dumbledore.

"He hasn't woken up," replied the monarch. "Nothing has changed since we left Constantinople."

Dumbledore summoned two chairs, one for himself and another for Moody. As they sat down, Moddy turned to Maria.

"Madam, what exactly was that thing he touched?"

Maria sighed. "What do you know of the soul?"

"It is what we are, correct?" said Dumbledore. "Our very being, in a non-physical form."

"Your description is correct, but that is not the soul," said Maria, surprising both Dumbledore and Moody. "In an accurate description, the soul is part of a greater whole, that which we call the Nucleus. It serves as the Nucleus's power source, if we can call it that. If removed or heavily damaged, the Nucleus dies, and a good example of what happens to the person is the aftermath of the Dementor's Kiss."

"How come I never heard of it?" asked Dumbledore.

Maria chucked. "It is a heavily obscure topic outside the Empire, and even there it is mostly known to high learned individuals. Even we only know about the Nucleus because such knowledge was recovered from archives of Al-Antidian cities. We have institutes specialized in the investigation of the Nucleus and its nature, all scattered across the Empire, seeking to improve the knowledge we already possess, and many of our research into the Nucleus comes from volunteers."

"Excuse me, but… volunteers?" said Dumbledore.

"There are people who, for reasons known only to them, decide to donate their Nuclei to further
the investigation efforts," she said. "They know the consequences of such act, and are fully willing to do so."

Dumbledore and Moody were quite unnerved by the very thought of someone donating the very essence of their being to further science. It was one thing to donate an organ after death, but they were talking about the very being of a person, not just something someone wouldn't need after dying.

"So that thing he touched was a Nucleus," said Moody.

"Yes, but not a normal one," said Maria. "A normal Nucleus has a blue glow, but that one was red, meaning it was altered. That means our enemies have access to not just Nuclei, but the means to alter them as well. Hopefully, we will soon have more light on these corrupted Nuclei."

As she finished speaking, she heard something akin to a groan, and all immediately turned towards Harry, wondering if he would wake up. Yet he remained asleep, but at the same time he began to speak, almost as if whispering.

"What I bring… is a Sea…"

They looked at each other, wondering what was going on. And for some reason, Maria found the sentence somewhat familiar.

"It is your Shelter… I give you the Waters… They hold the Secret… It is my Soul."

Maria could not put where she heard those words, but they were certainly familiar for some reason. It was rather unsettling. What exactly was Harry experiencing on his sleep for this to suddenly happen?

Unknown

He could not remember what happened, but all Harry knew that he was no longer in the Magnaura. He was staring into a deep void, filled with countless white dots, perhaps starts, if that was even possible, and unable to control his body. Whoever was doing so turned around, allowing him to see a large chamber illuminated by engravings which emanated a blue light. He began to walk forward, leaving the chamber and passing by oddly dressed figures... possibly guards.

He entered a corridor, and silently walked towards some sort of lift, which took him to an upper section of wherever he was. He did not understand what was happening, and he simply felt a strange acceptance of this situation, seemingly unnatural. As the lift stopped, he entered a small antechamber, where an oddly dressed man was. He approached him, bowing before him before speaking.

"Your Holiness, I have news about the rebellion," said the man.

Harry felt his arms move, and his lips as well, but he could not hear the words he spoke. However, the other man could.

"Of course," he said, bowing once more. "It shall be done, my Divine Sovereign."

He walked past the man, and entered a somewhat circular and well illuminated room. It looked like an observatory, judging by the amount of windows to the exterior. He walked past a throne of
sorts, and moved to one of the windows. He realized that he was in a tower of sorts, and below him was a massive metropolis. He felt as if this place should be familiar to him, but he could not understand why.

But then he felt his lips moving once more, and this time, he managed to hear a voice. But what shocked him the most was the fact that the voice was none other than his.

"I think you've seen enough. It's time to wake up."

And as the scene around him dissolved, his eyes opened to a completely different scenario.
Chapter 21 – The Lord of the World

In a blink of his eyes, Harry saw he was now in a completely different scenario. He was no longer inside some sort of structure, but in a strange barren wasteland. He was lying on the ground, as if he had fallen asleep there. Getting up, Harry looked around, trying to examine his surroundings. The first thing he noticed was the fact that he was now in control of his body, an improvement from his previous situation.

"What was that?" he wondered aloud.

There was a strange numbness in his body and mind. He felt detached from everything, and this place… there was something irrevocably eerie about it. Where was he?

He was in the depths of some sort of canyon, and Harry could see several mesas in the distance. To his west were vast barren plains, and they seemed to end at some sort of cliff. Having no clear destination, he decided to head towards the plains, finding them more pleasant than the canyons and mesas to the east. It took a while to finally reach the area, and as he looked behind, Harry saw that the canyon had disappeared, and he was simply starring into more plains.

"I must be dreaming," he thought.

This was certainly not normal. Not normal at all.

"A dream? I assure you this is not a dream."

Harry quickly turned around at the voice, and nearly jumped backwards when he saw that the cliff was now closer than before. More than that, there was also a man near the edge of the cliff, dressed in a rather strange fashion, a strange blue robe with golden sections, the latter filled with odd floral patterns, these made of countless and tiny jewels, their colour changing every few seconds.

The man looked to be old, his pale skin marked by many wrinkles, and his face was adorned by a rather well-kept beard, which contrasted in a strange manner with the man's untidy grey hair. In all, Harry could not feel as if the man was familiar to him.

"Who are you?" asked Harry.

"I have many names, young one," he said. "I'll give you the opportunity to add another to the list."

Harry was getting confused by this.

"You want me… to decide what I will call you?"

"Indeed. Tell me, what do I remind you of?"

The young wizard began to wonder what this man wanted, but he answered nonetheless.
"A mandarin," he said.

Truly, in style, the man did resemble one of the old Chinese bureaucrats.

"Mandarin…" muttered the man, as if tasting the name. "It pleases me. Very well, then. Henceforth, I shall be known as the Mandarin."

This man was very strange, especially the way he acted. Not as much as this place where he was, though.

"Now, I presume you are wondering what is this place, no?"

Despite not trusting the man, Harry nodded.

"Truth be told, this is not much of a place… more of a concept made physical," said the Mandarin. "This, Mr. Potter, is where time goes to die."

"That makes no sense," said Harry.

"To the undeveloped mind, perhaps," affirmed the Mandarin. "But it is what this place is… at least in a poetic sense."

The more this man spoke, the less sense he made. "I'm sorry, but what?"

"This… place, consider it to be the corpse, or ghost, of all that has happened," spoke the other. "All past events, even those beyond the reach of your era… you are surrounded by, and stand amongst them. Even events connected to you, no matter how close they are to your present self… they are already here."

Harry could discern a bit of sense there… but not enough to fully understand the proper concept of the place where he stood.

"Then who made this place?" he asked.

"No one did," answered the Mandarin. "The Graveyard is a by-product of the creation of time… such as the temporal constant that is the present… and the future itself."

Harry simply nodded. "Sure… But, why am I here?"

The Mandarin chuckled, and suddenly disappeared.

"What makes you think you are here?"

Harry turned around, seeking out the Mandarin's voice, finding him a few meters away from himself.

"You stand at the brink of non-existence, Mr. Potter. The absolute nothingness beyond creation," said the Mandarin. "No mortal would be able to stand where we are, and continue to cling to their insignificant existence. Except… you are not exactly a normal mortal, are you, Harry Potter?"

That question was more of a statement, Harry believing that this entity in front of him already knew the answer to its own question.

"I'm a wizard. What about it?"

The Mandarin smiled, although there was a hint of mock in the smile. "A wizard and the common
folk have little difference. One has the ability to cast spells and see a few things, while the other does not. Beyond that, they're the same creature, in body and essence. And all share the same fate. Do you know what it is?"

"Death," answered Harry, a few seconds after.

"The undiscovered country from whose bourn no traveller returns," said the Mandarin. "Alas, if it was that simple, we would not be speaking. A tricky affair, death. The unstoppable force, to which there is no unmoving stone. Of course, there are those delusional enough to call themselves 'masters' over it… a manifestation of the arrogance of mortality. I speak, of course, of the legend surrounding the Peverell family, of which you descend. I assume you know of what I speak."

"I've heard of it, yes," confirmed Harry. "The Deathly Hallows, right?"

The Mandarin extended his hand, a strange mist appearing in front of it.

"The Elder Wand," he said as the mist took form, and a rather familiar looking wand appeared. "The Resurrection Stone."

At those words, the wand returned to mist and took the form of a small and rather strangely shaped stone.

"And the last one, the Cloak of Invisibility."

The stone then took the shape of a cloak. A very familiar cloak.

"That's my cloak!" remarked Harry.

"Indeed, it is!" said the Mandarin, as the cloak disappeared. "It was passed down from Ignotus Peverell to his son, then his granddaughter, and finally, the Potters. All three, your ancestors. Nevertheless, three are the artefacts. A wand which brings death, a stone which summons the dead, and a cloak to hide from both. Curious that you ended up with the most important of the three. But I digress. This talk of the talismans has gotten in the way of our main topic."

"Me not being a common mortal?"

"All that is mortal by origin will die, Mr. Potter," said the entity. "It is a fundamental law of nature, and those who seek to change it will always meet a most terrible end. There are those who leave part of themselves behind… echoes of who they once were. You know them as ghosts, their real consciousness having passed onto eternal rest. And you also have the rare individual whose very essence moves on, only to be brought back into the mortal fold, born anew."

"Reincarnation?" he asked, wanting a confirmation.

The Mandarin nodded. "You are a child, Harry Potter. One whose mind had not matured to the fabric of reality itself," he declared. "In the countless millennia of my existence, I had the unfortunate experience of witnessing the birth of the greatest conflict this universe saw since the days when the Mount of Megiddo was reduced to ashes in a thousand flames for the first time."

"What conflict?" asked Harry curious.

"It had its beginnings within a rebellion against a great authority, a mirror of the first conflict," revealed the Mandarin. "History knows this one as the Third War of Righteousness, fourth in the First Era of your world and timeline. The forces of the rebel Cloteias against the supreme master of the world, Anipheon, the Divine Sovereign of the Al-Antidian Empire."
"I never heard of it," said Harry.

There was a strange expression on the Mandarin's face, almost as if both a great sadness attempted to overcome him, and he wanted to burst in laughter. Yet he remained as before, his demeanour not changing, which unnerved Harry a bit, considering what he had seen. Suddenly, the Mandarin disappeared much like before, and as Harry looked around to search for him, he turned towards the cliff, realizing that the cliff was no longer there.

This sudden change of scenario stunned the young wizard, standing now in a balcony overlooking a vast and apparently ancient city. A vast structure towered over him, its great shadow covering part of the city. And there was something very familiar about this place, something which he couldn't exactly discern.

"Beyond its ruins in the mortal world, this is all that remains of the ancient city of Iridal, together with its most important district, Bronzalae Cava. At its height, it was the capital of Al-Antidia, seat of the Eighth Dynasty," said the Mandarin, who was now next to Harry. "In the final day of the civil war, part of the city below was crushed by the collapsing spire, millions of lives claimed in a single instant. When the dust settled down, Cloteias stood victorious amongst the rubble, and six days later, the corpse of Anipheon was found by loyalists, and taken in secrecy to the necropolis below the city, where he was entombed."

"What happened then?" asked Harry.

"As a descendant of the first Divine Sovereign, Cloteias took the throne of Anipheon, and became the third of that name to hold it," revealed the Mandarin. "His dynasty was short, and gave only four more sovereigns, the last three the grandchildren of Cloteias. The Cloteans were deposed in another war, and the second and only surviving son of Anipheon IX took back the throne of his father, and became Anipheon X. Of course, one has to take into account Anipheon IX's true nature when discussing this."

"True nature?"

"Anipheon was the son of a Perennial, the first one in fact. As such, his power was unmatched by any other living being at his time," continued the Mandarin. "Of course, this led to many questions about his defeat at the hands of Cloteias. Nevertheless, upon his death, Anipheon did not pass onto the realm of the dead. Instead, as a human-perennial hybrid, his mortal part was consumed by his divine essence, effectively turning him into a full Perennial. Apotheosis, shall we say."

"So?" inquired Harry.

"Tell me, Mr. Potter. If you had plans in life, and found that you could continue to work towards their fulfilment even in death… would you do it?"

That was a strange question, but Harry could understand what the Mandarin was implying. "Anipheon continued to act after he ascended."

"But, he realized that his newly found status as a full Perennial prevented him from acting in the ways he so desired. He found… limitations. And, of course, there was also the fact that one of his old enemies had remained behind," said the entity. "An enemy, which concerns you too."

"Why would Anipheon's enemy concern me?" asked Harry.

"Because the one you call Lord Voldemort, is nothing more than a servant of this enemy."

Oh dear… those were not good news.
"What?" exclaimed Harry.

"In his youth, Tom Riddle was ensnared by the powerful charm of the one known as Ahkatheria," said the Mandarin. "Even in her current state, her power is not to be underestimated, especially considering who she once was."

"Who's Ahkatheria?" asked Harry, a bit confused. Was she the enemy the Mandarin spoke about?

"She is known by many titles. The Eternal Queen of the Seven Cities, being the most famous of them," replied the other. "She was once the wife of Anipheon IX. Yet even her power paled in comparison to Anipheon's, and not even she was beyond the wrath of the Divine Sovereign. Today, she is the leader of the Consortium, and organisation which seeks to restore her to full power."

Someone even more powerful than Voldemort… that really wasn't good at all. But a question still remained.

"But what does that have to do with me?"

"You are the key to their objectives, Mr. Potter," said the man. "The attack on the Magnaura and your subsequent slumber were critical points to the awakening of your true nature."

Harry did not like the sound of that.

"What's that supposed to mean?" he demanded.

"Before you entered the Graveyard, you saw events that occurred long ago," said the Mandarin. "It was not a dream, but a memory."

"Of who?"

Harry instincts were telling him that the answer would be very unpleasant.

"Remember when I told you that a normal mortal would be unable to enter this place without being consumed by non-existence?"

He received a nod in reply.

"You are not a normal mortal, Mr. Potter," said the Mandarin. "In fact, the only thing mortal about you is your body."

This was not the answer he was expecting, and the next words from the Mandarin were enough to leave him semi-catatonic for several moments.

"By his desire, you, Harry Potter, are the reincarnation of Anipheon himself."

Chapter End Notes

The Mandarin – A mysterious entity which manifested itself in the Graveyard before Harry. Knows much about him and the Ancient World.

Iridal (city) – Founded by the priest-king Iridal, grandson of the Divine Sovereign Taioron II, it became the capital of the Al-Antidian Empire during the Eighth
Dynasty, which was founded by Bronzas IV (originally King Victeus IV of Iridal). After the ascension of Bronzas to the Alluvial Throne, the central district was expanded and became known as Bronzalae Cava (translated as Bronzas's Spire). Part of it was destroyed when the central tower itself collapsed during the duel between Anipheon and Cloteias, causing millions of casualties. In the following generations, the city was abandoned and fell into obscurity. Records indicate it was located somewhere in the western regions of the Iberian Peninsula.

Anipheon IX – The last member of the Eighth Dynasty to rule as Divine Sovereign of Al-Antidia, Anipheon was the son of Oiraps VIII and the first-born Perennial, Phanes. Years after his death at the hands of Cloteias, his youngest son would re-emerge and take back the throne, founding the Tenth Dynasty of Al-Antidia. For reasons known only to Anipheon, he was reincarnated as Harry Potter.
Chapter 22 - Anipheon

Iridal, Al-Antidia

The sun shone brightly upon the ancient city of Iridal, founded and named by Iridal, grandson of the Divine Sovereign Taironon II, and appointed as Appraiser of the Wayward Whims, one of the twelve Exalted. It stood a few towns away from the vast ocean which separated the Imperial Mainland from the great western continent, the two landmasses connected by the Bridge of Prozac, and was surrounded by plains and forests, together with roads constructed millennia ago, connecting this bastion to many others.

At the centre of the city, stood a massive spire, surrounded below by many towers of stone and glimmering crystal which captured the light of stars during both day and night. The paved streets showed representations of religious scenes, and others showed important figures from the city, both dead and alive, and as the citizens walked by, they were shadowed by tall statues of ancestors who gazed down upon them, eternally judging the living. The base of the city was either littered with scheming noblemen, gossiping ladies, or the occasional individual on their route to the Undercity. Even at the surface, alley-bridges allowed one to look down into the chasm-neighbourhoods which led into the upper section of the Undercity, streams of water flowing downwards into the depths of the Al-Antidian capital.

At its upper heights, the Undercity held the homes of both nobles and wealthy individuals, or at least those who could not afford the large estates in the surface. Of course, there were not simply residences in the upper sections of the Undercity, but too the high-class services which catered to the noble and wealthy. Below, in the middle sections of the Undercity, one would find the residences of the middle class, together with their own services, albeit without the excesses and decadence of their upper city counterparts. As the laws which forbade the existence of slums and other low-class manifestations within such a sacred city, the second lowest of the districts were for common commerce and education.

Such an extensive underground required light for its inhabitants, and it was the underground section of the Temple of the Ancestors, the main tower of the surface, which provided the inhabitants with such a resource. Much like the great temple itself, the stone roots below were carved and grown with ancestral magic, mysterious crystalline formations providing the Undercity with much like. During the day they glowed brightly with a golden colour, yet as the night fell, they danced in a maelstrom of many colours, dimming away into a darkish blue that settled upon the city during the high hours of the night.

These three sections of the undercity surrounded a colossal and natural-looking well, their borders protected with stone, fences, and balconies. It was above this well that stood the Iridalian roots of light, and at its bottom, was the second holiest section of the city, right after the temple district of Bronzalae Cava.

The City of the Dead.
Small hills and plains were littered with countless funerary monuments, many paved streets surrounded by family mausoleums, forming small villages. Between these, it was common to find the usual burial vault, sarcophagi, and even ash pits. This land was too littered shrines dedicated to either deities, or ancestors. In the rare occasion, there was no difference between these two. But the greatest of tombs were in the cavern walls that surrounded the necropolis, magnificent structures and palaces carved out to entomb the most influential and richest of Iridal's inhabitants, amongst these the House of Iridal and its successor, the House of Iridal-Nedeus, which became the eighth dynasty to rule over the Al-Antidian Empire.

All this was knowledge common to the average citizen of Iridal, passed down from parent to child, from teacher to student, and the child that observed the city from the one of the high balconies of the Temple of the Ancestors was no different from the many inhabitants, except in a few special aspects.

Grey eyes eagerly observed what their owner would rule over one day, but he knew it would be many centuries before that would come to happen. The lifespan of an Al-Antidian was quite extensive, after all. In other days, he would never dream of coming to the balcony, the wind sometimes being rather violent in such altitudes, but today the weather seemed to be on his side. There was a stairway leading to a higher section of the tower, but that area was currently under maintenance. At this height, he was unable to see the people down in the city, mostly due to the clouds, and if he looked up he would be unable to see the sun, the celestial body being only visible on the other side of the tower.

"Anipheon!"

The boy, or more appropriately, teenager, turned around to look at the one who had called him. He knew that voice quite well, although he despised its owner. His father's wife, Ellivia, and his stepmother. She had married his father back during the reign of his grandfather, and despite her at tempts to have him declared as a bastard, and barred from succession, she had been blocked in all possible aspects. The late Protion VII was a quite religious man, and knowing that his first grandson was the child of the first-born of Aion was not exactly something one would spurn.

Anipheon knew nothing of it, considering he had been a mere infant, but he learned that upon his birth, his divine progenitor disappeared, nothing that prevented his name from being hailed by the priests and many celebrations occurring across the empire. Even upon the death of Protion, his father too, desired for Anipheon to succeed him as Divine Sovereign, much to Ellivia's frustration, and that of her and Protion's children. Of course, they too feared Anipheon, for causing harm to a human-perennial hybrid usually carried the consequence of bringing the wrath of their divine parent upon the perpetrator and accomplices.

"You missed the Rites of Lethargy," said Ellivia condescendingly. "I believe it is unbecoming for the heir to miss such events."

Anipheon's eyebrow was raised in curiosity.

"The last time I checked, I was not a follower of Anahit," stated Anipheon. "I do not partake in them, unlike you."

He saw the irritation in his stepmother's face. He had the body of young child, who seemed to have recently reached his teenage years, but having been alive for nearly three decades made quite the dissonance between mind and appearance.

"Your father participates in them," she declared. "He expects you to do so as well."
The heir to the Alluvial Thrones smiled.

"He does it to please you, nothing more," he said. "But now that we're speaking about it, it is also unbecoming for the Divine Consort to partake in the heresies of Hadahd… fatally so."

Those words petrified the woman. How in heaven did he know of that?

"So… unless you want your heresy exposed, I suggest you go away," said Anipheon.

Ellivia gulped, and in an attempt at expressing dignity, she left and entered the temple once more. Anipheon couldn't really tell what his father saw in that woman, but she really needed to disappear… permanently. Even his own tolerance of annoyances had limits, and that woman was writing her death sentence. It was as if she didn't know who the next Divine Sovereign would be.

"I bet she still hopes for the title to go to one of her children," thought Anipheon.

He decided to leave the balcony as well, entering the temple and heading to one of the lifts. Descending for several hectometres until he was beneath the surface, right above the roots of light. Entering a narrow corridor, he passed by one of the twelve Gardens of the Glittering Void, before entering what he knew to be an area of the temple under the control of the Paramount. There were very few people there, the majority attending the services in the upper sections of the tower, or perhaps not yet working. He was sure there had to be more guards in this part of the tower than members of the Paramount. He walked inside the Chamber of Observance, and his eyes fell on the bright column of energy at the centre. There was no one inside, him being the only one looking at the most important invention created in all Al-Antidia.

The Temporal Mainframe was no mere object, or computer, as popular belief held, instead being an artificial universe and database, containing all knowledge amassed over the millennia. Every Temple of the Ancestors had a Chamber of Observance, with a gateway into the Temporal Mainframe within, and each was maintained by a respective branch of the Paramount. The light mesmerized him, and it was something not everyone was allowed to see. His status granted him may privileges, and access to areas such as this was one of them.

As he got close to the energy, Anipheon began to see a strange shape appearing within the energy pillar. Taking a step back, he watched as a figure emerged from within the Mainframe, recognizing who it was.

"Exalted Nederel," said Anipheon, greeting the man.

Nederel was possibly the oldest of the Exalted. The man already had been a member during the reign of his grandfather, which made him one of the oldest humans alive in the empire. He was the Diviner of the Ideal Works, in other words, the High Priest of Ayavan. Mystery, Incomprehensibility, and Omniscience of God, Ayavan was highly worshiped amongst scholars and scientists, and was the first of the Sacred Twelve that students prayed to before their examinations.

The aged priest was different from most humans, his very physical form having been altered by his own experimentations. Nederel was not after immortality, but he desired to seek ways to expand his life, at least until he complete his research and work. He was tall, and his figure seemed to be almost skeletal, with bony and long fingers emerging from ornate and ancient robes. His hair had long since fallen, vanity not being a trait of Nederel.

"Child, why stand you here in these deep halls?" asked the Diviner of the Ideal Works.
"I apologise, Exalted One," replied the prince. "I was curious about the Mainframe."

The distorted face of Nederel looked down at the young child of Oiraps.

"I seek not your apology," he said. "Show only understanding and supreme will in my presence, Revered One. Such are His words and desires."

"As above, so below," declared Anipheon, his words a mere reply to the spoken thoughts of the priest of Ayavan.

The hint of a smile appeared on Nederel's face, and the old priest moved towards a nearby altar nearby, several cubes on top of it. His hand reached out to them, and one of the cubes floated towards it. Nederel grabbed the floating object, and it began to glow as the priest activated it.

"Be this what you see?" asked Nederel. "Keeper of intelligence anterior, deposit for events impending?"

Anipheon took hold of the cube, looking at it.

"The data cubes are a bit unimpressive," he commented. "The gateway is more spectacular."

The old priest chuckled.

"Such are the thoughts of youth," said Nederel.

Anipheon had been in the presence of data cubes before, and knew very well what they were. While the gateway allowed someone to enter the Temporal Mainframe, the data cubes allowed one to glimpse at the Mainframe. Not quite as exciting, but it was rather useful nonetheless. Much like Nederel had done, Anipheon activated the instrument, his mind simultaneously in his body and inside the Temporal Mainframe.

To the inexperienced, it was an unpleasant experience, and why most preferred to enter the mainframe directly. But in many situations, only the data cubes were available. Anipheon had used the cubes several times, but only in the presence of members of the Paramount. Just like the Temporal Mainframe, they were also in charge of maintaining the cubes and improving them. To Anipheon, it held the sensation of dreaming and being awake at the same time. It was odd and made him feel slightly numb, but in all it was not truly unpleasant.

He observed the events of the Second War of Ascendency and the triumph of Amilanius over the other kingdoms of the world, uniting all of them into his new empire. The Fall of Alartas in the Second War of Righteousness soon followed the first vision, leading to the ascension of the Sixth Dynasty. But he quickly stopped, deactivating the data cube. Only a few seconds had passed, and he gave back the object to the high priest of Ayavan.

"The past is still, but what of the future?" mused the young teenager. "Is it also still or perhaps uncertain?"

"The future is what He wishes it to be," replied Nederel.

Those words were strange to Anipheon. If He was the one who decided the fate of all things, then what about the thoughts and works of mortals. They also influenced the line of fate, right?

"And what we make of it as well, no?"
Imperial Mainland – The modern translation given to the "name" of what is today known as Afro-Eurasia. The ancient Greek wizards were the first to translate it, giving it the name of "Oikouménē".

Bridge of Prozac – An ancient and massive bridge which connected the Iberian Peninsula to the American continent. Divine Sovereign Prozac I ordered its construction, commonly believed to have been due to a bet he made with a courtier (and which Prozac apparently won).

Prozac I – Son of Kalthaia II and her successor as Divine Sovereign of Al-Antidia. A member of the Second Dynasty, Prozac was a religious zealot, much like his close relatives. He was succeeded by his son, Anipheon IV.

Iridal – Grandson of Divine Sovereign Taioron II, he was appointed by his cousin, Nergal X, to the Exalted, becoming the High Priest of Teutates. His descendants would rule over the city of Iridal, and millennia later they would ascend to the office of Divine Sovereign.

The Exalted – Officially known as the "Exalted Kings of the Twelve Worldly Towers", the Exalted are the highest of the priestly castes, and the second highest caste amongst those of the Al-Antidian Empire, directly below the Divine Sovereign. Each member is appointed by the Divine Sovereign, and they effectively make up the government of the empire.

Appraiser of the Wayward Whims – The official title and style of the High Priest of Teutates, and one of the twelve members of the Exalted. The title was created by the very first High Priest of Teutates, a process shared by the other members of the Exalted. Was in charge of social welfare and labour.

Diviner of the Ideal Works - The official title and style of the High Priest of Ayavan, and one of the Exalted. Was in charge of education, sciences, and technology.

Teutates – One of the Sacred Twelve and venerated as the embodiment of God's goodness. His High Priest was the Appraiser of the Wayward Whims.

Anahit – One of the Sacred Twelve, and venerated as the embodiment of God's impassibility. Her High Priest was the Minister of the Lethargic Words.

Ayavan - One of the Sacred Twelve and venerated as the embodiment of God's mystery, omniscience and incomprehensibility. His High Priest was the Diviner of the Ideal Works.

Oiraps VIII - Divine Sovereign of Al-Antidia and the father of Anipheon. Before his marriage, he consorted with the first-born, and Anipheon would be the outcome of that union.
Chapter 23 – Ascension

Temple of the Ancestors, Iridal, Al-Antidia

The skies above Iridal were blue and cloudless, almost as if the weather itself knew the importance of this day. Despite the ill-fated occurrence which led to the event which marked this day, celebrations were occurring across the empire, people rejoicing due to the ascension of a new Divine Sovereign. And as Iridal was the heart of Al-Antidia, its great temple was filled with nobles, clerics, and other high-class individuals from across the empire, all there to pay homage to their new sovereign.

At the temple's base, where massive statues of the Divine Sovereigns of old stood, many of those who would witness the ceremony gathered, the Temple of the Ancestors being sealed for the moment. But high above, in one of the balconies which overlooked the city, was Anipheon. It had been a century or so since he had stood on that very spot, thinking about his future and other affairs before he was interrupted by Ellivia. He knew very well that he was the only Divine Sovereign to ascend to the Alluvial Throne at such a young age, but it did little to impress him. Legally, he was still a teenager, but that would not stop him from assuming control over the Empire.

He would not rely on a regent, as that was certainly what the courtiers and certain nobles wanted. They had become too much free during his father's reign, and now he had to tighten the leash once more. They had to be reminded of the power a Divine Sovereign had access to, and he was not going to tolerate possessing a diminished authority over the empire. It simply wasn't right.

Whilst keeping himself entertained with his own thoughts, Anipheon was eventually distracted by someone approaching him. He turned around, and saw that it was one of the Exalted, more specifically, the Luminary of the Celestial Dome, high priest of Aernus.

"Your Eminence, the Chamber of Ceremonies has been prepared," said the priest.

"Then we shall begin immediately," declared Anipheon. "Unseal the temple."

The Exalted Priest nodded. "Very well, my Lord."

As the man left the balcony, Anipheon followed him until reaching one of the lifts. Instead of going down like the other, the device took Anipheon to an elevated section of the tower. He did not head towards the throne room, instead stopping at a level exactly below it. Leaving the lift, he entered an empty and semi-circular antechamber, a large door concealing what existed in the room beyond. Taking a deep breath, Anipheon walked forward and opened the door, revealing a suspended pathway leading to the centre of the room, where stood a small circular dais.

But that was not the main feature of the room. It was almost as if it was suspended in the middle of the most magnificent section of the cosmos, colourful nebulae and extraordinary galaxies surrounding him. It was breath-taking, and it was the first time he had entered the chamber. Only the Divine Sovereign was authorized to do so, and it was considered sacrilege for any other to do
so. However, there was an exception, and that was during the coronation of the new Divine Sovereign.

What happened within this chamber was secret, not even the Exalted or the family of the Sovereign knew of what trespassed within its cosmic walls. And as Anipheon walked towards the dais, the door closed behind him.

When the door opened again and Anipheon left the chamber, he was greeted with all the Exalted, the most prominent figure being that of Nederel, still amongst the living and effectively the "first amongst equals" within the twelve.

He took a step forward, bowing before Anipheon.

"Most Divine Master, we are exalted by your presence," said Nederel. "The Mother of Sovereignty awaits you."

Anipheon nodded. "Let us not keep her waiting then."

The priests stepped aside, allowing Anipheon to enter the lift once more, before being followed by the Exalted. The device descended into the lower levels of the temple, and when it stopped, he entered a large chamber, filled with columns and guards. Near the centre was an old woman, finely dressed and with much pomp.

"Anipheon, child," said the woman happily. "To think I would live to see you ascend to Divine Sovereign."

"Hello grandmother," greeted Anipheon. "Is everything ready?"

The woman nodded, "Of course. Shall we?"

At Anipheon's nod, she extended her arm, Anipheon taking hold of it. Viniathilda was without a doubt the most powerful woman in Al-Antidia. Her position as Divine Consort of Protion VII had allowed her to manipulate the court of her husband, and even after his death, her influence was enough to take control of her son's court as well. She knew that Ellivia had coveted the role of Mother of Sovereignty, but since it was Anipheon who had succeeded Oiraps, that had been denied to her.

"You will be pleased to hear to know that Ellivia has returned to her homeland," said Viniathilda. "She took your brothers with her."

"She could not bear the humiliation of a… how did she call me… a bastard, ascending to the throne instead of her children," replied Anipheon. "She took the easy path, but I have to keep an eye on them. They may try something."

In fact, Anipheon would not be surprised if Ellivia and his half-siblings had something to do with Oiraps's premature death. It was not normal for an Al-Antidian to suddenly die in his sleep, not even in his twenty-second century. His grandfather had died a few decades after reaching his fifth millennium, and there was the occasional individual who could nearly reach a seventh millennium, some of his ancestors amongst these. But if they did, then they covered their tracks quite well. In the end, whatever she planned failed, as the Exalted confirmed Oiraps's decision of who would become the new Divine Sovereign.
"Let's forget about them for now," suggested the Mother of Sovereignty. "Now… I believe you will be pleased about who came to congratulate you today."

Anipheon immediately knew who his grandmother was referring to.

"Cloteias! He's here?" he asked rather excited.

Viniathilda smiled. "Your friend is here, yes. I met him earlier this morning. He came all the way here from the Celestial Paths, just to witness your coronation."

She could basically feel the excitement emanating from Anipheon. Despite being soon coronated as the Divine Sovereign, he was still a child.

They quickly reached an antechamber, and as the Exalted entered it, the Mother turned towards Anipheon.

"Are you ready for this?" she asked.

Anipheon nodded. "I think so… yes, yes I am."

Viniathilda turned towards the doors of the antechamber, magically opening them. The two entered it, the doors behind them shutting down. The Mother turned towards the entrance of the Chamber of Ceremonies, where the coronation ceremony would happen. She grabbed a staff that was attached to the wall, and tapped the door with it three times. Seconds later, they opened, revealing an enormous room filled with many nobles, high clerics, and other important officials of Al-Antidia.

Anipheon's grandmother walked towards the throne on a dais at the centre of the room. The Alluvial Throne was usually in the Throne Room, at the top of the temple, but in special occasions it was moved to key areas of the tower, just like today. As she stood on the dais, right before the throne, the Mother of Sovereignty turned towards those present, before magically increasing the tone of her voice.

"I call upon me your attention, people of this world," she spoke. "I, who brought divinity upon this world, present upon your its new master. Son of the First-Born, and blood of Divine Oiraps, Sovereign of Al-Antidia and Master of all worlds beyond this one!"

She raised her hands towards the closed door.

"I call to you, Anipheon, Most Holy and Divine Sovereign of Al-Antidia, High Priest of Aion, Successor and Preserver of the Legacy of Amilanius, Heir of Shalmaner, and Emissary of the Celestial Path. May the divine grace bestowed upon you by the Lord be shown to the faithful, and your light be everlasting."

The priests began to chant, their voices resonating in harmony and creating an otherworldly melody. The doors were opened, Anipheon entering the room following by a collective kneeling of all those inside but the chanting priests. He walked slowly towards the throne, his ceremonial robes only missing the final part – the crown itself.

Viniathilda turned towards the throne, and took hold of the crown on the seat, before moving away to allow Anipheon access. The young Divine Sovereign got closer to the Alluvial Throne, and upon turning around, he sat for the first time in the seat of Amilanius. His grandmother walked to his front, before handing the crown to Anipheon. He took hold of it, before placing it on his own head.

It was then that Anipheon's grandmother turned once more towards those witnessing the event.
"Rejoice, people of the world!" she proclaimed. "For vacancy no longer occupies the Alluvial Throne."

The priests ceased their chant, and shouted as the people rose. "May you reign for many years!"

Those present all made a line before the Alluvial Throne, each ready to give their oaths of loyalty to the new Divine Sovereign. Unfortunately for Anipheon, there were far too many nobles and clerics.

Noble after noble, and cleric after cleric, Anipheon came to realize why his father had once said that his coronation had been tiring and utterly boring. He had been there just for the beginning, but left right before this part of the coronation began. However, his attention was soon brought up by one of the nobles who approached him.

It was a young woman, likely of his age, her hair black and straight, her skin having a slightly pale tone. He looked at her, and became mesmerized by her beauty.

"Your Holiness," she said whilst kneeling. "I have come to give you my oath."

"And you are?" he asked, very curious and eager to know.

"Ahkatheria," she answered. "I have recently become the Queen of Varandill Aanor."

So this girl… woman… was the one he heard about so much lately. He had known that something had caused the fall of the royal family of Varandill, and that the new ruler had been involved, but not much beyond that. There was certainly a veil of mystery around Ahkatheria.

"Your oath is accepted, Ahkatheria of Varandill Aanor," declared Anipheon. "You may go."

She smiled, and left towards the group which already had given their oaths. However, Anipheon had not been expecting the next person to approach him.

"Your Holiness," he recognized the voice immediately, and turning his attention from Ahkatheria, the Divine Sovereign saw his greatest and oldest friend on this world.

"Cloteias!"

"Happy to see me, my Lord?" asked the other teenager playfully. "It seems that your attention was on someone else though."

"Very funny," replied Anipheon in a low tone. "We'll have to speak later."

Cloteias smiled. "Very well. I am here to give you my oath of loyalty and that of my father. He is severely busy with the maintenance of the Celestial Paths and has not been able to come."

"I accept your oaths, and tell your father that there is no problem with his absence."

Cloteias nodded, before leaving and allowing Anipheon. But as the next noble advanced, he felt a small headache. Anipheon closed his eyes and rubbed his temples, but when he opened them everything had changed around him.

There was no magnificent room filled with people. There was no Alluvial Throne and no sound of voices. There was only a room in the darkness, the moonlight shining through an open window and
a boy drenched in sweat and heavily breathing, as if awakened from a horrible nightmare.

And it was then that Harry finally realized what he had seen… and what he was.

Chapter End Notes

Divine Sovereign - – A polished translation of "Handatar Belios", which would literally translate as "Sovereign Divine", coming from the old Idloatean language. The Divine Sovereign was the autocratic and theocratic ruler of the Al-Antidian Empire, the title being hereditary. While the Divine Sovereign was worshipped as a living god, the holder of this title was also the High Priest of Aion, standing above all other priests and deities, except Aion and all His sub-gradients. There was a total of nineteen dynasties to hold the title, and all descended from Amilanius, the first Divine Sovereign.

Aion – The main deity worshipped by both the Al-Antidians, and in more modern times, the Aeneans. A theologically complex entity, Aion is usually regarded in several gradients – in absolute oneness, in Trinity, his soul Al-Aernus, and the Sacred Twelve, of which Al-Aernus is the oversoul. He is usually identified as the Al-Antidian and Aenean variation of the Abrahamic God. The word "Aion" can mean either "eternity" or "God", and the latter cannot be used generically for any deity, as it simply refers to the creational deity. In the Al-Antidian Empire, the High Priest of Aion was the Divine Sovereign himself.

Amilanius – A member of the House of Laqtinuj, he was the founder and first Divine Sovereign of Al-Antidia. A bastard son of Nergal IV and of a Perennial, he inherited the Kingdom of Idloatai after the death of his half-brother Protion I, during the First War of Ascendency. After his death, he was succeeded by his son Nergal V.

Viniathilda – The mother of Oiraps VIII and widow of Protion VII, she was a noblewoman from the western region of the Imperial Mainland. After Protion's death, she was given the title of Mother of Sovereignty, which she retained during the reign of her grandson.

Progenitor of Sovereignty – Changed to Father, if male, and to Mother, if female, this was the title given to the widow of a Divine Sovereign whose child succeeded to the throne. Even if the holder of this title outlived their child, they would continue to hold this title, alongside the widowed parent of the new ruler of Al-Antidia. There were very view cases of a "Father of Sovereignty", as the majority of the Divine Sovereigns were male, but there were exceptional periods in which their female counterpart served as regent to the Sovereign, and sometimes they were the real power behind the throne.
For a sleepless Harry, the arrival of the morning had been slow, the hours he spent awake used to ponder on his new discoveries. If what the Mandarin had said was true, and those visions had also been real, then he was truly Anipheon reborn. The very thought was... less than pleasant, to Harry.

The Mandarin had said that Anipheon found limitations after ascending, and so sought to return to the mortal plane one again, reincarnating. The thought of reincarnation would be less disturbing to Harry if it had been caused by a greater force, but this... it had been Anipheon himself who decided to reincarnate, and he, Harry Potter, was the result.

"The means to an end..." he muttered.

Whatever was Anipehon's plan, he was unwillingly part of it, his own existence subject to the will of the god he was. If for one single moment he thought that all misery that had befallen him had been the desire of the forces of fate, then he was be wrong. It was all for the strange desires of his past self.

Having lived once on this world was also something which disturbed Harry greatly, as it meant the remains of his past body were entombed somewhere on the planet. In fact, there were too many things which disturbed Harry, some more than others.

Far too many.

It was then that he heard the door being opened, and he turned to stare at the newcomer.

"Henry, it is good to see you are finally awake," said his grandmother, closing the door behind her. "One of the portraits told me. I must say, that Elizabeth is a rather dreadful woman."

Harry snorted. "She's the epitome of blood-purism trapped within a painting. I would not expect less from her."

Maria noticed that Harry's expression had suddenly shifted, now being a bit sombre.

"Is something the matter?" she asked.

"Many things. What was that thing I touched?"

She sat on top of the bed. "It was a Nucleus. The physical form of a being's metaphysical essence. But the one you touched was corrupted, and we're still trying to figure out what those creatures were."

Harry nodded and sighed.

"When I touched that Nucleus, I saw... and felt... many things," said Harry. "I know what those things are, and I understand them too."

"What do you mean?" asked Maria concerned.
"Those… Corrupted, if I may call them that, were once humans whose Nucleus was corrupted by something," revealed Harry. "I saw the memories inside the one I touched, and I could experience the pain and anger behind it. That one was of a muggle… I mean, non-blessed, but whatever was once there, it's gone now."

Needless to say, Maria was horrified.

"My god! Are you certain?"

He nodded. "Yes. But I think it is best if you keep researching them. Now… I have a question for you, and I don't want any lies."

"What do you want to know?" asked his grandmother, a bit suspicious.

"What do you know about the Eternal Queen and Voldemort?"

Maria was taken aback in extreme surprise. How in heaven did he know about the Eternal Queen?

"How do you know about her?"

"When I was asleep, I saw… my mind was sent to a place called the Graveyard," he admitted, his grandmother's reaction suggesting she knew about that place. "You know about it?"

"Of course," she replied. "It is spoken of in Aenean canon."

"I met someone there. He called himself the Mandarin, and told me about the Eternal Queen, and how she was once the wife of a Divine Sovereign, and the leader of some cult called the Consortium."

"So that is the name of their cult" thought Maria, before speaking. "Did he tell you anything else?"

"A few things, mostly trivial," said Harry, not exactly wanting people to know he was the reincarnation of Anipheon. "I also saw a city called Iridal there."

"I know of it. Agents of the empire discovered its ruins to the east of Évora, in Portugal," she said. "I personally never visited the ruins, so I know little about it. How did it look like?"

"Massive, really. There was a huge tower at the centre, which apparently collapsed during a battle there," said the young wizard. "But then there were other things which I saw, but they are somewhat blurry. It's better not to say anything about them that may turn out to be false."

Maria sighed.

"The attack on the Magnaura was certainly made by the Eternal Queen's cult, the one which you called 'the Consortium'. We believe it was formed from the remains of the cult Herpo the Foul founded when he returned to life a few centuries ago by using terrible dark magic," revealed Maria. "Your ancestors fought against Herpo and his cult. They succeeded in destroying him, but at a cost."

"What was it?"

"The son of emperor Alexios VI. The young co-emperor John Anemas," she continued. "He somehow managed to kill Herpo, but died in the process. The details were all erased from record and memory by order of Alexios himself. With this, his father decided to appoint his brother Romanos as co-emperor, and the rest is history."
"And what did Herpo want?" asked Harry.

"Due to his tendency to gloat, we know that their plan was to resurrect the Eternal Queen. Luckily, they failed. But their remnants now wage war against us once more. The empire is now trying to find out the possible location of their headquarters, but without a proper clue, there is not much we can do. We had our opportunity during the attack on the Magnaura, but I'm sure you remember what happened to him."

The memory of that moment was very vivid in Harry's memory, especially what that man had called him. At that moment he did not know why he had been called "Divine Sovereign", but with the revelation of what and who he had been, it now made sense. And as he pondered on this, a very alarming thought dawned on his mind.

"Oh... they know!" thought Harry. "They bloody know!"

The Consortium knew that he was the reincarnation of Anipheon. Something in his gut told him that was really bad. And if they knew, then what exactly were they planning to do? Whatever it was, it certainly couldn't be good, especially considering that Voldemort was involved.

"And what about Voldemort?" asked Harry.

"We have little about him, but his actions before and during his campaign suggest he was possibly affiliated with the Eternal Queen."

"He serves her," confirmed Harry. "The Mandarin said he joined her when he was young."

That was troubling news for Maria. Voldemort had been the one to kill her daughter and son-in-law, so the chance of that having been an order of whatever remained of the Eternal Queen was very high. But from her suspicions regarding Harry's role in all this, it simply did not make sense that Voldemort had tried to kill him.

"How long has it been since the attack?" Harry asked, not yet aware.

"A week and a half," replied Maria. "I made sure your body was fed during these days, but I suggest you go and take a bath if you haven't done so."

"That was the first thing I did when I woke up," said Harry. "I think I'll return to Hogwarts."

"When do you want to return?"

He glanced at a nearby window, before making his decision.

"Today, if possible."

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**Hogwarts School, Inverness, Scotland (U.K.)**

The training grounds were mostly empty, most students in class, only a small number enjoying their free time. The few in the training grounds either talked amongst themselves, or watched as Madam Hooch taught the first years how to use a broom. It was the first thing Harry saw when he arrived at the location, several brooms high in the hair surrounding the imposing figure of Madam Hooch. But his attention was soon shifted to another area of the training grounds.
"Harry!"

The voice of Hermione confirmed that he had not been the only one to notice something, and Harry had to struggle not to fall as he was tackled by his friend in a hug.

"Hey, watch it Hermione," he protested as he was squeezed by her hug.

"Welcome back Potter," said an approaching Theodore.

"What happened to you Harry?" asked Ron. "No one really told us anything. Just that you were attacked."

Hermione had released Harry by then, the young wizard adjusting his uniform.

"I was attacked. And the entire Magnaura as well. The attackers were stopped, but I touched something I should have not. Let's say I did not react well to it," he said. "How have thing been since then?"

Ron shrugged. "Nothing new really. Wasn't there something that you wanted to tell Harry, Nott?"

Theodore seemed to space out for a moment, before realizing what Ron meant.

"Oh, right! Remember that talk we had about Malfoy?" he asked, receiving a nod from Harry. "I asked my father about the best way of… exposing secrets, and apparently what you want is a reporter. But not just any kind of reporter. The one you need is Rita Skeeter."

"Never heard of her."

"Well, she's the kind of person you want on your side, otherwise she can destroy your reputation in a mere day," explained Theodore. "That woman is as foul as anything you can imagine, so you better be careful with what you say in front of Skeeter and that quill of hers. Of course, you need to convince her first."

Harry chuckled. "She won't dare to slander me. She has more to lose than to win. Besides, from what I know, that kind of stuff would cause some sort of diplomatic incident."

"Aren't you the future emperor? Maybe there can be some sort of privilege you can offer to her," suggested Hermione.

"That's… a really good idea," mumbled Harry.

Truly, the best way to being someone to you side, was to give them benefits for being on said side. And once he had that Skeeter on his pocket, then everything would be set into place.
Chapter 25 – The Work of Skeeter

Inverness, Scotland (U.K.)

Time passed slowly, the days seemingly longer to the young Harry, and he was not amused by the reaction that the school had to his return. With the news of the attack and what had happened to him, many people looked at him with pity, almost as if he was a small kid with problems. And there were others, mostly Slytherins, who simply could not help but make fun of him and his "weakness". Of course, the greatest offender was Draco Malfoy, and his presence was really starting to piss off Harry.

Not the comments of Malfoy, but his actual presence. Every time he appeared, Harry could not help but want to violently attack the blond Slytherin, make sure his face would be unrecognizable by the time he was finished with him- Luckily, he self-control prevented such an episode, but he began to wonder how long it would be before he snapped and his more… animalistic urges got hold of him.

But then again, it would not be a good idea in the long run.

But the opportunity to strike a blow at the Malfoy family quickly came, Theodore Nott providing the means to do so.

"Is she there already?" he asked to the Slytherin.

Theodore nodded. "Yeah. Skeeter is usually punctual, so she'll probably be there waiting for you to arrive. Remember Harry, don't give her any leverage on you."

"I know Theodore," he replied. "And thanks for arranging this meeting."

"No problem. Just make sure you make use of it," replied Theodore. "Skeeter likes a good story, so go and give one to her."

Harry nodded, and proceeded to enter the Three Broomsticks, Theodore heading to Honeydukes. It was filled with people, but it was rather easy to spot the one he was looking for. Skeeter was sitting on a corner, a mug of butterbeer in front of her and her notebook and quill right next to her.

He approached the table, and quickly caught the attention of Rita Skeeter.

"Miss Skeeter, I hope I haven't kept you wanting for long."

"Harry, good of you to join me," she said rather pleasantly and in a really informal tone. "It is no problem at all. Take a seat."

Harry did so, sitting right in front of her.

"Now, I understand you have a story for me," she said, her quill and notebook suddenly coming to life.

Harry joined his hands face level, finger intertwining, and hiding a rather ominous smile being
"Indded. However, I have more than just a story for you Miss Skeeter," he said. "I assume you know my statute in the wizarding world, both here in the Isles and out there in the Empire."

Rita was certainly intrigued. "I do, yes."

"This interview is meant to produce a reaction that will lead to something that will… greatly benefit me," he said. "If this happens correctly, and as I want, your bank account will not only be heavily filled, but you will also be granted an Imperial License of Journalism. A little perk of essentially being the grandson of the former emperor and of the current regent."

Rita's eyes widened. In the Confederation, she was fully restricted to work within her residential area, a situation that was also somewhat repeated in the Empire. But to have a fabled Imperial License of Journalism… that gave her "full and unrestricted access" to the Empire and all the news and lovely gossip within. It was a gold mine, and many unscrupulous journalists and reporters would certainly kill for it.

"And if you so desire, I can also grant you a Basic Media Licence. I'm sure you know what the combination of the two can make," he said. "These are promises that I can fulfil, and know that I am not one to break my promises. I simply need your cooperation… and an assurance that you will not attack my person in the future, nor my family. Do we have a deal, Miss Skeeter?"

This was simply an opportunity that Rita could not let go to waste. The Basic Media Licence allowed her to create her own newspaper, magazine, or anything of the sort, and it was a rather expensive licence in the Empire. Harry could even see the glint in her eyes, and he knew that she was already in his pocket.

"We have a deal… your highness."

And she did not miss the rather unnerving smile on Harry's face, nor the unnatural glint on his own eyes.

In the next morning, all who saw Harry were a bit too much freaked out, because the teenager was just too much joyful. No one could understand the reason Harry "too-many-bloody-names" Potter was just so happy… until the Daily Prophet arrived.

Countless owls flew down towards the tables, dropping copies of the newspaper on the tables, the students quickly opening their respective ones. Harry's own joy increased when he saw the mixture of confused and shocked faces all over the Great Hall, including the Staff Table. He had his own copy right in front of him, and so he decided to open it as well.

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**THE MODERN BONACCORD**

*by Rita Skeeter*

*My readers, do you know why we are part of the Confederacy? It is because of the supposed oppression of the Empire in old times? It is because of a desire for freedom that our ancestors had? I can certainly tell you that the answer to those questions is “no”. Those who know about the*
ICW, know that its first Supreme Mugwump was Pierre Bonaccord, who is famous for banning troll-hunting and giving rights to trolls. However, it is not known that before founding and becoming the leader of the Confederation, he was the leader of the Empire. You read that well, my readers. Pierre Bonaccord was once the High Chancellor of the long defunct Roman Regency Council, and the most hated one.

Why, you may ask. Because he attempted to take the throne to himself in a palace coup, and supported by the nobles of north France and his close allies in the Wizard’s Council of Britain. It takes little time to understand why we were allied with Bonaccord, as the British Wizarding Community was suffering a great crisis, other states also in a similar situation, and our French neighbours supported us in these times. Harry Potter, who I took the pleasure of interviewing, made sure to mention that Britain was pretty much a dominion of the French nobles during this time. And that situation hasn’t changed until today.

Bonaccord caused a civil war that ended with the creation of the Franco-British Confederation and the division of the magical Kingdom of France into the North French Republic and the Kingdom of Aquitaine, and finally with his ascension as the leader of his little empire. For a long time, his descendants held the Confederacy, even as his main line died out. And so, today Britain is as much as a puppet of our French and American overlords as we were just of the French centuries ago, and we live in a state of decay, unlike our brethren in the Empire. They thrive under the enlightened leadership of their empress regent, and we simply pay vassalage to our “magnanimous protectors”, receiving nothing in return.

Meanwhile, our government is governed in the shadows by descendants of Bonaccord, specifically the Malfoy family, supposed supporters of You-Know-Who during the war, who hold properties in France and are great friends with their leaders. Makes one wonder when we will be truly free from this tyrannical oppression, and re-join our brothers and sisters in the Empire where we thrived, and perhaps we will be given the chance to grow again.

Harry wanted to laugh as loud as he could, but not wanting to attract much attention to himself, he simply cackled in a low tone.

"Oh Harry, what have you done…" said Hermione wondering about the possible repercussions.

He simply smiled, before glaring at the Slytherin table. He could see the rage emanating from Draco Malfoy, and in a great contrast, Nott practically radiated of joy, even though he made sure to keep it in a low manner, unlike his colleague.

"It seems I have to make sure Skeeter is well rewarded for this," he declared. "And she certainly did her research. A little incentive can to wonders."

"How dare you Potter?" shouted Malfoy who was clearly enraged.

"It's simply the truth," he said casually. "Why Malfoy? Are you like your father and by consequence unable to deal with it?"

"Don't you dare to speak about my father Potter!"

That wasn't the best thing to say.

"What? You have the gall to tell me that I am not allowed to speak about your father, when you insult my mother, and many others by calling them mudbloods?" said Harry, his voice low but
assuming a rather vicious tone. But he suddenly began to chuckle a bit maliciously, surprising many in the Great Hall. "Oh well, I suppose that's normal for someone whose lineage is tainted by one of the worst actions possible by humankind… betrayal. You have to live by making yourself feel better, insulting other people and finding yourself above them because of their muggle lineage."

Harry's behaviour was certainly not normal, and many of those who were capable of analysing such a thing were clearly noticing how Harry Potter had suddenly changed.

"And yet, it is from my mother that I carry one of the, if not the greatest legacy this world has ever seen. I carry the blood of people who created empires and brought them down, who discovered distant lands and brought new worlds to the old world, changing it… for the better and for the worst," declared Harry. "Yet you… you carry the legacy of a man who tried to usurp the throne of my ancestors… and failed."

The scorn which Harry had spoken made quite a few people flinch, but Harry cared only about the trembling Malfoy, rage taking over his body and mind. He decided to ignore the pampered brat, and walked away from the silent Great Wall, heading towards the Owlery.

He had to clear his mind.
Chapter 26 – Aftermath


Skeeter's article had caused quite a backlash against the Malfoy family and the Ministry itself, not to mention the involvement of Harry Potter, possibly the most influential person in the country now. He always had relied on the advice of Dumbledore and Lucius, but now the Prophet had publicly disgraced the Malfoy patriarch, not to mention the whole issue with Cygnus Black and the mass disinheritance. He was sure that someone would certainly bring up this issue in the next meeting of the Wizengamot, and there was no doubt that their relations, and standing, with the ICW would suffer a great blow.

There was a knock at the door, and Fudge turned towards it.

"Enter!" said the minister.

The door was opened, entering Cygnus Black himself.

"Speaking of the devil," thought Fudge. "What does Black want?"

"Good afternoon Minister," said the Duke of Settford. "I assume you have seen the news."

Fudge nodded and motioned towards his copy of the Daily Prophet. "I have. This whole affair is scandalous! What in heavens is Potter playing at? Doesn't he know this can jeopardize our position in the Confederation?"

Cygnus chuckled. "You are making the same mistake many others have Minister," claimed Black. "You have underestimated Anemas, and now that he acts, everyone is surprised."

"What is that supposed to mean?"

Cygnus sat in front of Fudge.

"You do realize that with the passing of his grandmother, and possibly before, he will inherit the leadership of not only the entire Empire, but also of the Portuguese dominions, both these in our world, and in that of the muggles."

"So?" asked Fudge.

"So? Minister, you do realize that this was possibly Anemas's first step at an attempt of… Imperial restoration," affirmed Black. "Unlike what many believe, he is not a blind fool. I am certain that he wants to cause a large enough negative reaction against the ICW, and hope to increase the positive perception that we have of the Empire."

"But that's treason!" sputtered Fudge.

"Not really. He is manoeuvring himself in a perfectly legal scenario, and one where the outcome will be of possible success," said Cygnus. "You know what the reaction to the article was, so the best action you could take right now is to distance yourself from Malfoy and his generous
donations, and seek out the best possible solution to this problem."

"And what do you suggest?"

Cygnus was no fool and one to dismiss a clear opportunity. But neither Fudge nor anyone else could see what the goals of the old man were, especially when many of his choices were to annoy people for his own entertainment. The dismissal of Andromeda Tonks banishment from the Black family had caused quite a scandal and indignation across the pure-blood community, and Fudge knew that the old man had enjoyed every second of it.

"As of now, I can see you having three choices. One, you resign from your position as Minister and let some poor sod inherit all your problems. Two, you ignore this, possibly increasing the malcontent disposition of the population and weakening the overall influence of the Ministry, eventually leading to your dismissal from office or your own resignation."

Neither of those two were exactly appealing to Fudge. "And the third?"

"You could always call for an emergency meeting of the Wizengamot, gather the general opinion of its members… and depending on them, call for a vote to leave the Confederation, releasing us from their influence," said Cygnus. "However, that would leave us as neutral ground, and possibly vulnerable to invasion by either France or the Americans."

Fudge could see where this was going. "And to prevent that we would need to swear fealty to the Empire, joining them."

"Exactly! The whole process might drown us in their… extensive bureaucracy, but it will prevent any possibility of invasion by the ICW," he said. "It would also cripple the French position in Europe, being surrounded by the Empire in all fronts, their only allies being located overseas."

"Sounds like Potter is also trying to cripple the ICW."

"He is, above all, an Imperial citizen," said Black. "I would not see him attempting to increase ICW influence or power, unless he was insane."

Of all those three choices, there was only that had a good outcome.

"I better solve this as fast as possible. Should I call the meeting today?"

Cygnus shrugged. "If you so desire. You are the Minister, not I."

The Wizengamot Chamber was filled, although there was a distinct lack of people in the visitor's gallery. The Emergency Session had been called, and all the members were present. In the central platform was the Chief Warlock, surrounded by the members of the Wizengamot and waiting for the doors to be sealed. It seemed that many of those present knew exactly why they had been called to the meeting, but none was more curious about this whole thing than Cygnus Black himself, whose presence had shocked the Wizengamot. It was a rare occurrence when the Duke of Settford decided to participate in a session of the Wizengamot, so his presence either meant that he had something to do with it, or this whole affair was too important for him to miss.

"I declare started this extraordinary session of the Wizengamot," said Dumbledore, his voice resonating through the chamber. "This session was called by Minister Cornelius Oswald Fudge, and the topic is to be shared by the Minister as well."
Fudge rose from his seat, internally nervous but keeping a clear expression.

"Members of the Wizengamot, I called this meeting to discuss the heavy reaction to the article published today on the Daily Prophet," he said, grabbing a copy of the Prophet. "Before proceeding with my proposal, I wish to hear your opinions regarding this whole affair."

He sat back down, and watched as a witch raised her wand, the tip glowing.

"The Honourable Lucile Connell may speak," declared Dumbledore.

The witch nodded.

"Thank you, Chief Warlock. The article made me curious about certain topics within, and so I decided to make a little research. It seems that much like Skeeter said, our country practically held by the MACUSA and the French Republic, a situation shared by all other members. While it is true that we were once is a severe crisis, those times are long gone. Right now… I believe our future lies without the interference of the ICW."

She sat back down, and another wizard asked for permission to speak.

"The Right Honourable Cygnus Black may speak," said Dumbledore.

Many looked at Black, wondering what the opinion of the oldest living member of the Wizengamot would be.

"Thank you, Chief Warlock. I agree with Madam Connell statements. This situation of ours as a puppet of the Americans and the French has gone long enough. Leaving the Confederation means freedom from them, a possibly a new beginning for the United Kingdom."

The weak willed on the Wizengamot automatically gravitated towards Cygnus Black's opinion regarding the matter, but there were some who remained unsatisfied. Once more, Dumbledore gave permission for another wizard to speak.

"While that may be true, what would happen then in such a scenario?" asked the man. "Without the ICW, we would be isolated from the entire magical community, not to mention our exclusion from the trade agreements the Confederation has with the Empire. We would need to negotiate with both, and I don't see the ICW accepting a deal with former members. Our only chance of survival would be to join the Empire, and even then we don't know what their answer would be!"

There were murmurs of agreement, and another rose to speak.

"The Empire has made many attempts to recover lost territory," said the witch. "They would certainly accept us back. The deal would heavily favour them."

There were also murmurs of agreement, and Fudge saw that the Wizengamot was already divided into three factions – those who supported Britain and Ireland leaving the ICW, those who were in favour of it, but unwilling to do so, and finally the minority which supported the ICW.

"I see that the Wizengamot has spoken," said the Minister. "Therefore, I propose a vote for the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland leaving the ICW, and assuming a temporary position of neutrality."

The chamber was filled with murmurs, and many wondered why Dumbledore was doing nothing about this whole affair. After all, he was also the current Supreme Mugwump of the Confederation.
"Very well. Those who approve the proposal, please raise their wands," said Dumbledore, before many wizards raised their wands in signal of their approval. "And those who refuse the proposal."

There were far less wands in the air this time, and the fate of Britain was now dictated.

"The Minister's proposal has been accepted. The United Kingdom will henceforth leave the International Confederation of Wizards, and assume a neutral position," declared Dumbledore. "As the current Supreme Mugwump, I shall personally oversee this affair."

Those in the chamber began to chat excitedly, and Fudge could only sigh in relief. But now, it was time to see what exactly would become of Britain, and more importantly, establish communications with the Empire.

Without a doubt, the world was changing.
Harry walked alone in the outer region of the Forbidden Forest, essentially the safest part of it. He was there for no specific reason, just to relax away from the fuss of Hogwarts. No one went to the forest, and no one even patrolled it. Therefore, a win situation for him. He had no idea why this area of the forest was forbidden. There were no acromantulas here, nor centaurs, or dugbogs, or even the semi-harmless bubotubers.

All that surrounded him, was the forest, the branches and leaves of its tall trees creating a natural ceiling above him, blocking nearly all sunlight, besides a few rays. And there was also a peaceful silence, the total lack of noise being rather… refreshing. Although, he had to admit that absolute silence was a rather strange phenomenon. Unnatural even, Harry thought. He could feel no wind either, almost as if the entire forest was inside a box.

Even the dim light itself seemed out of place to Harry, as everything seemed and felt both cold and ominous. He felt a terrible chill on his spine, something alerting him to a great and unseen danger, but there was no sign of such a thing. All was silent in the dark forest, and he only heard his own slow breathing.

Suddenly, in the horizon, amongst the distant trees, an orange light emerged, and as a powerful gust of wind blew all the leaves away, he saw the light quickly expanding into the skies and towards him as well. An immense heat replaced the coldness, and he saw a wave of fire heading towards him at high velocity. He attempted to shield himself, but was surprised when the flames simply passed through him, leaving him unharmed. However, the same could not be said about the forest.

He was now in the middle of a hellish inferno, around him nothing but smoke and fire. There was no escape, all routes blocked by wild flames, trapping him in that clearing. And as the fire became far more intense, he began to see a shadow moving beyond the wall of fire. And it was slowly approaching him. He took several steps back, as the figure emerged from the flames, revealing something he had seen before.

Its skin seemed to be made of burning coal and near solid lava, vein-like cracks across its surface. It wore tattered robes and a cracked mask concealed its face, showing only two glowing red orbs where the eyes were supposed to be. Black smoke emanated from this figure, as if a living fire, and as it raised a hand, the strange entity began to slowly reach out towards him.

"Harry…"

The being's voice was ancient, sounding simultaneously rasp and withered. There was an extreme pressure coming from all sides, this great force infiltrating Harry's mind, leaking inside. Anger, was what he felt, but not his own. It came from the creature and the burning forest, the former the epicentre of this chaos. Harry had no way to run, and the closer the being got, the intenser the heat became.

This force was too strong for him to resist. Harry's knees gave up, and he fell to the ground, flames engulfing the dark figure as it approached Harry. Its hand was within reach of him, and yet before it could touch him, all became dark, and he awoke in the Gryffindor Common Room, his body
drenched in sweat, and still feeling the heat of the burning forest.

**Carbonbek Institute, Almaty, Kazakhstan**

The news that Britain had decided to leave the International Confederation of Wizards had shocked virtually all British wizards, the students and staff of Hogwarts included. With this whole turn of events, Harry felt rather pleased with himself, knowing exactly the role he had in this, and exactly what would happen next.

Those with enough political knowledge knew that without a clear allegiance, and the threat of invasion by the Northern French Republic, Britain had to look for allies in the Empire. As the individual with the greatest Imperial connection in not just Hogwarts, but also in the British Isles, Harry had suddenly become the core of many conversations between his fellow peers. The reactions were mixed, but the strongest, and most silent of all came from Slytherin, who seemed to be confused on how to act towards him. If the United Kingdom became part of the Empire once more, then it would be a bad idea to be on Harry Potter's black list.

But as the collective mental debate continued, Harry himself was more focused on other matters. One of them being the fact that he had to travel to Kazakhstan in order to be examined by a specialised medical official.

Outside, the building which housed the Carbonbek Institute was rather historical in appearance. It seemed to fit rather well with the traditional architecture of the city, but at the same time, it seemed a bit displaced. This was very likely the work of enchantments… or perhaps something else. Still, there was something truly odd about this place. The reception hall was not exactly large, but it could certainly hold a moderate number of people. There, someone waited for him.

"Your Imperial Highness, welcome," said the man, a heavy Russian accent on his speech. "It is an honour to meet you. I'm Ruslan Mikhaylov, founder, president, and head researcher of the Carbonbek Institute."

Harry shook Ruslan's hand. "A pleasure, Mr. Mikhaylov."

"The pleasure is all mine," said Ruslan. "I am also the head of the Imperial Institute of Mental Injuries, where a relative of yours is hospitalised, if I'm not mistaken."

"He's my godfather," corrected Harry. "But yes, we are distant relatives."

"I believe you will be pleased to know that he is recovering very quickly. Prolonged exposure to dementors takes years to recover, but your godfather shows remarkable progress," continued the man. "Any questions?"

"I suppose. What's the Carbonbek Institute?"

"Think of it as a branch of the Imperial Institute, where we focus on the negative effects that magic has on the non-magical, and attempt to reverse them," explained Ruslan. "It is there where, if I may brag, my speciality shines."

"What speciality?"

"I research the Nucleus," said Ruslan. "Do you know what it is?"
Harry nodded. "I learnt of it a while ago."

Ruslan motioned Harry to follow him into a lift. The two entered, and Ruslan entered some sort of password, the lift beginning to descend.

"The proper installations are subterranean. Must be for the security of not only the people above, but also for that of our patients."

"Patients?"

"You see, magic is a volatile element. Think of it as invisible and highly toxic energy. The Nucleus of magical individuals absorbs and filters this energy, while the Nucleus of non-magical beings does not. This is the key component that separates wizards from non-wizards, and what grants us the ability to use magic," explained Ruslan. "However, in the same way that people are born with physical or mental deficiencies, some are born with a deficiency in their Nucleus. They are born with the ability to absorb the energy, but it stops there. They lack the remaining processes in which this energy is turned into the spell, amongst them the filtration, and since the Nucleus does not know what to do with this energy, it is stored within the Nucleus, poisoning it."

The lift stopped, and the doors opened, revealing another reception room, this time with a with the area which gave access to the rest of the facility blocked off by a small "chamber" surrounded by metal bars, essentially a cage. There was a smaller room connected to it, a man inside, likely the one who controlled the doors.

The air lingered with strange smells, the facility, or at least what Harry had seen of it, reeking with an atmosphere of unnatural eeriness. Ruslan motioned Harry forward, and gave a signal for the man inside to unlock the doors. Harry followed Ruslan inside, entering a narrow hallway, at the end a somewhat large common hall. There were very few people there, and those inside did not seem to be the healthy type.

"Are these patients?" Harry asked, his voice with a hint of nervousness.

"Some of them. The ones allowed here are those whose condition is stable," said Ruslan. "The others have to be contained."

As Harry and Ruslan advanced, the young wizard managed to see closer the patients there. People young and old, their bodies emaciated, and their heads covered by whatever strings of hair remained. Some stared into nothingness, as if their minds were someplace else, while others whose mental state was less degraded, were entertained with things such as reading a book or a newspaper.

"Señor Ruslan!"

Harry and Ruslan turned towards the voice, an elderly woman approaching the two, clearing one of the patients.

"Good afternoon, Mrs. Ordóñez," said Ruslan, speaking the Spanish language. "How are you today?"

"The same as usual," she said, her pale and skinny face clearly showing signs of tiredness. "One of my grandchildren came to visit today, you know?"

"Really?" asked Ruslan.
There was an odd tone to his voice, but Harry could not perceive what exactly it was.

Mrs. Ordóñez nodded happily. "Yes, yes. Such a scamp, that boy. But he still cares for his grandmother. Oh, excuse-me, I need to go to the bathroom."

The old woman walked past them, disappearing into a corridor nearby.

Ruslan sighed. "Mrs. Ordóñez is one of our most stable patients. However, she suffers from hallucinations. Oddly vivid hallucinations," he revealed. "That visit she spoke of never happened. No one receives visitors. People with no connection to our world for obvious reasons, but those with connections to our world… those cannot have visitors."

Harry glanced at the corridor which the woman had went to, feeling pity for the woman. Still, she believed those encounters, and they made her happy. At least she suffered little.

"This way, please."

Harry nodded, continuing to follow Ruslan.

"I will be examining you, and your Nucleus, to see if there are any signs of damage, caused by being in direct contact with a corrupted Nucleus," said the man. "You'll be subjected to the same procedure as the patients here, but don't worry. It will not be a painful experience."

That made Harry feel a bit relieved, but still, the feeling of unease remained.

The two eventually came by another "security check", exactly like the one in the reception. Except this one was just a large metallic door, and a window next to it, giving a view to the room with the security guard inside. They entered, a slightly larger corridor in front of them, at the end an intersection. Harry followed Ruslan into the left corridor, noticing that the right corridor led to another security area.

They were now inside a large chamber with many doors. Ruslan motioned to one of the doors, but as they approached, the door opened, and a man came out.

Ruslan seemed to have seen something, as he suddenly pushed Harry back.

"Don't move," he said.

The man which came out motioned to someone inside the room he came from, and moments later, another man came, accompanying… something. It took Harry a few instants to understand that the thing was one of the patients, but it was different. This one was extremely emaciated, it's head without any hair, and wearing what seemed to be a tight jumpsuit. Its arms were pointed forward, almost as if shambling towards someone, and brown straps came from where the hands would normally be, dangling and resembling very flaccid claws. Harry quickly realised that it was a body-wide straitjacket.

But then he did something he regretted. He focused on the patient's head. He had seen it bald, but not the details. The skin was not simply pale, but white, and the patient's face was… wrong. Where the mouth should be was fused skin, a small hole made there. The nose was gone, and it uncannily resembled that of Voldemort, a smooth section with two slits. Even the eyes and the ears were covered by the skin, as if a bag had been covering the head, and had been fused to it.

The man was guiding the patient, whose condition made it impossible to move freely. As it approached the exit, near Harry. The patient suddenly stopped. It's head turned towards Harry, as if knowing that he was there. Harry felt the beat of his heart, and could hear the breathing of the
Then, it roared before attempting to charge at Harry. Before he could even touch the young wizard, the patient was restrained by the two men, one of them injecting something into his neck, while the other strapped his arms. Ruslan quickly grabbed Harry, taking him inside the room before shutting the door.

"Are you all right, your highness?" asked Ruslan.

Harry nodded numbly. "What… what was that thing?"

"One of our high security inmates. These are past the point of no return," said Ruslan. "Their Nuclei have been heavily damaged by the accumulated magical energy, and their bodies and mind reflect it. We do to see if their condition becomes worse or if is stable."

"Why did it attack me?"

"All wizards who work here undergo a special training to make them… voids, shall we say. They have the ability to consciously halt and resume the absorption of magical energy within their Nuclei, and they don't emanate it as well" explained the man. "Essentially, they can shift to wizard and non-wizard at will."

So this entire building had to be isolated from magic, in order to keep the patients safe.

"And I can't. But why-"

"Did he attack you? They can feel both repositories and sources of magical energy. And it causes them great pain," continued Ruslan. "For that patient, you were the source of its pain."

Magic. If there was something that Harry thought to be wonderful, it suddenly seemed to be less so. Sure, there were the Unforgivable Curses and quite a few other less than pleasant elements, but this… there were few words that could give a correct description of this, and one of them was wrong.

This was wrong.

"Now, let us move away from that. The study of the Nuclei recovered from the Magnaura led to the discovery that they were mutated beyond repair, and the strange malicious energy within them seems to have a permanent nature. That is why you are here. Your grandmother believes you may have been affected by the Nucleus you touched, and as such, has requested for you to be examined."

"Ok," mumbled Harry as Ruslan took a small book from a pocket, alongside a pen.

Ruslan motioned Harry to sit down on a chair.

"Please remove your glasses," said Ruslan, as he too sat down.

Harry did so, and before he knew it, Ruslan's wand was pointed at his face, its tip glowing with a brownish colour. The man seemed to be analysing something, but he wasn't sure of what. Didn't he say that magic was not supposed to be used here.

Ruslan seemed to have known what Harry was thinking.

"We keep the use of magic to an extreme minimum. No visible change to the iris or to the pupil,"
he said. "Your natural eye colour is green, correct?"

"Yes."

Ruslan began to write down everything the two said. "The sclere appears to be normal, no sign of subconjunctival haemorrhage or other disorders. It seems that the eyes are normal. Now, please stand up."

Harry did so, and watched as the man took a few steps away from him, before casting another spell at him. He did not know what the spell did, but he felt his entire body becoming slightly stiff, almost as if something was constricting him. A golden jet of light came from Ruslan's wand, striking his chest. The sensation was odd, and he felt his entire body going numb. He had been quite sure that the previous spell had been just to keep him from falling.

The light vanished, and a tiny blue orb came out of his chest.

"What the?" was Harry's only thought.

The orb floated in the empty space between Harry and Ruslan, before suddenly bursting into an immense light, temporarily blinding the two occupants of the classroom. Although he could not see it, the sensation the came from the light was both warm and familiar to Harry. When it diminished, where the tiny orb once was, now floated what Harry and Ruslan knew to be a Nucleus.

"That's my… my Nucleus," mumbled Harry, before becoming suddenly dizzy. He felt as if he was in two places at the same time, and his own vision was distorted.

Ruslan, on the other hand, was amazed. He had seen many Nuclei before, but this one shone with a darker blue colour, and at the same time it held the brightest light he had seen in a Nucleus.

"This is very unusual, your Highness," he said. "Never in my life have I seen a Nucleus reacting this way to an extraction."

The man moved quickly, observing the Nucleus, and searching for something. Harry looked at the man and at his own Nucleus. His very being was in front of him… his own essence separated from his body. How in all of creation was that even possible?

"Other than the darker colour and the sudden brightness upon extraction, the Nucleus seems to be mostly normal, without visible foreign mutation or influence," said the man. "Certain aspect of the Nucleus are to be noted, such as the small cracks on the upper half. Direct contact with a mutated nucleus may have caused these or a previous event is to blame. I cannot say if these heal over time, so a second examination will be required."

The man cast another spell, before pressing the tip of his wand on an empty page of the book, the image of Harry's Nucleus appearing there.

"Well, your Highness, it seems that you are mostly normal," said the man. "Other than a few irregularities, but those will be analysed later."

Harry watched as the man cast a spell at his Nucleus, the crystal returning to the form of a tiny orb, before re-entering his body. As soon as it did so, the effects of Ruslan's first spell disappeared, no longer feeling the strange tightness on his entire body.

"Well, that's done," declared Ruslan. "When I have everything confirmed, I shall transmit the results to your grandmother."
Harry nodded. "Thank you, sir."

"No problem, your Highness," replied the man. "I shall accompany you to the exit."

Yet as Harry put his glasses back on, he could only wonder what exactly was wrong with his Nucleus.
Harry had returned to Hogwarts shortly after leaving the Institute. He had roamed around aimlessly, eventually reaching the corridors of the sixth floor. These were mostly empty, the occasional student passing by. Eventually, he reached the Grand Staircase, finding someone there he would have rather not found.

"Potter!" snarled his hated enemy, who was accompanied by Crabbe and Goyle, the three on the stairs, while Harry stood on the landing.

"Malfy. What do you want?" he asked.

"First you and Nott take the Black inheritance from me and now you dare to humiliate my family!" he shouted. "You're going to pay for that!"

"You had it coming Malfy," replied Harry calmly. "What was it you said to me before our first year? That I would find out there were some wizard families which were better than others? Well, it seems I did."

Malfy's rage had reached its peak, the Slytherin taking out his wand to attack Harry, but before he or his two followers could even utter a spell, they felt the stairs beneath them vibrating, and as they looked down, the three realised several cracks had appeared on the stairs. And as they attempted to leave the death trap, the stairs collapsed, the three Slytherins and the debris falling to the stairs below.

Harry's face was frozen in shock, and as he took a reluctant step forward, he glanced down for a few moments, noticing that the portraits around him were shocked at the collapse of the stairs, all wondering what had happened, the most excited one being Sir Cadogan. Harry's shock vanished, and his silence was soon broken, uttering a few words before returning to the corridors of the sixth floor.

"Pity. I liked those stairs."

He did not notice the burnt marks on the edge of the stair landing.

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The library of Hogwarts was mostly empty, one of its inhabitants being Harry. The young prince had decided to make a small research on certain topics of his interest, having his trusted Encyclopaedia Veneficia next to him, alongside other books from the library. He was certain that these books held little to no information regarding what he wanted to know, but it was still a good idea to search them.
"… then that means that when Amilanius died, he had met at least seventeen generations which would succeed him as Divine Sovereign," thought Harry as he took notes. "Prozac I was the last descendant which he met, who would become the tenth member of the Second Dynasty to hold the title of Divine Sovereign. Bloody hell, they had long lives…"

His interest in Al-Antidian history had suddenly increased, and thanks to his "resources", Harry could quench his thirst for knowledge. He was slightly disturbed by the fact that humankind, both magical and non-magical, held very extensive lifespans during the days of the old empire. But what exactly had changed that? Yet it was just one question amongst many.

His interest in the old sovereigns of Al-Antidia had also increased, especially regarding Amilanius and… well, his past self. As he was the reincarnation of Anipheon IX, his very essence held not just the divinity which Anipheon had inherited from his divine progenitor, but also the small fragment which came from his paternal line, all the way to Amilanius himself. The information regarding the genealogy of all the dynasties had been extensively researched by scholars from the middle ages to the present day, and from what the encyclopaedia and his fragmented memories told him, Anipheon and the entire Eighth Dynasty descended from a man called Iridal, who was some sort of high priest in the old empire and a grandson of Taioron II, a Divine Sovereign of the Fourth Dynasty.

For all intents and purposes, he was new to Atlantean history, but part of him felt as if he was supposed to know all this. A part which he identified very well.

"And then we died and the throne was usurped by that little bastard," bitterly thought the young wizard.

It was an instant before he realized what his thoughts had been.

"Wait…" muttered Harry, before resuming his thoughts. "Where did that come from? That wasn't me."

He had referred to himself as "we", meaning he was thinking of both himself and Anipheon, behaving as if he was also the former Divine Sovereign. Why would he care about something that happened to a version of himself in a bygone age? It just didn't make any sense. Was Anipheon manifesting himself through him?

His thoughts soon were shifted to something else, as he saw Hermione enter the library, quickly approaching him.

"Yes?" he asked in a low tone.

"Harry, something happened a while ago," said Hermione in a low tone as well. "An accident in the staircase."

"Really?" he asked in a tone of interest.

She nodded. "One of the stairs fell with people there. You won't guess who was there."

"Malfoy, Crabbe and Goyle," he said nonchalantly, surprising his colleague.

"Oh, so you already know," said Hermione, deducing that someone had told Harry about it.

His reply was certainly not what they had been expecting.

"I was there when the stairs fell off," he said. "Falling to the fifth floor certainly isn't good for your
health, is it?"

"You were there?" said Hermione shocked. "Why didn't you tell anyone?"

"Hermione, the stairs fell to the fifth floor. Without the Grand Staircase, I can only go to either the seventh floor, or to the cavern which leads to the dungeons," he replied. "Besides, the portraits certainly warned the teachers."

Hermione knew that something was clearly wrong with all this. It was disturbing to see Harry speaking about this whole thing in such an apathetic way.

"He's been different since he returned to Hogwarts," she thought.

"Besides, I have many things to concern myself with," he said motioning towards the books. "Malfoy and his little companions not being one of them."

That was just the confirmation that Hermione needed. It was clear that something had changed in Harry, and not for the best.

"They have been sent to St. Mungos," she said while preparing to leave. "I was told they were really in a bad state. I thought you should know."

Harry watched as Hermione left, before he focused once more on the books in front of him. If his deduction was correct, then Hermione would possibly head to McGonagall or Dumbledore as quickly as possible. Still, he couldn't care less about Malfoy or the other two. If they were roughed up a bit, then they had it coming.

Besides, it was not his fault that Hogwarts had a lack of maintenance.

Albus Dumbledore was not a happy man.

Three students had been sent to St. Mungos in a critical state, all because of some sort of failure in the enchantments that kept the Grand Staircase functional. Oddly enough, those involved had been none other than Draco Malfoy, Vincent Crabbe and Gregory Goyle. Coincidentally enough, these three were not exactly on good terms with Harry Potter, and considering the recent events surrounding the Malfoy family…

Well, he would not dismiss the possibility of someone attempting to eliminate the Malfoy line, but there was still the fact that both Lucius and Narcissa were still alive and capable of conceiving children. But there were also other possibilities for this occurrence, but for it to be an accident was certainly impossible. The burnt marks on the fifth-floor landing and on remnants of the stairs clearly suggested that something had damaged the stairs. Unfortunately, the portraits claimed they had not seen such an attack.

And now he had an extremely concerned looking Hermione Granger sitting in front of him, which most likely meant something involving Harry.

"So, Miss Granger, what exactly is worrying you?" asked the aged headmaster.

"It's Harry, professor," said Hermione. "I spoke with him a few minutes ago and he… he seems to be different. There was something wrong in the way he spoke to me, and he also said that he saw Malfoy's accident."
So it seemed that Harry was indeed involved in this whole affair. But how exactly?

"Do elaborate, Miss Granger?"

"When I told him what happened, Harry said that he already knew about it and that he had been there when the stairs fell," revealed Hermione. "He sounded so... unconcerned with it Almost as if it had been something normal."

That certainly was a disturbing report. The Harry that Dumbledore knew would not assume such a stance in these unfortunate events.

"Unfortunately, I cannot do anything Miss Granger," said Dumbledore. "However, I suggest you and your companions keep an eye out for any stranger behaviour coming from Harry."

Hermione nodded. "If something happens, we'll come right to you, Professor Dumbledore."

The old headmaster smiled. "Anything else, Miss Granger?"

"No, professor," she replied, preparing to leave. "Good day, Professor Dumbledore."

"Likewise, Miss Granger."

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**Chamber of Slumber, Varandill Aanor**

The Professor paced in front of several glass containers, only one filled with Eitr and a Nucleus. The progress made by the Consortium in the last weeks had been remarkable, and the new information which he had gathered was proving to be very valuable to his research. He was certain that in no time, he would understand how the mutation which he had created could be applied to the Nucleus of magical beings without permanently damaging the Nucleus.

But that was not the sole goal of the Consortium. They were not gathered to create abominations, no. They were merely tools in this blasted conflict against the Empire. Their goal was the resurrection of the Eternal Queen, but with each day more results came, each proving that it would be impossible to do so. Not the resurrection, since that was a rather simple achievement. But the Nucleus of the Eternal Queen was too much damaged and unstable to adapt itself to the Eitr and create a new body to inhabit.

He glanced at the filled container, looking at the humanoid shape within. Voldemort's new body was quickly taking shape, and it would not take long before he was fully restored. The followers of his incapacitated colleague would be rather useful for the Eternal Queen, and so would Voldemort. There was no doubt that the man was a powerful wizard, but a rather stubborn one.

His thoughts were soon shifted towards footsteps which came from behind him. Turning around, he saw two of his agents dragging a man towards him.

"My Lord Professor," said one. "Your theory was correct. We found him in the forest."

He looked at the man, which had been cast at his feet, and cowering before him. The Professor smiled in response.

"Very good. You may go," he said.
The two agents nodded and left the chamber, leaving the Professor alone with the man.

"I knew you would end up in Albania, searching for your former master," spoke the Professor in English, surprising the man. "He was once there, but not anymore. Still, with this whole issue surrounding the trial in the Constantinople, I am not surprised that you decided to leave your hiding place, fearing to be discovered."

The Professor approached the container with Voldemort.

"See this? The body inside is your… Dark Lord. Slowly regenerating and regaining his former power," revealed the Professor. "I recovered him from Albania personally. A rather anticlimactic task, to be honest."

The man looked in fear and awe at the body suspended in the glowing blue liquid, the Dark Mark on his arm suddenly burning with pain, almost as if Voldemort knew that one of his Death Eaters was there.

The Professor then approached the man, before crouching and looking at him in the eyes.

"I believe your fear is enough to continue on his, and by extension, our service," said the leader of the Consortium. "Isn't that right, Peter Pettigrew?"

Chapter End Notes

This was the last chapter I wrote before the story was archived.

Please [drop by the archive and comment](#) to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!