Two Shall Be as One
by Corwalch

Summary

HP/Stargate XOver. What if there was more than one prophecy out there concerning Harry Potter, only no one knew about the other except the person who made it. Merlin had prophesied "When two shall be joined as one their battles will shake the Heavens and the Earth and those in power shall be undone."

Notes

I blame Lady Stormrider for the plot bunnie that created this story. It just kept attacking until I started writing it. Just so you know the updates for this one will not be as fast as my other stories, because from the basic plot outline I have written so far, each chapter promises to be very very long. This one chapter is about 18 pages long.

No this story will not be slash, no matter what the title may imply because while I like slash and read it, I can’t write it all that well. This story is taking place during POA.

The bunnie that Lady Stormrider dropped off in my living room had the plot of; What if Daniel died and he came back as Harry? Instead of ascending after saved the planet Langara, Daniel was forced into a new body that of Harry James Potter (at what point in Harry’s life is up to you, personally I would go for birth) So at some period in his life Harry decided to go back to SGC (after Daniel’s death but before Harry is an adult) Can you imagine everyone's reaction to 16 yr old British citizen being able to list off all the planets and people the late Daniel Jackson had meet?
It gave birth to this mutant bunnie: The first time Daniel descended and he went back to Harry's 3rd year 1993. His disappearing interrupted his descension by the Others. Harry didn't manage to make it out of the house after blowing up Aunt Marge. Instead Vernon beat him so badly that he was very close to death and dumped him into the basement/cellar. It is at that point that Daniel will merge with Harry. Daniel's memories and the powers he got, as an Ascended will be intact. Beyond the fact that Vernon and company will get what is coming to them, and that it will follow some of book 3, but not all of it.

Now for the legal stuff: I don’t own Harry Potter or Stargate nor is it intended to infringe on any of the rights of those who do own them. Believe me if I did own them I wouldn’t have to worry about money for quite some time, but since I don’t I am writing this strictly for entertainment purposes and suing me would get you nothing but my mounting pile of debts and those you can have I freely offer them to you.

Now on to the story

words more words = private thoughts and flash backs
/words/ = mental speech/conversations
The Joining

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Stargate/Harry Potter XOver
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Otherworldly Plane
“Daniel Jackson, student of Oma, do you know why you are here?” An elderly male voice pulled
Daniel’s attention away from the featureless white expanse around him.

Another younger man and elderly woman were standing with him and Oma was standing off to one
side a look of regret on her face.

Knowing what his fate was likely to be and feeling no regrets about the choices he had made, Daniel
told him. “I am here because I was willing to do what you would not do. Deal with Anubis before he
could wipe out an entire planet of people who were unable to defend themselves from him.”

“You know it is forbidden to interfere with the lesser races.” The elderly woman made it more of a
statement than a question.

“But Anubis isn’t quite one of those less advanced people now is he?” Daniel countered flatly. “He
was ascended at one point and still is partially ascended. Therefore he was and still is your
responsibility. No one else can contain or destroy him, except another Ascended. What I don’t
understand is why you haven’t done it.”

The older two of the Ascended didn’t react to his claim that Anubis was their responsibility, but
Daniel noticed that the younger one looked at Oma and she looked very uncomfortable as if he’d
touched a nerve.

“We will not be making the same mistake with you.” The elderly male Ascended told him. “You
shall be returned to your human form and all of your memories…”

His voice trailed off as Daniel suddenly vanished. Turning to face Oma Desala, he asked, “Where
did you send him?”

Oma appeared to be just as surprised as he was by Daniel’s disappearance. “I did not send him
anywhere.”

“He could not have left here on his own,” the older Ascended woman countered. “He had to have
help.”

“Well, I did not help him,” Oma repeated and before the other Ascended could say anything, she
added, “nor did any of those currently in my charge.”

“You are certain of that.” A new voice joined the group facing her.

“Yes,” Oma met the crystal blue gaze of the oldest Ascended next to Myrrdin without flinching.

“Then we must find him and quickly,” the eldest Ascended ordered. “Before he becomes a danger
to us all.”
One moment Daniel had been awaiting judgment, and the next he was in excruciating agony in a dark windowless place. He’d almost forgotten what it was like to be in pain and would have been happy to avoid repeating the experience ever again, but it was not to be. He could feel his body dying. It felt like he was almost dead. Having died a few times a before, Daniel knew quite well what it felt like. In fact, it felt like the last moments of his life before Oma had ascended him.

When the Others had said they weren’t going to make the same mistake with him, he hadn’t thought they would kill him. Had they returned him to the last moments of his life when he was dying of radiation poisoning?

Wanting to live, his mind reached out instinctively for the power of the Universe as Oma had taught him and was surprised when it responded to his call. Not certain of how long he would continue to have access to the knowledge and powers of the Ascended, Daniel concentrated on healing those injuries that were life threatening. Once he could no longer feel his life ebbing away, Daniel allowed the waiting darkness to take him.

The next sight that greeted Daniel’s eyes was an odd looking stadium. He was facing three giant bubble makers and beyond them he could see a castle.

“Who are you?” A young male voice with a definite English accent asked. “And how did you get into my dream?”

“My name is Daniel, Dr. Daniel Jackson.” Daniel didn’t turn to face the voice yet, as he absently introduced himself, wanting to figure out what this place was. It wasn’t a dreamscape, he was certain of that, having visited his friends a few times in their dreams. All his senses were telling him this wasn’t a dream. This place gave off a feeling of safety and security. It was a retreat of some kind, but why?

“You still have not told me how you came to be in my dream, Dr. Daniel Jackson?” The young voice reminded him.

“This isn’t a dream.” Daniel turned to face the speaker for the first time and received a shock. The boy was probably no older than twelve or thirteen, with a broomstick in his hand, but that wasn’t what shocked him. He’d seen that face before, only when it was older, maybe sixteen or seventeen. “We’ve met before.”

Flashback
Chicago, 1996
As Daniel watched the limo containing one Katherine Langford, a lady who knew far too much about him for his comfort, drove away. It was still grey and the rain was pouring down and it matched his mood perfectly.

Sighing he picked up his bags and trudged off in search of somewhere to sleep tonight. He also needed time to try and figure out what he was going to do next. He had no intention of accepting an unknown job from a total stranger. He just had to figure out what he was going to do with his life now that he had burned so many bridges.

He had just rounded a corner when a teenager who was running through the rain with his head down, collided with him knocking them both to the ground. There were a number of apologies from the young man in a definite British accent filling the air as he helped Daniel pick up his remaining
When their hands made contact for the first time that a strange thing happened, the younger man’s emerald green eyes had suddenly become unfocused as if they no longer saw Daniel or the world around him. Then in a calm, clear voice he’d said, “You must go. Katherine has the answers you seek. She has the proof you need. And those answers will take you places and you will see things you never would have dreamt of.”

As soon as the last word was spoken, the teenager seemed to come out of his strange trance and took off before Daniel had a chance to question him about what he’d said.

End Flashback

“I do not think so,” Daniel could see suspicion in the boy’s eyes. “I have never seen you before.”

“You were a bit older that you are now when we met.” Daniel commented absently, his mind already working on the puzzle of how he’d come to be in this boy’s mind. “Can you tell me your name and the date please?”

“I thought you said we’d met before.” There was definite suspicion in the boy’s voice now.

“We have,” Daniel could understand why he was suspicious. If he hadn’t seen and done the things he had over the last few years, he probably would’ve had trouble believing that he could be in someone else’s head. “We weren’t introduced at the time. We ran into each other… literally. You told me something that changed my life forever and then you took off. You also looked somewhat older than you do now.”

“Maybe it was my father.” The boy countered. “I have been told I look a lot like him.”

“It’s possible, I suppose.” Daniel conceded. “Does your dad have the same green eyes?”

He shook his head. “No, I got my green eyes from my mum.”

“Then it wasn’t your dad I saw in 1996, it was you.” Daniel told him.

The boy gaped at him in disbelief. “Are you trying to tell me that you have somehow managed to invade my dreams from three years in the future?”

“This isn’t a dream,” Daniel repeated. “I think this is a safe haven that you have created in your own mind. And actually for me it is more like ten or eleven years in the future, that is if this is 1993.”

There was a pause as the boy seemed to digest this, then green eyes met blue and Daniel again asked. “Would you please tell me your name and the date?”

The boy gave him a long considering look then shrugged. “My name is Harry Potter and unless I have somehow lost track of time after that last beating my uncle gave me, the date should still be August 11, 1993.”

Harry waited for the expected glance at his forehead, but was pleasantly surprised when it didn’t happen. Instead what happened was that Dr. Jackson smiled, “I’m pleased to meet you, Harry Potter.” Then the rest of what he had said registered in the older man’s mind and he stared at him. “Your uncle beat you! How badly?”
After several minutes of silence, Harry finally reluctantly admitted, “bad enough that I thought I was dying.”

Harry had wanted to take the part about Uncle Vernon beating him back as soon as he’d said it. When he was younger, the few times he’d told an adult about the beatings, they had seemed to believe him at first and then would accuse him of making it up a few days later. He’d wondered how long it would be before this man from the future turned on him and accused him of lying.

It had been years since he’d told an adult about the beatings, simply because his uncle’s wrath hadn’t been worth it. Then again, once he’d started going to Hogwarts, his uncle had gotten more cautious, locking him up after that incident with Dobby instead of hitting him.

“Are your parents dead?” Daniel’s expression was solemn.

“Since before I was a year and a half old,” Harry didn’t know why he was telling this to someone who was a complete stranger to him this personal information, but there was something about the man that made him feel as if he could be trusted.

“I thought they might be.” Daniel nodded. “I’ve been in the same position myself in a way, only my abuser wasn’t family.”

Before Harry could make any comment, the landscape around them wavered and blinked out for a moment.

When it did it a second time, Harry asked worriedly. “What is going on?”

Not certain, Daniel reached out with the senses he’d gained when he’d ascended, surprised to find that he still had them, and tried to figure out what was going on. After a few moments, he said, “I think you are beginning to wake up, so I will say good-bye Harry Potter and it was nice to have met you.”

After a night of hunting, Hedwig arrived back at that hateful place her master was forced to spend some time in every year, and grew worried when she could not feel his presence there. Deciding to take the safest course she settled on a limb in a nearby tree, even though the window to his room was open. She was not about to go in that place when her master was not there. She knew they would like nothing better than to kill her and her master, but fear of the other wizards had so far stayed their hand.

Reaching out with the innate magic all owls have, Hedwig tried to find her master. He was not anywhere close by. When she tried to get a sense of the direction he was in, Hedwig ran into a wall. She started to panic slightly because that had certainly never happened before. She had always been able to tell what direction her master was in, if not how far away. The only thing she was certain of was that he was not dead. She would know if he were, given that their magic had bound them together once he had accepted her into his life. Could bad wizards have taken her master?

She took off from the tree and flew closer to the house. A moment later she felt the magic of the wards surrounding the house brush her wings. They were still intact so nothing had breached them and a bad wizard would have had to bring them down before they could reach her master. Veering off, she flew back to the tree she was doing her thinking in.

The only conclusion she could draw was that somehow, the bad people in that house had done something to her master, but what. How could someone with no magic in them, or at least very little,
prevent her from being able to locate her master? She had always been able to locate anyone a letter
was supposed to be delivered to, given enough time, no matter how far away they were.

Hedwig nodded to herself. She was going to need help and the best source for that, who was close
by, was that witch Hermione Granger. If nothing else, she could get other wizards involved in the
search for her master, if she presented the girl with the right level of panic.

Taking off, she flew through the night sky toward the Granger home.

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Daniel found himself back in that dark windowless place and his body was still in pain, though not
as bad as before. He heard someone else moan and say, “Where am I?”

“Harry!” Daniel was stunned into silence at the sound of his voice. It wasn’t his it was Harry’s!

Harry spoke again. “Who are you? Why do you sound exactly like me? And where are we?”

Daniel was thinking rapidly. Somehow he was sharing Harry Potter’s body, but why? How had it
happened? In all the information he had access to about the Ascended, none of them had ever shared
a body with another being. Their dreams, yes! Those they shared sometimes to help or teach, but
never their waking lives. To them it was too close to being a Goa’uld! “Harry, I don’t want you to
panic, but I am Dr. Jackson and somehow I am sharing your body.”

Harry jerked upright then fell back down as his right arm refused to hold his weight. “YOU ARE IN
MY BODY! GET OUT!”

/Harry, calm down./ Daniel tried speaking within his mind. /You are going to undo all the healing I
did to your body if you keep this up./

“OUT!” Harry continued to shout. “GET OUT!”

A door above them opened up and Daniel realized they were in a cellar as an angry voice shouted,
“Shut up you freak, or I will come down there and give you another beating since you apparently did
not learn your lesson earlier.”

/Your uncle?/ Daniel asked and felt his head nod. /Let me have control for a bit, Harry. I promise I’ll
give it back./

Harry did not resist as he took control. Daniel wondered briefly if this is what it felt like when Jacob
and Selmac switched places. “You just try it, uncle. We’ll see who learns the lesson.”

Vernon stormed down the stairs only to be greeted by the sight of the boy he’d thrown down the
stairs in a bloody heap, lying propped up against his school trunk, his hands glowing with white fire.
“What have I told you about that abomination of yours? I will not have it in my house! Those other
freaks have already undone what you did to my sister and I imagine they are looking for you to
throw you out of that school of yours because of what you did. You try anything further and I will
kill you before they get the chance to throw you out.”

“They can only expel me once.” Daniel commented in a lacklustre voice. Pulling information about
his family from Harry’s mind, Daniel said, “If nothing else, I will make sure you pay for what you’ve
done to me before they throw me out and then the only ones I’ll have to worry about are Aunt
Petunia and Dudley and neither of them will have the stomach for it once you are gone.” Daniel’s
anger grew and he added in the spirit of his friend Jack O’Neill. “And I won’t even have to worry
about hiding the body.”
One of the balls of white fire hit the ground at Vernon’s feet sending him scrambling toward the stairs. Daniel could smell the stink of urine as the man ran up the stairs and slammed the cellar door.

/Harry, we’ve got to leave here, before he works up the courage to come back down./ Daniel told his host as he returned control to the boy.

/I just want you out./ Harry told him. /How can you be inside me if you are from the future? Was that a lie?/

/No, I am from the year the year 2003./ Daniel told him. /As for how I got here, that’s complicated and when I got here I didn’t know that I was in your body./

/Would you have stayed if you had known?/ Harry couldn’t help sounding frightened. This was probably a little like how Quirrell felt when he was possessed by Voldemort, that was if he regretted housing the Dark Lord.

/I do not think I would’ve been able to leave./ Daniel told him. /I think I was sent here to save your life. You were almost dead when I got here. I think once you are safe I should be able to leave./

/I will never be safe as long as I am in this house./ Harry told him with certainty a little calmer at the thought he might get his body back to himself.

/I know that./ Daniel told him. /That’s why we need to leave, before he does kill you. Where are we Harry? You sound English. Are we in Great Britain or Australia?/

/I think we are in the cellar of my Uncle’s house in Surrey./ Harry told him.

/Then hold on./ Daniel told him as a white glow began filling the cellar. /I’m getting us out of here and taking you some place where the rest of your injuries can get treated./

There was a flash of bright light like a flashbulb going off then the cellar was in darkness again and it was empty.

As the ambulance driver pulled into St. Bart’s with his patient, he received quite a shock when the beams of his headlights, revealed the body of a boy who appeared to be unconscious, lying near the emergency room entrance.

“Barry,” the driver called to one of the EMT’s in the back. “Get inside and get one of the interns or residents and a gurney out here ASAP.”

“What’s going on, George?” Barry asked poking his head through the doorway to the driver’s compartment of the ambulance. He could not understand the urgency since the guy they were bringing in was holding his own now.

“Looks like somebody dumped a kid by the emergency room entrance.” George told him. “I can not tell if he is alive or dead, though I am betting he is probably still alive or...”

“The person would’a dumped the body elsewhere.” Barry finished as he opened the back door of the ambulance and jumped out.

In the emergency room area, Barry grabbed the first doctor he saw. “I need you to come outside right now. When we were pulling in with our patient, George saw the body of a boy lying near the entrance. I did a quick check and he is alive but he looks like he has been badly beaten. He also
appears to have a broken leg along with the bruising.”

Harry moaned as he felt hands touching him. He tried opening his eyes to see who it was but they refused to co-operate. He wanted to get away from those probing hands since they were causing more pain and not less, but he couldn’t seem to move.

/Easy, Harry,/ Daniel told him. /I think a doctor is checking to make sure it is safe to move you./

/Where did you bring me?/ Harry thought glad that he had someone to distract him from the probing hands if only for a little while.

/I brought you to St. Bart’s in London./

Harry heard a male voice instructing someone, “Lift him carefully. He is semi-conscious, so we want to avoid causing him any more pain than we have to. Jesse, get Dr. Sanderford. Tell him we’ve got an injured child with possible internal bleeding, a broken leg, and wrist. Also get hold of someone from Children’s Services. This boy appears to be malnourished and there is heavy bruising consistent with a beating so we may have a case of child neglect or abuse.”

Even though they were very careful in transferring him from the hard ground to an equally hard something else, Harry couldn’t help moaning in pain, as the broken bones in his leg were jarred and grated against each other.

The next thing Harry felt through the pain was something stabbing into his left arm and that was followed a moment later by something cool rushing through him. A few moments later the pain vanished and Harry felt as if he were floating. There were lots of voices around him but he couldn’t understand what they were saying and at this point he was so happy to be out of pain, he didn’t care what they were doing to him.

/Well Harry, it looks like you should be okay from here./ Daniel told him. /So I will be going./

/Thank you for all your help./

/I’ll see you in three years./ Daniel told him.

/But you will not know me then./ Harry reminded him.

/I know, but you’ll know me./

/Time travel seems to be very confusing./ Harry complained.

/Think about how I feel./ Daniel told him. /This is the second time I’ve done it and doesn’t seem to get any less confusing. If you do the wrong thing, you could mess up everything./

/Do you think you did the wrong thing in this case?/ Harry wanted to know.

/No, my past self aside, I think I was supposed to come here to save your life./ Daniel sounded very serious. /Harry Potter, I hope that you have a long and wonderful life, filled with the joy you have been denied so far./

/And I hope you make it home to your own time, Dr. Daniel Jackson./ Harry countered.

Daniel concentrated on remaining unseen as he separated from Harry’s body. The last thing he needed was the medical staff freaking out because a glowing, tentacled being appeared in the
emergency room. Once he was completely separate, he felt a sharp stab of pain as the EKG they were using to monitor Harry’s heart started squealing.

“He has flatlined!” The doctor shouted. “Get the crash cart in here!”

Daniel watched from his elevated position in a corner near the ceiling as they worked frantically over Harry’s body, using CPR and the defibrillator paddles to try and get his heart started. Come on Harry. He tried to send mental encouragement to the boy and almost missed the feeling of weakness that was slowly spreading through him. He wasn’t used to feeling weak in his ascended form. In fact it felt like he was slowly dying. It took him a few moments to realise that the cause for his weakness and Harry’s having no heartbeat must be one and the same. The moment they had separated, Harry had flatlined and now he felt like he was dying which was supposed to be impossible for one of the Ascended. Had he somehow joined his life force to Harry’s past the point of separation?

He knew he didn’t have time to consider this in depth, because if he didn’t do something they would both die, irrevocably altering the future. He floated back over to Harry’s body and merged back into him, joining Harry in unconsciousness.

When the EKG started registering the boy’s heartbeat again five minutes after they started trying to resuscitate him, the doctors and nurses surrounding him smiled, pleased that the boy hadn’t yet given up on life and that God wasn’t ready to claim him yet.

“Let’s get those x-rays and the blood work done. He looks malnourished and I want to make sure we do not have any other problems.” Dr. Sanderford ordered. “I want to get his leg and wrist set as soon as possible. We also need to get photographs of the bruises and any other damage for Children’s Services and the Police.”

Hermione had just gotten to sleep when the sound of an owl hooting frantically startled her out of it. She looked up and saw Hedwig flying around in circles over her bed, still hooting loudly.

“Hedwig!” Hermione called. “What is wrong? Has something happened to Harry?”

Pleased that she had accomplished her goal of waking up the bushy haired witch, Hedwig landed beside her and bobbed her head in an affirmative to the question.

“Has he been hurt?” Hermione asked.

Hedwig shrugged her wings like a human would shrug their shoulders when they didn’t know.

“Is he at the Dursleys?”

Hedwig shook her head ‘no’.

“Can you show me where he is?”

Hedwig shook her head.

Hermione didn’t know if that meant the place was inaccessible by non-magical means or if Hedwig couldn’t locate Harry, which was something that was supposed to be impossible. A bonded familiar should be able to locate their master as long as they were alive. That thought sent a shiver down Hermione’s spine. “Hedwig, is Harry dead?”
Hedwig shook her head ‘no’ again.

“Is something preventing you from finding him?” Hermione asked.

Hedwig bobbed her head ‘yes’.

“All right, Hedwig,” Hermione told the snowy owl, “I am going to write a letter for you to take to Professor Dumbledore. He should be able to get a magical search started for Harry. I am going to call the police and see if I can get them to check things out at the Dursleys, okay.”

Hedwig bobbed her head in approval and hooted happily.

Harry had blacked out at the moment Dr. Jackson separated from him and he remembered feeling a little odd and disconnected as if he were no longer in his body. Then suddenly he was in the middle of his favourite dream where he was flying his Nimbus 2000 around the grounds of Hogwarts. He was startled when he heard someone call his name because in this dream usually there was no one here but the birds. Looking down, he saw a man in a white standing there and thought it looked like that Dr. Jackson.

He quickly descended to the ground, determined to find out why Dr. Jackson was back in his mind.

“I thought you had left.” Harry commented once he was in range.

“I tried to,” Dr. Jackson told him, “but the minute we separated, you flatlined and I started dying.”

“Flatlined?” Harry had never heard that term before.

“Your heart stopped beating.” Dr. Jackson told him. “And I started feeling very weak and the longer we remained separated, the weaker I became. I just barely made it back in time.”

“You mean I can not ever get rid of you?” Harry flushed as he realised how tactless that sounded. This man had saved his life after all.

“I’m afraid not,” Dr. Jackson sounded as if he regretted that fact, “at least not until I can figure out how to do it, without killing both of us.”

Harry didn’t know why, but his instincts were telling him that Daniel really regretted that he couldn’t leave Voldemort alone in his body. They were also telling him that Dr. Jackson was nothing like Voldemort but he was scared to death of the idea of anyone or anything sharing his body. It reminded him way too much of when Voldemort had possessed Quirrell’s body during his first year at Hogwarts. The biggest problem he could see right now was trying to find a way to separate them without killing them both. He didn’t want Daniel dead. The man had saved his life after all, not to mention he had given Vernon a hell of a scare. That reminded him he needed to ask Daniel what kind of magic that was. He’d never seen anything like it before and he’d certainly never heard of it at Hogwarts. As his thoughts wandered down this path, Harry began to think it might not be such a bad thing to share his life with Dr. Daniel Jackson, at least until they could find a way to safely undo whatever had bound them together. He might even be the gainer in all of this. Merlin knew that given the way he seemed to attract trouble, he could use all the help he could get.

Resigning himself to a situation he could not change Harry asked, “What do we do now?”

“Well, since it looks like we are going to be together for quite some time, we might want to share our histories and see if we can find some common ground, besides our being orphans and left with
people who didn’t and don’t want us.” Daniel told him. “I can guarantee you’ve never heard a story like mine before.”

“Oh I would not be too sure about that.” Harry told him rising to the challenge. “You have not heard some of the more unusual parts of mine.”

If the residents of Privet Drive had been awake and looking out their windows, they might have become alarmed at the sight of the rather large, shaggy black dog that was slowly making its way house by house down their street. He’d meant to come by earlier, but wizards had suddenly popped into the area and he’d recognized a few of them from the Accidental Magical Reversal Squad, so he had to wait until they were gone and the neighbourhood quiet once more.

He figured that Harry must have had a burst of accidental magic and wondered what had set his godson off. He knew that once you started magic school, the only time a child would have a burst of accidental magic was if they were extremely upset to the point of possibly wanting to kill or badly injure someone.

The dog sniffed every house and yard, looking for a particular scent it hadn’t smelled in over twelve years. Sirius knew the street that Lily’s sister and her family lived on, but not the exact address. Once he located the house where Harry’s scent seemed to be the strongest, Sirius went around back and returned to his human form for a few moments. Then using the wand he’d stolen off of a drunken wizard, who’d passed out at the sight of his animagus form, he unlocked the back door and opened it before reverting back to his animagus form. He moved stealthily through the kitchen and the hallway surprised a few times when his nose encountered a strong acrid smell that his canine nose didn’t like. Knowing that muggles used some odd things to clean and that some of them would smell very bad to his canine nose, he guessed it was one of those, but he couldn’t help wondering why it seemed to be in patches instead of all over the floor, not to mention why it smelled like it had been recently applied.

Dismissing it for the moment, he moved carefully through the lower part of the house and was surprised to find no pictures of Harry on display only some extremely fat blond kid was on display beside the pictures of Petunia and her obnoxious husband... Vernol... Verand. He gave up trying to remember the stupid muggle’s name since it didn’t matter. What was important was checking on Harry before he started out for Hogwarts and finding Peter. He did find Harry’s scent on the cupboard under the stairs. He had to shift back to human form to get the lock off, not to mention opening it. Carefully to avoid making any sound he slid the door open and found Harry’s school trunk there and wondered why it would be locked up, but then he remembered that Petunia hated magic and probably locked it up there out of spite.

Given the late hour, he figured that Harry must be upstairs in bed. Slipping back into his Grim form, Sirius went upstairs and found Harry’s scent all over a tiny bedroom filled with broken toys but no Harry. Given the absence of any pictures of Harry downstairs with the rest of the family, Sirius doubted that any of these toys were his godson’s. He would bet the Black family home on Grimmauld Place that they belonged to the fat kid in the pictures.

Turning he headed back downstairs to the only other doorway he hadn’t checked yet, the one that led to the cellar.

Changing back to human form, he opened the door to the cellar and pulling out his wand, Sirius muttered, “lumos.”

The tip of his wand lit up illuminating the stairway and he went down it. He searched the whole of
the cellar and found nothing but some bloodstains that appeared to be fresh. Afraid of who they might belong to, Sirius slipped back into his animagus form and sniffed one of them carefully. The scent in and around the blood was... *Harry’s!* The grim growled. *How dare they hurt my godson!* And from the amount of blood he could see, James’ son must be badly hurt. Where was he though? Sirius knew from his trip through the neighbourhood that Harry wasn’t outside in hiding. Had he somehow managed to apparate somewhere? Sirius wasn’t certain that was possible, but he knew from some of the old books in the Black library that weren’t quite so Dark as the others, that wizards when faced with a choice of life or death had sometimes been known to do extraordinary things. Things they could never repeat afterwards. Had Harry somehow managed to do that...maybe take himself someplace safe. He hoped so, because with the manhunt that was going on for him he couldn’t look for him right now. He had to find Peter and get himself cleared before he could try finding Harry. He was however going to do something about the Muggles who had injured his godson.

Padding back up the stairs, he started to head out of the kitchen and back upstairs, when there was a pounding sound at the front door. Growling in disappointment as he heard someone come stomping down the stairs to turn on the hall light, Sirius headed out the back door.

*I will be back* he promised the sleeping occupants of the house. *You will not escape my wrath!*

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“Whoever you are you had better have a damn good reason for pounding on my door at 3:30 in the morning.” The policeman could hear someone growl as the door was flung open in response to his pounding. He’d had to do that when the first couple of times he had knocked, it seemed to be ignored.

“What the hell do you want?” Vernon bellowed, before taking a good look at who was there.

“I am Constable Jason Parker.” The police officer identified himself. “We received a call from a Miss Hermione Granger in Seven Oaks claiming that a friend of hers one Harry Potter had called her from this residence, telling her that his life was in danger, but before she could get more details the call was suddenly disconnected. She asked that we please check on him, given that he is a minor.”

Vernon suddenly paled and Parker noticed it in the light from the porch lamp. “Surely the police have better things to do with their time than to worry about some practical joke cooked up by my freaky nephew and one of his teenage friends.”

“That we do, sir,” Parker agreed.

Vernon looked relieved but it didn’t last long when Constable Parker added, “So if you will just get Mr. Potter so that I can verify that he is okay and in no danger, I can be on my way.”

“He’s sleeping right now,” Vernon tried to bluster as the hall light was clicked on from upstairs.

“Vernon, what is it?” A woman’s voice called. “Is something wrong?”

“Go back to bed, Petunia,” Vernon told her. “Potter called one of his friends and managed to convince her that he was being attacked, then she called the police. I was just explaining to this officer that it was a joke and that young Harry is safe upstairs in bed.”

From where he was standing, Constable Parker could see the woman’s face clearly and a look of terror has quickly crossed it before she got herself back under control when she saw he was watching her.
She crossed her arms, bristling like a hedgehog. “My husband is correct, Constable. My nephew is quite safe and asleep in his room.”

“He must be an awful sound sleeper if he can sleep through this.” Parker commented. “As I was explaining to your husband ma’am, if you would just fetch your nephew so that I can speak with him, we can get this whole matter sorted out and I can be on my way and you can go back to bed.”

“I will not,” She shrieked. “He has had a hard day of chores and has another one tomorrow. He needs his rest.”

“My request is perfectly reasonable ma’am.” Parker told her. “I have been asked to do a welfare check on one Mr. Harry Potter a resident of #4 Privet Drive a home belonging to Vernon Dursley. I have asked you to produce him. If you can not or will not, then Miss Granger’s suspicions that something has happened to her friend will be validated and we will have to search this house.”

“You will not set one toe over this threshold without a warrant.” Vernon growled. “We have told you there is nothing wrong with the boy.”

“Then sir, all you have to do is produce him so that I can talk to him.”

When Harry next woke to the real world, he found himself in a slightly familiar place. At first he thought it was the Hospital wing of Hogwarts but he could hear something beeping off to his left and as he moved his right arm he felt a heavy weight on his wrist and realized he was in a muggle hospital.

“What is a muggle?/ A sleepy sounding voice brought all the events of last night flooding back. For a few moments he had thought it had all been a very weird and detailed dream, except for the part about his uncle beating him for blowing up Aunt Marge.

“Daniel!” Harry hissed.

/You might want to just think whatever it is you want to say to me, Harry./ Daniel advised him. /Otherwise you may wind up in a padded room because people think you are crazy and believe me when I say that is no fun./ Then as if he’d read Harry’s thoughts, he added, /I bet you thought last night was all a dream./

/How did you know?/ Harry didn’t bother to hide his surprise.

/It’s what I’d be thinking if I were in your shoes./ Daniel told him. /And you have to remember, we both agreed that I’d had a far stranger life than you./

/Only for now./ Harry shot back. /I am a lot younger than you so there is still plenty of time for weirder stuff to happen to me too, especially given the fact that I live among wizards for most of the year and at least one group of them would like nothing better than to kill me in the most painful way possible./

/Yes, we’ll have to see what we can do about that./ Daniel told him. /You never did answer my question though. What is a Muggle?/

/A muggle is a person who is unable to do any sort of magic./ Harry told him. /No that is not quite right, a Squib can’t do magic either, but they are part of the wizarding world. I guess it would be more accurate to say a muggle is a person... without any special abilities like the ability to do magic. What my aunt and uncle call normal people and not freaks./
I think your aunt and uncle are about as far from normal as it is possible to get and still be called Homo Sapiens. Daniel countered. You’ll notice I didn’t say human.

Harry had noticed.

What’s a Squib? Daniel wanted to know. Sounds like it should be some kind of sea creature like a squid.

Before Harry could answer him, a female voice spoke up, “Oh good you are awake.”

Harry looked up at the nursing sister and remembering Daniel’s instructions asked, “Where am I and how did I get here?”

“You are at St. Bart’s in London,” The nurse told him as she took his pulse and then checked his blood pressure. After writing that information down, she told him, “As for how you got here, we were hoping you could tell us.”

“I am afraid I do not know.” It was the truth after all. Harry had no idea how Daniel had moved them to London from Little Whinging.

“Can you tell me your name?” The nurse wanted to know.

“Harry Potter.”

“Date of birth?”

“July 31, 1980.”

“And where are your parents, Mr. Potter?”

“They are dead.” Harry told her flatly. “They died before I was two years old.”

“Then who do you live with?”

“I live with my aunt and uncle, Petunia and Vernon Dursley in Little Whinging Surrey, when I’m not at school.” The nurse was watching his face and saw it become an expressionless mask at the mention of his aunt and uncle. Are they the ones that abused this child? Or did they just allow the abuse to happen? she wondered.

Harry decided to change the subject a little. He wasn’t ready to discuss his relatives yet. “How badly am I hurt and when can I get out of here?”

That appeared to fluster the nurse a little, because she said, “Oh, I will get the doctor right away and they should be able to tell you.”

/Must be a relatively new one./ Daniel observed.

/What do you mean?/ Harry wanted to know.

/Well if the hospital grapevine is as good as it was when I wound up here during some of my time in England, she knows you died and came back./ Daniel began.

/That still does not explain why you think she’s new, other than maybe she looks kind’a young to be a nurse./ Harry countered.

/No that’s not why I said that./ Daniel told him. /She got flustered when you asked how badly you’d
been hurt and a nurse who has been working for a while, will have learned not to do that because it can make the patients nervous. They start imagining all kinds of bad things being wrong, when a nurse won’t answer such a simple question. We must be in one of the children’s wards, because the nurses with more experience usually work with the adults./

A male voice interrupted the discussion, "hello, I’m Dr Sanderford. And as I understand it from the nurse, your name is Harry Potter, is that correct?”

“Yes sir,” Harry told him.

“She also told me you wanted to know when you could get out of here.” The doctor was looking over all the information the night nurses had recorded on his chart.

“Yes sir.” Harry agreed. “I have to be on the school train September 1st and the school itself is not exactly easy to get around in if you have two casts.”

“Well, I’m afraid the cast on your wrist will not come off for at least another six weeks and the one on your leg will not be off for at least two months. That was a bad break there. You’re lucky the bone did not come through your skin. I’m afraid you will not be able to go to school unless it is in a wheelchair for at least three or four months, because once the casts are off you will need physiotherapy to learn how to use your wrist and leg properly. What I mean by that is you will have to learn how to stop compensating for the cast and build up the muscles in your forearm and leg again.” The doctor told him. “If you would like, I would be more than happy to notify someone in authority at your school and let them know the situation. As for when you can be released, that will not be for at least a few days, until we can make sure you have not had any lasting damage done to your heart.”

Even though he already knew that his heart had stopped beating, at Daniel’s prodding, he manufactured a look of surprise and tried to sound shocked as he said, “my heart stopped beating!”

“I am afraid so,” The doctor nodded. “You were clinically dead for about five minutes, but as you can see since you are talking to me, we did get your heart started again. We just need to make sure there are not going to be any repeats of that situation and that your heart has not had any undue stress placed on it by what happened. So far all the test results look good.”

Dr. Sanderford was silent for several minutes. “Is there someone you would like me to notify? Maybe your aunt or uncle?”

“The only thing my aunt or uncle would like to hear about me is that I am dead and stayed dead.” Harry didn’t bother to conceal the contempt he felt for his relatives. “If you could though, would you contact a friend of mine from school? Her name is Hermione Granger and she lives at 44 High Park Avenue in Seven Oaks.”

Hermione had given him her address before the end of school last term, in case he needed a place to come to get away from his relatives. She’d told him she thought it would be easier for him to get to her by non-magical means, than it would be for him to get to Ron’s. He didn’t bother asking the doctor to contact Ron’s family because they were out of the country right now and even if they had been home they didn’t have a telephone. He still didn’t know where Ron had called him from that time Uncle Vernon got to listen to him yell into the phone.

“What would you like me to tell her?” Dr. Sanderford wrote down the name and address.

“Just let her know where I am and that I’m all right.” Harry requested.
“I will see that she is notified.” Dr. Sanderford put the clipboard back in its slot by the bed. “Also, you will have a couple of visitors sometime within the next few hours.”

Curious, Harry asked, “Who?”

“The Police and someone from Children’s Services want to talk with you about your injuries.” The doctor told him as he reached the door.

“Are they actually going to believe me this time?” Harry asked sceptically.

“What are you talking about?” The level of cynicism in the boy’s voice stunned the doctor.

Harry and Daniel debated mentally whether or not the question should be answered, before telling the doctor. “I told two different people about my aunt and uncle beating me and basically treating me like a slave and they were teachers. Each time they promised they would help and I would never have to go back to the Dursleys and each time within a few days someone would accuse me of lying and trying to tarnish the name of my fine relatives and the teacher would disappear. Then I would get beaten within an inch of my life for telling about how they have to punish a freak like me and trying to destroy their reputation.” Harry told him. “If these people are not going to guarantee that I will never have to go back to the Dursleys, there is very little point in my talking to them because all that will happen is I will be sent back and this time they may finally succeed in killing me.”

Harry regretted almost immediately saying as much as he had, but Daniel congratulated him on having the courage to say what he felt and that made him feel a little better.

Feeling tired, Harry went back to sleep.

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When Harry woke again, he found a police officer in uniform and a woman who looked to be about Professor’s McGonagall’s age, sitting near his hospital bed. He could see they were both reading some files.

/I think they are here for the interview about what happened./ Daniel commented.

/No kidding!/ Harry countered suddenly feeling very nervous.

Feeling his nervousness and not wanting to damage his confidence, Daniel asked carefully, /Would you like me to speak with them?/

/Would you?/ Harry was grateful that he was willing to do so. He still didn’t feel comfortable talking about it. It had been hard enough sharing his memories with Daniel even though he had gotten to see the older man’s in return. He still couldn’t believe there was actually a device in United States that would allow a person to travel to a different planet, let alone a different galaxy.

Harry felt himself shifted gently into the background of his mind as Daniel took control of his body.

“Hello,” Daniel said softly, pulling their attention away from their files.

“Mr. Potter, I am Detective Constable Jesse Markum of the Metropolitan Police.” The policeman introduced himself.

“And I am Angela Bruschard, from Children’s Services.” The woman introduced herself then she asked hesitantly. “Has someone told you why we were coming?”
“The doctor who came by earlier told me that someone was going to be coming by to talk about what happened to me.” Daniel told her sounding very much like an uncertain twelve year old boy instead of the adult he was.

“You should know Harry that when we called the Police Department in Little Whinging after the doctor provided us with your residence, they informed us that they had your aunt and uncle under arrest for suspicion of your murder.” DC Markum told him.

“Really!” Both Harry and Daniel were surprised at this news. “How did that happen?”

“It seems a Miss Hermione Granger called the Little Whinging Police department and requested a welfare check on you saying that you had called her saying you were in danger and that the call was abruptly cut off.” DC Markum began.

“Mione called the Police?” Harry broke through and said in a startled voice. Daniel took it back again from him. “She knew I was missing?”

“She said you called her.” Markum repeated. “Was that not the case you?”

/Hedwig must have alerted her./ Harry told Daniel. /She’s the cleverest owl and Hermione is the cleverest witch./

“To tell you the truth, I do not remember all that much about last night except an awful lot of pain.” Daniel lied to the officer.

“What happened last night?” DC Markum asked all business now.

“Before I say anything, I want to know that this time something is going to be done about it.” Daniel told them. “There is no point in my saying a word if in a few days, you’re going to come back and call me a liar and say that I am trampling the name of a good and honourable man into the mud, because what that will mean is I am being sent back to the Dursleys. That I am being sent back into that hell, a place where I nearly died last night.” Daniel gave vent to all the anger Harry had toward the Dursleys. “Can you promise that something will be done this time?”

“I must say I am impressed with you, Harry.” Ms. Bruschard complimented the young boy. “Most children in your situation would not have the courage to stand up for themselves. The fact that you have not broken under abuse says a lot about your sense of self worth.”

“Well I can thank my parents for at least part of that.” Daniel told her. “I started getting my self-esteem back at the private school they paid for me to attend before they died. That’s another thing. Vernon is so jealous of what my parents did for me that he tells people I go to St. Brutus’ Secure Centre instead of a private school in Scotland for gifted children. Please do not change the subject though Ms Bruschard. Can you give me that guarantee?”

“I can promise that we will do our best to see that you never have to go back to that home, once we have proven they were the ones that abused you.” Ms Bruschard wouldn’t commit herself any further because she had to operate under the constraints of the Law. “I do not know why the charges were not proven before and I do not know why they called you a liar. No child should be called that for reporting abuse. What I can tell you is that this time there is more than enough proof to prove a claim of neglect if not abuse just from the evidence that was taken by the hospital last night and provided to us and the police.”

/Well?/ Daniel asked Harry.

/I think you were right, we have to try, otherwise I will definitely get sent back there./ Harry told
him.

/I won’t allow that./ Daniel told him. /Just remember, I can get us out of there and someplace safe, if need be./

With Harry’s agreement, Daniel began to tell the tale of Harry’s life.

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Harry was engrossed in a book one of the nurses had gotten for him so he would have something to do other than sleep and stare at the walls of the empty ward, when he heard a familiar voice call his name.

He looked up to see Headmaster Dumbledore, Madame Pomfrey, and Minister Fudge coming in the door. The clothes they were wearing looked like something that had been worn in the ‘40’s or ‘50’s.

“Headmaster!” Harry spoke up in surprise. “What are you doing here? And how did you find me?”

“You can thank Miss Granger for that. She notified us through Hedwig that you were missing and then she let us know that you had been found and where you were.” Dumbledore told him, his eyes twinkling. “We have been looking for you since we were told you ran away from your aunt and uncle’s last night.”

“I did not run away.” Harry countered hotly. “I was beaten for accidentally blowing up Aunt Marge after she insulted my parents and then dumped in the cellar.”

“If the two of you can postpone this discussion, Headmaster, I would like to check on my patient.” Madame Pomfrey requested bustling up with her wand out.

As Madame Pomfrey ran through her diagnostic spells, the Minister who was standing behind Dumbledore wearing an old-fashioned pinstriped suit cleared his throat trying to get Dumbledore and Harry’s attention.

“Oh forgive me Minister.” Dumbledore sounded apologetic. “Harry, I would like you to meet the Minister of Magic Cornelius Fudge. Cornelius, this is Harry Potter.”

“A pleasure to meet you, Harry.” Smiling, Fudge extended his hand for Harry to shake, but when Harry raised the hand that was enclosed in a cast from the middle of his palm to halfway up his arm, the smile faltered and his hand dropped back to his side. “I am certain you will be pleased to know that we were able to deflate your uncle’s sister and her memory has already been modified about the events of last night. You know you had us in quite a tizzy because you left the safety of your uncle’s home.”

“You must have a different idea than I do of what constitutes safety.” Harry muttered under his breath.

“Mr. Potter, you body and magic and your magic seem to have undergone some rather severe strain within the last day or so.” Madame Pomfrey commented as she studied the results of her scans.

“That is only to be expected when you’ve died and come back, I suppose.” Harry commented in an off-hand manner. He enjoyed the shocked looks on their faces.

“Died!” Madame Pomfrey seemed shocked. “What are you talking about?”

“According to Dr. Sanderford, I was dead for about five minutes last night then I came back to life.”
Harry told her matter-of-factly. The shock of it had worn off last night when he talked about it with Daniel. The man had died himself quite a few times, so he’d had a rather unique perspective on the whole matter.

“I am amazed you are taking it so calmly Mr. Potter.” Madame Pomfrey commented.

“I have had some time to think about it and I am just glad to be alive.” Harry told her.

“Harry,” Dumbledore pulled his attention away from the school’s healer. “Madame Pomfrey is going to take care of the rest of your injuries so that we can get you back to the Dursleys as soon as possible. It is the safest place for you to be”

Harry disagreed. “The Dursley house is not the safest place for me to be. Besides I doubt if the Police or Children’s Services will let me go back there. Vernon and Petunia are currently under arrest for attempted murder and child abuse.”

“Oh that is already been taken care of. They will not stop you returning.” The Minister blurted out, sounding very pleased that he could give him this news. “We have convinced them it was all a misunderstanding.”

“A misunderstanding?!?” Neither Harry nor Daniel couldn’t believe the idiocy coming out of this man’ mouth. “Did you not hear what I said? I was beaten so bad by Uncle Vernon that I nearly died, in fact I did die because of the injuries he inflicted.”

“Now, now, Harry, I am sure your uncle did not mean it.” Fudge continued as if what Harry had said didn’t matter. “He was after all under a lot of stress given that you had just accidentally blown up his sister. I am sure it was not intentional. He just got a little carried away. Once we get you home, I am sure you will see that it has all blown over and you will be back in the arms of your loving family once more.”

“You call a broken leg and a broken wrist an accident. Are you just stupid or blind?” Harry couldn’t believe this man. Where had he been living, under a rock? “I have had nearly ten years of abuse, from my so called loving family? In fact last night if I had not been very lucky their brand of love would have been the death of me.”

“Harry, if you were as you say put in the cellar, how did you get out of the house?” Dumbledore took control of the conversation before Fudge could make another blunder.

“I have no idea, Headmaster. Maybe it was my guardian angel.” Harry told him.

/That is first time I have ever been called that./ Daniel commented.

/Well at this moment it is also quite true./ Harry told him.

/Shhh,/ Daniel hissed. He felt something probing at Harry’s mind and quickly deflected it to a memory of blackness from last night and made sure it couldn’t go anywhere else.

/What is going on?/ Harry wanted to know.

/I think someone is trying to break into your mind./ Daniel told him. /I have deflected the probe though so they will not learn anything of interest./

“I want to know how you convinced the police to drop their case against the Dursleys?” Harry demanded.
“How is not important?” The Minister said pompously. “What is important is that it was done in your best interests. You are safe at the Dursleys. I am sure you will come to realise that in time.”

/Politicians are the same the world over./ Daniel commented dryly. /Always more interested in doing whatever it takes to stay in office than doing the right or best thing for everyone concerned. And when it blows up in their face, they make someone else the fall guy. And where did he get that horrible suit. I know I’m no fashion plate, but please, a lime green, pinstriped suit./

Harry had to fight to hold in a laugh at Daniel’s comments. Even though Daniel had never met the Minister before, he had his character pegged. Harry had disliked the man ever since he arrested Hagrid and sent him to Azkaban for being behind the attacks at the school, even though he had no proof. Was this going to be another case of what was the phrase the man had used last year when he arrested Hagrid? Oh yeah, “Got to be seen doing something.” He couldn’t help wondering why the Minister of Magic was here and just what he had in mind for him?

“Minister Fudge, the only way I will go back to the Dursleys is if I am dead.” Harry told him grimly, not giving an inch of ground to this idiotic politician. “They have already had almost ten years of trying and Vernon came very close to removing me from this world last night.”

“It was a misunderstanding, my boy,” Fudge told him. “We will get it all straightened out and then everything will be just fine you’ll see.”

“I am afraid I must disagree, Minister. I can not authorise his return to that home.” Madame Pomfrey told him. “I just finished running some deep scan spells on Mr. Potter and they show a definite pattern of neglect, broken bones, as well as indications that several of his vital organs have taken severe bruising in the past. He is severely underweight for a child of twelve going on thirteen and there are signs of malnutrition. As a healer I must report this matter to the Wizarding Children’s Protection Department.”

“Poppy, please finish taking care of Mr. Potter’s current injuries and then we can make a decision about where he is to stay, until this matter is resolved.” Dumbledore told the medi-witch.

As Poppy pointed her wand at Harry and began muttering a series of words under her breath, neither Harry or Daniel paid much attention to her instead they watched Dumbledore and the Minister who had walked over to the far side of the ward. They were talking quietly together and there was an occasional gesture.

/I don’t know what is going on, but I have a feeling we’re not going to like it./ Daniel commented. /They remind me too much of a few of the politicians and military types, I’ve had to deal with./

/I do not understand why Dumbledore is insisting that I have to go back./ Harry really was puzzled by Dumbledore’s behaviour. He knew the headmaster was always willing to look for the good in everyone, but he surely couldn’t believe the Dursleys was the safest place for him in the face of what had happened to him last night. That was just insane.

“Headmaster, I am finished.” Poppy announced.

Harry looked down and saw the casts were no longer on his wrist and leg. He gave them both an experimental flex, pleased that the extra weight was gone and that he would be able to use them properly again. They moved without pain.

“Thanks, Madame Pomfrey.” Harry told her sincerely.

“Just try to avoid any further injuries this year, please Mr. Potter.” The medi-witch requested.
“I will do my best, ma’am.” Harry promised her.

Before Madame Pomfrey could say anything further, Harry heard someone say, “Stupefy,” and Madame Pomfrey collapsed to the ground.

Harry looked up and saw Dumbledore’s wand pointed at him and was shocked when he heard him say “Obliviate!”

AN: Muhahahahahahahahahahahahaha
Knowing from Harry’s memories of Gilderoy Lockhart what this spell was capable of doing to someone, Daniel instinctively shoved Harry out of the way and took command of his body. Acting with the speed of thought, he seized control of the spell just before it made contact with Harry’s body. Quickly shifting the colour of the spell out of the visible light spectrum, Daniel dispersed its energy so that it would cause no harm to anyone. He was fairly certain that from Dumbledore and the Minister’s perspective it would appear as though the spell had hit Harry.

Keeping the expression on Harry’s face blank, Daniel listened as Dumbledore told him, “Harry, you got out of your Uncle’s house after accidentally blowing up his sister. You took the Knight Bus to the Leaky Cauldron...”

Daniel’s attention was yanked away as Harry tried to take control of his body back, screaming. /How can he do this to me? I thought he cared about me.../

Not having much time, Daniel did something he knew he would regret for years to come, but right now he couldn’t let Harry have control. They couldn’t allow Dumbledore to know his spell had failed to hit its intended target, otherwise the elderly man might try some method he couldn’t counteract to change their memories. Confining Harry in a corner of his mind and silencing him at least for now, Daniel returned his attention to what Dumbledore was saying.

“...you agreed to the Minister’s request to remain in Diagon Alley and not go into muggle London, after the Minister assured you, you were not going to suffer any punishment for the accidental magic you used on Marge Dursley.” Dumbledore concluded.

As he laid out what he wanted Harry to remember about last night, Dumbledore watched the boy’s face carefully. For a brief moment it looked as though he might be fighting the memory charm, but then his face again took on that slightly dazed expression left by memory charms so Dumbledore thought he’d been mistaken. It had probably been a reaction to Marge Dursley’s name and not his spell failing.

When he was finished, Dumbledore pointed his wand at Harry and said, “Quiesco.”

While Daniel recognized the Latin word for sleep, he once again dispersed the spell before it could reach its intended target. He had no intention of letting this man put them to sleep. God knew where they might wind up while they were. He wanted them conscious so they could escape if need be once they were left alone. He did however give the impression that the spell had worked by closing Harry’s eyes and relaxing his body as if it were asleep.
“How long will he sleep, Dumbledore?” Daniel heard Minister Fudge ask.

“It should last until morning,” Dumbledore him. “Has the Accidental Magical Reversal Squad finished removing this incident from the appropriate records and files?”

“They should be finished cleaning up the records here by now and all other locations have already been taken care of and all the people involved have had their memories modified.” Fudge told him. “Once we leave here, there will not be a trace in any muggle records that Harry Potter was ever in this Hospital.”

“Good,” Dumbledore’s voice sounded pleased. “We also need to retrieve Harry’s belongings from his Aunt and Uncle’s house and get them to the Leaky Cauldron before morning.”

“My people will see to that.” Fudge assured him then commented. “You do realise Albus that we were very lucky that Black didn’t find him first.”

*

Black? Who is Black and why would he want Harry? Daniel wondered.

From the way the two men were talking, it sounded as though they thought this Black person might do Harry harm, but given what they had intended to do to the boy, Daniel wasn’t going to take that at face value. So far from Harry’s memories and what he had seen with his, or rather Harry’s own eyes, these two seemed to be big fans of political expediency and to hell with the truth or doing what was right for someone else.

He was so caught up in his thoughts he almost missed Fudge’s question. “Are you certain it is safe for him to be left on his own in Diagon Alley, given the current situation?”

“Oh yes, he’ll be perfectly fine there.” Dumbledore assured him. “The shopkeepers will be alerted and I know they will keep an eye on him for us. Besides we need time for tempers to cool at his relative’s house.”

“Perhaps you are right?” Fudge conceded. “It would be better for all concerned if some time passed before they saw each other again. There will be less chance that the memory charm will unravel that way.”


Daniel waited until his Ascended senses told him they were alone in the new location before opening his/Harry’s eyes to see where they had been taken.

Without raising his head, he looked about the room he found himself in with interest. The furnishings and the room itself looked like something out of the seventeenth or eighteenth century. The walls were white plaster with wood beams visible in it in the fashion of those that were built during the time of the fifteenth or sixteenth century. There were no electric lights in evidence, only candles and a fire in the fireplace on the opposite wall.

The trip that had brought him to this room had been weirder than any trip he had every taken through the Stargate and that was saying something.

After Dumbledore said something that sounded like ‘moblicorpus’ which he translated to mean mobile body Daniel had had to fight the instinct to struggle when his body began rising off the bed and into an upright position, given that Harry, at least as far as the other two men knew, was asleep. A moment later he felt someone taking hold of his hand and could feel something resting between his palm and the other person’s palm. Once the other person had a secure hold on his hand, he heard the word ‘portus’ muttered. What followed was odd to say the least. It felt as if someone had stuck a
hook through his stomach and that hook jerked him along paths of energy he could feel flowing around him almost like a mini Stargate. The method of transport was almost instantaneous because the smells of the hospital vanished and he couldn’t make sense out of what he was hearing or smelling in the new location.

Before moving more than his head, Daniel swept the room with all his Ascended powers to make sure that there was no one, possibly hidden under an invisibility cloak, who had been left behind here to keep watch on Harry. Once he was satisfied that they were alone, Daniel released Harry from confinement and returned control to him.

“How dare you!” Harry blazed up. “You have no right to do whatever you want with my body! How is what you did to me any different from what the Goa’uld, you claim to fight, do? You hijacked my body and kept me prisoner in my own mind! While I am not anxious to die, I will not put up with you taking control whenever you damn well feel like it!”

He continued in this vein for several minutes before falling silent long enough for Daniel to ask, /May I say something now?/

/What can you possibly say to make what you did right?/ Harry retorted.

/Nothing./ Daniel admitted. /But I don’t intend to apologise for what I did. It had to be done and I would do it again in a heartbeat. That Dumbledore of yours was determined to return you to the Dursleys and he didn’t want you putting up a fight. I don’t know why they want you returned to what is clearly a dangerous environment, and right now I really don’t care. The fact that Dumbledore and Minister Fudge were willing to use a memory charm to insure that you went meekly back to your relatives tells me that they didn’t give a damn about what you wanted or what happened to you. There’s also the fact that neither of us have any idea what that memory charm might’ve done to my memories if I hadn’t stopped the spell. I have too much I want and need to remember to let some old man who thinks he has the right to decide what’s best for you mess with my mind or yours./

Daniel’s words reminded Harry of the fact that it had been Dumbledore and not Fudge, who had cast that memory charm on him and that brought all the anger and sorrow he had felt at the Headmaster’s betrayal back to the forefront of Harry’s mind. /Why would the Headmaster do that to me? Why would he want to send me back there, knowing how they treat me? I know the Headmaster always looks for the good in people, but surely he can not believe that this was an isolated incident?/

/I wish I had an answer for you but I don’t./ Daniel told him. /I just know that no matter how much you may hate the way I did it, we couldn’t let him know that his spell had been blocked. While I wish I could’ve left you in control, it was too risky. From what I’ve seen of your life, you haven’t learned how to lie convincingly yet. I have. If Dumbledore knew his first attempt failed, he might’ve tried a stronger spell or something that I wouldn’t be able to counter and that was a chance I wasn’t willing to take. Dumbledore and Minister Fudge remind me a lot of some of the people I met during my time at the SGC. Ones who only cared about what use they could make of you. You could trust them to keep you alive up to a point, but no further. Once you’d outlived your usefulness, they wouldn’t care if you lived or died. I’ve gotten very good at fooling people when I’ve had to in the last seven years, especially those in power who intended to cause me and those I’ve sworn to protect harm./

/Am I one of those you have fooled?/ Harry asked in a small voice, not really sure he wanted to know the answer.

Daniel sighed, /Harry, while I may not always tell you everything, you are the only person I can’t lie to. You and I may be two separate souls in this body, but because we are bound together, you would
know if I were lying to you, just as I would know if you were lying to me./

A thought suddenly occurred to Harry, /Do you think he has done it to me before?/

/What?/ Daniel asked puzzled then caught on to what he was asking. /You mean tampered with your memory?/

/Yeah. Could he have?/

/I don’t know./ Daniel admitted. /It’s possible. I mean Dumbledore didn’t seem to have any regrets about doing it this time and that could mean he’s done it before, or that he’s so convinced he is right that he can justify anything he does, at least to himself. We may want to investigate your other interactions in the wizarding world to see if he had a hand in any of them. If that is the case then it makes him a very dangerous individual, maybe even moreso than this Voldemort character because that means he has probably already done a number of shady things in his quest for what he probably thinks of as the greater good and he won’t stop at simply altering your memory./

/Are you saying he has engineered everything that has happened the last two years?/ Harry couldn’t help feeling shocked.

/No, that’s not what I’m saying. But I do think he has arranged certain events to make sure you made the choices he wanted you to make, thinking that those choices were your own./ Daniel pointed out. /For example, he sent Hagrid to pick you up when they were having trouble getting your letter to you. The person he incidentally gave the job of picking up the Philosopher’s Stone to as well. This is a man who while I have no doubt is a kind-hearted individual, couldn’t keep a secret to save his life. Dumbledore must have known this, so why would he trust him to pick the stone up and to insure one-seventh of the defences guarding it? He also had to know of Hagrid’s bias against the Slytherins which while not as pronounced as Snape’s toward Gryffindor’s would insure that you got the Slytherins were bad and avoid them at all costs speech. And last but not least, I think he arranged your first meeting with the Weasleys. I think he also arranged for Ron to be your first lengthy contact with a wizard your own age./

/You are saying that he set me up with the Weasleys?/ Harry couldn’t believe it.

/Just think about it for a moment,/ Daniel urged then laid out the inconsistencies he’d found so far. /According to the Sorting Hat you were evenly balanced between Slytherin and Gryffindor. Even though he couldn’t know for certain that Slytherin would be one of the Sorting Hat’s choices for you, Dumbledore wanted to make sure you to chose Gryffindor over any other House. He may have known from Hagrid about your meeting with Malfoy, but he couldn’t be certain that that would insure that you would choose the House he wanted you in, so he arranges for you to meet a family that currently has several members in Gryffindor. Mrs. Weasley is not a very subtle person you know. She has sent five children to Hogwarts before your friend Ron, not to mention going there for seven years herself and yet she has to ask in a loud voice for the number of the platform. And her saying ‘Packed with muggles’ that was to get your attention so you would have to ask them how to get on, since Hagrid hadn’t told you. Whether that was on Dumbledore’s orders or not, I don’t know, but it is very suspiscious. Then there is the ride up on the train. Ron told you the train was full, but yet no one else joined the two of you or even disturbed you other than the Weasley twins and the lady with the sweets trolley until the trip was almost half over. Again, I’m not saying that Ron isn’t really your friend, but it is just another thing that doesn’t make sense unless there was an unknown hand controlling it, because you should have been interrupted long before then, if only by other students who were curious to see who else was on the train./

Before Harry could make any comment, they heard the doorknob rattle.
Lie down Harry, Daniel ordered, pretend you’re asleep.

Harry complied without wondering why he should do anything Daniel Jackson told him, given the man’s actions earlier. He listened as several people moved about the room putting things down. Whoever they were they were not talking, nor were they coming near the bed he was lying on. It seemed they were in a hurry to finish their business because they left a few minutes or so it seemed after entering the room.

Harry kept his eyes closed, listening carefully as Daniel stretched out his Ascended senses to make sure they were alone again. The only thing Harry heard was the rustle of wings while the only living thing Daniel detected was a bird of some kind.

There’s no one else in the room other than a bird, Daniel told his host.

That is probably Hedwig, my owl, Harry told him.

Your owl? Daniel was stunned for a moment then remembered, Oh yes, you mentioned something about your owl earlier.

Want to meet her? Harry asked eagerly as he opened his eyes.

I don’t think I have much choice. Where you go, I go, remember? Daniel reminded him with a laugh.

Oh yeah, Harry gave a slightly shaky laugh. I am still not used to this.

Neither am I, Daniel admitted, but we have time to get used to each other.

Hedwig stared at her master’s body where it was lying on the bed some of her concern easing, but not all. There was something off about him. The magic that bound her to him as his familiar was still there as strong as ever, but every so often it seemed to vanish to be replaced by a different signature entirely as if the person before her were no longer her master. Had her master somehow been possessed? And if he had indeed been possessed, why hadn’t the old white-haired wizard who kept the place her master went to every year, detected the change himself? She would have to be cautious around her master until she figured out what was going on.

Harry approached his owl. “Hedwig, you were such a clever girl, going to Hermione to get help for me.” He stroked her breast feathers with his finger. “If we really are near Diagon Alley, I will have to remember to pick you up a special treat.”

As Hedwig watched the expression on her master’s face changed slightly and she felt his magic signature disappear again. She flapped her wings, trying to back away from the hand that was next to her.

Her master’s magical signature was back.

“What is wrong girl?” Harry asked.

I think somehow she is detecting me, Daniel told him. She reacted that way when I spoke to you.

The signatures had switched again. She was getting very confused.

“Can she?” Harry’s voice asked further confusing Hedwig.

I honestly don’t know, Daniel told him. I suggest we ask her. If she is a magical creature, she may
be able to sense a change in your aura or something similar when I am active."

“Hedwig, are you feeling something peculiar about me?” Harry asked.

Hedwig uncertainly bobbed her head and waited to see what happened, preparing to flee for help if necessary out the open window.

“And I bet you can not make sense of it can you?” Her master’s magical signature had vanished again. “Hedwig, allow me to introduce myself. I am Daniel Jackson and through a very peculiar set of circumstances, I saved Harry’s life last night and in the process bound mine to his without intending to.”

Seeing the sceptical look in the owl’s eyes, Harry quickly rushed to tell her. “It is true Hedwig. If it had not been for Daniel, Uncle Vernon would have killed me last night. The only problem is we can not separate now, or it will kill both of us.”

Hedwig gave him a look as if to say ‘do you think I was hatched yesterday.’

“It is quite true my dear Hedwig.” The other was back again. “I am sort of from the future and also an ascended being. I thought Harry’s body was my own when I first woke in it and in the process of healing the injuries and pulling him back from the brink of death, I somehow tied our life forces together. It was not intentional I assure you. The joining I mean, not the saving of his life.”

If ever an owl could give someone a look like your mother when they suspected you were telling them a lie, Daniel thought that Hedwig managed it. Looking around the room, his eyes fell on the mirror over the dresser. Extending his arm to the owl, Daniel said, “While I can’t separate from Harry for very long without killing him, I can show you what I look like, maybe that will reassure you I intend no harm to Harry.”

Hedwig studied him carefully for a moment. She felt no immediate threat from him and her curiosity was beginning to get the better of her. She hopped on to the extended arm and let him take her over to the magical mirror.

A white glow covered Harry’s hand as it passed over the mirror. Hedwig could see that the image of she and her master had been replaced by the image of an older man with close-cropped, golden brown hair and blue eyes. The mouth was smiling. Hedwig studied the face intently, looking back and forth between her Harry and the mirror. It was a good face Hedwig decided. She would trust him... for now.

She gave a questioning hoot.

“That is the image of Dr. Daniel Jackson, archaeologist and linguist from the year 2003.” Daniel assured her. “I have no idea how I came to be here or in Harry’s body, but until we can figure out a way to safely separate, I will be a part of Harry’s life and given Harry’s penchant for finding trouble that’s probably a good thing.”

Hedwig hooted in agreement accepting this change in her master’s life and memorised the other’s magical signature so she could tell them apart.

“Hey!” Harry sputtered indignantly, annoyed that his owl was agreeing with Daniel. “You have found far more trouble than I have Dr. Daniel Jackson, so you have no room to talk.”

Daniel wisely made no comment, given that Jack had often called him a trouble magnet. O’Neill had often said that whatever trouble might be lying in wait on a planet would suddenly decide to occur the moment he got near it; from earthquakes and landslides to a Goa’uld who hadn’t paid a particular
world a visit in several millennia suddenly deciding that today was a good day to check out or reclaim it.

/Where do you think we are?/ Daniel decided to change the subject as Hedwig returned to her perch.

/Well, if I had to take a guess, I would say probably the Leaky Cauldron, given that Dumbledore mentioned me meeting Fudge there./ Harry told him. /I know the Leaky Cauldron has some rooms, though I’ve never stayed in them before./

Given that they had to have some kind of plan in place before they confronted Dumbledore again or anyone else who might know Harry well, Daniel asked, /How long before we have to go to Hogwarts?/

/If we go back to Hogwarts you mean,/ Harry countered.

/I think we will have to,/ Daniel told him thoughtfully, /if only to buy ourselves time. The more time we have the more foolproof we can make our plan so that if we do have to leave or go into hiding, they will not be able to find us if we do not want them to./

Harry considered this for a while and realised Daniel was probably right. While it would be impossible to plan for everything, it would be better to have a plan in place that covered the big things at least that way they wouldn’t be scrambling frantically to fix something when it went wrong. If it went wrong, he amended to himself. But then again with the way his luck usually ran and adding his new companion’s into the mix, bad luck was sure to follow. /The new term starts in about two weeks./

Thinking off the top of his head Daniel said, /The first thing we need to do is find out the complete state of your finances and who has control over them given you are still a minor./

/That means a visit to Gringotts in the morning,/ Harry told him.

/No,/ Daniel disagreed. /Actually it means a visit to Flourish and Blotts. We need to get a look at a book on goblin customs if there is such a thing. Given Dumbledore’s actions, I bet that he has hidden more things from you than just the fact that he does not want you leaving the Dursleys. We are probably going to have to go to the highest levels of management to get the answers we need./

/We will still need to get money from Gringotts, because there is no place to read in Flourish and Blotts, so we will have to buy the books and read them here./ Harry pointed out. /Besides, if we are going back to Hogwarts, I need to get my school supplies and finish up my assignments for the coming year./

/I can help with that./ Daniel offered.

/How? You know even less about the magical world than I do./ Harry pointed out.

/True, but I am a very fast learner./ Daniel told him. /Besides I do not have anything else to do at the moment, so I might as well help you. You are a very bright young man Harry, despite what your relatives tried to get you to believe. Do not let that intelligence go to waste./

/Great,/ Harry sighed, /you want to turn me into Hermione./

Daniel laughed then turned serious. /No, I just want you to use the gifts you were given and your intelligence is one of them. You have a very clever old man and a very cunning politician wanting to keep you in ignorance, for reasons of their own, not to mention this Voldemort character and the only way we may be able to overcome that is to use what we have; my brains and yours, and make
them underestimate us in the process. Face it Harry, it is the only way we will survive. /

/I would not have called Fudge smart, given what he did to Hagrid last year and the way he announced that they had taken care of the problem of people knowing about how my relatives abused me like he was doing me a favour. / Harry pointed out.

/Smart and cunning are too different things,/ Daniel disagreed. / A person may not be all that smart, but if they are cunning enough, they can try and find their way out of situations that would leave a smarter person totally lost. Even a rat can be cunning when it needs to be, though it is not considered a very intelligent animal. /

The next morning after they had breakfast in the Leaky Cauldron, Harry/Daniel went out back and wand out, Harry said, /Daniel Jackson get ready to experience a world you have never seen before. /

Tapping the correct brick with his wand, Harry smiled at Daniel’s gasp of amazement as the brick wriggled as if it were ticklish and then a hole appeared and grew larger until it formed an archway.

In a voice similar to the one Hagrid used the first time he brought Harry to Diagon alley, Harry said, /Dr. Jackson, welcome to Diagon Alley. /

Daniel found his first glimpse of Diagon Alley to be very informative. From Harry’s knowledge of the magical world which even Harry admitted was limited to his contact with other wizards like the Weasleys and those at Hogwarts and given the appearance of most of the buildings in Diagon Alley, he was willing to bet that most but not all contact with the non-magical world had been cut off some time in the seventeenth century. He knew from Harry that some had access to non-magical technological items like cars, stoves, among other things that had been enchanted to work without electricity. What he couldn’t understand was why if the magical community knew about the things that the non-magical community had produced, why had they chosen not to progress beyond the technological level of the seventeenth century in most of the things they used in their daily lives.

Harry smiled as he felt Daniel’s eagerness as he viewed the Alley for the first time. It did kind of surprise him though that a man who was probably way smarter than Hermione could still have all the eager innocence of a child when confronted by something he had never seen before. Hermione seemed to have lost that innocence. The last time he had been in Diagon Alley with her, she hadn’t bother looking around and exploring all the unusual shops, instead she had approached the visit with a businesslike attitude. That was, he reminded himself, until she saw Gilderoy Lockhart and like all the other females within a ten meter radius she had gone all gooey-eyed over the man.

/ Do not worry, Daniel, we’ll have plenty of time to explore, after we visit Gringotts. / Harry assured his eager passenger. In fact he was looking forward to having the time to really explore the Alley himself. The last two times, he had been brought here, he really hadn’t had the time to do so, because the people escorting him made sure he only went where he needed to go to get his school things and only made a couple of detours.

Harry headed to Gringotts and after presenting his key, was escorted to his vault by a goblin named Glathrock.

As the mine cart came to a halt in front of Harry’s vault, Daniel gasped, / Whoo! That was almost as much of a rush as going through the stargate. /

/ It is a bit of a wild ride. / Harry agreed as he got out of the cart.
“Key please,” Glathrock requested unaware of their exchange.

Harry handed it over and waited while the goblin put it in the lock and opened the vault. When the green smoke coming out of the vault cleared, Daniel got his first good look at wizarding money and whistled at the piles of gold, silver, and bronze coloured coins. As Harry scooped some of the coins into a nearby sack, Daniel could tell from the weight as he handled them that it was real gold. He made a mental note to have Harry find out the exchange rate between the wizarding currency and the British pound. He figured they had to have one, given that those students who came from non-magical families certainly wouldn’t have Galleons, Sickles, or Knuts, until they converted some of their British pounds. Once they had that information, even if the exchange rate changed a bit, they would still have a general idea of how much they would have when they went out on their own.

Once they were back outside the bank Harry asked, fairly certain of the answer, /should we go exploring first or to Flourish and Blotts?/

/Uhm.../

Harry could feel the wealth of indecision in that word and decided to add fuel to the fire of indecision. /The only part of Diagon Alley we have to make sure to avoid is Knockturn Alley. Other than that we can go pretty much where we want./

/I’m beginning to wonder if you might not be related to Jack O’Neill because that sounds like something he would have said./ Daniel growled.

Harry laughed out loud and that got him a few strange looks from the passing witches and wizards, who couldn’t figure out what he was laughing at.

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Harry/Daniel spent the remainder of the morning exploring the nooks and crannies of Diagon Alley. They stopped in a few of the more interesting looking shops and made a note to go back and look at a few others later. Then before tackling Flourish and Blotts they stopped in for a well-deserved snack of chocolate chunk ice cream.

/Ummm/ Daniel moaned in pleasure at the taste of chocolate after so long without it. There was only one... no two things about being Ascended that he hadn’t liked, other than not being allowed to openly help people, though he had found a way around that restriction and as long as he had been discreet Oma had never called him on it. No the two things he’d missed most while Ascended besides his friends were; chocolate and coffee! He wasn’t able to have coffee yet because Harry was a little young for it, but he was certainly going to enjoy chocolate.

After draining the last drop of chocolaty goodness from the ice cream bowl, Harry/Daniel set off for Flourish and Blotts.

When they got to the bookstore an interesting sight met Harry/Daniel’s eyes. Instead of the gold embossed spellbooks that had been displayed in the store window the last few times Harry had been here, there was a very strong looking cage that seemed to be holding about a hundred copies of the *Monster Book of Monsters*. He felt Daniel’s astonishment match his own as they watched the books fight with each other.

/Is this normal for the magical world?/ Daniel winced, as one book was ripped apart by others sending pages flying everywhere.

/I do not know./ Harry told him. /I do not think they are alive and the only other books I have seen...
act as anything other than a plain old book were the ones in the restricted section of Hogwarts./

/Well whoever created the spell to make these books act alive, has a very warped....../

“Hogwarts?” A rather impatient looking man that Harry recognised at the manager of the bookstore interrupted their silent conversation. “Have you come to get your books?”

“Yes,” Harry dug out his book list, but the manager was ignoring him.

As Harry/Daniel watched, he pulled on a pair of thick gloves, picked up a thick, gnarled walking stick and headed toward the cage.

Remembering the book Hagrid had sent him for his birthday was also the Monster Book of Monsters, now securely bound with one of Dudley’s old belts and stored in his trunk at the Leaky Cauldron, Harry checked his booklist and saw that it was indeed listed on there as a schoolbook. Before the manager could open the cage, he told him “I already have that one.”

“You do?” The man looked relived. “Thank Merlin for that. I’ve been bitten five times today...”

The manager’s voice trailed off as two of the Monster books got hold of a third and proceeded to rip it apart.

“That is it!” he cried, knocking the books apart with his stick. “I am never stocking these books again. It has been bedlam since they arrived and I thought the worst mistake we had ever made was in getting 200 copies of the Invisible Book of Invisibility. We never did find them and the cost... Well, can I help you with anything else?”

The manager helped Harry find all of his schoolbooks and then left him when he said he was going to browse and see if he could find anything else he wanted.

Harry could feel Daniel’s pleasure as they wandered up and down the rows of shelves of books, pulling out the occasional book that looked interesting either to him or Daniel. He liked to read, but it soon became clear that Daniel loved books. He didn’t seem to be quite as fanatical about books as Hermione was though. Hermione would give you a death glare if you dog-eared a page. He wondered if Daniel thought that books held only the truth the way Hermione did. He had never seen her doubt anything she saw printed in a book.

/No,/ Daniel told him. /I do not think books are the final arbiters of truth. After all the things I have seen over the years, even before the Stargate, I know that people will obscure those truths they do not wish to deal with or want others to know. Or as one of my history professors used to say: ‘History is written by the winners and they will say whatever they have to in order to avoid looking bad.’/

When they’d finally brought all their other selections up to the counter, along with Harry’s schoolbooks for the coming year, they had gotten a book on wizarding customs, one on wizarding law involving minors that the front flap indicated was self-updating, an older book on goblin customs, and at Daniel’s request Harry had gotten a book on Ancient Runes and their use in magic. Daniel was curious to see how the runes he knew about were used in the magical community.

It had taken them the better part of the afternoon to find a book on goblin customs that Daniel thought might be useful instead of highly biased and condescending about them. This one had been hidden in a very dusty corner near the back of the store and given the date on it, it appeared to have been written about two hundred years ago by a wizard who had dealt with them on a daily basis. Daniel just hoped that the customs of goblins hadn’t changed too much from when the book was
written and that even if they did make a mistake with some customs, they would make points with the goblins for trying to honour their customs.

The clerk at the counters stared at the book on Goblin customs for a few moments in surprise. “I did not think we had any books by him left in the store.”

“Oh is it that much of a best seller?” Harry asked fairly certain of the answer.

“No not really,” She told him. “Most people do not like his books. They felt that he had become too fond of the non-humans he studied and in his books he tried to give the impression that they should be equal to witches and wizards. Why would you want this book when there are others that are far more popular?”

“All we have ever been taught by Binns about them is the Goblin Rebellions.” Harry told her. “I thought it would be a good idea to learn about the customs of the people we entrust our money too, so I do not intentionally give offence.”

From the expression on the clerk’s face, Harry was fairly certain that she could not understand why he was going to all this trouble and her next words confirmed it. “Wizardkind and Goblins have treated each other the same way for centuries, luv. They do not expect us to be any different, unless the wizard or witch works for them or is in the government.”

/Well just because someone expects to be treated a certain way, doesn’t mean that they want to be or should be./ Harry agreed with Daniel’s comment but didn’t voice that thought aloud, because he had already started attracting attention. Harry didn’t know if it was because they had recognised him as the boy-who-lived, or because of the topic of conversation and he didn’t care. He hated getting people’s attention. It always led to trouble.

In the main room of the Leaky Cauldron as Daniel ate dinner and read the book on goblin customs, Harry listened in on the conversations going on around them.

The main topic of conversation seemed to be Sirius Black. He overheard one man telling his friend over fire whiskey. “My wife isn’t letting the kids out on their own ‘til he’s back in Azkaban.”

And his friend said, “They have no idea how he got out, do they. How he was able to make it past them... you know the Dementors. I thought that wasn’t supposed to be possible.”

“I heard they even got the muggles lookin’ fer ‘im.” Harry heard a woman at another table say.

“I do not know what they expect the muggles to do if they find ‘im.” Her companion replied. “Do not know what the Auror will do either, given he is the only man to escape Azkaban. That puts ‘im in a whole different league.”

“Well I just hope they catch him soon.” The woman countered. “I am scared to death with ‘im out there.”

/I wonder who this Sirius Black is and why the Minister seemed so certain that he is looking for me./ Harry commented to Daniel.

/I don’t know./ Daniel told him, not taking his attention from the book. /Maybe we should ask Tom in the morning. Bartenders hear all sorts of things and he might be able to tell us./

/I suppose./ Harry didn’t know much about bars or bartenders. /Is that book very helpful?/
/Yes, it is./ Daniel told him. /It appears as if the Goblin civilisation is set up a little like the feudal society of the Japanese Shoguns. Honour and their position in the clan mean a great deal to them, however, that won’t stop them from taking advantage of you if they can, if it can improve their position in the clan. The trick will be to get them to respect us and see us if not as equals, then at least as worthy of fair consideration./

/When do you think we would be able to speak with the goblins?/ Harry wanted to know.

/I think we should wait a few more days because I want to reread sections of this book and also check out the laws regarding wizarding minors as well as the book on wizarding customs. I need to see if there is anything we can use in either of them./

/If it is okay with you can we work on my homework tonight?/ Harry requested, /I would like to get it done as soon as possible. Especially my potions homework./

Having seen Harry’s memories of that man’s harassment over the last two years, Daniel told him, /we will put together an essay that is perfect and frustrate him no end./


Hey, Tom,” Harry walked up to the barkeeper in the deserted main room after breakfast the next morning. “Can I ask you something?”

“Anything Harry,” the barman told him.

“Who is Sirius Black?”

“I am not sure I am the one who should be telling you that,” Tom responded cautiously, looking for a way out of having to answer the question.

“Why not?” Harry inquired. “I know from the pictures I have seen that both the magical and non-magical world are looking for him, but why? What did he do?”

The bartender tried to look away from the emerald green eyes, but found he couldn’t. He knew he was going to have to tell him at least some of what Black did. Sighing he said, “Black killed thirteen muggles and a wizard named Peter Pettigrew.”

“That is not all he did Tom and you know it.” A man’s voice spoke up from near the doorway that led into muggle London unaware of who Tom was speaking with. “If yer gonna tell a kid what happened, tell him all of it. He betrayed the Potters to the Dark Lord, kid.”

“Zack, you should not have said that!” Tom berated the other man, knowing it was too late to prevent young Potter from finding out the rest. Dumbledore had asked the shopkeepers in the Alley not to tell Harry of Black’s connection to his family’s death.

“Why not?” Zack defended himself coming up to the bar. “These kids need to know how dangerous that man is.”

“But you did not have to be so blunt about it.” Tom gestured to the stunned boy standing beside him.

Zack took his first good look at the boy and realised that his callously delivered news had shocked none other than Harry Potter, the boy-who-lived. The boy was standing there his face pale and his eyes glazed over. It became quite clear to Zack that no one had ever told him who had betrayed his family to the Dark Lord.
Daniel felt Harry sort of blank out and slid him gently out of the way and took over until he could recover from this shock. They needed information and unlike Tom this man seemed willing to give it to them.

As he watched Potter shook himself and seemed to come out of his trance and asked. “Are you sure of that?”

“Everyone knows that he was your parents secret keeper, lad.” Zack tried to break the rest of the tale to him gently. “He was thought to be your father’s best friend. Betrayal of the worst kind that was.”

“Do you know why he did it?”

“He was a follower of the Dark Lord, what other reason did he need.” Zack said dismissively.

“Well what did he say at the trial about why he did it?” Daniel asked.

“There weren’t no trial, boy,” Zack told him. “Black was guilty as sin and everybody knew it. Why waste time and money on a trial?”

There were a number of things Daniel could have said to this, but he wisely said nothing. Instead he nodded his thanks to the man for the information before heading back upstairs to his room.

“You should not have done it that way, Zack.” Daniel heard Tom berate the other man.

“Why not?” Zack defended himself. “He deserved to know about Black’s betrayal.”

“But not that way,” Tom countered. “Dumbledore said he would tell him when...”

And that was the last Daniel heard as he reached the landing for the next flight of stairs.

As they got closer to their room, Daniel could feel Harry begin to be aware of his surroundings again.

Daniel found himself feeling grateful that Harry didn’t try to take control back even after they’d entered their room. The boy had had a nasty surprise, if the news about Black was accurate. Yet another secret Dumbledore was keeping from Harry. Daniel couldn’t help wondering just how many more there were and were any of them worse than finding out that your father’s best friend may have been responsible for your parents deaths. Given that there had been no trial, and probably no questioning either under the truth spell or truth serum that he had seen mentioned in one of the books at Flourish and Blotts yesterday, Daniel had questions about whether or not the man was guilty. The problem was going to be how to find out, given that Dumbledore for whatever reason had imposed silence on those around Harry. Unless one of them decided to break their silence to give him the magical communities version of the story, they would have to try the old fashioned way to find out the truth and given that the magical community seemed to want to keep it secret from Harry, that was going to be harder.

Worried by the boy’s continuing silence, Daniel called, /Harry?/

/Why?/ Harry finally cried. /Why would he do that? That man said he was my Dad’s best friend. How could he betray them like that?/

Remembering the time that Jack had gone undercover and everyone had thought him a traitor, Daniel told him softly, /We do not know that he did. /

/But that man said that he did./ Harry reminded him.
Probably because that was what he heard or was told by someone else, he may not know the truth about what happened. Daniel countered. Remember what happened last year to you? Just because you can talk with snakes, a neat trick by the way, suddenly you were this evil wizard out to kill them all even though you had done absolutely nothing to harm them. And do not forget what the Minister did to Hagrid, simply to protect his image. Throwing someone into prison simply because you have to be seen to be doing something and never mind that the person you are doing it to is innocent, does not give me a high opinion of the magical communities justice system. Hagrid was thrown in prison without benefit of a fair trial and apparently so was this Sirius Black.

So you think he might be innocent? Harry inquired.

Daniel sighed. I am saying that we do not know. From what you have shown me, it seems as though most members of the magical community seem more worried about how they are perceived by others. It is their image that matters most to them. Also from what I have seen in your memories and from observing them so far myself, they do not seem to want to think for themselves and that is a very dangerous habit for anyone to get into. As for Sirius Black, I do not think we should rush to judgement like others are doing and have done, simply because we do not have all the facts and from what little we got out of Zack downstairs, I am fairly certain the magical community does not either.

Daniel could feel Harry calming down as he considered Daniel’s arguments.

I have only one question. If we find that he is guilty, will you help me deal with him? Harry wanted to know. He needed to know his parents had been avenged.

I will not help you kill him, but I will help you see justice done. Daniel promised, then felt compelled to add, and not the magical communities idea of justice either.

It was another couple of days before Daniel felt he had gained enough information from the books they’d purchased to try tackling the goblins at Gringotts.

Their plan was to go to Gringotts in the early afternoon when not so many people would be there and hopefully get out before the evening rush started. They wanted as few witches and wizards as possible to see them in the bank, just in case Fudge or Dumbledore were taking an unusual interest in Harry’s activities. They were fairly certain they wouldn’t be, but it was better not to take any chances.

Given that they had the whole morning before they were going to go to Gringotts, they decided to take care of a few other things as well and so their first stop upon entering Diagon Alley was to Ollivander’s to discuss Harry’s wand.

As they entered the wand shop, they could hear the jingling of the bell in the back. The shop hadn’t changed at all since Harry had been here two years ago. He waited expectantly for Mr. Ollivander to appear.

“Mr. Potter,” Ollivander’s voice came out of the shadows between the shelves of wands. “Holly, eleven inches correct?”

“Yes, sir.” Harry agreed then got to the reason he had come. “Mr. Ollivander, I need some information about a personal matter that may or may not affect my wand. Since you made the wand, and according to Hagrid are the best wandmaker in the world, I thought I would see if you could answer my questions if you have some time.”
“I have some time right now if you would care to discuss this matter.” Ollivander gestured toward the back of his shop.

Harry followed him back and settled on one of the stools near the workbenches. There was a few moments silence as Ollivander moved things out of the way then Harry spoke. “Mr. Ollivander, before I explain the situation, I need to be certain that this issue will remain between the two of us and that no one else will ever hear of it.”

“I assume you wish me to give you a wizard’s oath not to reveal this conversation.” Ollivander anticipated his request

“Yes, an oath not to reveal it to anyone or anything.” He added that last bit when Daniel reminded him of Riddle’s diary.

Once the oath was given, Harry launched into the story of what had happened at the Dursleys the night he blew up Aunt Marge, leaving out only the part where Dumbledore and Fudge had tried to alter his memory. Mr. Ollivander was very intrigued especially when Harry told him that Hedwig was able to detect when Daniel was active or changed places with him.

“Interesting,” Ollivander murmured. “So your familiar is able to sense the difference in your auras, even though you share the same body. Harry is it possible for him to separate from you long enough for me to see his aura separate from yours?”

There was a brief pause before Harry responded, or maybe it was Daniel, “If I do it may adversely affect Harry. The last time I did so, his heart stopped the moment we separated. If we stay separated too long we could both die.”

“You are Daniel?” Ollivander asked.

“I am.” The voice was Harry Potter’s and it didn’t sound any different than before which surprised Ollivander. In his long life, he had seen a few possessed individuals before and the voice of the other had always sounded slightly different.

“How do I know you have not been the one I have been speaking to all this time?” Ollivander wanted to know.

“Unless you can see us as Hedwig does, you do not.” Daniel countered. “Every time I am active, something in Harry changes, even if only slightly and she knows it is me. We do not know for certain what it is she sees.”

“Hedwig is Harry’s familiar.” Ollivander told him. “As such she is able to sense his magical core. Yours is obviously different from his and she is detecting that change.”

Daniel nodded. “We thought it might be something like that, though I called it a shift in his aura.”

“They are the same thing in the magical world. The aura is merely the visual representation of the inner core.” Ollivander told him then asked. “Daniel, how long could you safely stay separated? I need to see your aura, separate from his, before I can determine whether or not he needs a new wand, his current one modified, or if there will be no problem at all.”

There was a blank look on Potter’s face, before he answered, “No more than a minute and that will be pushing it. You will need to have some kind of stimulant on hand to help his recovery once I return.”

“I have several vials of Pepper-up potion here and can do an enervate charm to wake him if needed.”
Well Harry, do you want me to do this? Daniel asked.

I do not want to do it, but it has to be done. Harry told him. We have to make sure my wand will work with you here and since I can not do magic over the summer even in Diagon Alley, he is the only one who might be able to tell us.

“You might want to provide some place comfortable for Harry to sit or lie down,” Daniel suggested to the wandmaker as he got to his feet. “Otherwise he may injure himself when he collapses.”

Ollivander looked slightly ashamed of himself for not having thought of that himself. He gestured with his wand and the stool Harry had been sitting on changed into a comfortable overstuffed armchair.

As he settled back into the chair, Daniel told him, “You will not have long to see whatever it is you need to see, so make it quick.”

Not really knowing what to expect, Ollivander was startled when a moment later the spirit appeared beside Harry looking like a man with golden brown hair, crystal blue eyes, and dressed in a white sweater and pants.

“Hello, Mr. Ollivander, I am Dr. Daniel Jackson.”

“A pleasure,” Ollivander told him as he extended his magical senses to get a feel for the spirit/man’s aura.

The spirit had a bright, almost blindingly white aura that felt cool and yet warm like a comforting fire in the fireplace. There was a purity about this one’s aura that he had never experienced before and doubted he ever would again.

A moment later the man vanished from sight.

Remembering what he’d been told, Ollivander hurried to get the pepper-up potion from his first aid kit, and slowly and carefully poured to contents down Potter’s throat.

When Harry had recovered, he looked up at Mr. Ollivander. “Will my wand continue to work for me as it is?”

“I am afraid not,” Ollivander told him. “It will have to be modified slightly, but I am not quite sure what to use. I have never encountered an aura like your companion’s before and so that complicates matters. The only thing I do know for sure is that whatever is used to modify your wand, it must not only be compatible with him, but with you as well.”

It had taken several hours before they were finished at Ollivanders, but they had left with the modified wand and tested it to make sure it would work in Ollivander’s shielded workroom. Given that they still had a few hours before the time they wanted to be at the bank, they decided to explore some more.

As they wandered through the side alleys off of Diagon Alley, Daniel noticed something unexpected. He was beginning to feel the currents of energy that flowed through the magical area of London and it felt al lot like the energy that Oma had taught him to manipulate. He also noticed that the witches and wizards they passed in the Alley seemed to have the same type of energy around them, in varying degrees of strength. He wasn’t quite sure what use this new ability would be to either of them, so he used the skills Oma had taught him to block out most of it. After that the only
time this new sense jarred him was when Harry made physical contact with the witches and wizards around them.

In an old, shabby looking shop hidden away on one of the alleys closest to Gringotts, Daniel saw something he’d never expected to see again: The Eye of Ra. At his prompting, Harry picked it up so he could examine it and make sure his eyes or rather Harry’s eyes weren’t playing tricks on him. They weren’t. In Harry’s hand was an almost exact copy of the Eye of Ra medallion that Catherine Langford had given him before his first trip to Abydos.

As Harry handled the round, gold amulet, Daniel could feel the power contained within it. It felt powerful like the weapon that Ra had hidden on Abydos. Daniel winced slightly as he remembered just how powerful that weapon had been when Anubis had used it to destroy Abydos.

As Harry studied the hieroglyphs carved onto the back of the medallion, Daniel for the first time in his life, had a vision, or at least that’s what he thought it was. He saw Harry standing out near a moonlit lake, surrounded by cloaked creatures that felt evil and the Eye of Ra was clearly visible on his chest. Then the vision was gone as quickly as it had come.

/"Harry, I think that medallion is meant for you./ Daniel told him as he started to put it down.

/"Are you sure you aren’t trying to get a piece of your past back?/ Harry inquired amused.

/"No,/ Daniel shared the brief vision he’d had. /Can you tell me that’s already happened to you and that you were wearing a similar medallion at the time?/

Harry gasped at the cold and evil feeling that came from the cloaked figures in the vision, but before he could reply, the elderly witch behind the counter who had heard his gasp asked, “Is something wrong, dear?”

“Just got a bit of a shock from this medallion,’ Harry lied, then at Daniel’s prompting asked. “What can you tell me about this amulet?”

Taking the amulet from Harry, she studied it from the bronze disc to the snake shaped clasp that closed it before going into the back room and returning with a thick book. Opening the book, she flipped through a few pages until she found what she was looking for.

“/The Eye of Ra was bought by my father in the 1890’s from one of the few freelance cursebreakers of that time, Shallan Maybar.” She told him, then added, “/Most of the expeditions to Egypt and other places where there might be treasure were and still largely are funded by Gringotts. Cursebreaker Maybar was one of only a handful that worked on their own. He was very successful at it too for a while then he fell on hard times just prior to the turn of the century. He had to sell the items he had kept for his private collection. Most of the items that my father bought from him were sold off long ago. That amulet is the sole remaining piece of Maybar’s collections and for some odd reason no one has ever expressed an interest in it until now.”

“Why is that odd?” Harry wanted to know.

“/While this shop maybe old and shabby looking, my father and I have a solid respectable reputation among the cursebreakers for having the best talismans for protection. The cursebreakers know that a lot of the older amulets and talismans have better protection spells on them than we can come up with today. They also know that neither my father nor I will buy or sell anything that we can’t verify some sort of provenance on. Nor will we sell them unless we can identify at least the type of spells on them.” She looked very pleased as she said this and Harry was willing to bet it was true.
Tapping the medallion sitting on the counter beside her, she told him, “This Eye of Ra amulet is over five thousand years old and has some of the strongest protection spells either of us have ever seen. When my father put it out for sale about eighty years ago after Cursebreaker Maybar failed to come back and redeem it, he expected some other cursebreaker would snatch it up right away, but none of them ever did. It is as if it was concealing itself until the right person came along. Maybe it has chosen you since the its last owner is most likely dead. If he were alive, he would have come back for it because he valued it highly.”

Harry didn’t know what to make of her fanciful claim that the amulet had chosen him, but in Daniel’s vision he’d been wearing it while standing near the lake at Hogwarts. He asked Daniel, /What do you think?/

/I do not know what to think of her claim either, but we need to get it./ Daniel told him. /If it really is over five thousand years old then it is something from the time of the Goa’uld or possibly even the Ancients./

“How much is it?” Harry asked the elderly witch.

“Five hundred galleons.” She told him.

“**Five hundred galleons!”** Harry couldn’t believe his ears.

“That price includes all the scrolls that were found with it.” She told him. “So far, no one has been able to figure out what they say. All the translation spells have failed to make them readable.”

“What makes you so sure they go with the scrolls then?” Harry wanted to know.

“Because on the upper left hand side of each scroll is a drawing of the All Seeing Eye of Ra.” She went into the back and brought them out to show him.

She was right. There was a detailed drawing of the Eye of Ra medallion in the upper left corner of each scroll. Daniel recognized the language it was written in.

/Two of them are written in Ancient, Harry./ Daniel told his companion. /And the third is written in Goa’uld./

/So you can read it?/ Harry commented.

/I should be able to./ Daniel told him.

“I do not have five hundred galleons on me at the moment, but I am going to Gringotts.” Harry told the elderly witch. “Will you hold them until I return?”

“I doubt anyone else will be able to see the amulet, but I will keep it behind the counter until you return, Mr. Potter.”

Harry looked at her surprised. He hadn’t thought she’d known who he was given she hadn’t had the usual reaction of most witches and wizards who met him for the first time - checking for the scar then announcing it to the world at large, so he was mobbed.

“I surprised you.” She observed shrewdly. “Yes, I recognised you from your scar, but I am not one of those who gets all gushy and excited like a schoolgirl just because I have met somebody famous. My friends all tell me that the only time I get really excited is when I see a really old magical object or scroll. I wanted to be a cursebreaker when I was younger, but I did not have the fine sensing skills needed to detect some of the more subtle curses.”
“You sound like a muggle archaeologist I know,” Harry grinned. “He is happiest digging up artefacts and uncovering forgotten pieces of history. According to a friend of his, he needs a minder because he forgets to eat when he’s involved in his work.”

/Hey, I am not that bad!/ Daniel sounded slightly offended as the grey-haired witch giggled.

“I am not that bad,” Harry almost did a double-take at her choice of words, wondering if she’d heard Daniel, “but I can get a little involved in my research.”

“I know a few people who are the same way.” Harry told her.


Stepping up to the first open desk, Harry asked the goblin, “May I speak with an account manager please?”

Looking down at the young wizard standing in front of his desk, the Goblin asked, “Concerning what?”

“My family’s account here.” Harry told him.

The goblin gestured for one of the goblins standing in a group nearby to come over. Leaning over he spoke to the other goblin for a moment. The second goblin nodded and scurried off only to return a few minutes later.

“Come with me,” the second goblin instructed.

Harry followed the goblin down a very opulent hallway to a closed door. Gesturing to the closed door the goblin told him. “Go in, Mr. Potter, your account manager is waiting.”

“Mr. Potter, my name is Glaive. I am the account manager for the Potter family.” The goblin seated at the desk identified himself to the boy standing in the doorway. “Glathis said that you wanted to speak with me about your family’s account.”

“Yes sir. At least that is part of the reason I wanted to speak with you.” Harry told him as he closed the door behind him.

Then he did something completely unexpected. Bowing, he said, “May our business together be profitable and may your family be prosperous in all its dealings so that they bring honour and gold to your clan.”

To say that Glaive was stunned would be an understatement. With the exception of the wizards who worked at the Goblin Liaison Office and then only when they wanted something, he had never been given the proper greeting required to open a business meeting. He was so stunned in fact that he almost forgot to give the proper response. “May your business always be profitable and your vaults full of gold honourably won.”

“Thank you,” Harry smiled at the goblin showing teeth, before getting down to business. “The first matter I would like to discuss with you as I told the goblin at the counter concerns my family account. I would like to know the exact balance as of today.”

“Because you are still a minor under both Wizard and muggle law, the only vault I can give you any information on is your trust vault.” Glaive told him regretfully. “For information on your family’s main vault, you would need to have one of your guardians present.”
“Even if my aunt and uncle were willing to set foot in Diagon Alley, I would rather they did not know about the money my parents left me.” Harry commented dryly. “They would try and take it.”

“Well then you need to ask your magical guardian to come in with you.” Glaive told him.

“My magical guardian?” Harry had no idea what the goblin was talking about. “I do not have any other guardian other than Aunt Petunia.”

Glaive opened the young wizard’s file to double-check the information they had before telling him. “When you were placed with your mother’s sister, the Wizengamot appointed a magical guardian to take care of any issues that might come up for you in the magical world without having to involve your muggle relations, since they had requested as little contact with the wizarding world as possible. Once a year we send a statement to the Wizengamot in a secure pouch that can only be opened by your magical guardian.”

“Do you know the name of my magical guardian?” Harry asked.

“The Wizengamot never provided us with that information.” Glaive told him. “They said it was done to protect the person’s identity. I gather from your question that this person has never contacted you, even after your entry into the wizarding world.”

“No they haven’t.” Harry confirmed his guess. “And they should have done so by now, correct?”

“If they intended to be a proper guardian to you then one would think so yes.” Glaive agreed.

/I bet it is Dumbledore./ Daniel commented after a few moments thought. /After all Hagrid had the key to your vault and that would have to have been provided by whoever was overseeing your finances./

Harry silently agreed with him. Dumbledore did seem to be controlling a number of aspects of his life he had never noticed before.

/You were never meant to./ Daniel pointed out. /Those who are really good at manipulating people can make it seem as though the whole thing was your idea to do whatever it was in the first place and you would really believe that if asked./

“I would appreciate whatever information you are able to provide on my account.” Given that the goblin had clearly indicated that they couldn’t provide full disclosure on his bank account without a guardian or rather an adult who had some responsibility over him present, Harry took what he could get and moved on to the next matter. “The other matter I was hoping you would be able to help me with is my parent’s will. Do you by any chance, know where I might be able to see a copy of it?”

There was a noticeable pause this time, before Glaive told him. “We at Gringotts do have a copy, though we are not the executors of your parents will. However as much as I would like to let you see it, I am unable to do so without your guardians permission, before you come of age at seventeen.”

/Harry we need that information, especially the banking account information./ Daniel pointed out. /I think we are going to have to invoke that hardship clause in the Guardian Law./

Harry nodded and Glaive thought their business was concluded until Mr. Potter said in a solemn voice, “Account Manager Glaive, I am invoking Article 17 of the Guardian laws of 1560 which have never been repealed. I am doing this because I believe that my guardians, both Magical and Muggle, are not acting in my best interests. Gringotts as the primary banking institution for the magical world is obliged to follow those aspects of it where it impacts on my financial dealings with your bank.”
It wasn’t often that Glaive would admit to being surprised, but this young wizard had managed to do it twice. He felt compelled to point out, “You are aware are you not that we at Gringotts can not change who the Wizengamot has assigned as your guardian? Nor can we remove you from your Aunt’s care.”

Harry nodded, “but I can appoint an adult to act as my advisor in financial matters if I believe my current guardian or guardians are not acting in my best interests. Given that my magical guardian has never met with me since my entry into the wizarding world, nor have they provided me with any assistance in becoming acclimated to the wizarding world, I think that proves they are not looking out for my best interests. As my guardian they should have done at least that much, seeing as how they were appointed by someone I do not know to take care of me and my magical needs so that Aunt Petunia would not have to. As I understand the way the law is worded, my chosen Advisor’s decisions would be given more weight at Gringotts than either of my current guardians, is that correct?”

Glaive nodded. It wasn’t often you met a wizard who was willing to take the time to find out what he needed to make things work the way he wanted them to. Generally most of the ones he dealt with never thought things through and tried to bully the goblins into doing what they wanted, but Mr. Potter appeared to have done some thorough planning including looking up old laws that could help him. This had been his intention all along and a very intelligent one it was because an adult Advisor under that old law would be allowed to get access to those things young Mr. Potter had asked him for.

While he was fairly certain that Potter had already chosen his Advisor, Glaive still had to go through the formality of asking, “Do you have an Advisor chosen, or would you like me to select one?”

“I have already chosen my Advisor.”

“May I have the name of the Witch or Wizard you have chosen for this position of trust?” Glaive requested.

“Daniel Jackson.”

“And is he here?” Glaive inquired. The wards in the bank and surrounding the private offices had detected no one hidden behind an invisibility cloak or under a disillusionment spell. Surely the young wizard knew that his chosen Advisor had to be with him, even if he did want to protect his identity.

“Yes, he is.”

“Well, why did not he come in with you?” Glaive wanted to know.

“He did.” Harry told the goblin.

The goblin’s eyes darted around the room in concern. He knew that Gringotts had the best detection spells and wards that money could buy. No one should have been able to enter the bank without being detected. If a wizard had somehow come up with a way to baffle all their wards and spells it was going to be cause for great concern among the managers of Gringotts because it brought their security procedures into question.

Unaware of the concerns that he had roused in the goblin with his words, Harry continued. “Before he reveals himself to you, we need an Oath of Secrecy regarding what we have discussed so far and what we will discuss with my Advisor.”

Glaive was instantly suspicious. “What sort of secrecy oath?”
“Nothing dangerous to Gringotts or its employees... at least I do not think it should be” Harry was quick to assure him. “As for the content of the oath itself, we would just like you to swear that what is revealed and discussed here will remain between the three of us unless Daniel or I give you permission to discuss it with someone else.”

Then hopefully to ease concerns the goblin might have, Harry added, “We are also willing to swear a magically binding oath that is to be discussed does not knowingly endanger Gringotts.”

Glaive was still a little cautious since none of the goblin magic he’d performed out of Mr. Potter’s field of view had revealed where the adult wizard was hiding in his office, but he was also starting to get a little curious. After all it was rare that a wizard or witch would offer to give a goblin a magically binding oath. The only problem he could foresee was if the Advisor, Mr. Potter had chosen, asked for something beyond his authority to provide. He also wanted someone else here who was a bit more powerful than he was magically to see if they could detect how the human wizard was hiding himself. Carefully he told Mr. Potter and his unseen guest, “Mr. Potter, Mr. Jackson, while I would be more than happy to swear the oath you ask, given that the privacy and security of Gringotts customers is our primary concern, what you both may ultimately require, may be beyond my level of authority, so I would like to ask your permission to have one of our senior managers present at this meeting as well.”

The young wizard was silent for several minutes then he said, “He can sit in on our meeting, if he will agree to swear the same oath as you do.”

Glaive wrote a quick note and summoned a goblin to deliver it to the most senior manager available.

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When the senior manager arrived, he didn’t even notice that Harry was sitting off to one side in Glaive’s office, instead he started speaking rapidly in gobbledegook to the younger goblin. While the tone of the goblin’s voice never rose, both Harry and Daniel were willing to bet that he was not pleased about being asked to come here. Harry/Daniel waited to see if he would ever give Glaive a chance to explain things, but he wasn’t allowing the younger goblin to say a word.

Because the older goblin showed no signs of running out of steam and Harry was beginning to get a little angry at being ignored, Daniel suggested, /Allow me./

Harry yielded control, wanting to get things moving.

As the elderly goblin paused for breath, Daniel commented, “You know if you gave him a chance to get a word in edgewise, you might find out why he asked you to meet with him.”

The unexpected comment startled the elderly goblin and brought his attention to the young wizard seated to one side of Glaive’s desk. Clearly not impressed by the young wizard, the elderly goblin asked. “And who are you to be giving me orders?”

“My name is Harry Potter. I am the reason he asked you to come.” Daniel informed him calmly. “And who may I ask are you?”

“I am Glamridel a senior manager of Gringotts, in fact the most senior.” The elderly goblin told him arrogantly.

Daniel bowed slightly from his seated position. “I am grateful that you chose to come and help us.”

“What is it you require me assistance with?” Glamridel asked, slightly mollified by the young wizard’s respectful attitude toward his age and rank.
“Before we discuss that, I must ask you to swear an oath of secrecy; not to discuss what happens between us today with anyone or anything - living, dead, or inbetween.” Daniel told him.

“And if I don’t?” Glamridel demanded annoyed. “After all I am under no obligation to obey a mere child.”

“True,” Daniel agreed. “I am sorry you are uncomfortable with what I have requested. However that also means that Account Manager Glaive may not be able to resolve all of my current issues if his authority does not extend far enough.”

After years of dealing with the Goa’uld, touchy aliens from other worlds, and people like Kinsey, Daniel had gotten very skilled at getting angry people to do what he wanted... most of the time. He was fairly certain that the implication that his account manager was willing to swear the oath he wouldn’t would sting Glamridel’s sense of honour, if not his man, err, goblinhood, but he wouldn’t be able to say that Harry had deliberately impugned his honour, since no real insult had been given.

He waited a few moments before offering the carrot to the still silent goblin. “If it is any source of assurance to you, I will also be swearing a magically binding oath that as far as I know, what we will be discussing is in no way a threat to Gringotts or its employees.”

The older goblin stared at the young wizard surprised. It had been some time since anyone of any species had challenged him in such a cunning fashion. After being told that the wizard would also be swearing an oath that could cost him his magic if he swore falsely, if he refused to swear the one that was asked of him, he would lose face in front of a junior employee.

Finally and with no evidence of the frustration he was feeling at being outmanoeuvred by a wizard child, Glamridel told him. “Very well, Mr. Potter, you shall have my oath.”

Once the oaths had been sworn, Harry dug a potion vial out of his pocket and placed it on the desk. “You will need to give me that in a few minutes.” Harry told the waiting goblins.

“What is in it?” Glaive asked

“Pepper-up potion and you will see why I needed it in a minute.”

They stared at the young wizard in confusion and concern, as he seemed to collapse in his chair.

Before either goblin could make a move toward him, a bright light appeared next to him and within that light was a man dressed in white with golden brown hair and blue eyes.

“Hello,” he greeted the goblins. “Do not worry Harry will be fine once I rejoin him. We cannot stay separated for long. Account manager Glaive, I am Daniel Jackson. I am the one that Harry Potter would like to be his Advisor on financial matters.”

With those last words the glowing man vanished and Harry Potter began stirring. Glaive was jarred out of stunned state by the boy’s moan of pain and grabbing the vial off the desk, he helped him drink the potion.

As Glamridel watched the young wizard recover, his mind was racing. As one of the most senior Managers at the bank, not to mention the oldest goblin working there, he was privy to a lot of confidential information that not even the wizards knew about, like the fact that Merlin was one of the Old Ones and had taught humans among others how to use their magic. One thing he had never expected to see in his lifetime was the fulfilment of one of Merlin’s final prophecies and the possible release of one of the most closely guarded trust vaults that Gringotts had. The first thing he needed to
do was find out if Harry Potter were indeed joined with one of the Old Ones.

Glamridel waited until Mr. Potter was a little more aware of his surrounding before asking the only question they had in the Ancient’s tongue. “How do you gain access to the heavenly roads?”

Young Potter’s eyes still looked slightly dazed as he or the one who was sharing his body answered, “the Chapa’ai or Stargate.”

The second word didn’t mean anything to Glamridel but the first one did and it was the correct answer. An Old One again walked among them, albeit in the body of a thirteen-year-old wizard, who had been powerful enough as an infant to destroy Voldemort. Interesting times were ahead as well as what looked like the fulfilment of an ancient trust. Unfortunately the only way to find out if Harry Potter was indeed the inheritor of Merlin’s vault was to bring Lord Gringotts down here and that would require Mr. Potter’s permission because of the oath.

“Mr. Potter, Mr. Jackson,” Glamridel spoke respectfully to the pair before him. “I need your permission to bring Lord Gringotts the head of the bank into this meeting.”

“Why?” Harry sounded and felt very tired. Having to do this twice in one day had proven very draining.

Glamridel tried to explain without giving too much away. The responsibility for this vault lay with the Head of the bank and no one else. “Over one thousand years ago, we goblins were given a sacred trust by Merlin. Like your Mr. Jackson, he was one of the Old Ones. He gave us this trust shortly before he ascended to a higher plane of existence. We were instructed to release this trust only to the magic user who was joined to one of the Old Ones. I believe you are that one and Lord Gringotts must be told since he is the only one who can provide access to what we hold in trust for Merlin’s designated heir.”

“Give us a moment,” Harry requested.

Glamridel nodded. “Of course.”

/Daniel./ Harry called.

/I’m here./ Daniel’s voice sounded as tired as Harry felt.

/Do you know what he’s talking about?/

/No, but if I had to make a guess, I would say that Merlin was an Ancient. The question he asked, while a few of the words were mispronounced was definitely in the Ancient’s tongue./ Daniel told him after a few moment’s thought. /It is a part of the legend about him that he was able to see the future, or as one story had it he lived backward through time so he was remembering it not seeing it. If Merlin really was an Ancient, then he may have had the gift of seeing the future, or he may have had some way to travel back in time safely without disrupting the timestream./

/You are guessing./ Harry was certain of it.

/At this point that is all I can do./ Daniel pointed out. /We do not have enough information to do more than guess right now. I did notice one thing though about Glamridel though. After he saw me, he became a lot more respectful. If he and the other goblins think I am a real Ancient then we may be able to use that to get most if not all the information we need to put our plans into effect./

/Do we really want to let someone else know about you?/ Harry inquired. /I mean if this keeps up, the whole wizarding world is going to know soon and when they do find out I doubt it is going to go...
over very well./

/I doubt we will have to do it more than one more time for this Lord Gringotts person, but we will cross that bridge if we have to when we come to it. Daniel responded evenly. /As for Lord Gringotts, we will only show him, if he agrees to swear the oath. We need to see what Merlin left for us./

/If it is for us./ Harry countered.

/You think there is another ascended being joined to a wizard roaming around England./ Daniel couldn’t resist saying it.

/The vault could be meant for someone in the future./ Harry pointed out.

/True,/ Daniel conceded, /but we will not know for sure unless we see what he left for ourselves./

Harry looked up at the waiting goblins and told them, “If Lord Gringotts is willing to swear the oath of secrecy, then yes you may tell him. I would ask though that you bring some stimulant and pain relieving potions just in case we have to separate again. It is painful and very draining on both of us.”

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The message that Glamridel sent must have caused quite a stir, because both Daniel and Harry were willing to swear that Lord Gringotts had had to run to the office given how quickly he showed up.

After a brief conversation with both Glamridel and Glaive, Lord Gringotts turned his attention to Harry. “Mr. Potter, my employees tell me that you are sharing your body with another being is this correct?”

“Did they also explain about the secrecy oath I have requested?” Harry wanted to know.

“You do not trust the reputation of Gringotts?” Lord Gringotts questioned. “We have been the keepers of the Wizarding world’s assets and secrets for more than a thousand years. Our security has never been breached.”

“We both know that is not true.” Harry countered. “My first year in the wizarding world there was a successful break-in to a high security vault and the only reason nothing was stolen was because Hagrid from Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry had removed the item with Nicholas Flamel’s permission earlier that day.”

Lord Gringotts looked annoyed at that reminder of his bank’s failure as Harry continued. “I have no doubt you have upgraded your security since that incident and you bank is as close to impenetrable as it is possible to be. I merely wish to assure that my secrets remain that... mine. The wizarding world is far too curious about me as it is. They turned on me last year because I am a parslemouth. I would hate to see what they would do if they knew about this.”

Lord Gringotts conceded that he had a valid point. The wizarding world did indeed have far too much interest in the life of the Boy-Who-Lived and he didn’t know how they would react to knowing that his body also now housed one of the Old Ones. “Very well, Mr. Potter, I swear upon my life and my honour that what is revealed in this room shall not be disclosed to any other being, living, dead, or inbetween.”

“Thank you, Lord Gringotts.” Harry looked over at Glaive. “Do you have the potions I requested for afterwards?”
Glaive held up two vials. “One stimulant potion and one pain relieving potion.”

“Thank you,” Harry turned his attention back to Lord Gringotts. “Give me a moment and I think we can satisfy your curiosity. I must ask one thing though. If you have a question for him that you want to ask separately to him, ask it quickly, because we can not remain separate for long.”

Lord Gringotts watched as Mr. Potter took several deep breaths and then seemed to collapse.

A moment later a blinding white light appeared then dimmed down to reveal a man with golden brown hair. While the physical description didn’t match Merlin’s the blinding white light that surrounded him matched the one from the last description that goblins had of the great Wizard as he ascended to join the last of the Old Ones in the heavens. The Old One bowed slightly in Lord Gringotts direction and said, “Greetings Lord Gringotts, I am Daniel Jackson.”

“Greetings Mr. Jackson,” Lord Gringotts bowed back. “It has been a long time since one of the Old Ones walked among us.”

“Do you have a question for me, because if not I must rejoin Harry.”

“No I do not. The test I need to conduct will occur once you are rejoined to him.” Lord Gringotts told him.

“Very well,” Daniel vanished without another word.

As Lord Gringotts watched, Glaive quickly moved over to Mr. Potter’s side and once Potter was aware enough to take them, helped him swallow both potions.

Lord Gringotts waited a few minutes for the potions to do their work before he spoke to the exhausted young wizard. “Mr. Potter, there is only one other thing I require in order to determine if Merlin’s vault is yours.” He held up a black stone that seemed to be all angles. “Merlin left this with us and said that when we found one we thought the vault might belong to we were to give them this and it would show us whether or not the vault belonged to them.”

“All I have to do is hold it?” Harry’s voice sounded very tired.

“That’s all,” Lord Gringotts confirmed.

“Will anything happen to me if I am not the one the vault is meant for?” Harry wanted to know.

“Nothing will happen if you are not the one the vault is meant for.” Lord Gringotts again held out the stone and this time Harry took it.

The moment it touched his hand a blinding white light filled the office. Surprised, Harry released the stone and the bright light vanished as the stone changed from white back to its normal black colour before hitting the carpeted floor.
As Harry blinked away the bright spots before his eyes, Lord Gringotts told him, “Mr. Potter, you are the heir to Merlin’s vault.”

Harry was speechless for several minutes, but once he’d recovered from the shock that Merlin had somehow foreseen his and Daniel’s joining, he started getting curious about just Merlin had left for them. “Would it be possible to go down and see the vault’s contents today?”

Daniel mentally seconded the request. He was really eager to see what an Ancient would have left behind on Earth.

“I will take you down whenever you wish it.” Lord Gringotts assured him.

“You!” Harry would have thought that the owner of the bank would have had more important things to do and added at Daniel’s prompting, “I am honoured that you would take the time out of what I am sure for you is a rather busy day.”

Lord Gringotts didn’t know if it was the Old One or Mr. Potter who’d made the observation about his time being valuable, but he was pleased they recognised the fact nevertheless. He then explained, “I have to be the one to take you down, at least the first time. The security that has been put in place over the years on Merlin’s vault will kill anyone who goes down unaccompanied by someone who is keyed into them. Once we are down there, you and Mr. Jackson will be keyed in to the security wards, so that any goblin may take you down from that point on.”

Both of them were eager to see the contents of Merlin’s vault, so Harry got to his feet, only to stagger for a moment and then collapse back into his chair.

“I think you need a little more time to recover from your separation from the Old One, brief though it was.” Glaive told him. “I suggest we take care of the other matters you and your Advisor Mr. Jackson wanted to discuss with me, while we wait.”

“Advisor?” Lord Gringotts inquired in gobbledegook. That was a term he had not heard in some time, since at least the early part of the century in fact. “Why is Mr Jackson Mr. Potter’s Advisor? And what matters was he needing assistance on?”

Glaive explained also in gobbledegook. “Mr. Potter requested a listing of his assets and wanted to see a copy of his parent’s will but because he was here without either of his Guardians, I was unable to provide the information he wanted, since Mr. Potter is regarded as a minor under wizard and muggle law. When I explained that to him, Mr Potter invoked Article 17 of the Guardian laws of
1560, which has never been repealed. He used as his reasoning for requesting it the fact that his magical guardian has never contacted him regarding his assets or anything else he needed to know to enable him to become acclimated to the wizarding world.”

“Really?” Lord Gringotts was both pleased with the thoroughness of Mr. Potter/Jackson’s planning and instantly suspicious of the appointed magical guardian’s actions. Magical guardians by Wizarding law were required to maintain a monthly contact with their wards if the ward did not live with them. “Order a quiet audit of all Potter assets. And given that Mr. Potter is sharing his body with one of the Old Ones he is to be considered as an adult in the eyes of Gringotts. Glamridel instruct the main floor staff that whenever Mr. Potter comes into the bank he is to be escorted to Glaive’s office and that it is to be done discretely. Glaive, you will be responsible for helping Mr. Potter and Mr. Jackson with their needs. This will keep the number of people who know the truth about them down to a minimum.”

Glaive nodded then turned his attention back to Mr. Potter who was still sitting there looking a little dazed. “If you will give me a few minutes, Mr. Potter, I will go get the copy we have of your parent’s will and I will also get some more pepper-up potion for you.”

“Thank you, Glaive,’ Harry bowed slightly in his direction. “You do your family and clan much honour by your actions.”

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Handing over two folders, Glaive told Harry, “The first folder contains a list of all the Potter assets that are handled by Gringotts. The second is a copy of the Wills of James and Lily Potter.”

Harry/Daniel opened the folder containing the Wills first. Daniel was very surprised to find they were not written in legalese as he was expecting but plain English. They skimmed the first few pages until they got to the sections pertaining to Harry and found:

In the event that both Lily and I should die before our son Harry James Potter comes of age, we list the following people in order of preference as those who should be his Guardian(s).

Sirius Orion Black

Jessica and Malcolm Roland

Frank and Alice Longbottom

Amos and Celia Diggory

Arthur and Molly Weasley

Also while we would like to list Remus Lupin as a potential guardian, we know that the prejudice of the Wizarding world that the Ministry would not allow him to be the guardian for any child, but we do here state that we feel that he would be an excellent guardian for our son and should be allowed to maintain contact with Harry. We also herein stipulate that under no circumstances is Harry to be placed with the family of Lily’s sister Petunia Evans Dursley. Even Voldemort would be a better choice than Lily’s sister, given Petunia and Vernon Dursley’s hatred of anything having to do with magic. If Harry were placed in their care we know that our son’s life would be hell and indeed it would be highly unlikely that he would live to come of age.

/Who is Remus Lupin?/ Harry wondered. /And why would the Ministry not allow him to be a guardian for any child/?
I have no idea. It’s just another question we have to add to our growing list. Daniel observed. So your parents knew that Petunia’s family would be a danger to you. I wonder why their Executor failed to carry out their wishes.

Executor? Harry had never heard the term before.

An Executor is someone appointed by your parents at the time this Will was written and they would have been entrusted with the task of insuring your parent’s final wishes were carried out. Daniel explained, then asked, May I speak with Glaive for a moment?

Harry switched places with him.

“Glaive, this is Daniel,” Daniel told the goblin. “I have a question for you. Would you have any way of knowing if the Potter’s Will was read and executed?”

The goblin seated behind the desk nodded. “Yes, it was. All bequests made by your parents were dispersed within a month of their deaths with the sole exceptions of Mr. Potter and Mr. Black’s. Mr. Black’s because he was in Azkaban by that time and unable to come into claim his. And Mr. Potter’s was being held because he is considered a minor under both Wizard and Muggle law.”

Daniel was quick to pick up on the change in verb tense. It should have been is not was unless the Goblins were viewing Harry as adult under their laws. So the Goblins now consider Harry an adult?

“Within the walls of Gringotts he will be, because he is sharing his body with you. Any time you come into Gringotts, I will be taking caring of your needs personally.” Glaive told him bluntly. “May I ask why you wanted to know if the Potter’s will had been read?”

“Because, if it has then the whoever the executor is, they have violated at least part of the will.” Daniel told him. Then upon seeing the slightly angry expressions on the faces of the three goblins, he quickly assured them. “We know it was not Gringotts that did it because you told us that Gringotts was not the Executor and the part that was not carried out had nothing to do with Gringotts, or at least it does not appear to have any direct connection to Gringotts. It has to do with Harry’s guardianship.”

Daniel handed the parchment page over to Glaive so that he could see what Daniel was talking about. After he and the other two goblins had read the pertinent section, Daniel continued. “It clearly states that under no circumstances was Harry to be placed with the Dursleys and yet he was. That means that the Executor either did not see or chose to ignore a very clear set of instructions.”

The goblins could find no fault with his logic, but Lord Gringotts asked. “Are you hoping for our assistance in this matter? Because you should know that we have very little influence in wizarding matters where they do not impact on the bank or on financial and legal matters that are under Goblin control. The only way we would have any say over this issue would be if we had been the executors of this will and as you already know we were not.”

Daniel looked thoughtful, “I really do not know what kind of assistance we are going to need yet. I think what we will mostly need right now is information and advice. You know a lot more about how legal matters in the wizarding world work than either Harry or I do right now. If you do not mind once we have determined what we do need to know, could we correspond with Gringotts regarding these issues? We are going to need as much information as we can get, if I am going to have a chance of getting Harry away from the Dursleys before they succeed in killing him.”

“As long as what you ask does not conflict with the confidentiality we must maintain for our other
clients, we will be more than happy to help you gain the knowledge you need to secure your safety and that of Mr. Potter, Old One.” Lord Gringotts bowed slightly toward the joined pair.

Daniel stood and returned his bow of respect gravely. “We thank you Lord Gringotts for any assistance you and your people will give us and I promise it will not be forgotten.” Then feeling a little more stable on Harry’s feet, he told the senior goblin, “I think we are ready to go to Merlin’s vault, if you are ready to take us,” before relinquishing control to Harry.

Merlin’s vault was in the oldest, deepest part of the Gringotts vault system and it was definitely guarded by Dragons.

“Hagrid would’ve loved to be on this ride.” Harry observed as they walked under the watchful eyes of gold and silver dragons to the next cart they had to take to the vault.

Each time they encountered the dragons, Lord Gringotts would hold up a medallion and as soon as it started to glow, the Dragons would cease roaring and bow slightly to them.

“Lord Gringotts, these do not look like the dragons I have seen in books where did they come from?” Harry wanted to know.

“These were provided by Merlin himself.” The goblin told him proudly. “They guard the six oldest and most secure trust vaults we have, which include vaults for the Founders of Hogwarts, and Morgan Le Fay.”

“Does that mean that Tom Riddle, otherwise known as Voldemort has been down here?” Daniel wanted to know. “From what I understand, he considers himself Slytherin’s heir.”

“Mr. Riddle has never set foot in this section of Gringotts.” The goblin told them. “I doubt that he is even aware that Slytherin set up this vault. In fact most wizards don’t even know this section exists. Slytherin set this vault up for his only child by his wife or that child’s heir if they ever appear in Gringotts. Amaris Slytherin died in childbirth and his legitimate heir mysteriously vanished on the day of its birth. Slytherin never remarried, though he did have a number of liaisons up until the day of his death only one of which resulted in an illegitimate child. Slytherin’s vault like the few others down here have a very specific set of criteria that have to be met before anyone can lay claim to them, aside from being blood kin I mean. Like Merlin’s vault, each has a test that the potential heir must pass before they are allowed access.”

That made no sense and Daniel said so, “If no wizard knows that these vaults exist, then how could anyone claim them?”

“Through the inheritance ritual,” Lord Gringotts told them. “Any witch or wizard may come into Gringotts if they suspect that they may be entitled to an unclaimed vault and ask to take the inheritance ritual. The ritual checks their blood and magical core for markers that the claimant may have in common with other families. Each magical core is slightly different, but the family magic which forms the foundation of that person’s magical core remains and can be detected. It will reveal any and all vaults and properties they are entitled to claim. Even some of the muggle-born may be entitled, because we goblins have long suspected that those who the wizarding world calls muggle-born are actually the first magical children from a line of squibs so long they have forgotten their families ever knew how to do magic. However according to wizard law we cannot tell anyone of the unclaimed vaults. Someone must ask us first before we can say anything about the unclaimed vaults. The Ministry would like to get their hands on the contents of some of the vaults, but they cannot because we will not allow them to breach the trusts we hold.”
“A stalemate then,” Daniel concluded. “The Wizard government cannot get the money and goods within, but you cannot tell anyone who does not ask the stuff is even there and that they might be able to claim it, unless they ask you to do the ritual.”

“Quite so,” Lord Gringotts agreed. “The Ministry’s interference annoys us no end, but we are not going to start another rebellion over it, as long as they make no attempt to try and force us to give them access to the vaults they have no right to.”

The final cart ride was the longest and ended at a set of curved double doors set in an archway. Torches flared magically into existence at their approach and Daniel saw that there were words written in Ancient carved on one of the doors. The doors also looked like they were made out of naquada and that meant they could take a lot of punishment but no one would get past them easily unless they had access to advanced technology like the Tollan pass through devices. Formidable protection indeed.

“There is one final thing you have to do to gain access to the vault, Mr. Potter, Mr. Jackson,” Lord Gringotts told them. “You must read the phrase carved on the door, in your native tongue.”

Harry/Daniel took that to mean that it must be spoken in Ancient. Harry changed places mentally with Daniel and the linguist read it over once silently, before saying, “In the name of Myrddin Emrys, guardian and father of magic, I command that the doors be opened to his chosen heir.”

The doors leading to the vault gave off a flare of almost blinding white light and then began to open slowly and soundlessly. The fact that the doors were opening so quietly came as something of a surprise to Harry/Daniel because they had both expected some creaking, given that the doors probably hadn’t been opened since the day the vault was closed almost a thousand years ago. The doors stopped moving when they were open wide enough to admit one person.

“I will wait for you both here,” Lord Gringotts told them.

Taking a deep breath, Harry/Daniel walked through the narrow opening. As soon as they’d cleared the thick doors, lights came on and a blinding light enveloped Harry/Daniel’s body for a moment before vanishing. Harry/Daniel had to blink several times to clear the spots from their eyes so they could both see again. Once Harry/Daniel’s eyes had readjusted they realized that the dim lighting allowed them to see only the immediate surroundings but no further. While there shouldn’t have been any danger, Daniel advised Harry to be cautious.

“Come in, young one, come in,” an elderly voice called out and even though the words were clearly not in English, Harry was able to understand them.

/I am translating for you,/ Daniel told him. /He is speaking in Ancient./

“Actually I am speaking Alterran, not Ancient, please call it by its proper name,” the unseen voice requested. “You are part Alterran after all.”

“Actually I am not Ancient or if you prefer Alterran” Daniel came forward and Harry let him handle the conversation for now with this unseen person. “Actually I am of the Tau’ri. And how did you know what I said to Harry given that I was not speaking out loud?”

/Tau’ri?/ Harry wondered.

/It means I am from Earth,/ Daniel told him. /To other races in the universe we are known as the
“If you are the ones I prophesied then you as the Ascended one are at least part Alterran.” The voice insisted, “As for how I heard you, that white light that surrounded you just a moment ago allows me to hear the mental voice of whoever is currently not in control of the body you both share. At least it will until I have a chance to give you something you will need.”

An elderly man surrounded by a nimbus of white light suddenly appeared a few feet away.

“Greetings to you both. I am Myrddin, or if you prefer Merlin,” Moros identified himself using the two names he was most well known by on Earth, since he and Daniel had not met under his real name while Daniel was living among the Ascended as Oma’s protégé, “and I have been waiting for you to arrive for a long time.”

Harry stood there for several minutes in stunned silence. He looked exactly like the picture that was on the wizard trading card he had gotten from his chocolate frog package. If there was one thing he hadn’t expected to find in this vault it was Merlin himself. Finally he took control back and asked, “Have you been in here all this time, sir?”

Merlin laughed and switched to English, “No, my child, I have not. I left a monitor charm here to let me know when the vault was opened. If I had been occupied, you would have been greeted by the hologram I left behind, but since I was free I wanted to see the pair of you and bestow my gifts in person.”

“I am honoured sir.” Harry told him. “My name is Harry Potter and my unseen companion’s is Daniel Jackson.”

“It is I who am honoured to meet you, young Harry.” Merlin told him. “Would you do me a favour Harry, because I would like to be able to see and speak with both of you, could you please put the ring sitting on that pedestal behind you on the second finger of your right hand?”

“What will it do, sir?” Harry asked studying the intricate knotwork that ran around the ring with an admiring eye. It was a very elegant looking piece.

“I must admit to being quite proud of how that ring turned out, even if I do say it myself.” Merlin told them. “What I designed it to do is: when worn on the second finger of your right hand, Harry, it allows Daniel to appear when he wills as a separate from you, completely solid entity, without risking both of your lives. When you wear the ring on the second finger of your left hand, then when needed or desired, Daniel’s image will be superimposed over yours, completely hiding you and he will feel real and solid to anyone you encounter.”

Harry quickly slid the ring onto his right hand and felt it adjust to fit comfortably on his second finger. A few moments later the man he had only seen an image of in his head appeared beside him wearing blue jeans and a slightly large white sweater.

Smiling, Harry held out his hand toward Daniel. “It is a pleasure to meet you in the flesh so to speak, Dr. Jackson.”

“And I am glad to finally be meeting you,” Daniel gripped his hand gently for a moment then turned his attention to Merlin.
“I need to caution you about your use of the ring.” Merlin told them. “If you wear it so the two of you are separate, it would be best if you limited it to six hours at a time because it starts putting a strain on the pair of you also when you are appearing as two separate people, the maximum distance you can keep between you is about one hundred feet apart before Daniel will disappear.”

“Greetings Myrddin,” Daniel bowed slightly to the older Ascended. Harry could still hear the translation of the Ancient or Alterrnan in his head. “Given that you made this ring for us to use, I gather you do not intend to tell the Others where to find me.”

“If they look for you at all it will be in the time you came from, not in the past.” Merlin told him. “And because your lifeforce has become bound together with Harry’s even if they try to find you in the past they will not be entirely successful because your Ascended signature is no longer the same as it was.”

“Merlin, how did you know about Daniel and I?” Harry wanted to know. “What I mean is the goblins said you opened this vault for us a thousand years ago, so how did you know that Daniel and I would wind up bound together?”

Merlin looked solemn. “That is a rather complicated story. Among the Alterrnan, I am one of the few who has visions and is able to remember them, instead of having to be told what I said after the fact. However like Cassandra, the oracle of Delphi, I am not always believed, especially about the truly catastrophic things, like the plague that affected us and the Ori. And like Oma Desala, your mentor, Daniel, I can not resist helping those who need and deserve it. When I first returned here about five thousand years ago after the Goa’uld were driven off, I found a number of human’s who were manifesting Alterrnan abilities or as they called it magic. Those who could work magic were humans of Alterrnan descent. I taught them in various guises how to use magic over the years and how to protect themselves from those who might try and use magic against them, or from magical creatures that might attack them. I also taught others how to defend themselves from human magic users as well, since I do not play favourites Anyway about a thousand years ago during the time when Hogwarts was first being founded, I had returned to Earth to check on my charges and while I was staying at Hogwarts I had a vision of powerful Wizard who was joined to an Ascended One who was not entirely Alterrnan and I heard myself say that when a Wizard and Ascended One are joined as one, their struggles will shake the heavens and the earth.”

“Myrddin, that is the second time you have said I am partly Ancient or Alterrnan and I am not.” Daniel disagreed. “I’m one of the Tau’ri. Oma Desala helped me to Ascend and if I had been Descended as the Others intended for trying to defend Abydos from Anubis I would have gone back to being just a plain Tau’ri.”

Merlin moved closer to Daniel, extending his hand and the glow surrounding it increased. He ran his hand along the side of Daniel’s head as if stroking it. When he pulled his hand back he looked slightly troubled but said nothing. Of all the things he had expected when he met those involved in his last and most important prophecy meeting Seanon Amon Slytherin again hadn’t been one of them. His thoughts drifted back to the first time he had seen Seanon.

Flashback

Myrddin was surprised to be met at the main entrance to the keep that would one day be the completed Hogwarts by Godric Gryffindor. He had not planned on coming here today, but something had drawn him here and he had learned over the years to listen to those instincts. They had never played him false.

Instead of all the usual pleasantries he was used to from Godric, which generally included the
progress they had made on building their school, the burly man began to hustle him up the stairs to
the chambers, Myrddin knew were occupied by Salazar and his wife. “I am glad you are here,
Merlin. We have a problem. Someone poisoned Sal’s wife about two weeks ago. We do not know if
the poison was meant for her or Sal. We were not able to figure out what the poison was either, so
Sal had no way to make an antidote. She is in labour but Helga says that she does not have enough
strength to give birth because all her energies both physical and magical have been going toward
keeping her and her baby alive long enough so he can be born.”

“You are sure it is going to be a boy?” Myrddin commented with a smile.

“Amaris is and you know she has the ability to see the future almost as well as you do.” Godric
pointed out. “She has been asking for you since she went into labour. And Sal did not know what to
tell her.”

Myrddin summoned his satchel full of supplies from the place where he kept it in other space. If the
Others knew he used these supplies on part Alterrans they would have a fit. Since they had
Ascended, they had forgotten their children, those of other races who were part Alterran. He felt an
obligation to see that their children survived long enough to develop and reach for the stars
themselves. “Take me to her.”

Salazar Slytherin looked up ready to blast whoever was coming in, suspecting it was another
twittering idiot, but sighed in relief when he saw it was Godric followed closely by Merlin. “Thank
the powers you have come.”

“Godric filled me in,” Myrddin told the worried husband. “Let me see what I can do for them.”

Even with Helga’s help and the discreet use of the advanced medical supplies he had brought with
him it was still a long fight over several hours before Salazar’s son came into the world with a loud
cry.

“You have a son, Amaris,” Helga told her friend.

“He sounds healthy. Does he look like his father?” Amaris asked weakly.

“He looks more like you in colouring and hair, at least right now.” Myrddin told her as he finished
cleaning up the baby. The boy’s fine downy head of hair was a dark gold and his eyes were blue like
hers, but blue eyes were normal for babies.

As Salazar and Godric entered the room, Merlin’s bare hand came down on top of the child’s
downy head. He saw a vision of a grown man with golden brown hair in what was clearly a smoke
filled ship’s corridor and he was fighting an unseen enemy. The young man’s clothing was also
wrong for this time period so he was from sometime in the future, but he could feel about the man
the essence of the child beneath his hand. He saw others standing with Sal’s child who were clearly
not from this time. His visions generally involved events or people who were going to affect the
world in a long term way for good or ill so what did this mean? Something was clearly going to take
Sal’s child away from him? Why and where though? And what was this boy’s fate to be?

Delving deeper into the boy’s essence, Myrddin found almost no magic within the boy’s body, and
what traces of magic there were seemed to be leaving the boy for somewhere else. Using his other
senses, he traced that magic to find out where it was going and realised the boy was and probably
had been all this time fighting along with his mother to keep them both alive. He reached down and
closed off that connection before the baby could bleed away his lifeforce in a futile effort to keep his
mother alive. She had been dead the moment the poison started its work. It was only her
determination and his apparently that had kept them both alive this long. The problem was that the
boy had drained his magic to the point where he might no longer be allowed in the magical world.
While it was possible he might regain his magical abilities, it was equally possible that he might not,
if he had drained them past the point of recovery. One thing was certain though, those in the
magical community would not give him the chance to try. In fact most magic users would probably
call for his death out of fear. Fear that he would reveal them to the witch hunters in revenge because
he was unable to use magic himself.

Myrddin now knew at least part of what the vision meant. He now knew who was going to be taking
Sal’s son away. It was to be him. Like a handful of the others who were part Alterran, but who had
little or no magic, he would have to move this one through time to a different life and family if he
was to have a hope of surviving and from what he had seen the boy was going to have an eventful
life in front of him. His problem was going to be explaining to Salazar why he was going to lose both
wife and son.
End Flashback

“Was you prophecy wrong?” Harry asked, when the older wizard remained silent after taking his
hand from Daniel’s face.

“No,” Myrddin seemed to be lost in thought for a moment before returning to the present. “You are
the ones spoken of by my prophecy and he is an Ascended One. However, I can also see the ties of
another prophecy binding you as well, young Harry. If they still keep them there, as they did the last
time I checked on my children here, I would suggest going to the Department of Mysteries in the
Ministry of Magic to hear the other prophecy that was made concerning you.”

“Do you have any idea what the contents are?” Daniel asked concerned.

“Unfortunately no,” Myrddin shook his head. “I can just see the ties binding him to a prophecy that
has yet to be completed.”

Wanting to distract them because he needed time to think about what he had just found out regarding
Daniel Jackson, Myrddin told them, “Have a look around. While most of this is gold and gems, not
mention a few other types of currency given I did not know when this vault would be opened, I did
leave a number of things here for the pair of you and this may be your only chance to find out, from
the one who made them, just what they do instead of reading a few lines of explanation in that book
over there.”

“Book?” That got Daniel’s attention.

Myrddin gestured toward the niche in the wall where a thin white book was lying open. He’d left it
open to the page on the ring just in case he hadn’t been able to meet with them. “Everything in that
book I made for you. They are designed to work with the combined human magic and Ascended
powers you now possess. You will have to practise with most of them because the first few times
you use them they may leave you feeling weak if you use too much power with them. It will also be
good practise at getting Harry’s magic and your Ascended powers working as one, instead of
separately. Though they will still work separately when needed.”

As Daniel picked up the book, Myrddin wondered how he could have missed seeing the
resemblance between Amaris and Daniel, given that Amaris’ colouring and elegant features were
very evident in Daniel’s face.

“I missed being able to do this,” Daniel told him before turning his attention back to the pages of the
book.
Myrddin noted that Daniel also had Salazar’s slender but compact build and apparently, judging by
the way he was devouring the pages of the book, also had his sire’s fierce desire for knowledge. He
also wondered how he could have forgotten that he had left Seanon with a family named Jackson in
Egypt after their son was still born.

The Jacksons had definitely done a fine job raising Seanon Amon Slytherin into a fine and noble
young man just like his birth parents. He made a mental note to find and thank them for it. They had
raised a young man who was willing to stand up and fight for what was right and not take the easy
way out. Daniel Jackson, from the gossip he had overheard from the Others, had never taken the
easy way even before he Ascended and afterwards always skirted the edge of breaking the rules.
Myrddin suspected part of the reason that Daniel kept from completely shattering the rules so long
was because he had so much to see and learn. It had taken the potential destruction of Abydos to
finally get him to shatter, not just try and break the rules. Myrddin just hoped some of the Others up
there had learned from his example.

Anubis had to be dealt with even if he was following the rules laid down. He retained some of the
Ancient knowledge and that gave him a big edge in finding and learning how to use it. They hadn’t
been successful in blocking the knowledge when they tried to descend him, not realizing that you
couldn’t Descend a parasite, you had to destroy it. In their fear of what the Ori might do, the Others
had forgotten that for years they and the other three races had held the Goa’uld in check, and that a
Goa’uld’s greedy, rapacious nature and desire to be worshipped as a god didn’t change just because
it no longer had a body, especially when said parasite now really seemed to have the powers of a god
and didn’t have to worry about dying.

Myrddin turned his thoughts from the immediate past to his current problem, which was: Should he
tell Daniel the truth about his family and who they were or should he wait until the situation was a
little more stable? It was going to be a shock to find out that you were actually born almost a
thousand years ago and to a man who these days thanks to the efforts of his illegitimate son was
considered by history to be a Dark Wizard, interested only in the purity of someone’s bloodlines.

He remembered well how Salazar had spent a year mourning for Amaris and the son he couldn’t
keep and that everyone else except the other three founders had tried to get him interested in
remarrying, but he showed no desire to do so. Given his position in the magical community Salazar
had certain requirements he had to meet, he had often been seen with various ladies at those
functions requiring a female companion and each of them had hoped to be the next Lady Slytherin,
but in the end they were doomed to disappointment. He’d told Myrddin during one of his last visits
to early Hogwarts that he could never make that kind of commitment again because he would never
settle for less than another soulmate as Amaris had been. What was amazing is considering the
number of women who had tried to snare him by various means was that Slytherin had only one
other child by Ciera Griffith and that had been because of her scheming. Myrddin was fairly certain
that the woman had expected Salazar to marry her, but she had been disappointed, because even
though she had called her child Sylvanus after Salazar’s father, Salazar refused to acknowledge the
child as his, though he did provide for him. The elder Slytherin had acknowledged the child as his,
but he never married Ciera.

It had been Ciera’s child that had given rise to the Slytherin reputation of wanting to prevent those
who came from non-magical families from coming to Hogwarts when he became a teacher there
after his father’s death. The best Godric and the remaining Founders had been able to do was remove
him from the school, but then he had gone on to recruit likeminded followers in an attempt to force
his views on the rest of the magical community. He had been defeated but not before the damage had
been done. The magical community had been forced to go into hiding for centuries after the deaths of
so many innocents, both magical and non-magical and even now they were still afraid to come out of
the shadows. At times Myrddin wondered how much of Sylvanus hatred for those not of magical
blood might not have been because he found out that his older brother was still alive, just not magical
and how much was because his father refused to acknowledge him. Given who his mother was
Myrddin was willing to bet Sylvanus wanted to remove any other potential heirs, not knowing that
Seanon was far out of his reach in the future, taken there by Merlin himself. He also occasionally
wondered how this world would be now if the second Salazar Slytherin hadn’t forced such a steep
division between the magical and non-magical peoples because of his hatred.

Abandoning the what–ifs for now, he decided that for now he would keep the information on
Daniel’s true parentage to himself for a while longer. After all not knowing wouldn’t hurt Daniel
right now and knowing might distract him at a critical point in whatever the pair needed to do from
this point on. He would wait until Daniel had more emotional support than just Harry to help him
work through whatever issues might crop up as a result of this information.

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Lord Gringotts waited about an hour for the two who had entered Merlin’s vault to return. Ordinarily
he would have been impatient to return to his work, but he was very curious to see what treasures if
any would be brought out of the vault. After all these were things that hadn’t seen the light of day
since Merlin had first put them in the vault. He was beginning to wonder how much longer they
would be, when the vault door swung open and Mr. Potter stepped out with a bag over one shoulder.

“Lord Gringotts,” The joined pair greeted him. “Sorry we took so long, but the vault was full of
interesting, useful, and unusual things.”

“Indeed.”

Daniel/Harry had already decided to trust those goblins already bound by the secrecy promise with
the knowledge of what the ring could do. Holding up his hand, Harry told him, “This was the most
useful thing we found.”

The goblin took the ring from the boy’s palm and studied it. It appeared to be of silver and was
covered with celtic knotwork. He detected nothing unusual with goblin magic and it didn’t look
unusual enough to get the reaction it was getting from the joined pair. Handing it back he waited to
see if they would show him what it did.

Harry slid it on his right hand and got to watch the goblin’s eye briefly pop in surprise when Daniel
appeared beside him.

“Myrddin made the ring to give me form when needed without putting a strain on us.” Daniel told
the goblin.

Lord Gringotts bowed slightly to the Old One. “He was truly the greatest of all magical beings.”

“He is indeed very talented,” Daniel agreed. “I think we are ready to return to the main area of the
bank, if you are.”

As Lord Gringotts lead the way back to the carts, Daniel asked, “Lord Gringotts, can you tell me if
the goblins have or know of someone capable of creating an identity for me that would pass any
magical or muggle checks?”
Chapter Notes

I used sections of POA in this chapter though some of them were moved around. This is not intended to infringe on JK Rowling’s copyright or plagiarise her in anyway. I also want to thank her again for giving us such a wonderful universe to play in. :)

word, words and more words = conversations in Ancient
/words, words and more words/ = conversations between Harry and Daniel
words, words, and more words = private thoughts
words, words, and more words = Dementor speaking

Merlin’s ring came in very handy during the remaining days before Harry needed to catch the train to Hogwarts. For at least a few hours out of every day, Daniel wandered the streets of Diagon Alley. They had acquired wizard robes for him so he wouldn’t stand out during his forays. At least part of his time out was spent at Flourish and Blotts looking for information while the rest was spent in making purchases he and Harry would need if they were to carry out their plan of getting Harry free of the Dursleys and Dumbledore.

Glaive had recommended a solicitor, Ken Daveys, to them because he worked for Gringotts when they needed legal matters dealt with in the muggle world. The muggle-born solicitor dealt in both magical and muggle law, which was a little unusual, but he was one of a very few that practised in both worlds and as a result his services were much in demand. It was after speaking with him that they had come up with a plan that was both simple and complicated. The safest way to get Harry free of those who didn’t have his best interests at heart was to get a legal change of custody in both the muggle and magical courts.

Mr Daveys had provided them with blank copies of the forms that needed to be filled out and signed. Daveys had also promised that once the forms were signed that he would for a fee take care of filing the ones that needed to be filed in the muggle courts, since Daniel had told him his schedule was very irregular owing to the work he did for the US Muggle government. Daveys also assured him that once they were finalised by the muggle courts the magical ones would automatically be filed with the proper departments recording the change of guardian and that would be that. An added advantage was that once the papers were filed in the proper departments in the Ministry, the court appointed magical guardian would be removed from their position and if it were Dumbledore, he would no longer have any say in Harry’s life beyond where it pertained to his schoolwork or behaviour in school.

Neither Harry or Daniel expected to have any trouble with getting Petunia Dursley to sign the change of custody papers, given that she probably would’ve given custody of Harry to the Devil himself, if she could have. It was on the magical side of things that the new guardian would need to be a magical and given that Dumbledore wanted to keep Harry so desperately with Petunia, it would
probably be best if the guardian were thought to be a blood relative as well. It should give them the least amount of government interference hopefully, if Dumbledore tried to get the change of custody overturned. The big problem there was proving that Daniel was related to Harry in such a way that it would raise no suspicions from the magical community.

Daniel couldn’t claim to be a previously unknown Potter, aside from the fact that according to the Goblins there were no remaining Potter relatives alive, there was no way pretend to be given that if he were his name would be on the Potter family tree in the vault. That meant that they were going to have to create one on the Evans side.

Harry found that a sort of poetic justice, because they were going to be able to scare Petunia with the idea that she and her precious little Duddykins were Squibs and that if Dudley bred with the right female he might have magical children. The thought of Dudley actually breeding was enough to give Harry nightmares, but he also found the thought of Petunia being one of those she despised very funny.

During their forays in Diagon Alley, Harry had also made a point to keep an eye out for Hermione and Ron, they were supposed to be coming to the Alley to get their school supplies if nothing else, but so far he hadn’t seen them.

Harry had resigned himself to seeing them on the train tomorrow when he heard a female voice shout, “Harry! Harry!”

Turning he was engulfed in a hug from Hermione while Ron looked on.

When she released him, Hermione began chattering, “We’ve been looking everywhere for you.”

“Good to see you mate!” Ron told him before Hermione could get started on every place they’d been in search of him.

“Harry, did you really blow up your aunt?” Hermione asked in serious tone as she and Ron dragged him over to Florean Fortescue’s Ice Cream Parlour where they’d been sitting after their fruitless search for him.

“It was Uncle Vernon’s sister Marge, so she couldn’t properly be called my aunt.” Harry told her, “but yes I did. I didn’t mean to though. I just lost control. How did you find out about it, anyway? I thought the Minister was keeping it quiet.”

“Dad,” Ron told him. “He works for the Ministry, remember? He told us when we were getting our rooms at the Leaky Cauldron for tonight. Dad thought it would be a good idea if we all went to the train together tomorrow.”

“Are you staying there tonight, too?” Harry asked Hermione, hoping to divert her before she started lecturing him about what he’d done to Aunt Marge.

“Yes, I am. Mom and Dad dropped me off at the Leaky Cauldron with my school trunk so I could ride in with you all tomorrow.” Hermione told him, then returned to the previous topic. “You’re very lucky you know, Harry. You could’ve been expelled for blowing up your uncle’s sister, you know, especially after that warning you got last year on account of Dobby.”

“You were lucky mate.” Ron agreed. “If I’d accidentally blown up an aunt, I would hate to see what the Ministry would do to me. Mind you they would’ve probably have to dig me up to do it because Mum would’ve killed me first. You probably got off easy ‘cause you’re Harry Potter.”

There was something about Ron’s tone of voice that made Daniel think of Steven Raynor, a fellow
archaeologist and linguist who had always been jealous of Daniel’s success until he’d done the unforgivable and gone against older and wiser men by trying to prove the Pyramids were older than history said they were. Now Steven just acted superior, because he hadn’t lost his reputation. He made no comment though not wanting to distract Harry as he dealt with his friends.

“Have you gotten all your school things?” Harry asked.

Ron nodded, “The assistant at Flourish and Blotts nearly cried when we said we needed two of the Monster books. And look at this,” Ron pulled a slender box out of the bag at his feet. “Mum and Dad bought me a brand new wand. It’s Willow with the tail hair of a male unicorn.”

Harry admired the wand for a moment before handing it back. “Well you needed a new one after Lockhart broke yours beyond repair last year.”

Getting to his feet, Harry asked, “I’m gonna get some ice cream, do you want any?”

When they shook their heads no, Harry stepped away from the table only to trip over three heavy bags seated on the ground between him and Hermione. He sent the contents of the bags spilling out as he tried to keep from falling himself.

Hermione was on her knees scooping up the books that had spilled out of the bags, almost before the last one had spilled out onto the cobblestone sidewalk. She inspected them for damage before putting them back in their bags.

Recognising the bound copy of the Monster Book of Monsters, Harry asked, “Are all these books yours Hermione?”

“Yes, they are,” Hermione sounded slightly defensive. “I’m talking more subjects than you are this year. These are my books for Muggle Studies, Arithmancy, Care of Magical Creatures, Ancient Runes, Divination…”

/Now you see why I compared you to Hermione./ Harry commented to Daniel.

/I don’t think I was quite this bad, when I was in school./ Daniel countered dryly used to those kind of comments from Jack O’Neill. /I know that I never took five elective courses in a single semester. I wonder how long it will take before she collapses from exhaustion? Even stimulants will only keep you going so long./

“Hermione are you planning to eat or sleep at all this year?” Harry wanted to know as Ron sniggered, earning them both a glare.

Hermione didn’t answer his question, instead she checked the contents of her purse and announced, “I’ve still got ten galleons. Mum and Dad gave me some extra money so I could get myself an early birthday gift.”

“Well how about a nice book?” Ron suggested, the innocent expression on his face not fooling Harry or Daniel for a minute.

Hermione appeared to consider it seriously for a moment then shook her head. “No, not right now. I really want to get myself a familiar. An owl, I think. I mean Harry’s got Hedwig and you’ve got Errol….”

“Errol’s not mine.” Ron disagreed. “He’s the family owl. The only thing I’ve got is Scabbers.” He pulled the rather battered old rat out of his pocket and put him on the table. “Thanks for reminding me though Hermione. I want to get him checked over ‘cause I don’t think Egypt agreed with him.”
Looking at Scabbers, Harry had to agree with Ron’s assessment. Scabbers didn’t look all that good. He’d lost a lot of weight and his whiskers were drooping.

“The Magical Menagerie is over there,” Harry was quite familiar with the shops in Diagon Alley, having explored just about every nook and cranny with Daniel in the last two weeks. “You should be able to get Scabbers checked out, while Hermione gets her owl.”

Harry waited in line with Ron near the counter, while Hermione went to look at the owls. The shop was very crowded. Almost every inch taken up with cages of animals that hissed, slept, crept, growled, or tried to attract the attention of the customers in the store.

“How can I help you?” The witch behind the counter asked once the wizard in front of Ron had departed.

“It my rat.” Ron explained. “He’s been a bit off-colour since we got back from Egypt.”

“Bang him on the counter,” the witch instructed as she pulled on a pair of thick spectacles.

Ron pulled his rat out of his pocket and placed him on the counter as requested. The sleek black rats in a nearby cage stopped their tail skipping to watch.

After studying him for a moment, the witch told him, “Your rat has been through the mill hasn’t he. How old is he?”

Ron shrugged. “Dunno. He was old when I got him. He used to belong to my brother.”

“What special powers does he have?” The witch wanted to know.

“None that I know of.” Ron told her after a few moments thought. “Or if he does, he’s never shown them.”

“An ordinary garden variety rat like this one generally will not live beyond three years.” The witch told him bluntly. “Now if you’re looking for a replacement, one of these might interest you.”

She gestured toward the sleek black rats who resumed their game of skip rope using their own tails.

Ron glared at the rats and muttered, “showoffs.”

“Well, if you aren’t interested in a replacement, then you might want to try this rat tonic. It might help.” She put a bottle on the counter.

Ron would never admit it but he wanted his rat back to his usual self. ‘How mu…OUCH!’

Something large had launched itself from the highest cage on to Ron’s head and then from there onto the counter, hissing and spitting madly.

“NO CROOKSHANKS!” The witch behind the counter shouted as the orange thing made a try for Scabbers who bolted out from between the witch’s hands like he’d been greased.

As soon as Scabbers was on the floor he took off out the open door with Ron in hot pursuit. Harry followed close on his heels, wanting to help his friend find his pet.

It was Harry who found Scabbers hiding under a rubbish bin near Quality Quidditch Supplies and pulled him out by his tail.

“Easy Scabbers,” Harry tried to comfort the twitching rat. “That thing isn’t out here.”
There’s something off about Ron’s rat. Daniel spoke up suddenly.

What do you mean? Harry inquired.

He doesn’t feel right, was all Daniel said.

Well if the witch at the Magical Menagerie is right he may be dying from old age. Harry pointed out. That may be what you are picking up.

No, Daniel disagreed. I know what impending death feels like and Scabbers isn’t dying, but I have never encountered this feeling before. It’s magical in origin though, I know that much.

“Good you found him,” Ron sounded very relieved as he hurried over to join his friend who was standing near Quality Quidditch supplies, staring at Scabbers.

Taking the trembling rat from Harry, Ron stuffed him in his pocket, then massaging his head he asked. “What was that thing anyway?”

The brief glimpse Harry had had of it only told him it was a feline. It was either a very large cat or a very small tiger.

Ron looked around. “Where’s Hermione?”

“Probably still getting her owl.” Harry told him as they headed back toward the Magical Menagerie to find Hermione.

She was coming out as they approached, her arms filled with the large ginger coloured cat that had made a try for Scabbers.

“Hermione! Please tell me you didn’t buy that monster!” Ron begged.

“Isn’t he adorable?” Hermione sounded very pleased with herself.

Harry wisely said nothing about the cat’s looks. The cat was large with a mashed in face and from what he could see it looked decidedly bow-legged. While it looked quite content right now, Harry was willing to bet that that was because Scabbers was out of sight.

“Hermione that thing nearly scalped me!” Ron pointed out. “Why would you wan to buy it?”

“I’m sure he didn’t mean to, did you, Crookshanks?” Hermione cooed. “Can you believe that nobody wanted him? The witch in there told me he’d been there for ages and no one wanted to buy him.”

“I wonder why.” Ron commented darkly then he asked. “What about Scabbers? He’s going to need rest and relaxation. How’s he going to get it with that cat around?”

“Ron, Crookshanks will be in my dorm and Scabbers will be in yours. He isn’t going to bother Scabbers, you’ll see. By the way, you forgot your rat tonic.” Hermione slapped a bottle of red liquid in his hand before walking off, Crookshanks cradled in her arms.

She doesn’t know cats very well, Daniel observed as Harry and Ron followed her to the Leaky Cauldron, carrying the bags of books that had been bought earlier that day. While my experience with them is limited, I know that cats will go wherever they want, whenever they want and you will never know how they managed to get there.
Instead of his usual dinner alone in his room, Harry had dinner in the parlour with the Weasleys and Hermione. It was a very lively affair.

Once they reached the pudding course, Fred asked, “Dad, how are we all going to get to King’s Cross tomorrow?”

“The Ministry is loaning us a couple of cars.” Mr. Weasley told them.

Percy looked up surprised. “Why?”

“It’s because of you, Perc,” George’s expression was serious. “They’ve heard all about you and wanted to make sure you receive a proper escort since you are such an important person. And I certain the cars are sure to be sporting little pennants that say HB on them.”

“For Humungous Bighead.” Fred added, making all the Weasleys except Mrs. Weasley and Percy snort into their pudding.

“Why is the Ministry providing cars for us, Father?” Percy repeated his question, trying to ignore his snickering siblings.

“Because we don’t have one any more,” Mr. Weasley’s attention was focused on his chocolate pudding. “They are doing me a favour because I work there.”

/There’s more to it than that./ Daniel commented. /You would think a government employee could lie better./

Harry could only agree. He’d noticed that while Mr. Weasley’s voice remained matter-of-fact, his ears had turned red, a lot like Ron’s did when he was under stress. /Probably something to do with Sirius Black, given how worried the Minister was that he might’ve gotten to me first the night Dursley almost killed me./

Before anyone else could question Mr. Weasley further, Mrs. Weasley spoke up, “And it’s a good thing they did too. Do you realise just how much luggage you’ve got between the seven of you. Now you’ve all got a busy day tomorrow, so I want you to go upstairs and make sure you’ve got everything packed. There may not be time tomorrow.”

“Ron, hasn’t even started,” Percy told his mother. “He’s got his stuff scattered all over my side of the room.”

“Snitch,” Ron scowled at his brother. “I would’ve gotten to it.”

Harry followed the Weasley children and Hermione upstairs. He needed to make sure that everything he didn’t want the others to see was hidden in the secret compartment of his new trunk. Once he was done, he went down the hall hunting for Ron and Percy’s room to see if he could help his friend pack.

He had no trouble finding the room, because he could hear Percy shouting from the partly open doorway of room twelve. “Where is it? I set it on the table here so I could polish it and now it’s gone.”

“I don’t know,” Ron shouted back. “I need to find Scabber’s rat tonic, I can’t find that. Maybe I left it in the bar.”

When Harry opened the door he saw Percy standing between Ron and the door. The room looked
like it had been hit by a hurricane. “You’re not going anywhere til you find my badge.”

“What’s going on?” Harry asked.

“My Head Boy badge is gone.” “I can’t find Scabbers rat tonic.” Ron and Percy said at the same time, only Percy sounded like it was the end of the world if his badge wasn’t found right this minute. Ron tried again to get past Percy so he could go down and check the bar, but Percy held him back saying, “You aren’t going anywhere until you’ve found my badge.”

“I’ll check for Scabbers tonic downstairs for you, Ron.” Harry offered.

“Thanks mate,” Ron turned his attention back to packing his stuff, ignoring Percy who kept insisting that he look for the badge.

As he headed down the passage from the parlour area to the main bar, Harry heard a pair of raised voices coming from the parlour where they’d had dinner and recognised the voices as Mr. and Mrs. Weasley’s.

“…it makes no sense not to tell him.” Mr. Weasley was insisting heatedly. “I told Fudge that Harry has a right to know, but he insists on treating Harry like a child. He’s thirteen years old after all.”

“Arthur, that news would terrify him.” Mrs. Weasley insisted. “He’s better off not knowing. I mean would you want Ron to have that knowledge hanging over his head if it were him? Harry’s better off going back to school without knowing about this.”

“I’m not so sure about that Molly,” Arthur disagreed. “Remember all the trouble he and Ron have gotten themselves into. They’ve ended up in the Forbidden Forrest twice remember. Besides, others will know, like Malfoy and they are sure to use that knowledge to taunt Harry into doing something foolish and he can’t afford to do that this year. In fact, I am prepared to bet that if the Knight Bus hadn’t picked Harry up when he ran away from his Aunt and Uncle’s he would’ve been dead before morning.”

/Ah so the Minister and Dumbledore told everyone the same story that they wanted you to believe./ Daniel commented. /I had wondered if they would bother to tell your friends anything at all or leave it to you./

“Harry’s not dead. He’s fine, so what’s the point in telling him.” Mrs. Weasley wanted to know. “He’s better off not knowing, let alone worrying about it.”

“The Ministry thinks Sirius Black is mad, Molly,” Arthur told her, “and maybe he is, but his madness seems to have made him very clever. He was clever enough to get out of Azkaban and that’s supposed to be impossible. Not to mention that in the three weeks since his escape, no one has seen hide nor hair of him. Fudge keeps telling the Daily Prophet that we are close to catching him, but we are no nearer to doing that than we are to inventing self-spelling wands. The only thing any of us know is what he is after…”

“But Harry will be perfectly safe as long as he is in Hogwarts.” Molly protested. “Dumbledore won’t let anything happen to him.”

“We thought Azkaban was secure too,” Arthur pointed out, “but Black got out. If he could get past the Azkaban guards, then he can probably get into Hogwarts. Besides Dumbledore can’t be everywhere Molly and if Harry takes it into his head to go hunting Black, I shudder to think of what could happen to him.”
“Are you sure that Black is after Harry?” Molly demanded. “He might be doing something totally different you know.”

There was a thudding sound from within the room that Daniel identified as someone’s hand or fist hitting the table. Probably Mr. Weasley’s. Then Mr. Weasley said, “Molly, how many times do I have to tell you. They didn’t report it in the Prophet, because Fudge wanted it kept quiet, but a few days before his escape the guards reported that Black was muttering in his sleep every night and it was always the same words ‘He’s at Hogwarts... he’s at Hogwarts.’ What else could we think but that he’s after Harry. If you ask me in Black’s deranged mind, he may think that murdering Harry will bring back You-Know-Who.”

“Does Dumbledore know about this?” Molly wanted to know.

“Of course he does,” Arthur sounded frustrated. “We had to have his permission to station the Azkaban guards around the school. He wasn’t happy to have them there, but he agreed.”

“Why wouldn’t he be happy to have the Azkaban guards there?” Molly sounded shocked. “I mean if they are there to catch Black, what possible objection could he have?”

“Dumbledore doesn’t like the Azkaban guards.” Arthur told her now sounding tired. “Neither do I if it comes to that.”

“But if they keep Harry safe and catch Black….” Mrs. Weasley began.

“Then I will never say a word against them ever again.” Arthur told her. “Come on dear, it’s time we went to bed. We have an early day tomorrow.”

Harry headed into the main area of the Leaky Cauldron and found the bottle of rat tonic under a table near where they’d been sitting before dinner.

Daniel was strangely silent as they headed back upstairs with the bottle. After giving it to Ron, he headed for his room and found the twins crouched further down the landing listening and laughing as Percy demolished his and Ron’s room in search of his badge.

“We’ve improved it.” Fred held Percy’s badge out for Harry’s inspection. It now read: Bighead Boy.

Harry forced a laugh and went onto his room.

After locking the door, he took the ring out of his pocket and put it on his right hand. He needed to see Daniel not just hear him in his head.

/Activate the silencer./ Daniel requested before appearing.

Harry opened his trunk and pulled a small celtic style dragon out of the secret compartment. He stroked the head of the dragon once and the walls shimmered briefly.

“What do you think?” Harry wanted to know.

“Well we now know at least part of the reason they wanted to keep you in Diagon Alley. They think Black is after you and they wanted you where hopefully other wizards could protect you.” Daniel told him. “Mr. Weasley is also apparently to serve as your escort to the train station. They probably think you won’t be alarmed by his presence they way you would say by the wizard equivalent of a policeman because you trust Mr. Weasley.”

“They all think that Sirius Black is after me. Could he be?” Harry desperately wanted reassurance.
from the one adult that he could trust.

“I don’t know,” Daniel admitted. “We still don’t have all the facts regarding Mr. Black. However we will be on our guard, and if Mr. Black does intend to do us harm, he will be in for a big surprise… Me. You have my word Harry. I won’t let him harm you. I won’t let anyone harm you. Not Black. Not Dumbledore. Not even the Goa’uld.

Daniel descended the stairs to the main area of the Leaky Cauldron, dragging Harry’s trunk behind him. They had agreed last night that it would be best if Daniel were in control of their body until the train for Hogwarts left the station. That way if Sirius Black or anyone else made an attempt on Harry, he could protect them.

Daniel’s eyes swept the large room and noted the breakfast crowd was larger than usual, even allowing for the Weasleys and a number of the diners weren’t paying attention to their food, instead they were watching the room.

/They are about as subtle as the Goa’uld./ Daniel commented to Harry. /If these are an example of the Ministry’s finest protectors, the wizarding world has major problems. If these guys had been at the SGC, Jack would’ve sent them back for retraining./

“Harry!” Ron helped him drag his trunk over to join the rest of the pile waiting by the door to muggle London. “Dad’s outside waiting for the cars to arrive.”

A moment later Mr. Weasley poked his head in the door. “Cars are here. Why don’t you go first, Harry?”

Daniel mentally congratulated Mr. Weasley on his lack of subtlety. The man was making appear as though Harry had a choice, even as he dragged Harry’s trunk toward the door, leaving Harry with no choice but to follow. If Harry hadn’t followed him out the door there would have been questions.

Mr. Weasley checked in both directions as they crossed the pavement to the car and if Daniel/Harry wondered if he was checking to make sure that no one was trying for Harry or if he wanted to make sure they didn’t run into any muggles by suddenly appearing out of thin air. Harry had no idea how far the spell that kept those with no magic from seeing the Leaky Cauldron actually went.

/It makes a good argument for the goblins assertion that muggle-borns are in fact the children of long forgotten Squibs./ Daniel frowned over that word, not liking the slightly insulting sound of it. /Hermione’s parents are able to see the Leaky Cauldron, therefore they must have some magical ability even if they can’t harness it. I mean if you make a shield selectively porous so some can get through but others can’t, sooner or later it will be no protection at all./

/I wonder how Hermione would take the news that she might have an unclaimed vault at Gringotts?/ Harry put in as they settled in the back of the car.

/I doubt she would believe you./ Daniel told him. /From what I’ve seen of her in your memories, if she can’t confirm it by finding it in a book, she won’t believe it unless someone like Dumbledore tells her it’s true and I’m not sure that he would tell her that. If you are going to suggest it to her though, I would suggest you wait until we are out from under Dumbledore’s direct control that way he won’t have to wonder how you found out about it./

Hermione, Ron and to Ron’s disgust, Percy soon joined them. Daniel was willing to bet that the addition of Percy was Mrs. Weasley’s idea since she seemed to think he was so responsible.
Daniel personally thought he was like a younger version of Lt. Colonel Simmons, not that he would ever say it aloud. Simmons with his superior air had had his nose rather rudely rubbed in the fact that he didn’t know everything when the rocket he thought would take out the Goa’uld, blew up long before they hit their intended targets. In fact if it hadn’t been for SG-1, Simmons’ actions would have been partially responsible for the destruction of Earth because he would have delayed military mobilization past the point where it would’ve been able to even fight a delaying action to buy more time for more of the people of Earth to escape. He just hoped that Percy would lose that superior air, before he also accidentally caused great harm.

At King’s Cross, the drivers from the Ministry found carts for the trunks and then made sure they were safely on their way into the station before departing.

Mr. Weasley remained close by Harry until they reached the portal to Platform 9 & 3/4, then looking around, he told them, “since there are so many of us we will go through in pairs. Harry, you and I will go first okay?”

Daniel nodded and walked up to the brick pillar with Ron’s father. Leaning casually against it, they slipped through to the other side with a minimum of fuss. The others came through a few minutes apart. Once they were all gathered again, Mr. Weasley led them to a car near the end of the train that seemed to be largely empty and then he helped the older boys get all their gear stored in two separate compartments. They lost Percy almost immediately though as he spotted his girlfriend, Penelope because after finger combing his hair, he headed over to see her, his chest stuck out so she couldn’t miss his Head Boy badge. This made Fred and George start sniggering until their mother shushed them.

Once the trunks, Hedwig, and Crookshanks were stowed they headed back off the train to say goodbye to Mrs. Weasley.

Daniel had returned control to Harry for the good-bye. They didn’t need Mrs. Weasley suspecting anything was amiss and most mothers had an instinct that allowed them to know when something was wrong even if the child wasn’t their own.

Once Harry had said good-bye to Mrs. Weasley, Mr. Weasley spoke up, “Harry, can I talk to you a moment, over here.” He gestured toward a pillar near the end of the train. “It’s kind of a private matter.”

“What is it, Mr Weasley?” Harry couldn’t help noticing how tense the man looked, not to mention that he was looking around nervously.

“There’s something I need to tell you before you go…”

Certain that Mr. Weasley was about to tell him about Sirius Black, Harry interrupted, “I already know, sir.”

“You already know about…?” That surprised Mr Weasley. “How?”

“I overheard you and Mrs. Weasley talking last night,” Harry admitted. “So it’s alright, you haven’t broken your promise to the Minister by telling me.”

“That isn’t how I wanted you to find out about…. him.” Mr. Weasley was surprised by how calm Harry seemed to be over the whole matter. He was certain he wouldn’t be taking it quite so well if a mass murderer was after him. “You’re taking this a lot better than I expected, Harry. I expected you to be scared at the very least.”
“I’m fine,” Harry told him, and at the look of disbelief on Mr. Weasley’s face he added “really I am. I mean Sirius Black can’t be any worse than Voldemort, now can he? Besides, once I’m at Hogwarts, do you really think that Black is going to try and get past Dumbledore?”

There was the expected flinch at Voldemort’s name before Mr. Weasley said. “I knew you were made of stronger stuff than Fudge thought.”

The train whistle blew indicating the train was going to be leaving soon, so Mr. Weasley hurried to get to the main reason he wanted to talk to Harry. “I want you to promise me something Harry.”

“Arthur!” Molly interrupted him as she ushered the other on to the train. “Harry needs to get on the train. What are you doing?”

“He’ll be there in a minute, Molly.” Mr. Weasley started moving Harry in the direction of the train as he said, “I want you to promise me…”

“That I’ll be a good boy and stay in the castle.” Harry spoke up anticipating him.

Mr. Weasley shook his head. “Not entirely, though that would be the best thing to do…” The whistle blew again as he said, “I want you to swear to me you won’t go looking for Black.”

Harry looked at the man in surprise. “Do I look crazy to you? Why would I want to go looking for someone who wants to kill me?”

“Just promise me,” Mr. Weasley requested as Harry climbed on the train, “no matter what anyone says to you that you won’t…”

“Arthur, the train is leaving, let him get inside.” Molly Weasley shouted over the sound of the whistle.

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Harry, Ron, and Hermione returned to the compartment their trunks were in and found a surprise waiting for them. The compartment was no longer empty. A man was now sleeping on one of the seats, his head resting against the window. He was the first adult the three of them could remember seeing on the Hogwarts Express, other than the lady who pushed the food trolley. This train was generally reserved for the students only.

The sleeping man’s robes were kind of shabby and threadbare in places and they looked like they had been repaired quite a few times.

Daniel was kind of surprised that there weren’t more adults on the train. Apparently Fudge hadn’t been able to come up with a convincing excuse to put guards on the train, in addition to giving Harry an escort to make sure he got to the train, unless this one apparently sleeping man was supposed to be it. Daniel hoped not, because while the man looked young, he also looked like he was utterly exhausted if not ill and his light brown hair was flecked with patches of grey. He’d obviously been living a hard life up to now and Daniel wasn’t too sure how much more he might have to give before he broke.

“Who do you think he is?” Ron whispered as they quietly entered the compartment.

“Professor R.J. Lupin,” Hermione whispered as she sat down near the door to the compartment.

“How do you know?” Ron asked.
“It says so on his suitcase.” Hermione pointed out the battered case tied with string, sitting in the luggage rack above the man’s head.

Neither of them saw Harry start at the man’s name. *R.J. Lupin! Could this man be the Remus Lupin mentioned in my parent’s will? Lupin couldn’t be that common a name even in the Wizarding world.*

/When we get a chance we’ll ask him./ Daniel promised. /Judging by that suitcase, he is going to be at Hogwarts for a little while at least./

“I wonder what he’s going to be teaching at Hogwarts.” Ron kept his voice low so he wouldn’t wake the sleeping man.

“It should be obvious,” Hermione sounded slightly superior. “There’s only one current vacancy: Defence Against the Dark Arts.”

Ron looked the man over and commented, “I hope he’s up to the job. I mean he looks like one good hex would finish him off.”

“Well, he couldn’t be any worse than Quirrell or Lockhart, now could he.” Harry put in.

Ron shrugged. “We’ll see if he can break the curse.”

Most of the students at Hogwarts were convinced that the DADA job was cursed, given that no teacher had managed to last more than a year in the position without something happening to them.

Harry studied the sleeping man across from him intently. He could feel Daniel thinking in the back of his head, though the man hadn’t said anything as yet.

/Pence for your thoughts,/ Harry offered.

/I was just wondering who arranged for Professor Lupin to get the Defence position and ride up on this train. Was it Fudge or Dumbledore?/ Daniel told him. He could feel Harry’s confusion, so he elaborated, /I mean the timing is a little too co-incidental. One old friend of your parents breaks out of jail, possibly to come after you and now another that we know through your parent’s will that they thought highly of, just happens to get a job teaching Defence at your school. The timing just seems a little suspicious to me./

Harry stared out the window at the passing scenery and mulled that over for a moment. /If it is something more than coincidence then it was probably Dumbledore who arranged it. I can’t see him letting Fudge choose his DADA teacher./

Before Daniel could reply, Ron asked, “Harry, what did my dad want to talk to you about?”

Harry sighed, pulling his attention away from the window. He hadn’t wanted to bring this up and worry his friends, but since the topic had been brought up, he proceeded to tell them about the discussion he’d overheard between Mr. and Mrs. Weasley the previous evening and how they thought that Sirius Black was after him. He also told him that Mr. Weasley wanted to make sure he wouldn’t go after Black.

Ron looked shocked and Hermione was holding her hands over her mouth as if she were trying to keep from screaming as he finished his bare recital. When she finally lowered them, it was to say, “Sirius Black escaped to come after you? Oh Harry… Mr. Weasley’s right, you need to be really really careful. Don’t go looking for trouble, Harry…”

“I don’t go looking for trouble. It finds **me**, without me looking for it.” Harry couldn’t help feeling
annoyed that Hermione would automatically assume he was going to go looking for Black.

“Hermione, just how thick do you think Harry is?” Ron gave voice to his friend’s annoyance. “He’d have to absolutely barking to want to go looking for a nutter who wants to kill him.”

Harry was a bit surprised at their reactions. Both Ron and Hermione seemed more worried than he was by the notion that Black was after him, but then again he did have an Ascended being sharing his body, so he really didn’t have all that much to worry about. He couldn’t tell them that though.

“My dad told me that nobody knows how he managed to get out of Azkaban.” Ron told them. “He was in the high security wing too. Azkaban is supposed to be escape proof, between it’s location and the Azkaban guards.”

Remembering the conversation of the night before where Mr. Weasley had expressed his distaste over the Azkaban guards and the fact that they would be guarding the entrances to Hogwarts, Harry asked, “Ron, what are these Azkaban guards your father talked about?”

“I don’t know,” Ron admitted, “but they must be something awful. Dad had to go out there once and when he came home he was all white, shaky, and sick looking.”

Before Harry could ask him another question, a faint tinny sort of whistling sound filled the compartment.

“Where’s that coming from?” Hermione started to check under the seats.

After listening for a moment, Ron, said, “Sounds like it’s coming from your trunk, Harry.”

Harry with Ron’s help slid his trunk off the luggage rack and opened it. The whistling sound was coming from the pocket Sneakoscope that Ron had sent him for his birthday. It spun in the palm Ron’s hand, whistling and flashing.

“Is that a Sneakoscope?” Hermione leaned over for a closer look.

“Yea, but it a rather cheap one.” Ron told her. “It kept going off while I was trying to attach it to Errol’s leg so I could send it to Harry for his birthday.”

“Were you doing anything untrustworthy or that you shouldn’t have been?” Hermione wanted to know.

“Well, I wasn’t supposed to be using Errol.” Ron admitted. “Mum and Dad wanted me to wait until we saw him again to give Harry his present, but I didn’t want him to think I’d forgotten his birthday.”

The whistling was getting louder so Hermione advised him, “Put it away, before it wakes Professor Lupin.”

Harry slid the Sneakoscope into a pair of Uncle Vernon’s socks and then stuffed it down to the bottom of his trunk.

“I wonder what made it go off?” Harry spoke his thoughts aloud. “I don’t think any of us were doing anything untrustworthy.”

Ron told him. “Might want to get it checked when we go to Hogsmeade. Fred told me they sell that sort of thing in Dervish and Bangees.”
“Do you know much about Hogsmeade, Ron?” Hermione asked. “I read that it’s the only entirely non-muggle settlement in the whole of Britain…”

“Yea it is,” Ron agreed trying to head her off before she got into full flow about everything she’d found in her books about Hogsmeade. “That’s not why I want to go though. I want to get inside Honeydukes!”

“What’s that?” Hermione didn’t remember reading about that place when she’d looked up information on Hogsmeade.

“It’s the world’s best sweet shop.” Ron told them a dreamy look on his face. “They’ve got everything… Chocolate Frogs, Pepper Imps… they make your mouth smoke, Sugar Quills that look so real you can suck on them in class and no one will know you don’t have a real quill….”

“Hogsmeade’s a very interesting place,” Hermione agreed. “I read in Sites of historical Sorcery that the inn was the headquarters for 1612 Goblin rebellion and the Shrieking Shack is supposed to be the most severely haunted magical or muggle place in Britain.”

“And massive sherbert balls that when you suck on them, they levitate you several inches off the ground.” Ron clearly wasn’t listening to Hermione’s listing of places of educational interest in Hogsmeade.

Harry watched the two of them going back and forth like a tennis match, neither listening to what the other was saying, until Hermione said, “It’ll be nice to get out of Hogwarts for a while and see some of the surrounding area.”

“Yea it will,” Harry agreed, glad that Daniel had signed Uncle Vernon’s name to the Hogsmeade permission slip. There was no way he could’ve forged it and Daniel’s handwriting looked nothing like his.

Hermione looked thoughtful. “Harry, with Black after you, do you really think you should be going to Hogsmeade?”

“Hermione are you nuts? Harry can’t miss Hogsmeade.” Ron looked at her aghast.

“Ron, I’m just thinking of Harry’s safety and if you were a good friend you would agree with me that it’s too dangerous for Harry to go while Black is out there after him.” Hermione crossed her arms and glared at the red head.

“I am a good friend of his. In fact I was his first friend and that’s why I don’t think he should miss Hogsmeade?” Ron countered hotly.

“I can settle this now before you both say something you’ll regret.” Harry spoke up before their argument could escalate. “Hermione, I am going. I am not going to miss out on seeing Hogsmeade. I doubt Sirius Black is going to put in an appearance in a crowded town so don’t worry.”

Hermione looked like she wanted to continue arguing with him, but Harry told her, “End of discussion Hermione. It’s my life, let me live it. I haven’t gotten to enjoy myself all that much thanks to the Dursleys and I’m not going to miss Hogsmeade if I can help it.”

Hermione sniffed and turned to open Crookshanks basket.

“Hermione, don’t you dare let that thing loose in here.” Ron warned, but it was too late.

Crookshanks leapt out of the wicker basket and perched on Ron’s knee. The lump in Ron’s pocket
that was Scabbers trembled, so Ron pushed the cat away. “Get off!”

“Ron don’t!” Hermione chided him as she cuddled her cat.

Ron was about to respond, when Professor Lupin stirred slightly. He remained silent, not wanting to wake the man.


The sleeping professor in their compartment wasn’t very good company, and they remained quieter than normal so as not to disturb him but later that afternoon, his presence proved to be a good thing as the day wore on and the weather began to turn gloomy.

Malfoy pushed open the door to their compartment with a bang and stepped in flanked by his two goons Crabbe and Goyle.

“Well, well, what do we have here? Looks like Potty and the Weasel.” Malfoy announced, then before Harry or Ron could say anything, he continued. “I heard your father came into some money this summer Weasel, I’m surprised your mother didn’t die of shock when she heard about it.”

Ron’s face turned red and he stood up so quickly, he knocked Crookshanks basket off the seat and it bumped into Professor Lupin on the way down. The sleeping man gave a snort and shifted slightly to get away from the basket.

Realising there was an adult in the compartment with them, Malfoy backed up a step as he asked, “Who is that?”

“A new teacher, probably for Defence Against the Dark Arts.” Hermione spoke up from where she was seated as Harry/Daniel got to his feet, in case he had to hold Ron back and keep him from doing something stupid.

Malfoy wasn’t stupid enough to start anything in front of a teacher.

“Let’s go,” Malfoy muttered resentfully to Crabbe and Goyle and the two larger boys followed him out of the compartment.

Ron punched a seat cushion with his fist. “I’m not gonna take any rubbish from Malfoy this year. If he doesn’t lay off my family and I get my hands on him, I’m gonna do this,” he made a violent twisting gesture, “to his head!”

“Ron!” Hermione hissed, glancing worriedly at the teacher.

He still appeared to be asleep, but she didn’t know how he could sleep through all the noise of students chattering as they passed by and on top of it Malfoy coming in. The man must be really really tired. She wondered if he would be at the Opening feast or would he sleep through that as well.


The view outside was a dark, shimmering grey between the thick sheets of rain and the darkening sky and would make one think it was evening, but it wasn’t, at least not according to Harry new watch. They couldn’t even see any of the passing countryside from their window.

The train started slowing down.
“We must be nearly there.” Ron commented. “Good, I’m starving.”

“We can’t be, it’s too soon.” Hermione disagreed. “And I don’t know how you could be starving, considering how much you ate off the trolley.”

Ron shrugged. “I’m a growing boy.”

The train continued to slow.

“I wonder why we are stopping? I mean we still have a couple of hours before we reach school.” Harry put in checking his watch again.

Harry got up and carefully stepped over Professor Lupin’s feet. Opening the door he looked out into the corridor and saw other students doing the same.

Returning to his seat near the window, he told the others, “I don’t think this is a planned stop.”

Hermione and Ron looked at each other worriedly and then glanced at the sleeping teacher.

The train jerked sharply as it stopped suddenly and they heard bangs from other compartments in the sudden silence that told them people and luggage had fallen to the floor. As the voices in the other compartments started to rise the lights went out and they were in total darkness, both within the train and without.

“What’s going on?” Ron demanded a slight note of fear in his voice.

“Could we have broken down?” Hermione wondered.

“Dunno…” Harry used the edge of his sleeve to wipe a section of the fogged up glass to see if he could get an idea of what was going on outside. “There’s someone moving around out there though.”

Their compartment door opened and someone came in, falling over Ron’s legs in the process. “Ouch!. Sorry, whoever you are.”

“It’s okay, Neville.” Ron helped his fellow Gryffindor to his feet and got him settled on seat opposite him.

“Anybody got any idea what’s going on?” Neville asked as the compartment door opened again and someone stumbled over his feet.

“I’m afraid we don’t, Nev,” Harry told the other boy as he reached down to help the person who had fallen further in to their feet.

“Who’s in here?” the voice asked.

Ron recognised it as his sister’s. “Gin, it’s us.”

“Good, I’m glad I found you.” Ginny sounded relieved. She tried to sit down in the first available space, but wound up bumping into Crookshanks’ basket and than earned her a fierce hiss from the cat within.

“Sorry Crookshanks.” Ginny apologised to the cat as she fumbled around with her hand trying to find an empty space to sit.

“Quiet,” a hoarse older voice said abruptly.
Since Harry didn’t recognise the voice, he assumed that Professor Lupin had finally woken up. A moment later a dim light appeared in the compartment and Professor Lupin appeared to be holding a handful of flames.

“Stay where you are,” he instructed as he moved carefully toward the compartment door.

The door slid open before he reached it and a wave of cold filled the small compartment. A cloaked figure was revealed in the light in Lupin’s hand. The face was completely hidden by the cloak and when Harry looked down at the hand that had pushed the compartment door open, he nearly lost his lunch. The hand was slimy, grey and scabberous like something dead that had been decaying in water.

Daniel gasped recognising that appendage from the knowledge he had gained when he Ascended. *A Sai’ki’eth here! That isn’t possible. They were all supposed to have been destroyed!*

The Sai’ki’eth had been a living weapon created by the Ori during one of their wars and according to Oma they had supposedly all been destroyed, before the Ancients had left Earth. She had told him that the Sai’ki’eth were hard to control or contain and even harder to kill. Had she lied to him, or had some of the dark creatures escaped their destruction, or even worse had some foolish wizard found a way to recreate the damnable things.

Daniel’s attention was pulled back to Harry who was beginning to retreat inside his own mind due to the cries of some woman who sounded as if she were in peril of her life. Daniel quickly figured out that the Sai’ki’eth had brought one of their main weapons to bear, the one that allowed them to bring forth the horrible memories of whoever they happen to be near and feed on their good memories. Daniel could feel Harry’s body shaking in reaction to their presence. Unfortunately there was no way he can work through Harry now because he was almost comatose, so he would have to separate and hope that he could deal with the Sai’ki’eth before both he and Harry died.

Projecting himself only for the Sai’ki’eth to see, Daniel told it, “You do not belong here. These are not your prey.”

*You no longer have authority or power here, Alterran,* a hissing, guttural voice disagreed. *This is our place now.*

Beginning to feel weaker, Daniel said to it, “That is where you are wrong. This is my place!”

Daniel extended his hands palm out and balls of blinding white light filled them. The foul creature backed up realising he intended to destroy it. Sending the energy blast toward the Sai’ki’eth he could see and through him to all the others that were on or around the train, Daniel continued to pour energy into his attack until he no longer felt the foul presence of the Sai’ki’eth.

Severely weakened, Daniel returned to Harry’s body and they both slipped into unconsciousness.

“What the bloody hell was that light?!” Ron’s voice spoke into the darkness.

“I’m afraid I have no idea.” Professor Lupin’s voice told him, before saying, “Lumos.”

A bright light appeared on the tip of the Professor’s wand. “Is everyone all right?”

“Other than really bright spots before my eyes, and the feeling that I will never be happy again, I seem to be okay.” Ron told him and one by one the others agreed.

“Here, this should help with that feeling.” Lupin handed out some chocolate.
As Hermione took her piece of chocolate she realised that there was one person who hadn’t answered the Professor’s question. “Harry, are you okay?”

No response.

“Harry!” Ginny called this time.

Still no answer.

Professor Lupin turned his lit wand toward where Harry was sitting.

The light from his wand revealed that Harry was leaning against the window, his eyes closed, he face very pale, and blood running from his nose.

“HARRY!” Ginny shrieked.
As Ginny’s shriek died away, Lupin moved to check on his friend’s son, not that Harry would ever know that he used to be one of his parent’s best friends. It had been one of the terms that Dumbledore had insisted on as a part of his employment. Unless Harry asked first, he was not to know that Lupin had any connection to his parents. The other reason he had been chosen as the new DADA teacher, aside from his skill and knowledge of the subject, was to aid in protecting Harry from Sirius Black if he managed to make it past the Dementors and into the school.

While the nosebleed appeared to be stopping on it’s own, the pallor of Harry’s unconscious face in the light provided by his wand worried Lupin. So did the irregular pulse that he could feel under his fingers at the side of Harry’s neck.

“Are you all okay?” Lupin asked as he continued to check Harry over.

They nodded as Ron said, “Other than feeling like I’ll never be happy again.”

“Eat the chocolate I gave you,” Lupin urged them. “It will help take that feeling away.”

They complied and then the young red-headed girl asked. “How is Harry?”

“He’s unconscious,” Lupin opened the door to the compartment. “I need to get an emergency portkey from the engineer and get him to the Hospital wing. I’m also going to check and make sure there were no other injuries. If you do leave the compartment, I would suggest you move around cautiously, since the rest of the train appears to be in the dark.”

“We will, Professor,” Hermione spoke up before the others could.

As soon as Professor Lupin left the compartment, Ron asked, “Any idea what caused that light, Hermione?”

“No, I don’t, but it seemed to come from the area around Harry.” Hermione answered after a few minutes thought.

“Whatever it was it drove that thing off.” Neville sounded relieved by that fact.

“Do you think it could’ve been accidental magic?” Ron persisted, “like when he blew up his aunt a few weeks ago?”

“It may explain why he’s unconscious, if it was.” Hermione mused. “Accidental magic is not under a
person’s conscious control and it reacts to stress most easily. We know Harry is powerful or will be
one day and he may have unconsciously seen that creature as a threat and wanted to drive it off.
Problem is that with those things affecting him, he couldn’t control the strength of the outburst and so
he overdid it.”

“A simple ‘I guess so’ or ‘I don’t know’ was all I needed, Hermione.” Ron grumbled. “I didn’t need
a lecture on accidental magic.”

Before the conversation could escalate into one of Ron and Hermione’s typical squabbles, Ginny got
to her feet, “I’m going to go get a wet flannel and wipe that blood off Harry’s face.”

Hermione spoke up quickly. “I wouldn’t. Madame Pompfrey may need to see how bad it was, just in
case whatever he did caused internal injuries.”

After thinking about it for a moment, Ginny nodded and sat back down between Harry and Neville.

Time seemed to move slowly in the semi-dark compartment as they waited for Professor Lupin to
return and for there to be more lights than just the dim ones in the corridor between the
compartments.

It seemed like forever before Professor Lupin returned an amulet in his hand. As he rechecked Harry
to make sure he could withstand a trip by portkey, Lupin told the four waiting with him, “Everyone
else appears to be fine, except for maybe a few bruises from when the train stopped so quickly. The
trolley lady, the prefects, and Head Boy and Girl should be coming by soon to give you some more
chocolate. The engineer told me the train will be resuming its trip to Hogwarts in about ten minutes.”

“Sir, what about Harry?” Ginny asked worriedly.

“I’m going to be taking him from here directly to the Hospital wing.” Lupin held up the emergency
portkey, he’d gotten from the engineer. “We’ll know more once Madame Pompfrey has had a look at
him.”

“Do you think Madame Pompfrey will let us come by and see him tonight?” Hermione wanted to
know. “I mean I doubt she is going to let him join us at the feast, even if he is awake for it.”

“I will ask her about it and then let Professor McGonagall know so she can tell you when you get to
the Entrance Hall.” Lupin promised as he manoeuvred the unconscious body of his friend’s child so
that he could safely carry him while using the portkey.

As he cradled Harry in his arms, Lupin couldn’t help noticing that he seemed to be a lot lighter than
an average thirteen year old boy should be, even one as slim as Harry. He made a mental note to ask
Poppy if this was normal for Harry.

Making sure the amulet around his neck was touching Harry as well, Lupin activated it. “Infirmary.”

The trolley lady arrived at their compartment to give them some more chocolate just as the lights
brightened and the train began to move.

The four Gryffindors ate the chocolate she’d given them in silence as the train continued its
interrupted journey to Hogsmeade, their thoughts on their unconscious friend.

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“Poppy!” The male voice calling from the main area of the Hospital wing startled the medi-witch.
Heading out of her office, Poppy was surprised to see Remus Lupin settling an unconscious Harry Potter on the nearest bed.

“Is he trying to break his own record, by getting into the Hospital wing before school even starts?” Poppy demanded as she took out her wand. “What happened?”

“Dementors boarded the Hogwarts Express. One of them came into the compartment Harry and I were in. Harry started reacting to it and then all of a sudden there was this bright white like almost like that produced by a Patronus that came from where Harry was sitting. A few moments later the light vanished, the Dementor was gone, and Harry was unconscious in his seat with a rather bad nose bleed. I also noticed that his pulse was very irregular when I checked it.” Remus hit the high points, leaving out the fact that he thought Harry had destroyed the Dementor. He would give that information to Dumbledore.

Poppy waved her wand over the unconscious boy and muttered a few spells. “He suffering from extreme magical exhaustion. If he did indeed produce something similar to a Patronus, which is a very advanced magic to be produced accidentally, that might account for it, but it would be the second bout of accidental magic for him in less than a month and that is rather unusual. Most witches and wizards no longer have bouts of accidental magic when they start using their magic regularly.”

“I have heard of witches and wizards who have under rather unusual circumstances been capable of performing astonishing feats of wandless magic. Most of them have been in rather stressful, life-threatening situations either for themselves or others when they did it and afterwards they could never repeat the spell.” Lupin told her as he helped her get Harry into a pair of hospital pyjamas.

“Are you saying that Mr. Potter tried to produce a wandless Patronus?” Poppy stared at him in surprise. “Not even Dumbledore, the greatest wizard of the age, could produce a wandless Patronus! “Where would he have learned about the spell?”

Lupin looked thoughtful for a moment. “No. Like you I think it was a case of accidental magic, but I think it was the stress of the situation combined with probably a very real desire to drive the Dementor off that produced an outburst of magic similar to the Patronus charm. And it was apparently similar enough that it dealt with the Dementor. I doubt he will be able to repeat again unless he encounters similar circumstances.”

“Well with those Dementors outside the school grounds, that just might happen,” Poppy told him tartly. “I don’t know who thought it would be a good idea to have Dementors guard the school?”

“Probably Fudge,” Lupin shrugged. “I didn’t have a very high opinion of the Minister. The man was wholly in favour of the restrictions on werewolves that would keep them from holding jobs and if Dumbledore hadn’t stood up to him, he wouldn’t be here right now. “Oh, before I forget, Harry’s friends want to know if they would be able to come visit him tonight after the Feast.”

“Not tonight,” Poppy told him. “They have classes in the morning and in all likelihood, he won’t be awake. If he is awake tomorrow they can come by after classes to see him.”

“How many days of classes do you think he’ll miss?” Remus asked her.

“I don’t know,” Poppy gave the boy lying on the bed a thoughtful look. “It depends on how quickly he can recover from magical exhaustion.”

#######

“Weasley! Granger! I need to speak to you for a moment.” McGonagall got the attention of the two
Gryffindors as they came into the entry hall.

“Is it about Harry, Professor?” Hermione wanted to know.

“Partially Miss Granger,” McGonagall told them. “He will be fine. He is resting comfortably in the hospital wing. Professor Lupin asked me to tell you that Madame Pompfrey will not allow you to visit Mr. Potter tonight, since he will be resting all night from his case of magical exhaustion, but you should be able to go see him after classes tomorrow.”

Both of Harry’s friends looked relieved.

“Mr. Weasley, I need to speak to Miss Granger privately for a few minutes regarding her class schedule, why don’t you go into the Great Hall.” Professor McGonagall suggested. “She will join you there in a few minutes.”

Ron saved a seat for Hermione and she rejoined him just as the Sorting was finished. He noticed that she looked disappointed that she’d missed the Sorting, while he was glad it was over because that meant they would soon be fed. All they had to get through now was Dumbledore’s welcoming speech.

Dumbledore rose to his feet to greet the students. “Welcome to all our returning students as well as our new ones. Before we begin our wonderful feast, I have a few announcements to make. The first and most important is that as I am sure you now know from their search of the Hogwarts Express, Hogwarts has at all of its entrances the Dementors of Azkaban. They are here on Ministry business and I want to warn you not to try to leave the school grounds without permission. Dementors can not be fooled so it would be in your best interest to give them no reason to want to harm you.”

Dumbledore continued with his announcements. Hermione’s guess that Professor Lupin was going to be the DADA teacher was proven correct, though not too many people applauded at the announcement. The most surprising announcement of the evening was when he told them that Hagrid would be taking over as Care of Magical Creatures teacher. Now the choice of book made sense to Ron, because it would be just like Hagrid to assign a book that was in a way a creature itself. The Gryffindors were pleased and cheered and clapped loudly, making Hagrid turn red.

“Now on with our feast.” Dumbledore raised his hands and the tables were filled with food.

When the Feast was over, Hermione and Ron hurried up to congratulate Hagrid on his promotion.

“It’s all because of you two and Harry,” Hagrid told them as he wiped his eyes with a large handkerchief. “Where is Harry by the way?”

“He’s in the Hospital wing,” Hermione told Hagrid. “He had an outburst of accidental magic in reaction to the Dementors that got on the train and it knocked him unconscious. Madame Pompfrey told Professor McGonagall that he was suffering from a case of magical exhaustion.”

“So Potty exhausted himself magically trying to get away from the Dementors, eh,” Malfoy’s voice drawled from behind Ron and Hermione.

“Actually Malfoy,” Ron turned to glare at the blond Slytherin, “he wound up magically exhausted because he was driving off a Dementor that was in our compartment and he was successful too.”

“Ron!” Hermione hissed before dragging him off. That was not something Malfoy should know! It would undoubtedly get back to his father and they didn’t need Malfoy Senior knowing that Harry could be incapacitated by Dementors or that he might be capable of driving them off.
“Hermione! Let go of me!” Ron was finally able to jerk his arm out of her iron grip just before they reached the portrait of the Fat Lady. “What is your problem? Why’d you drag me off like that? I was just about to make Malfoy eat his words.”

“Do you really think it is a good idea to let Malfoy know that Harry might be capable of driving off Dementors?” Hermione wanted to know. “He’ll probably tell his father… who has access to the Ministry. Remember Dumbledore told us that the Ministry placed the Dementors here so that means they control them. Who’s to say he wouldn’t try to set the ones around the school on Harry? I mean it would be good way to get rid of the Boy-Who-Lived and make it look like an accident.”

From the expression on his face, it was clear that this idea had never occurred to Ron.

#

Ascended Plane 1993

“Myrddin,” an authoritative voice demanded the attention of the most well-known wizard of Earth.

“Yes Demetrius,” Myrddin looked up at the younger Ascended Alterrann who stood there with a look of righteous indignation on his face.

“The council has demanded your presence at once.” Demetrius told him.

“Did they say why they wished to see me?” Myrddin gave evidence of unconcern, which he knew frustrated the arrogant younger man no end.

Myrddin knew from past conversations that Demetrius was of the opinion that the Council knew what was best for everyone and all should follow the council’s edicts without question and nothing he said could change the younger man’s mind. Myrddin on the other hand, had long ago stopped jumping every time the Council asked to see him. The turning point for him had been when they demanded he not teach those able to access their Alterrann given talents and let them either die off or kill each other. He couldn’t allow his people’s children to suffer that fate and had taken personal responsibility for those children and their descendants. Now the council usually wanted to see him because one of those he was responsible for on Earth had used some newer power and brought themselves up on the Alterrann radar again. The only reason they hadn’t kicked him off the Ascended plane was because he was the first one to figure out how to do it without help and he could come back any time he liked.

“It wasn’t my place to ask them why they wished to see you,” Demetrius told him pompously. “I was simply told to find you and bring you to them.”

“Well then you will just have to wait.” Myrddin told him. “My experiment has reached a critical point and there is no way to stop it once it reaches this point.”

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“You wanted to see me, Narwal?” Myrddin addressed the leader of the Council.

“Yes,” The current leader of the council gestured and brought up a view of Earth, one of their former colony homes. “We detected a huge burst of Alterrann power here,” he pointed at a blinking light, “at approximately 6:30 local time.”

“This is close to that school for the children with Alterrann genes and powers that you allowed to
be built.” Anlar sounded disapproving, but then she never had approved of his teaching those with Alterran gifts how to use them. “You went to that world recently. Did you teach them how to access the higher powers? You know that was forbidden.”

“No, I have not taught any of them how to access the higher powers. Mainly because they aren’t ready to use them. They still have not overcome their tendency to do violence with their gifts.” Myrddin wondered if Daniel had done something and why he had felt the need to do so. He was currently the only fully gifted Alterran on Earth.

“Why were you there then?” Denaria wanted to know. “Surely they don’t need you to hold their hands now.”

“No they don’t but like any good parent, I do stop by occasionally to make sure everything is still going well.” Myrddin countered dryly. “They are my responsibility after all. You council members made me solely responsible for their actions. It could have been a burst of Alterran power generated accidentally. It has happened before in times of great need, but has never been repeated afterwards.”

“I suggest you go there and find the person who did this and find out why it happened.” Narwal’s tone made it clear this was an order not a suggestion.

########

Harry looked around. He didn’t recognise this place, though for some reason it felt familiar.

There was sand all around and he could see a city of stone in the distance and he had just stepped out of a pyramid.

“We are in the place I think of as my home,” Daniel answered Harry’s unasked question as he joined him dressed in multi-layered robes of various shades of brown. He gestured to the sky above the pyramid and Harry saw there were three moons instead of the one he was used to in the darkening sky. “This is Abydos, or at least Abydos as I remember it.”

“Why are we here?” Harry wanted to know.

“I think we got pulled into my dreams this time instead of yours.” Daniel told him.

“What happened? The last thing I remember that thing was coming in the compartment and then I felt very cold and heard this lady screaming.” Harry shuddered lost in the memory.

“We’re more than likely unconscious in the hospital or maybe the Hogwarts Infirmary, if they didn’t take you to a hospital. I’m afraid I used up almost all our energy destroying the creatures that were on the train.” Daniel responded after a few moments to organize his thoughts. “That creature in the compartment was a Sa’ki’eth and one of it’s many weapons is its ability to pull up a person’s worst memories and make them relive them. This can incapacitate individuals so that they are better able to feed on their happy memories. They induce despair and depression in their victims. If they are around a person long enough they will commit suicide if they are able because they feel they have nothing left to live for. What I don’t understand is how they can be here. The knowledge I have from the Ancients tells me they were all destroyed or maybe I should say they were all thought destroyed.”

“What are they?” Harry couldn’t believe something that awful had been around for over five thousand years.
“They were created as a weapon of war by a group of the Ancients called the Ori for their war against the Alterrans.” Daniel explained. “The information I have on them reports that they were all destroyed before the Ancients left Earth, but either some were very well hidden, or…”

“…Or someone figured out how to recreate them magically.” Harry finished for him.

“Yes,” Daniel looked worried. “I hope it is the first and someone just found them and decided to put them to use, and not that someone figured out how to recreate them, because it would be the most evil thing one human being could do to another.”

Harry gasped, “Human! These things were once human? Someone did that to another human being?”

Daniel nodded. “If these Sa’ki’eth are the ones created by the Ori, or someone figured out how to duplicate what the Ori had done, then yes they were at one time human. Though they are no longer.”

“You said these things pull up our worst memories and make us relive them,” Harry wanted to make sure he understood what Daniel had said.

“Yes,” Daniel looked a little uncomfortable. “I saw my parents being crushed to death in front of me, before I destroyed the things.”

“So they affect even those who are Ascended?” Harry commented.

“They were created specifically to be used against the enemies of the Ori,” Daniel told him, “but they affect any race that can think and feel. The Ancients didn’t stop feeling just because they ascended to a higher plane of existence. They just hide their emotions better than they did before.”

For some reason Harry felt it was very important that he know who that voice belonged to. So hoping Daniel could help him figure out who it was, Harry told him, “I heard someone’s terrified pleading, but I didn’t recognize the voice.”

Hearing the unspoken question, after a few moment’s thought, Daniel spoke slowly and carefully, “While your life has been filled with a number of traumatic events, I think the most severe one would’ve been the death of your parents. According to what you’ve told me, Dumbledore said your mother sacrificed her life for yours, which means she was in the room with you when Voldemort tried to kill her. I have no doubt that you are probably hearing her final moments.

“Why that memory though,” Harry wanted to know. “I mean there are plenty of others just as bad.”

“Because it was the most horrific one you had.” Daniel told him, “Despite what some psychologists think, it has been proven from the moment you are born everything you’ve ever experienced is recorded in your memory and maybe even from before you draw your first breath. The Sa’ki’eth would’ve pulled up your worst memory first to try incapacitate you so they could feed off your happy memories before you had a chance to get away. I doubt you’ve ever had a chance to work through your parents deaths, so a memory that strong and painful suddenly popping up from where it had been buried all these years would indeed make you freeze like a deer caught in headlights.”

“Could it happen again?” Harry wanted to know.

Daniel nodded. “Any time they get close to us, the trick is going to be working through the effect they have on us to the point where we can both act in spite of it.”

“I hope they stay away.” Harry told him.
“So do I,” Daniel agreed. “They should if they have a way to communicate with each other. If they do, it won’t take long before they know that there is someone on this world who can kill them. They don’t want to die either, even if the life they have is really not a life.”

“But if every time you use your powers like this, then what’s to stop them from trying to kill us while we are unconscious?” Harry felt compelled to point out.

“Nothing I suppose,” Daniel shrugged. “I doubt that we would be left totally unprotected while unconscious and someone must have a way to control the Sa’ki’eth without destroying them. If they hadn’t been under someone’s control they would’ve been killing everyone on the train.”

Harry thought about what Daniel said and could find nothing wrong with it, at least not right now.

“Would you like a tour of Abydos, at least the way I remember it?” Daniel asked after a few minutes of silence.

Harry nodded eagerly. Exploring a different planet even in a dream was bound to be interesting, because he knew how detailed Daniel’s memories could be.

Before they left the grounds of the pyramid though an unexpected guest appeared in their dreamscape.

“Myrddin!” Daniel stared at him surprised. “What are you doing here?”

“The Others detected a burst of Alterran power here and sent me to find out which of my charges was responsible.” Myrddin told them. “They are afraid one of them has taken a sudden evolutionary leap with powers that the Tau’ri aren’t yet ready to handle.”

Knowing where the burst the Others had detected had come from and why, Daniel told him simply, “I destroyed some Sa’ki’eth.”

“Sa’ki’eth!” Myrddin stared at him aghast. “Are you sure? I thought we got all of those things!”

“Well, either the Ori hid some real well, as a backup, or someone figured out how to make more.” Daniel told him. “I hope it was the former and not the latter. The last thing anyone needs is someone knowing how to make more of those damn things.”

“Are there any more?” Myrddin hated those things the Ori had created with a passion. They had killed his first wife and son.

“I don’t know,” Daniel admitted. “I destroyed all the ones that were on the train and that nearly killed us both, because I had to separate from Harry without the ring to drive them off. Are they going to be coming here to see what happened?”

“No!” Myrddin hastened to assure them. “I am the one responsible for dealing with the children descended from Alterrans who are capable of doing magic among the Tau’ri, because I taught the first of them how to use it.”

“So what happens now?” Harry wanted to know.

“I report to the Others that one of our descendants accidentally accessed their Alterran powers to destroy some Sa’ki’eth.” Myrddin told them. “If those are the only ones then that’s it. If there are more and they try to come after you, I will warn them there may be more outbursts and insist that I have to train you and teach you how to control the outbursts because they can kill you.”
Ron and Hermione received a shock when they arrived in the Great Hall for breakfast. They saw Harry was already there eating a big breakfast.

“Harry!” they both cried, rushing over to join him.

Hermione gave him a big hug and then Ron slapped him on the back.

“We didn’t expect to see you down here today, mate.” Ron told him as he scooped food from the platters onto his plate. “How did you get Madame Pompfrey to let you out so soon?”

“Madame Pompfrey ran all her tests and couldn’t find anything wrong this morning, so she had to let me go.” Harry sounded quite pleased by that fact. “she wasn’t happy that she couldn’t find anything wrong and told me to take it easy today.”

“Did she tell you what happened?” Hermione wanted to know.

“Just that I was suffering from a case of magical exhaustion last night and she was surprised at how quickly I recovered from it.” Harry shrugged, pretending ignorance as to the cause. “She couldn’t tell me how it happened though. What happened last night?”

Hermione bit her lip nervously. They hadn’t been told to keep quiet about it, but she didn’t know if it was a good idea to tell Harry what he’d done.

Ron took the decision out of her hands, by saying, “You had a huge burst of accidental magic that drove off the Dementors mate. Nobody’s ever been able to do that before.”

Before Harry could make any comments or ask any questions about what they’d seen, a loud, drawling voice spoke up from the doorway, “And look who has deigned to join us for breakfast, why it’s Potty the brave Gryffindor who passes out in the presence of Dementors.”

“He should talk,” Fred Weasley muttered as he handed Ron and Hermione their class schedules.

“What do you mean?” Harry inquired as he continued to eat like a starving man. Daniel had used up a lot of energy the night before destroying those things that Ron called Dementors, but Daniel said were Sa’ki’eth.

Looking over at Malfoy who was now pretending to swoon much to the amusement of the other Slytherins, George told them. “Little git wasn’t so arrogant last night while the Dementors were around. He came running into our compartment, crying like a girl and trying to hide from them.”

Malfoy and his little group of followers came over to the Gryffindor table, when Potter failed to respond to any of their taunts. Leaning on the table, he told Harry, “I look forward to seeing what happens when you try and leave school grounds, Potter, given the Dementors are guarding all the entrances. I’m sure everyone will enjoy the sight of their hero fainting dead away.”

Harry met Malfoy’s silvery gaze and at Daniel’s prompting spoke loud enough to be heard by everyone in the Great Hall. “I have an idea Malfoy. Why don’t we get a device that will let us turn back time to yesterday, then you and I will trade places so you can be the one to drive off the Dementors while I run crying like a girl into a fifth year’s compartment and try to hide from them.”

Daniel noticed that Hermione, who was seated across from Harry, gave him a surprised look when he mentioned going back in time and filed that odd reaction away for later as Harry continued, “At least I did something useful, even though it put me in the Hospital wing. According to what I’ve heard you just ran and hid. I wonder what your father would say about your cowardly behaviour?”
Malfoy alternately paled and grew red with anger as Harry revealed how he had reacted to the Dementors’ presence on the train. The Ravenclaw and Hufflepuff students who were nearby and heard what Harry said laughed at the thought of Malfoy running and screaming like a girl. They all knew he was a coward unless he had backup or was picking on someone weaker than himself, but this was the first time they could remember anyone ever calling him a coward to his face.

“You’ll pay for those lies,” Malfoy hissed.

“You know I’m not lying,” Harry countered calmly. “And as for paying, I think in the end you’ll be the one paying, not me.”

Harry then proceeded to ignore Malfoy and compare schedules with his friends.

“Harry, why did you say that about turning time back?” Hermione wanted to know as Harry picked up her schedule. “Surely you don’t believe someone came travel in time, even magically?”

/I wonder why she looks so worried about the idea that you might think there really is a way to travel in time?/ Daniel commented.

Harry mentally shrugged, /who knows, maybe she read about somebody trying it magically in a book and if they succeeded, she might be worried I’d try it for real./

/You don’t need magic to travel in time,/ Daniel reminded him. /I know how to do it using the Stargate./

“I believe all things are possible, Hermione,” Harry told her as Daniel told him how he and his team had taken a the trip to 1969. “Aren’t the science fiction novels used in the muggle world as inspiration for all the new technology that they will develop someday. I mean people like HG Wells wrote about machines that could travel in time, so who’s to say that someday a muggle won’t figure out how to do it so that time travel will become an everyday occurrence, and people will be able to take day trips into the past to see the great events of history actually unfold.”

Hermione looked horrified at the idea. “Do you have any idea how much havoc that could cause? What’s to stop someone from meddling in things they shouldn’t and disrupting the entire timestream?”

/Is she channelling Sam?/ Daniel was surprised to hear almost the very same argument from her that Sam had used in 1969.

“Hermione, you just asked if I believed time travel was possible, and I believe it may be some day with adequate safeguards.” Harry told her.

Wanting to distract Hermione from what looked like was going to be a long lecture on the improbability of time travel, Ron said, “Hermione, they’ve messed up your schedule.”

“Where?” Hermione quickly grabbed it back and started going over it.

“They’ve got you in three classes at the same time this morning and that’s just not possible.” Ron pointed out. “I mean you’re good Hermione, but nobody can be in three places at the same time.”

“Of course I’m not going to be in three classes at once. That’s impossible like time travel, Ron. You should worry more about your own classes. You barely passed last year remember?” Hermione reminded him as she folded her schedule up and stuffed it in her bag. “Don’t you worry about my schedule, I told you a few days ago that I’ve taken care of things with Professor McGonagall.”
She not very good at lying or covering things up. Daniel observed. She’s hiding something.

Yes and it seems to be related to her overfull class schedule, Harry noted. With Daniel’s encouragement, he was actually putting his intelligence to use. Even on the essays he’d had to do for school, Daniel had helped with the research, but the words had been all his and he knew that they were much better than they had been originally.

I’ll bet that what she’s hiding is something she was given by this Professor McGonagall so that she could be in three or more places at once? Daniel continued. Even I know that is physically impossible without some help.

Harry shrugged, She has a right to some secrets, just like I do or Ron does. We don’t need to know everything that’s going on in her life. As long as it doesn’t hurt her or interfere with us and what we’re going to be doing, let her have her secret. Though I would like to know how she is going to be in three classes at the same time.

The trip to their first class of the day, Divination had definitely been interesting to say the least. For some reason the classroom was located in the far north tower and they got lost on the way there, but after following a mad knight from a seventh floor landing, they reached the stairs near the classroom’s location huffing and puffing. For someone in full armour, even if it was painted, that nutty old man had moved fast.

However instead of the classroom they’d expected, they found themselves standing on a narrow landing with the rest of the third year Gryffindors who had decided to take Divination.

Spotting Neville, Harry went over and asked, “Where is the classroom?”

“Up there I think,” Neville pointed to a bronze plaque set in a circular trap door of the landing ceiling that read: ‘Sybil Trelawney, Divination teacher’.

“And just how are we supposed to get up there?” Ron wanted to know.

As if in answer to his question, the trap door opened and a very narrow ladder slowly descended to the landing.

The third year Gryffindors all stared at one another, but no one seemed willing to go up the ladder, given they didn’t know what was up there. Finally Harry got tired of waiting and started up the ladder. Ron and Hermione followed a moment later.

The classroom they entered looked to Daniel like the worst sort of gypsy fortune teller’s parlour. You’ve got to be kidding, was all Daniel said as he looked at the lamps covered with filmy, dark red scarves and the crystal balls sitting on every table. The thick scent from the incense made Harry/Daniel feel slightly nauseous when combined with the heat coming from the fireplace.

As Harry, Ron, and Hermione settled onto some overstuffed poufs placed around a nearby table, a voice that was trying to sound ethereal, came out of the shadows on the far side of the room.

“Welcome all. How nice to see you all in the physical world instead of through my Inner Eye.”

As soon as Daniel caught sight of the woman wearing glasses that made her eyes look huge and the shawls and bangles covering her arms, he sent Harry a mental picture of one of the worst movie spoof fortune tellers/psychics he had ever seen when Jack felt like having what he called “Bad movie night”, with the kind of movies that made you groan almost as much as they made you laugh. The woman had been over the top with sweeping gestures and a voice that made everything she said
Harry was hard pressed not to snicker as he compared the image Daniel shared with the woman standing in front of them. Professor Trelawney did look a lot like the oddest sort of gypsy fortune teller… the kind you wouldn’t believe even if she told you the sky was blue.

Harry wondered. /I wonder if she dresses that way because it’s what most people expect a fortune teller to look like?/

/We’ll soon find out,/ Daniel told him as he watched the woman sit down in the arm chair closest to the fire.

“Welcome to Divination,” the professor began the introduction to her class. “I doubt that any of you will have seen me before because I rarely descend into the main areas of the castle since the hustle and bustle there tends to cloud my Inner Eye. While many discount Divination as imprecise magic, you will find it to be one of the most difficult of all the magical arts especially if you are not possessed of the inner eye, because books and research will only take you so far.”

Both Ron and Harry looked at Hermione to see how she was taking the news that this was a class where studying wouldn’t take you very far. She looked stunned at the very idea that this might be like flying. Book learning hadn’t taken her very far there either. Even now she wouldn’t fly a broom because she wasn’t any good at it and hated to look like a fool.

Trelawney’s eyes roamed over the crowd of nervous students and noted the three sitting together who didn’t seem to be as nervous as the rest of the class. Trelawney could tell that the girl sitting between the two boys, wouldn’t be in this class very long. There was something about the chit that told her she was one of those who didn’t believe in what she couldn’t confirm the reality of. She would be stubborn about it though and probably not give up on Divination until the year was almost over. It took her a moment to realize who the boy sitting to her right with the messy dark hair was. Harry Potter is taking my class! Oh the fame I will gain if he turns out to be able to use the Inner Eye because I will be known as the one who taught him how to use it!

It will be him, this year, she decided as she continued her opening speech interspersing it with minor predictions. Some of them she knew would come true and very soon based on what she read of one student’s body language and some might not but she made them to sound suitably mysterious.

“There are many witches and wizards who are excellent in the area of flashes, loud noises, potions and changing things from one form to another who can not penetrate the mysteries of the future.”

After passing out the scalding tea and instructing the students on what to do with it, Trelawney sat back and waited to see what they would come up with and if there were any potential seers among this crop of third years. She paid particular attention to the table where Harry Potter was sitting and heard him tell his red-headed companion, “… you’re going to suffer, but be very happy about it.”

“You need your Inner Eye tested, if you ask me, mate,” the red head countered sourly. “My turn now.”

He picked up the teacup that contained Potter’s tea leaves and turned it this way and that. “There’s a blob here that looks like Fudge’s bowler hat. Hey, maybe you’ll end up working for the Ministry.”

Even though she couldn’t read Potter that well, Trelawney could see that he wasn’t pleased at that idea. Getting to her feet, she moved among the students listening as they tried to read the signs in the teacups. She could see that some of them had potential, but others were way off the mark. As she moved around correcting some of the readings, Trelawney kept part of her attention focused on the
reading the red head was giving young Potter, waiting for the right moment to interrupt.

“When you turn it this way it looks like an animal....” The boy was saying.

_Animal?... A Grim... Wonderful! I haven’t used a Grim in ages._

“It looks like a hippo... no a sheep.” This earned a snort of laughter from Potter.

Sweeping over Trelawney plucked Potter’s teacup from the red head’s grasp. “Let me see that.”

Revelling in the silence that came over the class, Trelawney studied the contents of the cup intently before saying, “The falcon... my dear you have a deadly enemy.”

“Everybody knows that.” The bushy haired girl sitting with them commented.

When she just stared at the girl for daring to interrupt her, the chit defended her comment, “Everyone knows about Harry and You-Know-Who.”

Trelawney decided to ignore her for the moment and returned her attention to the cup. “The club... dear, dear, this is not a happy cup.”

“I was sure it was a bowler hat.” Ron said sheepishly.

Giving every evidence of concentration, Trelawney let the silence build before saying, “A skull.... There is danger in your path, my boy.”

Now for the pièce de résistance, Trelawney gave the cup one final turn before giving a gasp and then a slight scream. Sinking into the nearest armchair and closing her eyes as if she no longer wished to see what she had seen, Trelawney told Potter, “My dear boy... my poor dear boy... it is far better if I do not tell you....”

“What is it Professor?” Seamus Finnegan interrupted as he and other students crowded around Harry’s table out of concern. Or around Trelawney’s chair trying to get a look at the cup contents that had scared the Divination teacher so much.

“It would be kinder not to say,” Trelawney paused and opened her eyes widely, so that her glasses made them appear huge. “but you have the Grim in your cup.”

Those Gryffindors who were purebloods or better informed half-bloods gasped, while Harry and those who were muggle-born stared blankly at the teacher not understanding why she was so worried.

“Huh?” was all Harry could say.

Slightly displeased that the boy was not reacting properly to her pronouncement, Trelawney told him, “The Grim! The giant spectral dog that haunts churchyards. It is one of the worst omens of death there is?”

Harry still started at her blankly while Daniel told him, /She’s trying to make you think the Hound of the Baskervilles has appeared in that cup and you are soon to die because of it./

_/Do you think she really did see it?/ Harry wanted to know.

_/I doubt it,/ Daniel shrugged. /I think she does it to be dramatic for her first class. Besides you and I seem to be very hard to kill. Between the two of us we have survived quite a few things that should have killed us, so if a Grim really is after us, I think we can give it one helluva a surprise./
Harry agreed and then cheekily asked, “Professor, do you think I really will die this time? I mean, Death doesn’t seem to have a very good track record when it comes to trying to take me out. I mean there was Professor Quirrell in my first year and a Basilisk not to mention Acromantulas in my Second, but so far I’m still here.”

As a few of the Gryffindors gasped at Harry’s audacity, Trelawney was surprised by his reaction. She had never seen any third year react this way after she predicted their death. Some broke down and cried, or were reduced to a state of panic, though they contained it. Others pretended not to believe her, but she could see in their eyes that they were worried. She didn’t know what to say to someone who didn’t even seem to be worried about it, who in fact seemed to think he was immune to death.

The bell rang signalling the end of class before she had a chance to come up with an answer.

While Harry/Daniel weren’t worried about that death prophecy of Trelawney’s, apparently a large majority of his Gryffindor classmates did, because as he took his seat near the back of the classroom, he noticed that his classmates kept shooting furtive glances in his direction as if they expected him to keel over at any moment.

Professor McGonagall began her lecture on human to animal transformation and ended it by changing into a cat and then back into human form, that got Daniel’s attention. The energy pattern was the same as Scabbers. That means that Ron’s pet is a human masquerading as an animal but why and more importantly why hide in that form for over twelve years?

“What is going on here, today?” McGonagall wanted to know. “It’s not that I’m complaining mind, but that is the first time my transformation hasn’t gotten applause from a class.”

None of the Gryffindor third years gave her an answer, until Hermione raised her hand and said, “Ma’am, we’ve just come from Divination and….”

McGonagall nodded, “Say no more Miss Granger. Which one of you is supposed to be dying this year?”

The some of the Gryffindors gasped at how unconcerned their Head of House seemed to be over the death omen that Trelawney had seen in Potter’s tea leaves.

Harry raised his hand. “That would be me, Professor.”

McGonagall walked over to where he was sitting and looked him over. “You look healthy to me so I don’t think you are in danger of dying any time soon. If you do however, you don’t need to worry about turning in your homework.”

None of the third years responded with either laughter or smiles, so McGonagall felt a need to explain further. “I’m sorry to say that Professor Trelawney feels the need every year to select one student and announce that they will die. It is her way of greeting a new class. I personally don’t think much of it, but so far none of those predictions have come true for any of her students.”

Harry arrived at lunch a few minutes after his friends.

“What kept you, Harry?” Ron wanted to know as he scooped stew onto his plate.
“I was talking to McGonagall,” Harry told them.

“About what?” Hermione pulled her attention briefly away from her book to give him a curious look.

Harry shrugged, seeing no reason not to tell them. “Wanted to see how hard it would be to transfer out of Divination and into Ancient Runes.”

“Transfer out!” Both Hermione and Ron stared at him surprised.

“You’ve only had one class with Professor Trelawney, why would you want to transfer out of it?” Hermione continued.

“Cause I don’t want to spend a year having my death predicted over and over again.” Harry started eating his lunch. “Remember that Professor McGonagall said she made a habit of predicting a student’s death every year. Well I have a feeling, given that as far as the wizarding world is concerned I’m the Boy-Who-Lived, she’s probably not going to stop at one time.”

“What did Professor McGonagall say?” Hermione wanted to know.

“She asked me to give Professor Trelawney’s class one more try and if she predicted my death again and I still felt uncomfortable about being in there because of it, she would arrange my transfer to Ancient Runes.” Harry told them. “I agreed to do so if she didn’t say anything to Professor Trelawney. If the woman knows, I feel uncomfortable she might change her behaviour for a class or two, just long enough to make it impossible for me to change classes without having to do a lot of catch up work. One more class won’t put me too far behind.”

Deciding a change of subject was in order, Ron asked, “What do you think our first Care of Magical Creatures class is going to be about?”

Harry shrugged again. “Given that he thinks that dragons are like cute puppies and makes friends with Acromantulas, Merlin only knows what he’s going to spring on us. Let’s just be ready for anything.”

Ron and Hermione nodded, both well aware of what Hagrid considered a cute and cuddly creature.

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Care of Magical creatures turned out to be a combined Gryffindor/Slytherin class, and Malfoy as already in full voice about how the standards of the school had gone down when a gamekeeper could become a teacher.

Having finally had enough even before they reached Hagrid’s hut Harry told him, “Keep talking Malfoy. With every word out of your mouth you confirm for the world that you are nothing but a whiny bratty fiver year old girl.”

Hagrid when he met them outside his hut looked very excited. “Come with me, I’ve got a very exciting first lesson all lined up for you.”

He led the group of third years on a trip around the edge of the Forbidden forest to an empty paddock.

“How?” Malfoy’s drawling voice interrupted.
“Huh?” Hagrid didn’t understand the question.

“How are we supposed to open these things?” Malfoy held up his book which was bound tightly shut with a belt.

“You mean none of you have figured out how to open them?” Hagrid stared at them amazed.

All the students held up their books bound in various ways. Reaching out Hagrid took Hermione’s book that was bound shut with spellotape and ripping it off, he said, “Ya just stroke it, like this,” he ran his finger down the book’s spine and it shivered before falling open.

“Oh why didn’t we think of that,” Malfoy spoke up sarcastically. “Oh I know, maybe, because we were afraid these books would take our hands off.”

“I thought you’d find ‘em interestin’,” Hagrid looked disappointed that the books he had chosen hadn’t been as well received as he’d hoped. He had found the book to be a great source of information on the various creatures he’d encountered in the Forbidden forest and had thought his students would enjoy learning from it as well.

Hagrid quickly glanced at Harry and his friends and saw nothing but encouragement on their faces. Clearing his throat Hagrid decided to go on and not give Malfoy the satisfaction of getting to him. “Open yer books to page fifty-five and take a look at the information there. I’ll be right back.”

“God, this place is going to dogs,” Malfoy commented once Hagrid was out of sight. “My father is going to hear about this. Hogwarts is supposed to be one of the best schools of magic and yet they hire a gamekeeper to teach Care of Magical Creatures. They must be getting really desperate for teachers, if they are willing to do that.”

“Shut up Malfoy…” Harry growled. “It can’t be easy to get up in front of people the first time and teach them what you know. You sure as hell couldn’t do it.”

“Watch out Potter, or you may find yourself facing a Dementor again,” Malfoy retorted.

“Well if you’re there when they do appear, then everyone in Slytherin will be able to see you squeal like a girl and run away like you did last night.” Harry countered, allowing Daniel to help him keep calm when all he really wanted to do was pound Malfoy’s face in the dirt.

The third year Gryffindors laughed at the expression on Malfoy’s face while the Slytherins glowered at Harry.

“It’s a good thing that looks can’t kill, Harry reflected, or I’d be dead several times over and Professor Trelawney’s prediction would’ve come true.”

Hagrid returned before Malfoy could come up with a response other than to glare and following behind him into the paddock were about a dozen of the most bizarre creatures Harry and Daniel had ever seen and considering all the places Daniel had been both before and after Ascension that was saying something. The creatures/being looked like someone had put horses and giant eagles together.

It took Daniel a minute to figure out what the creatures might be from Greek and Roman legends. /Those are Hippogriffs! They are supposed to be creatures of legend because they come from the union of female horses and griffins. Given that horses and griffins are supposed to be natural enemies such a creature was thought to nothing but legend./

“These are hippogriffs,” Hagrid told the class. “Aren’t they beautiful?”

Most of the class nodded in agreement, but Harry noted that Malfoy and his goons weren’t paying
attention. He couldn’t help wonder what they were plotting now.

“The first thing you need to know about hippogriffs is they are proud creatures… very proud.” Hagrid explained about what he considered important facts about the Hippogriffs. “Ya always want ta let ‘em make the first move cause besides being the polite thing to do it help you avoid accidentally offending them without meaning to.”

Hagrid moved a storm grey hippogriff into the center of the paddock. “When you approach a hippogriff, you want to move slow and maintain eye contact. When you are within a few feet, you want to bow, while maintaining eye contact.” Hagrid demonstrated. “If the hippogriff bows back,” which the grey one did to Hagrid after a few moments, “then you can come closer and you are allowed to touch him.”

He looked over at his class to make sure they understood and then asked, “Who wants to go first?”

None of the third years made a move toward the paddock.

Hagrid looked over the class. “Doesn’t anyone want to meet Buckbeak?”

A moment later Harry felt someone shove him hard from behind out into the open area in front of the paddock.

Hagrid looked at him, pleased to see his young friend was willing to try this. “Good man, ‘arry.”

“Oh, no, Harry.” Lavendar moaned. “Remember what Professor Trelawney said about your tea leaves.”

*I’ve got to remember to do something nice for Malfoy to thank him for this,* Harry sighed to himself as he let Hagrid lead him closer to Buckbeak, while the big man repeated the instructions he had given to the class as a whole.

Harry bowed to the grey hippogriff while doing his best to maintain eye contact. The hippogriff just stared at him and made no move to acknowledge the bow with one of his own. Even though Daniel was sting passively in the back of Harry’s mind, he began to wonder if Buckbeak, who was after all a magical creature like Hedwig, might not be detecting his presence.

/Daniel could he be picking up on your presence in my mind, like Hedwig did?/ Harry wanted to know as the burnt orange eyes continued to stare at them.

/Possibly./ Daniel told him, /though Hedwig is only able to detect me when I am active./

/Just in case he is detecting you, you might want to bow as well./ Harry suggested as Hagrid began to sound a little concerned and was suggesting Harry back away.

Daniel quickly swapped places with Harry and bowed while maintaining eye contact with Buckbeak. After he’d done that he switched back. Buckbeak bowed his scaly knees in response.

“Wonderful!” Hagrid crowed. “Now ya can pet ‘im, Harry.”

Daniel felt a far better reward for their bravery or as Jack would’ve called it; their stupidity, would be to walk away slowly and carefully before this disaster waiting to happen hit them in the face. However that was not to be because the large man was behind Harry urging him forward and Harry didn’t want to give his classmates the idea that he was afraid. Having done a few stupid things himself when he was younger and in foster care, because he didn’t want to appear as if he were afraid, Daniel wisely made no comment about this.
Almost all of the class burst into applause when the hippogriff’s head leaned into Harry’s hand as he stroked the creature’s beak. Daniel/Harry noticed that Malfoy who was standing near the front looked disappointed that Harry hadn’t been savaged by the hippogriff.

“I think Buckbeak might let ye ride ‘im, Harry.” Hagrid’s voice boomed. “He really seems to like you.”

The gamekeeper had hoped that Harry would be one of the first to volunteer, because he had asked Buckbeak if he would give the young Gryffindor a ride as a thank you for his help in getting him free the previous year. He knew how much Harry loved to fly and thought this would be the prefect reward, though he would never tell Harry that. Young Harry had helped him without any thought of being rewarded for his actions and in Hagrid’s mind that put him on the same level as Dumbledore as being one of the few in the wizarding world worthy of his respect.

/Ride him!/ Daniel gulped. He had never ridden on an animal that could fly before and while a part of him was eager to try this new experience, a part of him was convinced this not such a good idea and him wanted to keep Harry’s feet firmly planted on the ground.

Harry also was having second thoughts and third ones about Hagrid’s idea. While Hagrid had sounded like he was giving Harry a treat because he knew how much he loved to fly, Harry wasn’t so sure this was a good idea. Buckbeak was clearly a thinking feeling creature, and Harry wasn’t so sure it was a good idea to try and ride him, especially if said creature didn’t want him there. Buckbeak’s eyes gave him no clue as to what the hippogriff was thinking, or even if he agreed with Hagrid’s idea.

Before Harry/Daniel could voice a protest though, Hagrid had hoisted him onto the hippogriff’s back.

“Just keep yer knees right behind the wing joints so they don’t interfere and don’t pull out any of his feathers.” Hagrid advised him. “’E won’t like that.”

Once Harry was positioned to the larger man’s satisfaction, Hagrid shouted, “get up there, Buckbeak!”

The hippogriff ran forward a few paces, flapping its great wings once, twice and then they were airborne. Harry gripped Buckbeak’s neck when the Hippogriff started to move because he couldn’t find any place else to hold on where he might not accidentally rip out a few feathers.

/Hagrid really should of rigged some kind of harness for each hippogriff if he intends the whole class to take a ride on them./ Daniel commented.

Harry couldn’t help agreeing with that sentiment as he shifted carefully to find a safer place to sit on Buckbeak’s back without causing the hippogriff problems. As the hippogriff flew higher, Harry began to enjoy the wind whipping through his hair. When he leaned left or right, Buckbeak turned in the direction he was leaning allowing him to get a better look at the ground beneath them.

The view of the castle and lake were spectacular and Harry/Daniel could just make out the village where the Hogwarts Express arrived every year.

/Hogsmeade looks like something out of a movie about the middle ages,/ Daniel observed. /It should be interesting to explore before we go visit Petunia’s./

/We still have to make up the genealogy first,/ Harry reminded the archaeologist.

/We’ll do that over the weekend when everyone else is busy. It will be easier to slip away then./
Buckbeak made a great circle and then began his descent back to the paddock. Once he returned the Gryffindors all applauded and cheered as Harry got rather shakily down from the hippogriff’s back while the Slytherins just stared.

“Good job, ‘arry.” Hagrid’s voice boomed loudly over the cheering, then he asked, “who wants to go next.”

Harry took up a position near the fence and watched as the rest of the class selected a hippogriff and began bowing to it and tried to get answering bow. Malfoy and his two goons Crabbe and Goyle had decided to work with Buckbeak, probably on the theory that if he could do it so could they only better.

Buckbeak had bowed his scaly knees to Malfoy and the blond Slytherin moved closer to pat his beak. As he did, Harry heard him comment in a drawling voice filled with sarcasm, “This is really too easy. I knew it had to be given that Potter could do it….”

His tone worried Daniel. Animals whether they were intelligent or not could tell what someone thought about them by the tone of voice that was used and right now he could tell that Buckbeak who was a reasonably intelligent creature wasn’t real happy with Malfoy.

“….you’re just a great dumb brute aren’t you.” As soon as Malfoy said that Daniel knew the line had been crossed and reacted. Reacting without thinking, Daniel used his ascended powers to bring down a bolt of lightening out of the clear sky and instead of vaporising either of the two involved, it struck the ground nearby, separating them and leaving Malfoy with a new hairdo ala Einstein.

While the bolt of lightening had knocked them both several feet apart, Buckbeak was still enraged and tried to charge Malfoy, as Hagrid yelled, “No Buckbeak!”

Hagrid was too far away to stop the hippogriff’s charge before it could get to the arrogant Slytherin and fully expected to see the boy ripped to shreds, when an unseen force dragged the arrogant Slytherin out of the paddock on his butt, putting him out of Buckbeak’s reach.

The remaining third years all quickly bolted out of the Paddock, in case the enraged hippogriff tried to charge them as well.

“Malfoy!” Hagrid stormed over to the blond Slytherin and told him. “Thirty points from Slytherin, for disobeying a teacher’s instructions. I told you that hippogriffs were proud creatures. You should’a treated him with the same care you would use with your father, not as if he were a worm!”

“Oh, no! Professor Trelawney was right!” Lavendar screamed, pointing to the edge of the paddock where Harry’s body was lying in a crumpled heap.
Hermione and Ron pushed through the crowd of students who were standing gathered around their friend, and basically adding to the confusion without providing any help. Hermione shook her head in disgust. You would’ve thought one of them would’ve bothered to check and see if Harry was okay, but no, all they did was stare at his body. Obviously they thought Lavender and Professor Trelawney were right and Harry was dead.

Once she was certain that Harry was alive, if unconscious, Hermione snapped at Lavender, “Hush! Professor Trelawney was wrong! Harry is alive. He’s just unconscious.”

Hagrid, who had joined them after securing an angry Buckbeak to the paddock fence, told the gathered Slytherins and Gryffindors. “Class dismissed,” then he growled, “Malfoy, you stay!”

“I am not a dog that you can order around, so why should I be forced to stay?” The blond Slytherin spat contemptuously. He was extremely annoyed that he had lost thirty points for Slytherin due to a jumped up gamekeeper and scarhead.

Hagrid loomed menacingly over him for a moment. “Thirty more points from Slytherin, Malfoy. And you stay ‘cause I said so! You will be accompanying me and Harry to the Hospital wing. If Madam Pomfrey says his condition is the result of you ignoring my instructions on how to deal with Hippogriffs then you will have detention with Filch for the next month for endangering a fellow student.”

“I had nothing to do with Potter’s collapse!” Malfoy protested. “I wasn’t anywhere near him. In fact, I was the one who was in danger because of that maniacal Hippogrieff.”

“Actually,” Ron couldn’t resist putting his two knuts in, “you brought Buckbeak’s reaction on yourself, by ignoring what Hagrid said. He told us that Hippogriffs are proud creatures and needed to be treated respectfully, but you acted like Buckbeak was a bug to be stepped on.”

“Also it is possible, Malfoy, that Harry magically exhausted himself saving your life.” Hermione added. “The lighting that separated you from Buckbeak came out of a clear sky. Then there was the spell that pulled you out of the paddock… before Buckbeak had a chance to try again.”
“Are you out of your mind, Granger?” Malfoy couldn’t believe the drivel he was hearing. “How could Potter have magically exhausted himself? He didn’t even have his wand out, not to mention that we haven’t learned how to do the summoning charm yet.”

“Accidental magic,” Hermione shot back unwilling to give an inch in the argument as Hagrid picked Harry up and started to carry him toward the castle. “It wouldn’t be the first time Harry’s done something really powerful by accident.”

“You’ve definitely fallen off your broomstick, Granger.” Malfoy snorted as he reluctantly followed Hagrid back to school with the other two Gryffindors bringing up the rear. “Everyone knows that you stop doing accidental magic once you get your wand.”

“You’re wrong about that Malfoy.” Ron looked pleased by the thought that he could one-up both Malfoy and Hermione. “My dad told me that the Ministry has sometimes had to clear up accidental magic done some wizards even after they’ve had their wands for years. Apparently if you’re really powerful, you can sometimes have outbursts of accidental magic, when you get angry or have some other kind of strong emotional outburst.”

"Of course that's something you don't have to worry about, now is it Weasley, being powerful I mean. You can barely do the most basic of spells, without the help of scarhead and a filthy mudblood.” Draco said as he eyed Hermione with disgust before quickly moving to follow Hagrid, pleased to have had the last word.

Pulling on Ron’s arm, Hermione barely managed to stop him from going after the Slytherin. Hermione was also pleased to note it put some distance between them as they followed Hagrid and Draco back to school. She wanted to talk to Ron without anyone overhearing. “Ignore him, we have more important things to worry about.”

“What?” Ron growled frustrated.

“These magical outbursts Harry’s had, can they be dangerous?” Hermione wanted to know. “I mean what if he has more outbursts like that one?”

Ron stopped moving for a moment, looking thoughtful. “I don’t know. Dad never said what happened to the older wizards who had outbursts of accidental magic. It’s not exactly something someone wants to experiment with. Harry’s had three bursts of accidental magic that we know of in the past month and two in less than twenty-four hours that have caused him to pass out. That’s guaranteed to have drained his magical core, though hopefully not to a dangerously low level or it could take a while for it to build back up.”

From the tone of Ron’s voice, Hermione gathered that wasn’t a good thing. “Do you think Harry might have had more incidents of accidental magic than we know of? And if he did, why didn’t he tell anyone?”

“Who would he tell, Mione?” Ron wanted to know. “He spends the summers with the Dursleys. And if he’s lucky, they ignore him for the most part. Though from what Dad told me, other than his blowing up of his Uncle’s sister, there were no other outbursts recorded in or around his home this summer, so if he did have any more, they might’ve happened while he was staying in Diagon Alley. It probably wouldn’t have been detected there, with all the other magic around.”

Hermione chewed worriedly on her bottom lip, "Sounds like it was his blowing up of Marge Dursley that started this pattern of accidental magic. We need to do some research to see if there is a way to stop it from happening.”
“Mione, this isn’t going to be something you are going to find information on in books. Especially not at Hogwarts.” Ron told her, not because he hated the idea of spending time in the library, but because he knew from what his father had told him that most of the information on accidental magic in adults was mostly hearsay. “Nobody’s really bothered to research it. The only place that might and I do say might have any information at all on repeated occurrences of accidental magic would be the Department of Mysteries at the Ministry, and that’s only because they look into all sorts of odd things. Also according to my father the only ones who can get their hands on anything researched by them are the ones who work in that department. They’re even more paranoid about their secrets than Mad-Eye Moody.”

"I’ll bet five galleons that we wake up in the hospital wing again.” Harry commented as he stared at the desert landscape of Abydos.

“I never bet when I know I’m going to lose.” Daniel told him.

“What happened?”

Daniel looked slightly sheepish as he admitted, “I think I overtaxed our energy levels saving Malfoy’s life.”

Harry mentally replayed the events leading up to his collapse. “I don’t know whether to be glad that you did what you did, or tell you shouldn’t’ve bothered. Malfoy is a prat. I doubt this incident will get him to change his behaviour toward those he considers beneath him. In fact I doubt he will even admit he was responsible for what happened.”

“I’ve met a few people like that.” Daniel put in agreeably. “Their minds are set in concrete and you can’t free them with dynamite.”

“What worries me,” Harry commented, “is what Lucius Malfoy will try and do to Hagrid and Buckbeak once Malfoy tells his father what happened.”

Remembering Harry’s memory of Dumbledore explaining that his father had saved Professor Snape’s life, Daniel suggested, “Once we get out of the Hospital wing, we may want to check in the Library and see if there is any kind of requirements incurred by the saving of someone else’s life in the wizarding world. I mean in some cultures if you save someone’s life you become responsible for them and in other’s they become your property.”

“What you mean I might be responsible for that prat?” Harry looked horrified at the thought.

“Not necessarily,” Daniel told him placatingly. “Tradition seems to be very important in the wizard community from what I remember reading in the books we got in Diagon Alley. It might be possible that when a person saves another’s life there is some kind of binding or ritual invoked because of it. For example, from what you shared with me of your memories of your first year at Hogwarts, there had to be something else driving Snape to protect you, given how much he hated your father and it might’ve been what was behind his attempts to save your life during your first year at Hogwarts.”

Harry looked thoughtful. “What if the books are in the restricted section or have been taken out of the library?”

“Why would they be?” Daniel looked at him puzzled.

“Dumbledore seems to want to keep me ignorant of wizarding customs and traditions. He might’ve
had them removed in case I ever wanted see what obligation Snape had toward my father.” Harry reminded him.

“True, but if you didn’t look for the information during your second year, I doubt he would’ve continued to keep any books on the subject out of the Library.” Daniel reasoned.

Harry thought about that for a moment and agreed with the reasoning. “I wonder how Professor Trelawney is going to react to what happened?”

“She’ll probably feel vindicated.” Daniel guessed, “And more than likely will step up her Death predictions, which means we will be out of her class and into Ancient Runes by Friday evening.”

Harry looked pleased at that prospect. “That’s going to bollux up one of her other predictions as well. Remember she said that ‘around Easter one of our number will leave us forever’. We’re gonna be leaving way before Easter.”

Daniel just laughed and Harry thought it was a nice laugh.

“Would you show me some more of the places you’ve been? I’ve never really been anywhere but London, the Burrow, and here.” Harry asked

“Do you want to see places on earth? Or other planets?” Daniel was certain there were quite a few places on Earth and in the universe that Harry might enjoy seeing.

“How ’bout we start with Earth and then work outward.” Harry suggested. “I think I should see more of the wonders of my homeworld before I go wandering any more of the galaxy.”

#####

“Madam Pomfrey!” Hagrid’s voice boomed as he carried Harry through the doors into the Hospital wing, followed by Malfoy, Ron, and Hermione.

“Don’t shout Hagrid!” Madam Pomfrey sounded annoyed as she came bustling out of her office, but when she caught sight of the unconscious child in his arms, she instantly switched to her concerned healer’s voice. “What happened to him?”

“I found him like that.” Hagrid told her. “I think he used accidental magic to save Malfoy when he antagonised one of the hippogriffs, I was using for today’s class.”

“Put him down there,” Poppy gestured to the nearest bed. Then she pointed a finger at Malfoy, “You! Over there!” She pointed to a bed across from the one Hagrid had just placed Harry on. “I want to check you over as soon as I finish seeing what harm has been done to Mr. Potter by your foolishness.”

“I found him like that.” Hagrid told her. “I think he used accidental magic to save Malfoy when he antagonised one of the hippogriffs, I was using for today’s class.”

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“It’s not my fault Potter got hurt! I wasn’t anywhere near him!” Malfoy protested as he sat down on the indicated bed. He was smart enough not to argue with her. The medi-witch had very subtle ways of getting back at you. “I was the one in danger from that stupid beast that this supposed teacher brought to a class of third years. What competent teacher in their right minds would expect a thirteen year old to be able to deal with a hippogriff?”

“You disobeyed a teacher’s instructions.” Hermione reminded him. “And Harry put himself at risk to save your life.”

“All of you be quiet!” Madam Pomfrey ordered, not taking her eyes off her unconscious patient. “Miss Granger, Mr. Weasley both of you will wait outside. I don’t need any distractions right now.”
“But we want to know how Harry is!” Ron protested.

“And I will come out and tell you, as soon as I am done with both of my patients.” Madam Pomfrey assured them.

“How is he?” Hagrid asked worriedly as Poppy studied the results her diagnostic spells had produced.

“He is going to be fine. He has just managed to magically exhaust himself again!” Poppy sounded annoyed. “I knew I shouldn’t have let him out so soon. Well he won’t be leaving until Thursday morning at the earliest. I intend to make sure he doesn’t get another chance to do so, because if he keeps this up, he could reduce his magical core down to that of a Squib.”

“When will he wake up?” Hagrid wanted to know.

Poppy waved her wand over Potter again and stared at the results, baffled. “His energy levels are rising quickly almost as if he’d swallowed an energy replenishing potion, so I would say he will probably be awake this evening.”

Madam Pomfrey bustled over to the bed Draco was sitting on. “Now let’s see what’s happened to you.”

A few diagnostic spells later she told him, “You got off lucky, just some bruising on you back and butt.”

“If it were up to me Malfoy, I’d tell her ta leave ‘em,” Hagrid’s rumbly voice commented, “but then you’d just go whining to yer father like you always do and he’d make out to the Board of Governors that you were mortally wounded and I refused to allow her ta treat ya.”

Malfoy said nothing, just scowling at Hagrid for making him sound like a baby. He didn’t always go running to his father. Sometimes he took care of things himself, but as his father had always told him; *If you have power you should use it, otherwise people will think they can walk all over you.*

Healing up the bruises, Madam Pomfrey told him, “You can go.”

As Draco headed for the door, Hagrid told him, “You are to meet me at 5:30 Saturday morning, Mr. Malfoy. You will serve your detention with me then. Oh and be sure to wear something you don’t mind losing.”

Draco paused at the door wondering what the batty gamekeeper had in store for him and how Snape might be able to get him out of it.

#####

Harry woke and even though everything was fuzzy, he could tell by the whiteness around him that his guess was correct and he was in the Hospital wing.

/I should just move into the hospital wing./ Harry told Daniel as he reached out to the nearby nightstand, groping for his glasses.

/Jack says the same thing about me and the SGC Infirmary./ Daniel laughed. /Last time I was in there, he told me I spent so much time in there that Janet should just give me my own bed. I told him not to give her any ideas. I have enough trouble getting out of there as it is./
/I wonder how long it will be before we will be able to convince Madam Pomfrey to let us out of here?/ Harry wondered idly.

/I don’t think we can expect to see anything more than these four walls for at least a few days./ Daniel pointed out. /She’s a lot like Janet. She’s not going to let you go until she’s certain you’re not going to have a relapse./

Once he could see the room clearly, Harry sat up and waited expectantly for Madam Pomfrey to appear. She always seemed to know when her patients were awake.

/Probably some kind of motion detector spell on the bed or you./ Daniel hazarded a guess.

Harry made no comment certain he was probably right. It would be the only way she could stop people sneaking out. Unless they were too sick to move, most people got out of the Hospital wing as soon as they could. Madam Pomfrey was a lot like Molly Weasley when she had a patient… way too overprotective.

/I just hope she’ll let us have something to read or work on./ Daniel commented, /otherwise you and I are going to be bored to death with nothing but these four walls to look at./

/Well she’ll let Ron and Hermione bring me schoolwork./ Harry told him. /They did it last year when I was getting the bones in my left arm regrown after that idiot Lockhart removed them./

/In that case maybe Hermione can find us a book on wizard debts as well./ Daniel suggested.

/How would we get her to do it?/ Harry inquired. /Hermione is real big on studying, but might not help if it doesn’t directly deal with homework or a school subject./

/Malfoy is the vindictive sort isn’t he?/

/That’s not quite the word I’d use but yea./

/Well, he’s bound to want to go after Hagrid and Buckbeak./ Daniel pointed out.

/He’ll probably get his father to./ Harry agreed.

/The we can present it to her as we need to find out information on wizard debts so that if he does owe us for saving his life, we can stop his father from doing anything./ Daniel explained his reasoning. /I think she will help us locate a suitable book if it’s put to her like that./

/How do we get her to keep it secret? I mean so Dumbledore doesn’t find out?/ Harry wanted to know.

/We just tell her that given Malfoy’s vindictive streak, we want to have something to use against him if he decides to get even with Hagrid or Buckbeak over what happened today, without Snape or the Slytherins finding out./

/That might just work./ Harry told him sounding pleased.

Madam Pomfrey bustled into the Hospital wing and noticed that her patient was sitting up in bed. “What are you doing up, Mr. Potter? You should be lying down.”

“I feel fine Madam Pomfrey.” Harry protested.

“Well, you’re not.” Madam Pomfrey countered. “You’ve managed to magically exhaust yourself twice in less than forty-eight hours. You may as well resign yourself to staying in that bed for a few
“Days!” Harry managed to sound properly horrified even though he and Daniel had expected it. “Why do I need to stay here that long? I feel fine.”

“You are staying because I said so. I have no intention of releasing you only to have you magically collapse because you do a piece of magic that is beyond the power of a third year to do either deliberately or accidentally and drain your magical core down to almost nothing again. You don’t seem to understand the seriousness of what happened or what could happen to you if it continues. You could wind up a Squib.” Madam Pomfrey cast a quick diagnostic spell and it revealed his magical core was back to its normal level, which made no sense. She’d been a healer for over forty years and had never seen someone’s magical core behave the way Potter’s was. What was going on? How had Potter managed to regenerate his core so quickly? And for the second time! It normally took about a week at least.

Feeling Harry’s worry that he might end up like Filch the only other Squib he knew of, Daniel was quick to reassure him. That will never happen, because you haven’t lost the ability to care about people. Besides if Mryddin is right about Ascended powers and magic all coming from the same source, my power will always be there for whatever we might need to do. Besides, even if the worst happens and you can no longer work magic, we both know you will be okay, given that we met in ’96 and you weren’t starving or homeless. As a matter of fact, you looked like you were doing ok. Before Madam Pomfrey could say anything more, the door to the Hospital wing opened and Harry spotted Hagrid coming in the door.

“Hagrid!” Harry was pleased at the interruption, because the expression on Madam Pomfrey’s face had made Daniel comment that it looked like she was about to ask some rather awkward questions they wouldn’t be able to answer.

“’Arry, yer awake!” Hagrid was pleased by that fact and hurried over to sit in a chair near his bed. “Yer looking fine.”

“And I feel fine.” Harry hastened to reassure him. “I’ve been trying to convince Madam Pomfrey of that fact.”

Knowing that Harry wanted his help to get out of the Hospital wing, Hagrid told him. “Ye jes lissen ta what Madam Pomfrey tells ya. She’s only doin’ what’s best fer ya.”

“Then can you do me a favour?” Harry requested. “Can you ask Hermione to bring me my books and assignments by later so I don’t get too far behind, since Madam Pomfrey isn’t going to let me out of here until Thursday at the earliest.”

“Ye ‘ad me worried earlier when ya collapsed.” Hagrid told him earnestly as Madam Pomfrey headed back to her office as soon as she saw that neither of them was paying attention to her.

She wasn’t going to protest Hagrid’s interruption. He was keeping the boy’s mind off getting out of the Hospital wing for now. She would keep an eye on them though and if Hagrid got the boy too excited, she would make him leave.

“I’m just sorry Malfoy spoiled your first class.” Poppy heard Harry say to Hagrid. “Don’t let him get you down though, just remember Malfoy’s a git. He’s always been a git and he’ll always be a git.”

“Yea, that ‘im is jes like ‘is father.” Hagrid commented, in a slightly lower version of his booming voice. “How did ya like me firs’ class?”
“I liked the class and meeting Buckbeak.” Harry told him cautiously. “I just wish that you had picked something less dangerous for our first class.”

“Hippogriffs aren’t dangerous.” Hagrid told him.

“Not if handled correctly,” Daniel agreed, taking over the conversation with Harry’s approval since he didn’t want to hurt his friend’s feelings, “but when you get a git like Malfoy or someone who is not a very brave person yet, like Neville, that’s a potential disaster waiting to happen. I mean, if I hadn’t intervened, Malfoy could’ve been badly hurt if not killed and if that had happened, Malfoy’s father would’ve come down on you and this school like a rampaging Troll.”

“Yer right,” Hagrid sighed, sounding melancholy. “I jus’ wanted me firs’ class ta be special.”

“And it was,” Daniel was quick to reassure him. “I doubt anyone will forget it, but you need to work up to what most people consider dangerous creatures. You have to make your class fit your students, not your students fit your class, Hagrid. We’re only thirteen and we don’t know a lot of defensive or protection spells yet like the sixth and seventh years would. What won’t hurt or kill you or them, could us. You need to start off small like with baby animals, or full grown animals that won’t possibly kill or injure us if we make a mistake. Or if someone like Malfoy deliberately decides to be stupid. Teach about animals like the phoenix or unicorn., then gradually work up to the more potentially dangerous ones with us.”

“Eh, maybe,” Hagrid murmured as he got to his feet and headed for the door, looking thoughtful. “I’ll see ya later ‘arry. Ron and Hermione asked me to tell you they’d be by later.”

Harry didn’t have another visitor until after dinner. Ron and Hermione came in. Hermione’s arms were full of books while Ron had just opened what looked like a chocolate frog box, grabbed the frog in mid leap, and stuffed it in his mouth.

/Some wizard candy is just strange./ Daniel observed as he watched the legs stop twitching on the frog that was hanging half out of Ron’s mouth.

/But it’s very tasty./ Harry countered.

/You won’t get any argument from me on the subject of chocolate./ Daniel told him. /It’s just I prefer mine not to move./

Harry made no comment to that, choosing instead to ask Hermione, “What’s with all the books?”

“I brought your books for class so you wouldn’t get too far behind.” Hermione told him, settling the books on the nightstand beside his bed.

“I tried to talk her out of it, mate.” Ron put in. “I told her you needed your rest. I mean at the very least she could’ve brought you a Quidditch magazine to read. The last one I saw had some great moves for Seekers and I have no doubt Wood is going to be on fire to win that trophy since this is his last year.”

“Well, he doesn’t need to get too far behind in his schoolwork either.” Hermione disagreed. “Or he’ll never catch up. After all Madam Pomfrey told us he was going to be in here until Thursday at least.”

“Thanks for reminding me.” Harry commented glumly. “I’m fine, but she insists on keeping me in here for a few days.”
“Harry, you’ve passed out twice from magical exhaustion.” Hermione rounded on him sternly.

“But…”

Harry got no further in his protest, because Hermione barrelled on as if she hadn’t heard him “You need to fully recover this time and not go to classes where you will need to use magic and possibly have another magical outburst so that you pass out again.”

/Good God! She’s almost a clone of Sam!/ Daniel commented. /That sounds just like something Sam would say if I were in the base infirmary./

/And how do you get around Sam when she agrees with you base doctor?/ Harry wanted to know.

/I don’t./ Daniel told him. /I protest a bit and then she bribes me with Chocolate Walnut cookies and Starbuck’s coffee. God I miss coffee!/ At Daniel’s silent prompting, Harry said, “Hermione, can you find a book for me in the library?”

Surprised, Hermione said, “sure, as long as it’s not a book on Quidditch.”

“I need you to find a book on wizard debts or maybe it might be obligations.” Harry told her after looking around as if to make sure there was no one nearby. He already knew from Daniel’s ability to detect magical signatures that Ron and Hermione were the only ones near the bed. “And I don’t want anyone to know about it.”

“Why?” Hermione looked puzzled. “It would be far easier to locate an obscure book like that if I ask Madam Pince’s help.”

“I think Malfoy is going to try and pull something on Hagrid or Buckbeak, because of what happened this morning.” Harry told her earnestly. “From something Dumbledore told me my first year about how my father saved Snape’s life, placing him in his debt. I think that the debt was more than just a desire not to owe my father for saving him. I think maybe it is a real obligation with penalties, if it isn’t paid. I need to find out what they are so I can try and stop Malfoy and his father from hurting Hagrid or Buckbeak.”

“I wouldn’t put it past the slimy git.” Ron muttered. “He hates looking like a fool. And he certainly did this morning.”

“Right,” Harry nodded. “But I don’t know anything about such obligations though I’m willing to bet the Malfoy’s do. Malfoy is going to be counting on my ignorance and this once we need to beat him to the punch before he has a chance to do real harm.”

“And it would be better if Malfoy and the other Slytherins didn’t know you were trying to locate the information.” Hermione quickly understood. “Otherwise they might remove it.”

/I just hope she will keep it from Dumbledore./ Daniel commented.

/She will./ Harry was certain of it.

“Hermione, I expect you’ll be seeing me in Ancient Runes soon.” Harry commented.

“Oh,” Hermione seemed surprised and a little worried by that. “Why?”

“I rather imagine Professor Trelawney is going to play up the fact that I collapsed as proof that Death is after me. She strikes me as the type who won’t let it rest.” Harry told her. “Which means Professor
McGonagall will have to allow me to change classes.”

“Will you be changing classes too, Ron?” Hermione asked the red head.

“I think I’ll stick with Divination. Besides Neville will need some moral support, if Professor Trelawney decides to start targeting him instead. She’s already got him spooked.” Ron said with the air of one making a great sacrifice for the good of his fellow Gryffindors.

They spent the remaining time until Madam Pomfrey told them they had to leave discussing various school topics.

As she turned to leave, Hermione told Harry, “I’ll bring you my notes for Ancient Runes tomorrow, so you know what’s already been covered.”

Harry felt like swearing as he rushed to try and get to his first Potions class of the year. Madam Pomfrey had kept him in the Hospital wing until the last minute, when he had wanted to speak to Professor Lupin before the day’s classes started. Now he would be lucky if he weren’t late to Potions and wind up with Snape taking off points. He was certain that Snape would take off points even if he were early to class, not that he would be. He had no real desire to spend any more time in Snape’s company than he had to.

One thing Harry was looking forward to about Potions was seeing Malfoy. Hermione had come through for him and found a very slim volume on Wizarding protocols and obligations that had information on life debts. He and Daniel had worked up a few scenarios for getting Draco to publicly admit that it had been Harry who saved his life. According to the information in the book a publicly admitted life debt was a more powerful binding than one that was privately acknowledged.

The Potions class was almost halfway over by the time Harry reached the dungeon classroom. He entered quietly hoping to remain unnoticed while Snape was busy ranting at Neville regarding his potion, but his arrival was noticed, by Snape. “Well, nice of you to deign to join us, Mr. Potter. You might’ve been better off if you had gotten here at the beginning of class instead of in the middle.”

As the Slytherins snickered, Harry simply said, “Yes, sir. I’ll be sure to pass that information on to Madame Pomfrey as well, since she was the one who kept me from getting here at the beginning of class instead of in the middle.”

Snape just glared at him, knowing full well just who had delayed the brat’s appearance in his class. “Ten points from Gryffindor for your cheeky and unnecessary comment. Take a seat and get started on your potion.”

Snape smirked at the look of dismay on Potter’s face as he realised the only available seat was next to Malfoy. The Potion’s Master had deliberately arranged it that way, after Poppy had made it quite clear to Snape that Potter was not to suffer any potions mishaps today that brought him back to the Hospital Wing or Snape would regret it the next time he came under her care.

Snape in turn had made it clear to Draco that he was to make sure that nothing dangerous made its way into Potter’s cauldron and that Potter made no stupid mistakes with his potion. He had made it clear to Draco, that godson or not, if Potter wound up in the Hospital wing again any time soon, then he would suffer Snape’s wrath.

“We are making Shrinking Solution today. The instructions are on the board.” Snape told Harry once he had his equipment out. “Normally any competent brewer could make it in an hour, but given how
late you arrived, I doubt you will be able to. We shall see.”

Harry wisely made no comments, not wanting to lose any more points. He could feel Daniel in the background of his mind observing everything with fascination, but staying silent until his input was needed.

Malfoy worked quietly on his own potion for several minutes and then decided that while Snape had made it clear that Dumbledore’s “golden” boy was not to be physically harmed, nothing had been said about not harassing him.

“Seen your pal, Hagrid lately?” Malfoy inquired snidely

Harry didn’t respond, his attention focused on chopping up his daisy roots as fine as was called for in the potion recipe.

Ron however rose to the bait by saying, ”That’s none of your business, Malfoy, but I doubt that he has, given that he’s been in the Hospital wing for the last few days because of your actions.”

Malfoy glowered at Ron, but continued on as if Harry had answered his question. “I doubt he’s going to be a teacher much longer. Not that he’s really qualified to teach to begin with. Dumbledore must’ve been truly desperate to hire him as a teacher. Father wasn’t too pleased when I told him about my first Care of Magical Creatures class.”

Pulling a couple of Shrivelfigs out of his Potions kit, Harry couldn’t resist commenting, “You mean you actually told your father what a git you were and how you failed to follow a teacher’s instructions. Or did you do what you usually do; lie and blame other people for your mistakes?”

Ron and some of the nearby Gryffindors snickered at Harry’s comeback.

“My father knows that an unqualified teacher brought several dangerous creatures to class without adequate supervision.” Malfoy countered loftily. “He intends to speak to the Board of Governors as soon as possible about it.”

Harry calmly repeated what Daniel had said. “Actually, Hagrid had adequate supervision for a group of teens. He just didn’t know he was going to have several spoiled children to teach.”

Malfoy’s eyes narrowed at the insult. “At least I have someone who cares about me. According to what I’ve heard you don’t even have that.”

“Maybe, maybe not.” Harry felt Daniel give him a mental hug and knew there would always be at least one person who would be there for him and that Daniel didn’t regret the fact that their lives were forever joined together. Daniel had been alone most of his life too and it was nice for both of them to know that neither of them would have to go on alone.

“Your father might want to reconsider that course of action, given what your family owes me.” Harry pointed out.

“What my family owes you.” Malfoy stared at him in disbelief. “What could my family possibly owe you?”

“You mean aside from getting rid of Voldemort, so he could pretend to be a law abiding citizen again?” Harry added the daisy roots to the potion. “Well, if it weren’t for me, he might be burying you because of your failure to follow instructions.”

“You did nothing!” Malfoy countered haughtily. “It was a bolt of lightening that kept the beast from
striking me.”

“Ah yes, that single bolt of lightening coming out of a clear blue sky.” Harry commented as he sliced up his shrivelfigs. “And then there was your rather undignified exit from the paddock, before Buckbeak had a chance to try and strike again. No human pulled you out of Buckbeak’s way and I doubt an elf would’ve have bothered considering how your family treats them. And lest we forget, I ended up in the hospital wing suffering from magical exhaustion, after you were miraculously rescued.”

“So what if you were responsible,” Malfoy countered. “It means absolutely nothing.”

The air crackled around them and golden aura surrounded both boys.

“Actually,” Harry disagreed, “it means a great deal, for you have just publicly admitted that I saved you life, thereby placing you in debt to me.”

Snape came over to stand near their table. “I would suggest you both return your attention to your potions, if you want to get a grade for today’s class.”

“Yes sir.” Harry agreed and then added, “Malfoy just publicly admitted that I saved his life earlier this week.”

"I see," Snape replied as he raised an eyebrow at the pale boy in a questioning manner. "Your father will need to be made aware of the matter as soon as possible. I doubt your father will be pleased to find out that the Malfoy heir has publicly admitted being indebted to the Potter heir. Nor will he be happy to hear the reason for it. I am also sure he will be revisiting your lessons on when you should speak and when you should stay silent."

Snape turned his attention to the Gryffindor side of the room where it was far safer to vent the anger he was feeling over his godson’s stupidity. And fortunately his usual target other than Potter had managed to screw up his potion again. “Orange? Longbottom, this potion isn’t supposed to be orange. Tell me does anything stay in that brain of yours. Not only do the instructions on the board say that you use only one rat’s spleen and a dash of leech juice, I went to all the trouble of repeating it, so you hopeless dunderheads wouldn’t wind up poisoning yourselves. I’m beginning to wonder just what it is I have to do to get through to you, Longbottom.”

/And I thought Kinsey and the Goa’ulds were the only ones that arrogant./ Daniel commented as the Potion’s Master verbally ripped into Hermione Granger when she offered to help Neville fix his potion. /Is Snape always like this?/

/Sometimes he’s worse./ Harry told him, /he hasn’t threatened to use him for potion’s ingredients yet./

As Seamus Finnegan leaned over to borrow Harry’s scales, he asked, “Did you hear what was in the Daily Prophet this morning, Harry?”

“No, what?” Harry wasn’t really interested, he was concentrating more on finishing his potion since he had started later than everyone else and he knew Snape wasn’t going to cut him any slack because he’d just gotten out of the hospital wing.

“Sirius Black was sighted near here.” Seamus told him. “He was spotted by a muggle who called the hotline, but by the time the Aurors had gotten there he’d vanished.”

Malfoy couldn’t help noticing Potter’s interest in this bit of news and thought he could get back against Potter for that nasty trick he’d played with the life debt. His eyes glittered maliciously as he
asked, “Thinking of trying to catch Black single handed, Potter?”

Harry looked at him in disbelief. “Now why would I be stupid enough to want to go after a mass murderer?”

“I can’t believe you don’t want justice after what he did, Potter.” Malfoy was surprised at his answer then a thought occurred to him. “You don’t know what he did, do you? Cause if it were me and he’d killed a member of my family, I wouldn’t be willing to stay in school like a good little boy. I’d be going after him.”

Harry finally figured out what he was talking about. Black had been put in prison for killing his family, but he wasn’t supposed to know about that, so he pretended ignorance. “Just what are you babbling about, Malfoy?”

“Black killed…”

Before Malfoy could finish his big announcement, Snape stated, “All of you with the possible exception of Potter should be finished with your potions. Now it’s time to test Longbottom’s.”
They arrived in the DADA classroom before the Professor and Ron was still trying to figure out what Hermione was hiding, though he kept his voice low so she wouldn’t hear him. He had spent most of lunch when he wasn’t stuffing his face trying to get her to tell him.

Daniel was fairly certain he knew and had told Harry what he thought it was. The other books that had fallen out of her bag had been for those classes she didn’t have with Harry and Ron which meant that since they were at the same time as Potions, she had some kind of device that allowed her to make controlled trips back in time, but the device apparently didn’t return her to her departure point. If the girl wasn’t careful, she was going to give herself away.

They had book, quills and parchment out, when Professor Lupin finally made an appearance. “Good afternoon. You can put you things away, except for your wands. Today’s lesson is going to be a practical one.”

Harry and Ron eyed him curiously, hoping this practical lesson would be better that Lockhart’s one with the Cornish Pixies.

When everyone had put their books away, Lupin told them, “If you would please follow me.”

This was definitely different. They’d never left the DADA classroom for a lesson before. They followed him silently down the empty corridor. When they turned the corner, they saw Peeves who appeared to be stuffing chewing gum into the keyhole of the broom closet.

“I’d take that gum out of the keyhole if I were you, Peeves.” Lupin advised the poltergeist. “Mr. Filch won’t be too happy with you if he can’t get to his brooms.”

“Loony, loopy, Lupin.” Peeves sang out several times while hanging upside down before blowing a loud wet raspberry.

Everyone was surprised by how Peeves was treating the DADA teacher. He usually showed some respect to the teaching staff. They waited to see how Professor Lupin would handle this show of
disrespect from the ghost.

He just gave a small sigh and took out his wand. “This is a very useful little spell, as you will see. Please watch carefully.”

Raising the wand to shoulder height, he said “*Wassiwasi!*” before pointing the wand at Peeves.

The wad of chewing gum shot out of the keyhole with the force of a bullet and went straight down Peeves’ left nostril. The poltergeist shot upright and zoomed away, cursing up a storm.

“That was cool sir.” Dean Thomas said slightly awed. He’d never even seen McGonagall get the better of Peeves.

“Thank you, Dean,” Lupin gave a slight bow of his head in acknowledgement as he put his wand away. “Shall we proceed?”

They followed Lupin down the corridor feeling slightly more hopeful about this year’s DADA teacher. He seemed to know what he was doing.

The parade came to a stop just outside the staff room door. Opening it, Lupin gestured for them to go inside.

The third years did as instructed coming quickly to a halt when they saw Snape glaring at them from where he was seated in one of the mismatched armchairs scattered about the panelled room.

“Leave it open, Lupin,” Snape ordered rising from his seat and heading for the door. “I’d rather not witness this spectacle.”

Before he slammed the door shut, Snape issued a warning. “I don’t know if anyone has told you, Lupin, but this class contains Neville Longbottom, a hopeless case if ever there was one. I wouldn’t trust him with anything important unless Miss Granger is standing beside him whispering instructions in his ear.”

Harry/Daniel could see Neville go red in the face from that public humiliation. Both of them glared at the Potions professor, wondering why he felt compelled to bully Neville outside his own classroom. Did he get some kind of perverted thrill out of it?

Lupin merely raised an eyebrow and told him, “I am hoping that Neville will help me with the first part of this lesson. And I have no doubt that he will be able to carry off his part of the lesson without any problems.”

Neville went even redder in the face if that was possible and Harry couldn’t help wondering is Lupin might not be overestimating Neville’s capabilities. His fellow Gryffindor rarely did well in any class other than Herbology.

Snape gave a snort of disgust and slammed the door shut.

Lupin led the class to the end of the long panelled room that held the old wardrobe where the teacher’s stored their spare robes.

Several students gasped as it began to wobble and bang against the wall as soon as Lupin got near it.

“Don’t worry,” Professor Lupin spoke in a calm and reassuring tone of voice. “That’s just the boggart we are here to study. I asked the headmaster not to get rid of it, because I wanted my third year class to get some practice dealing with one.”
A number of the third year students were not reassured at all at the notion that Professor Lupin thought they could handle a Boggart. Neville had gone ash white and Seamus was eyeing the door handle worriedly.

As if unaware of their concerns, Professor Lupin explained about the Boggart’s tendency to like dark enclosed spaces, then he asked his first question of the class. “So the first thing we must ask ourselves is what is a Boggart?”

When Lupin gestured to her, Hermione told the class, “It's a formless shapeshifter. It takes the form of whatever the person that sees it is most afraid of.”

/Maybe that’s why Snape left instead of waiting to see if Neville would fail./ Daniel commented to Harry. /He doesn’t want any of the Gryffindors to know what he is afraid of./

/Makes sense./ Harry agreed. /Snape enjoys creating terror in others, but he doesn’t want anyone to know what he’s afraid of. I wonder what the Boggart would’ve become for him./

/I think a question of far more immediate concern is what will it turn into for us. We are going to be facing it in a moment./ Daniel pointed out. /It could give us away if it turns into two separate things./

That shocked Harry into silence and he returned his attention to Professor Lupin who was finishing up, “…he will immediately become what we each fear the most.”

Ignoring the small whimper that escaped Neville, Lupin continued. “This gives us an advantage right off. Can you tell me what it is,… Harry?”

Harry was surprised when the question was directed at him. He hadn’t even had his hand up. Hermione looked slightly disappointed that he had been chosen to answer the question, but she continued to bob in place with her hand up in case he got it wrong. Not certain of the answer, Harry guessed, “Could it be that because there are so many of us, the Boggart won’t know what it should become?”

“Exactly!” Lupin sounded pleased.

As Professor Lupin went on to explain how it was best to have company when dealing with a boggart and why, Daniel’s mind was working quickly on the problem of how to keep the boggart from revealing that there were two people in Harry’s body. Hedwig had only detected him when he spoke to Harry or changed places with him. Buckbeak had detected his presence even when he had been doing nothing. Neither of them could betray his presence the way a boggart could though.

Daniel had a reputation for being able to think fast on his feet, but this one almost beat him until he remembered the magical energy signatures he could feel from the people and things around them. It was a long shot and might not work, but it was the only thing he could think of.

/Harry, I think I’ve got an idea how to hide myself so the boggart won’t detect me./ Daniel spoke quickly.

/What?/ Harry wanted to know. The last thing they needed to happen was for Daniel to magically exhaust him again. Madame Pomfrey would never let them out of the Hospital wing again if that happened.

/I’m gonna try to match my energy signature to yours, so hopefully we appear as a very powerful single entity./ Daniel told him.

/Ok./ Harry mentally crossed his fingers for luck.
Closing his eyes, Daniel turned his will and ascended powers toward quickly matching his energy pattern to that of Harry. A moment later he checked, not a perfect match but it just might be enough. Making himself comfortable, Daniel did his best to maintain the matching patterns as he watched the class unfold through Harry’s eyes.

Daniel watched as Lupin handled the very frightened Neville. He had seen enough teachers in his lifetime to be able to tell a good one from a bad one. Lupin was very patient as he explained to Neville what he wanted him to try and do. When Daniel compared him to the other DADA teachers he had seen in Harry’s memories, he could tell that Lupin was in a class by himself and this was probably going to be a year where Harry and his classmates learned a great deal about how to defend themselves against what was out there.

Lupin turned back to the class before opening the wardrobe. “If Neville is successful in driving the Boggart back, it will most likely turn its attention to each of you in turn. I want you each to take a few moments and figure out what you can do to make thing that terrifies you most look comical.”

The image that popped into Daniel’s mind at those words was Jack with the glowing eyes of a Goa’uld. He looked at what had appeared in Harry’s thoughts. It was an image of Tom Riddle otherwise known as Voldemort, but a moment later it was replaced by the image of a Sa’ki’eth otherwise known here as a Dementor.

A moment later, Daniel’s attention was distracted from Harry’s attempt to try and make it comical by Lupin opening the wardrobe door. Snape stormed out of the wardrobe toward Neville, finger outstretched and shaking at the other boy. If took Neville several tries to get the spell out, but as soon as he did, Snape’s wardrobe was changed into a Victorian style lace dress and a vulture topped hat. Daniel was hard pressed not to laugh. He knew if he did, he might disrupt the careful energy matching he had done with Harry.

Daniel watched as Lupin called the students forward one at a time and concentrated on making sure his energy signature continued to match Harry’s.

When the legless spider came to a halt near Harry’s feet and he prepared to make his attempt against the Boggart, even though he still hadn’t figured out a way to make a Dementor appear harmless, they were both surprised when the Defence Professor stepped in. The boggart changed to a silvery orb that reminded Daniel a lot of the moon.

/Why did he do that?/ Harry thought at Daniel as Lupin had Neville finish off the Boggart cockroach, he had changed it into.

/I have no idea./ Daniel admitted.

When Lupin awarded five points to Harry, he protested, “But I didn’t face the Boggart, sir.”

“No, you didn’t,” Lupin agreed, “but you did answer a question about it.”

#####

Friday’s Divination class proceeded about like Harry/Daniel expected. Trelawney was practically floating on air as she continually commented about how she had foreseen the accident, but that the aura of Grim was still hanging over Harry so he was still under the pall of death. Harry just made a mental note to speak to Professor McGonagall about transferring to Ancient Runes before lunch.

Ron was a bit upset, when Harry told him that he would be taking Ancient Runes instead of Divination even though Harry had mentioned it previously when he was in the Hospital wing. Harry
finally got Ron calmed down enough to understand why Harry wasn’t comfortable hanging around a teacher who seemed to take great delight in predicting his death every time she saw him. Ron even admitted he wouldn’t have been real happy about someone predicting his death every moment they were in his presence either.

The Care of Magical Creatures class, on Friday, while not as exciting as the first one was nevertheless very interesting as Hagrid taught them about Phoenixes. And even though Fawkes was the only Phoenix on display, the entire class was surprised to learn that there was more than one type of phoenix and that each was linked to a specific element of nature. On the whole, other than Malfoy, the students had seemed pleased with the class, because the Gryffindors were walking away chatting about what they’d learned with their house mates and a large number of the Slytherins were walking away without looking like they’d just experienced something disgusting.

Harry/Daniel’s first Ancient Runes class proved to be very interesting as well. Daniel knew a bit about Runes, primarily the Norse ones linked to the Asguard, but this was the first time, he’d seen them used for their other purpose of spell casting. Professor Conroy Torrin had a real passion for his subject. He told them that while runes were primarily used by Cursebreakers and enchanters, knowing a rune’s meanings and how it was used in combination with others would help you figure out what spells were on the old magical items your family had and what they were intended to do.

/And I thought Professor Cumberland at the Oriental Institute was a boring speaker./ Daniel commented during their History of Magic class. /Compared to this guy, he’s actually hyperactive. Does Binns ever talk about anything but Goblin Rebellions?/

/Not that I’ve ever heard./ Harry told him. /The only time he ever discussed another topic was when Hermione brought up the Chamber of Secrets./

The bell rang signalling the end of class and most of the students started waking from their naps.

/Want to shake him up just a bit?/ Daniel asked.

/How?/ Harry wanted to know.

/Let me have control for a bit./ Daniel requested.

Curious, Harry traded places with Daniel.

“Professor Binns,” Daniel/Harry raised his voice over the noise of the students getting to their feet.

“Yes, Mr. Potter,” the droning voice of the ghost responded.

“Yes, Mr. Potter,” the droning voice of the ghost responded.

“I just wanted to know sir, do you ever teach about anything besides the Goblin Rebellions?”

Everyone stopped moving in surprise.

“I mean sir,” Daniel/Harry continued, “You assigned us an essay on medieval witch burnings for our summer homework, but you haven’t discussed it, nor have you returned the graded homework and that was turned in more than a month ago. Surely there is more to the history of the wizarding world than a never-ending stream of goblin rebellions. I mean why don’t you teach about Merlin who is supposed to be the Father of the British magical world. Or teach about the separation of magickind from the non-magical? Surely that is information we need to know.”

The ghostly Binns just stared at him, not saying anything.
When the silence from the ghostly teacher went on for more than a few minutes, Daniel/Harry continued, “Shouldn’t those of us who grew up outside the wizarding world be able to learn it’s rich history? I mean aren’t we entitled to know about the major and minor events of the wizarding world or is it some great dark secret because you feel we really don’t belong here?”

When Binns remained silent just staring at the boy with his mouth open, Daniel/Harry put in his final jab. “I see, sir, all you want us to know about is the dislike, if not active hatred other races have for us.”

That said he walked out of class leaving his friends scrambling to catch up with him as he headed for the Great Hall for lunch.

“I can’t believe you said that!” Hermione chastised Harry once she caught up with him at the Great Hall.

“What’s your problem?” Harry was perfectly willing to leave Daniel in control. He knew that the Archaeologist could out argue Hermione on his worst day. “I felt it was a perfectly valid question. The only thing that Binns has ever taught us about except for the one time you asked about the Chamber of Secrets is Goblin Rebellions. He is supposed to be a History teacher, which means teaching history.”

“He was teaching History.” Hermione argued as she put food on her plate. “He was teaching about the Goblin Rebellions which are a part of history.”

“Hermione,” Daniel/Harry’s use of her full name, instead of the nickname he and Ron had for her, got her attention. “The class is called *History of Magic* correct?”

“Yes,” Hermione shot back, “And that’s what Binns was teaching us… *History*.”

Ron watched their argument between Harry and Hermione with the intensity he would’ve given to a Quidditch match as he shovelled food into his mouth. He had been surprised though when Harry had spoken out in class. He doubted it would do any good. Binns, according to what he’d been told by his father, had been teaching the same dull material about the Goblin Rebellions even when he was alive.

“He’s only teaching one aspect of history,” Daniel/Harry pointed out. “That would be just fine if he were teaching in college and was only required to teach that aspect of History like at a muggle college where they can teach things like Medieval or Ancient Egyptian History, but he is supposed to be teaching us the general history of the wizarding world, which means all of it, not just how to perpetuate the hatred wizards feel toward the goblins and theirs toward us. I for one refuse to believe that the history of the wizarding world is one long unending stream of goblin rebellions.”

The expression on Hermione’s face was one of disapproval even though she couldn’t find fault with Harry’s argument. “You shouldn’t have said what you did to Professor Binns. It was disrespectful toward the teacher. He is teaching the required curriculum.”

“Required by whom?” Daniel/Harry wanted to know. “Hogwarts? The Ministry? I don’t think so or we wouldn’t have been assigned a paper on medieval witch burnings over the summer. We instead would’ve been required to do an essay on the Goblin Rebellions.”

Hermione just sniffed, refusing to respond any further since she couldn’t get Harry to see that he was wrong about what he’d done. Instead she turned her attention to her lunch and started reading her
As the bell rang signalling the end of Transfiguration class, McGonagall got their attention before they could leave the classroom. “Gryffindors, I need you to make sure I have your permission slips before Halloween, if you intend to go to this first Hogsmeade weekend. If I don’t have your permission form, you won’t be able to go, so don’t forget.”

When Neville raised his hand, she told him, “Your grandmother already sent me yours Neville.”

Neville sighed in relief and followed Ron, Harry, and Hermione out of class.

“Should we give McGonagall our forms tonight, Harry?” Ron wanted to know.

“Yea. We should take care of it as soon as possible. I’m just glad I got uncle Vernon to sign it before Marge showed up. I doubt he would’ve signed it afterwards.” Harry/Daniel observed.

“Harry, you can’t possibly be thinking of going.” Hermione stared at him in shock. “Why would you do something so foolish? You’re supposed to stay in school.” She looked around then whispered, “Mr. Weasley told you that Sirius Black is after you. Why would you want to do something so silly and go somewhere he can easily get his hands on you? You can always go to Hogsmeade once they’ve caught him.”

“Hermione,” Ron disagreed, “Harry can’t be the only third year not going. It would just be wrong for him to miss out on Hogsmeade.”

“Mr. Weasley told Harry that he has to stay in school where he’s safe.” Hermione hissed surprised that Ron wasn’t agreeing with her. Ron knew that Black was after Harry. His own father had been certain enough of it to warn Harry not to leave the school grounds.

“Just ignore her, Harry. She just doesn’t want you to have any fun.” Ron countered harshly. “Sirius Black isn’t going to risk capture to try and kidnap Harry from among the hordes of students who will be there on Hogsmeade weekend. I’m sure the Minister will have extra Aurors posted just in case he is stupid enough to try.”

“I am going.” Harry/Daniel confirmed.

Hermione huffed. “I’m sure that Professor McGonagall will be able to talk some sense into you. It’s not safe for you to go Harry. Why are you putting yourself at risk?”

At Daniel’s prompting, Harry told her, “You know your argument might carry more weight if you weren’t going Hermione. Based on the paper, Black is bound to know that you are one of my friends. Even if I weren’t to go, what’s to stop him from kidnapping you and forcing me to exchange myself for you? For that matter what’s to stop Black kidnapping anyone else in this school for the same reason? If Dumbledore and Professor McGonagall were really worried about Black, then they would have cancelled all Hogsmeade weekends because of the danger that Black poses. They didn’t so I’m not going to deny myself a trip to Hogsmeade.”

Harry walked off before Hermione had a chance to try and continue the argument.

After handing in his permission slip for Hogsmeade to his Head of House, Harry headed toward the old classroom, that Fred and George had recommended for potions work, to check on the genealogy
potion he and Daniel were brewing. Given their ability to plan and carry out pranks without being caught, Harry and Daniel both had figured they knew a few places safe to do some work that you didn’t want anyone else to see and they’d been right. The room was thick with enough dust to make Daniel glad he no longer had his allergies, but it was in an out of the way corridor, so no one bothered him here, not even Hermione. The fact that it was relatively close to the Owlery, relative being a subjective term, made it the best possible choice since it meant he could get Hedwig on the way. He needed her to deliver the genealogy chart to Gringotts so it could be put into his vault until he could get it. Harry didn’t want to take the chance of it being found before he was ready.

/I wonder why she looked so upset by the fact I had a signed permission slip?/ Harry wondered, still trying to figure out why McGonagall had looked like she wanted to object to his turning in a permission slip.

/Maybe she wasn’t expecting you to have one, though why that would be I don’t know./ Daniel commented. /Unless they somehow have been in contact with the Dursleys and know that it wasn’t signed, though why they would have bothered to ask that I don’t know./

Harry mentally shrugged as he settled Hedwig on a nearby perch and walked over to the cauldron containing the potion. He had put a protective cover over it since nothing was supposed to get into it, not even sunlight while it was steeping. Dim lighting like torchlight or a lumos spell was ok, just not sunlight /It may be that they think Black is going to make a try for me and since they think I don’t know about him, they don’t want to risk telling me./

/That’s most likely the case. I’m fairly certain that she is going to run and tell Dumbledore to see if he can talk you out of going since she has no authority to bar you because you have a signed permission slip… just not signed by any of the Dursleys./ Daniel sounded positively pleased with himself over his bit of forgery.

They needed to be able to move around freely outside the school without questions being asked to get their goals accomplished before the end of the year and Hogsmeade was their best chance for that. The only problem Daniel and Harry could foresee was that Ron and Hermione might try to stick to them like burrs, but getting separated in the crowds of students that were bound to be there would take care of that since they weren’t gong to be gone more than a few hours.

Removing the cover, Harry said, “lumos.”

The contents of the cauldron were revealed to be a beautiful sky blue, exactly what the book said they should be.

“It’s ready.” Harry slipped the ring on his right hand so Daniel could appear.

Pulling a roll of parchment out of the nearby bag, Harry slid it into the potion. They both watched as the sky blue potion was absorbed into the parchment. Once the potion was gone, the parchment glowed blue for a few moments. Once the glow vanished the parchment looked no different than any of the other rolls that Harry kept for homework.

Pulling it out, Harry rolled the paper flat and Daniel weighted it down. Taking out a stick pin, Harry pricked his finger and allowed three drops of blood to fall in the form of a triangle on the page and with each drop he repeated, “Ostendo prosapia nemus materia versus iens tergum triginta genit.”

The drops of blood sank into the parchment and then the paper was covered in a deep green pulsing light that Daniel though matched the colour of Harry’s eyes and from the picture he’d seen it matched his mother’s too. It was several minutes before the light vanished and names began to appear rapidly on the paper… lots of names.
“I hope the parchment is big enough,” Daniel commented.

“We only told it to go back 30 generations figuring that would get us to at least somewhere in the 1300’s, so we should be ok.”

They waited several more minutes before studying the parchment to find the best places to make the changes they needed to put Daniel in the Evans family tree. The chart appeared to have colour coded itself. Both Harry and his mother were in dark green, which since both Harry and his mother were magic users, must mean those were witches and wizards. Given that there were other names marked with the same dark green colouring, it indicated that Lily Evans wasn’t the first magic user in the Evans family, just the first one in a very long time.

At least two or three hundred years by Daniel’s estimation, using the standard calculation of twenty-five years to a generation. Petunia was showing in yellow as was Dudley and so was a majority of the Evans family tree. Vernon Dursley was shown in black married to Petunia. There were fewer of those, mostly from the last approximately one to two hundred years, but Daniel assumed that indicated the presence of someone with no magical ability, not even the potential to pass it on to his heir.

“The colour coding should make it easier for us to figure out where to make the changes we need to make.” Daniel commented as he traced his finger up the chart from Harry and his mother looking for a point where there was more than one child and at least one of those children was a green rather than yellow. “It will also make Petunia easier to handle, given that she, Dudley, and your grandparents appear to be Squibs. Given her aversion to anything to do with magic, we can make her terrified of Dudley getting married.”

While girls still were not that interesting to Harry yet, and he did understand from Daniels memories that one day he would probably do stupid things to try and their attention, he still shuddered at the thought of Dudley marrying and producing a child. Harry couldn’t resist commenting dryly. “I’m sure that millions of young women in the world will worship at the altar of Daniel if you manage to convince my Aunt that she should get Dudley fixed in order to avoid producing a magical grandchild.”

Daniel chuckled. “Given his size at least from your memories, I doubt any girl would be willing to have sex with him out of fear of being crushed to death.”

There Daniel’s tracing finger finally found the point where the division between those with magic and those without began. Prior to the mid sixteen hundreds the dark green was more prevalent and after that there was more yellow and black.

Resting his glowing fingertip on one of the yellow names on the parchment that wasn’t a direct ancestor to Harry Daniel changed it to green. Making sure to keep the energy signature matching Harry’s so the change wouldn’t be detected, he moved slowly down the parchment changing enough of the names to green to make the line appear to be the magical one, while the other was mostly Squibs. When he reached the last dozen or so he even changed the names so that they matched his families genealogy and ended with him.

“Are you sure no spell will reveal the alterations?” Harry wanted reassurance because if this step failed, Dumbledore might intervene and he wouldn’t be able to get his custody changed or his freedom from the Dursleys.

“As far as I know the changes shouldn’t be detected.” Daniel told him. “The spells we read about...
that check the authenticity of charts all check the blood and energy signature. Our powers are joined so nothing should turn up odd regarding the energy signature, not even if Dumbledore were to check the chart, but we aren’t going to let him do so.”

Giving the chart to Hedwig to take to Gringotts, Harry checked his watch. “We need to get back before Ron and Hermione come looking for us.”

#########

At breakfast on Saturday morning, Professor McGonagall stopped to speak with Harry. “Mr. Potter, the Headmaster would like to see you after breakfast. The password is Hershey’s”

As she walked off, Ron commented, “wonder why Dumbledore wants to see you today.”

Harry shrugged, “I don’t know. I’ll find out when I talk to him.”

/I bet I know why./ Daniel commented. /he wants to try and talk us out of going to Hogsmeade. Or he maybe planning to cast some kind of spell on us to make us not want to go./

Hermione glared at Harry darkly. “I bet I know why. You gave your permission slip to Professor McGonagall didn’t you.”

“So what if I did,” Harry didn’t deny it. “I have a right to go into Hogsmeade just like every other third year.”

Hermione tried to make him see reason. “Harry, every other third year doesn’t have a madman after them trying to kill them. You can’t have forgotten about Sirius Black.”

“How can you be so sure about that?” Harry countered.

Hermione stared at him baffled. “What are you talking about?”

“How can you be so sure that Black won’t go after one of the other students?” Harry inquired calmly. “If Black really is after me, what makes you think Black wouldn’t try taking one of the other students?”

“Why would he do that?” Hermione couldn’t believe what she was hearing. This was the flimsiest argument she had ever heard.

“It’s called kidnapping, Hermione? It happens all the time in the muggle world.” Harry reminded her. “It is entirely possible that Black would take someone to try and force the Headmaster or the Ministry to hand me over in exchange.”

“They wouldn’t do that!” Hermione protested. “They wouldn’t give in to his demands!”

“You can’t be sure of that, now can you?” Harry countered. “If they were really worried about Black being a threat, then they would bar everyone from going to Hogsmeade.”

Harry got up and left the Gryffindor table before Hermione could come up with a response.

#########

As they stepped onto the revolving staircase that led to Dumbledore’s office, Harry asked, /Daniel would you mind handling this meeting with Dumbledore?/

/Are you sure you want me to?/
Yeah, Harry told him. I’m still so mad at the meddling old fool, I might say something by accident that I shouldn’t. He’s good at getting things out of you that you want to keep secret with that kind grandfatherly act of his. Since you don’t have any history with him and are older than I you should be able to stay in control easier and not give us away.

As they mentally changed places, Daniel commented, Dumbledore might be many things, but a fool isn’t one of them. He reminds me more of the character Moriarity in Sherlock Holmes, but he somehow he has Holmes’ honourable reputation to hide his manipulative nature behind. We are both going to need to be very careful around him.

The door to the headmaster’s office was open when Daniel reached the top of the stairs. He knocked on the doorjamb just to be polite, even though he was fairly sure the older wizard knew he was there. When the Headmaster looked up, Daniel/Harry spoke in the slightly uncertain voice of someone who didn’t know if they were in trouble or not. “Professor McGonagall said you wanted to see me sir.”

“Yes, Harry. Come in and have a seat.” Dumbledore gestured toward one of the overstuffed chairs in front of his desk.

As they entered the office, Harry felt his stomach drop, Uh oh…/

/What’s wrong?/ Daniel looked around for a potential threat, but saw no one else in the office except…. Fawkes!

When Hagrid had had the class on Phoenixes, Harry had made sure to stay in the middle of the group and avoid attracting Fawkes’ attention. Daniel had remained silent and still within Harry throughout the entire class to prevent Fawkes from detecting his presence since he was Dumbledore’s loyal familiar and they didn’t want him telling the Headmaster about them.

They had forgotten that Fawkes spent most of his time in the Headmaster’s office.

Daniel mentally shrugged, /There’s nothing we can do about it now./

Harry knew he was right, but he still mentally crossed his fingers and said a silent prayer to anyone who might be listening that Fawkes wouldn’t give their secret away.

As soon as Daniel was seated, Fawkes launched himself from his perch with a spirit lifting trill and landed in Daniel’s lap

“Fawkes seems pleased to see you.” Dumbledore observed.

§Greetings White Lord.§ Fawkes sang. §Why are you here in the semblance of the youngling Harry Potter? Have you hidden him form those who would harm or use him.§

Before Daniel or Harry could even come up with a response, Fawkes reared back slightly and gave a trill of amazement. §You are joined! How is this possible?!§

/There really isn’t time to discuss it now,/ Daniel hoped that the phoenix would be able to hear his thoughts.

§You are right Lord,§ the phoenix sang. §I will come to the youngling Potter’s bed in Gryffindor tower tonight after the others are asleep and we can discuss it.§

Harry thought quickly at Fawkes. /Please don’t tell the Headmaster about this!/
Don’t worry youngling, my beak is sealed. Fawkes gave a trill that sounded like laughter. I made it very clear to my bonded after what he did to you that night in the muggle hospital that he is travelling a dangerous road and that if his previous actions toward you are repeated, he will lose me. No matter what reasons he had for doing so.

Fawkes sent his bonded a reminder of that warning along their bond before settling down in Harry’s lap. He gave the nearest hand a nudge, indicating he wanted to be petted.

Unaware of the conversation that had just taken place in front of him, Dumbledore was quick to conceal his surprise at Fawkes’ change of mood. Fawkes had largely been silent in the presence of others and radiated his disapproval over his bondmate’s tampering with Harry and Poppy’s memories back in August.

Dumbledore hadn’t thought it possible for a phoenix to sulk more than a few days, but Fawkes had clearly been trying for a record. Fawkes just didn’t understand that, sometimes, unpleasant things had to be done for the greater good of all.

He sighed, hoping this indicated that Fawkes little tantrum was over. Turning his attention back to Harry, he asked, “How was your summer?”

“It was okay at my relatives… I guess. They didn’t manage to kill me.” Daniel/Harry made a subtle stab at what had really happened, but made it sound like a joke. “The last couple of weeks were great though. I loved exploring Diagon Alley.” He stared at Dumbledore for a moment. “I don’t think you asked me here to talk about my summer holidays.”

“You’re right.” Dumbledore admitted. “But I did want to make sure you weren’t suffering any lingering affects from the basilisk you faced at the end of last year.”

Harry mentally snorted. If Dumbledore hadn’t tried to alter his memory, he might’ve believed him, but not now.

“I’m fine. Did you also check on Ginny Weasley?” Daniel/Harry wanted to know. “After all she suffered a lot more than I did at the hands of Tom Riddle.”

“Yes, I did.” Dumbledore managed to look slightly hurt that he would even have to ask. “But since you live in the muggle world during the summer, I thought I should make a special check to see that you were doing ok.”

“Well if you’d let me stay here like I asked last year, you would’ve known wouldn’t you? Is that all you wanted to know Headmaster?” Daniel started to get up as if he were going to leave.

“Yes, I’m afraid there is one more thing.” Dumbledore looked slightly apologetic, though no one on the other side of the desk was buying it. “I’m afraid that the permission slip you gave to Professor McGonagall has disappeared and until another one is signed by your Aunt or Uncle, you will not be able to go to Hogsmeade with the rest of the students.”

“That’s not fair! I’m to be punished because Professor McGonagall lost my form!” Daniel/Harry knew he had to react like a thirteen year old boy and not a thirty-eight year old man. “I had a hard enough time getting them to sign the first one. I doubt they will be willing to sign another especially after I blew up Aunt Marge.”

Dumbledore looked down at his desk, hiding his relief at the news that Harry might not be able to get them to sign the form again. Looking back up, he told Harry, “I’m sorry, those are the rules. We have to have the signed form. We will of course send another permission slip to them. I’m sure they
Daniel/Harry snorted. “Right. What dream world are you living in, if you believe that?” He paused for breath and then as if a thought just occurred to him said, “Have you told the others that they aren’t going either? I mean she couldn’t have been so inept as to lose just my slip now could she? If mine is the only one lost, I’m going to start wondering why.”

Dumbledore’s silence was telling. Daniel/Harry stared him in the eye. “So mine was the only one lost. If that’s the case, I want to see where in the school rules it says I can’t go to Hogsmeade, because my Head of House lost my permission form.”

Dumbledore quickly hid his dismay at how suspicious Harry was proving to be, not to mention the disapproval he could feel coming from Fawkes. He had expected Harry to accept his ruling, given that it was meant to keep him safe from Black. He would’ve made it up to the boy, once Black had been caught and Kissed. Given that the boy was staved for affection, it would’ve been so easy to make it up to him just by spending a little time with him. He had no intention of allowing young Potter out of Hogwarts while Black was on the loose. The Wizarding world couldn’t afford the loss of their saviour, given that the prophecy concerning Harry and Voldemort was still active.

“Well the Rules and Code of Conduct for Hogwarts students can be found in the Library, so you can check it at any time, but you will see that I am right.” Dumbledore made a mental note to have one of the house elves remove the books from the library as soon as Harry left his office.

/We don’t need the rulebook. We already know he lying./ Harry hissed. /Remember we checked the rulebook. It said as soon as that form was handed over my name would automatically be put on the list of students allowed to go to Hogsmeade and only detentions or a parent or guardian revoking that permission could remove my name from the list for however long they decree./

/I know, but it is best to have our proof in writing, especially if we have to take it to a higher authority like the Board of Governors./ Daniel said calmly.

/We have to be able to get out of the castle. You said so yourself./ Harry reminded him.

/This might work out even better./ Daniel told him. /No one will look for us here, and so we should be able to get out and back in without being detected./

/I wonder if Professor McGonagall knows that he is blaming her for my being confined to school./ Harry commented.

/I doubt it./ Daniel told him. /But we should be able to make her feel guilty, if she doesn’t bother to contradict him./

Looking at Dumbledore, Daniel/Harry told him. “Let me have the form. I’ll make sure it gets to my relatives. At least I know Hedwig won’t lose it.”

Chapter End Notes

_Ostendo prosapia nemus materia versus iens ergum triginta genit:_ Show family tree, maternal line going back thirty generations.
Let’s Scare Auntie Petunia

Chapter Notes

(AN: I want to thank Lady Foxfire for her help when some of the things didn’t come out quite the way I wanted them.)

/words and more words/ = mental conversations between Harry and Daniel

Let’s Scare Auntie Petunia

The day of the first Hogsmeade weekend dawned clear and cool.

Harry went down to breakfast in the Great Hall, his anger at not being able to go to Hogsmeade clearly showing on his face. Daniel and he had both agreed that the easiest way to make sure no one tried to hang around with or commiserate with him while his yarnameates went to Hogsmeade was to drive them off with righteous anger. He had made it clear to anyone who would listen the day he had been told he wasn’t allowed to go that he was extremely angry over being prevented from going when he hadn’t done anything wrong. Their plan had worked too. Even Collin Creevy, who was known to stalk Harry just about anywhere trying to get pictures, had taken to avoiding him

Harry had had plenty of fuel for his anger, between Dumbledore’s deliberately lying to him about not being allowed to go to Hogsmeade because McGonagall had lost his permission slip and the anger he felt toward the headmaster for trying to obliviate him after he’d nearly been killed by Vernon.

The only two Gryffindors who were brave enough to come near Harry these days were Ron and Hermione.

“Harry, you really need to stop being so angry about not going to Hogsmeade.” Hermione lectured him for what seemed like the thousandth time. “Maybe it was for the best that your permission slip was lost.”

“I would like to see you say the same thing, if it was you being banned from going to Hogsmeade after turning in your signed permission slip.” Harry countered tartly.

“I wouldn’t have even turned in a permission slip if I knew someone was out there who wanted to kill me.” Hermione sniffed. “I would’ve just accepted the decisions made by older and wiser heads that were meant to keep me safe.”

“Older and wiser heads that can’t manage to keep track of eight sheets of parchment.” Harry commented dryly.

“It was an accident,” Hermione reminded him.

“So if Professor McGonagall accidentally lost your homework and gave you a failing grade, you would just shut up and accept it, right?” Harry wanted to know. “I mean after all she is an older and wiser head who is doing what’s best for you, given you didn’t turn in your homework. Or rather
given that she has no physical proof that you turned it in, even though she **knows** you gave it to her.”

“Harry has a point, ‘Mione. You wouldn’t be silent. You would be screeching like a banshee, demanding she find your homework.” Ron put in, his mouth full of eggs. He was on Harry’s side in this argument. Harry had turned in his permission slip and he should be allowed to go.

“But that’s different.” Hermione sputtered.

“How?” Harry demanded

“It just is!” Hermione insisted. “Professor McGonagall would never lose important papers… like homework.”

“So you’re saying my permission slip wasn’t important.” Harry pounced on that.

“No, that’s not what I’m saying.” Hermione was beginning to feel very frustrated. Her attempts to make Harry see reason were not going the way she planned.

“Then you are saying that Dumbledore with the aid of our Head of House is **lying** to me and she didn’t lose my permission slip.” Harry countered as he saw Professor McGonagall walk by them. “You can’t have it both ways Hermione. Either Professor McGonagall is incompetent because she was unable to keep track of eight pieces of parchment. Or she is helping Dumbledore lie to me and preventing me from exercising one of my rights as a third year Hogwarts student with a valid slip giving me permission to do so. Which is it?”

Hermione stared at him in shock. Why was he determined to make it sound like a deliberate plot against him rather than an attempt to keep him safe, which she knew was the Headmaster and Professor McGonagall were trying to do.

Before Hermione could say another word, Professor McGonagall spoke up. “Mr. Potter, ten points from Gryffindor.”

“For what ma’am.” Harry inquired, fairly certain he knew the answer.

“For implying that the headmaster or I would lie to a student.” McGonagall told him crisply.

“So you would prefer that I thought of you as incompetent instead of as a liar, because you couldn’t keep track of eight pieces of parchment Professor?” Harry at this point didn’t care if he got detention. He was fairly certain that Daniel could still get them out of Hogwarts to do what they needed to do.

“Twenty points, Mr. Potter.” McGonagall was aware that silence had fallen on those around them and knew the students were listening in on the conversation.

“Since when is it against the school rules for me to express an opinion to a fellow student ma’am? The reason I ask is because the code of conduct for students and teachers at Hogwarts has mysteriously vanished from the Library. Madame Pince was most upset to find it was gone.” Harry asked. “I didn’t know that Great Britain or even the magical portion of it had become like a socialist state where being able to freely express an opinion was against the law.”

McGonagall stared at young Potter for a moment stunned. He had never spoken back to her before and of all things to compare Hogwarts to magical Russia where there had been no freedom of speech, until very recently, angered her. Hogwarts had always been a place where the free expression of ideas was allowed. “If you continue on in this manner Mr. Potter you will be serving detention with me for the rest of the day.”
Harry could see that some of the nearby Ravenclaws were whispering to each other and he could hear Hermione hissing at him to shut up and not get himself in any further trouble.

“I will not forget the lesson you have taught me today Professor.” Harry told McGonagall before returning his attention to breakfast.

McGonagall gave him a puzzled look. “And what lesson is that, Mr. Potter?”

“I don’t think you would understand ma’am,” Harry countered, “because it wasn’t a lesson you intended to teach or wanted me to learn.”

McGonagall sniffed and walked away stiffly. If she had been in her cat form her tail would have been lashing back and forth.

“Harry, how dare you accuse Professor McGonagall of acting like the Communists of Russia?” Hermione was angry with him for attacking her favourite teacher.

“She’s your Enforcer now? Because you’re certainly acting like one.” Harry got to his feet and left before she could respond.

Ron just stared after him trying to figure out what had happened. He had never seen Harry act that way before. Harry usually just gave in to what other people wanted never standing up for himself. Ron suddenly realised that ever since they’d caught up with him this summer that he had stopped letting people walk all over him and use him and couldn’t help wondering what had caused the sudden change. Madame Pompfrey certainly would’ve noticed if he were the victim of possession or under a spell’s influence, wouldn’t she? He would have to ask her if there were a way to check.

Not wanting to see his friends again for a while or deal with an angry Hermione, Harry decided to explore some of the parts of Hogwarts he hadn’t seen before. He made sure to stay in places where he could be seen until after everyone left for Hogsmeade, but after that he started to head for the older areas of the castle. He needed to find a safe place to leave from any way.

As Harry passed by an open doorway in one of the less frequented corridors, he heard a voice call, “Harry.”

Going back to the doorway, he saw Professor Lupin standing there, studying the contents of a tank that seemed to be filled with water. “Hello Professor.”

“Would you like to join me for a while, Harry.” Lupin offered when Harry seemed to hover in the doorway. “I’m surprised to see you wandering the halls. Was your fight with your friends this morning that bad? If you want someone to talk to about it, I can offer you a cup of tea as well.”

At Daniel’s prompting Harry entered the Professor’s office. This was a chance to find out if Lupin had a connection to Harry and maybe what it was. Plus Daniel was getting an odd feeling off Lupin almost but not quite like the one around Scabbers and Professor McGonagall.

“I didn’t fight with my friends exactly,” Harry told him. “Hermione is convinced that anything Professor McGonagall and the Headmaster say should be treated as holy writ straight from the mouth of Merlin. I disagree, given that between the two of them they have managed to keep me from being able to go to Hogsmeade.”

Lupin nodded his head in understanding as he bustled around making them both a cup of tea. “And did you check the code of conduct to see if they were right in what they did? I mean to see if your
friend had a point?"

“The books containing the code of conduct and school rules have mysteriously vanished from the library.” Harry told him. “And I’m willing to bet they won’t reappear for quite some time.”

Lupin seemed startled by that piece of information. “It is possible that it was done with the best of intentions Harry.”

“How by lying to me?” Harry countered. “I get that all the time from my relatives. I much prefer the truth to lies. It’s less painful in the long run. For example, why will none of the teachers talk about my parent’s time here at Hogwarts? It’s almost like they’re afraid to or have been given orders not to. Other than some pictures that were given to me by Hagrid of my parents and some of their friends, the only thing I know about them is that I have my mum’s eyes, but look a lot like my dad when he was my age. Nor will anyone tell me why Voldemort was after my family and is still after me.”

Remus raised an eyebrow as he handed a cup of tea to Harry then took a sip of his own. "That sounds like an interesting theory. Perhaps if you asked questions about your parent people would answer instead of asking people to tell you about them. They may not know what you already know about them. They also may not wish to speak ill of the dead.”

Harry snorted. “That hasn’t stopped Snape from bad-mouthing my dad every chance he gets.”

Lupin coughed as if he’d swallowed a mouthful of tea wrong, then said, “Well, your father and Professor Snape had an interesting relationship while they were at school together.”

Then as if speaking the man’s name aloud had called him there, Snape was striding through the doorway, his robes billowing out behind him. “I brought your potion, Lupin.”

“Thank you, Severus” Lupin took the smoking goblet from him.

“You should drink that right down…” Snape began and then finally caught sight of Harry who had walked over to examine the contents of the tank.

“Harry and I were just having a little talk about the Grindylow I brought in for my third year defence class to study.” Lupin lied.

Snape chose to ignore Harry for the moment for which Harry was grateful. “I’ve made an entire cauldron full of that for you, just in case you need more.”

“And I probably will need to take some more tomorrow.” Lupin told him. “Thank you, Severus.”

Snape glared at Harry before departing.

“Do you have some kind of health problem, professor?” Harry asked curious as he watched the man’s face take on a disgusted expression after drinking the contents of the goblet. He wasn’t real anxious to lose a possible link to his parents, even if Dumbledore had been the one to put the man here.

“A chronic complaint,” Lupin told him without going into details. “That potion Professor Snape brought makes it easier to deal with. The potion is a very complicated one to make and I’m glad he can make it for me.”

When it was clear the man didn’t intend to say any more on the subject, Harry asked, “Professor Lupin, if I asked you if you knew my parents well, how would you respond?”
Lupin just stared at him surprised. In one way he had been waiting for this day for a very long time and in another he’d been dreading it. Dumbledore’s instructions, when he had hired him to be DADA teacher in addition to keeping an eye out for Sirius Black, had been very clear. He was not to tell Harry that he knew his parents unless Harry asked about it first. Well Harry had just asked and he was totally unprepared.

“I would hope you would tell me the truth.” Harry continued when the silence went on too long. “I would hate to think that there was another person at this school I couldn’t trust.”

“What makes you think I did?” Lupin stalled.

“I saw someone who looked like a younger you in a few pictures of them.” Harry told him. It wasn’t a lie. There was no reason to tell the man he’d seen his name mentioned in his parent’s will at Gringotts “Now would you please answer my question, did you know my parents? Were you one of their friends?”

Lupin was silent for several more minutes before finally answering in a low voice, “yes, I was a very good friend of theirs.”

“Then why have I never seen you before?” Harry wanted to know. “Why did you wait until now to come into my life?”

“I’m afraid that is one thing I can’t tell you right now Harry?” Harry could tell from Lupin’s expression that he really regretted not being able to tell him.

Harry nodded his head accepting Lupin’s answer for now. "That's okay, I think I know who ordered you to keep silent. I imagine that it’s the same person who is determined to keep me prisoner in this castle."

"Harry..." Lupin began in a warning tone, his concern evident in his eyes.

Harry held up his hand silencing the older man. "Don't you start on the ‘it's all for the best’ speech. I’ve heard it and I don't believe it."

Lupin sighed in disappointment about not being able to tell Harry why he wasn’t allowed to go to Hogsmeade with his yearmates and yet he also felt slightly relieved that he didn’t have to tell him about Black yet. "Then shall we discuss other subjects, that aren't quite so controversial?" Lupin suggested.

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Harry left Professor Lupin’s office two hours later, feeling a little like he had found a friend, even if it was a friend he wasn’t sure he could completely trust, yet. After talking a bit about Harry’s family and then learning that the only reason Lupin hadn’t let him face the Boggart was because he thought he was afraid of Voldemort, they had spent a pleasant couple of hours discussing the Dark Arts and then branching out into comparing the magical and muggle cultures. Harry and Daniel both had been surprised to find the man was well versed in how the non-magical world worked. For a wizard to be that knowledgeable about non-magical culture, was something they hadn’t expected. From what they both had seen most wizards preferred to forget the non-magical world existed.

/I wonder why a wizard would know so much about the non-magical world?/ Daniel commented as they continued to look for a place where there wasn’t much of a chance for someone to see them leave or return.

/Yea, he did seem to know a lot more than the average wizard./ Harry had noticed that Lupin seemed
to know far more than the usual wizard did about how things worked in the non-magical world. Even Ron’s dad who loved everything about the muggle world didn’t know as much about them as Lupin seemed to. Not even Hermione’s Muggle Studies teacher knew as much as Professor Lupin and she should have considering she was teaching a class about muggles to wizards.

/For him to know that much, he would’ve had to live in the non-magical world for months if not years./ Daniel pointed out.

/But that doesn’t make sense, why would he?/ Harry countered. /I’ve never known a wizard to willingly live in the non-magical world./

/I think you just hit on the key… willingly./ Daniel’s mind was moving very quickly. /It may have something to do with that odd feeling that wasn’t quite like an animagus I got from him, or it may have been something entirely different, but it is very possible that something drove Lupin from the wizarding world and Dumbledore was content to leave him there until he needed his help… but help with what?/

/Black maybe?/ Harry hazarded a guess. /Everything that has been done to me recently if you want to include the headmaster’s attempt to obliviate me, seems to have to do with Sirius Black./

/You’re probably right about that./ Daniel agreed. /Given he went to school with and knew your parents the odds are very good that he knew Black as well./

They rounded a corner and came upon a very small hallway, almost a cul de sac with two doors on either side of it. Neither door was open.

/Which one should I try?/ Harry asked.

Daniel mentally did eenie, meenie, minie, moe and said, /the left one./

Harry laughed at his way of choosing a door. /You could’ve just mentally flipped a coin and gotten the same result, you know. Ennie, meenie, minie, moe is how your friend Jack O’Neill would have chosen the door./

He felt Daniel shrug. /What can I say, some things Jack does will occasionally rub off on others, like fungus./

Harry laughed even louder as he opened the door on the left hand side of the small corridor. /I can hardly wait to meet Jack O’Neill./

/It should be interesting./ Daniel pointed out, /Especially once we tell him you and I are sharing the same body./

/Do you think he will faint?/ Harry wanted to know.

/Jack, nah./ Daniel told him after a moment’s consideration. /We might get both of Teal’c’s eyebrows to go up though./

The room was completely empty, no furniture, only a set of arched windows that had no glass in them.

/This will be perfect./ Daniel told Harry. /Let me have control. I need to match our energy pattern to the wards around Hogwarts so that we can pass through them./

Harry saw his hand begin to glow with a white light as it was resting on the outer wall of the room
and couldn’t help asking, /This isn’t going to make us pass out again is it?/

/It shouldn’t./ Daniel told him. /I’m doing this slowly and carefully so the wards aren’t tripped alerting the Headmaster. The only time we seem to pass out is if I have to pull a lot of power from you very suddenly./

A few minutes later when Daniel almost had the ward signature matched a young female voice disrupted his concentration, “Stop it, you shouldn’t be doing that.”

Daniel spun around and saw what looked like an eleven year old girl standing on the other side of the room. She was dressed in clothing he’d seen once at a medieval clothing exhibition at the University of Chicago. Sarah had dragged him to the thing cause she loved Medieval clothing. The girl had long black hair that was unbound and her eyes appeared to be a deep piercing grey and she was wearing a white chemise with a lace up overdress in green. He knew that while the entity on the other side of the room appeared to be eleven, she felt much older. He was also fairly certain she wasn’t an Ancient. She felt very different from them as if she weren’t quite alive and yet she was. An interesting contradiction and if they weren’t pressed for time, he would have loved trying to figure it out.

"Who are you?" Daniel asked as he looked at the girl in confusion.

"I am Hogwarts." She looked very solemn, "and I will not permit you to continue with your plan. I shall not allow you to bring harm to those I protect and nurture." The girl seemed to stand taller and more regal.

"I do not intend to harm anyone here." Daniel said softly his hands spread apart as if to assure her that he meant no harm. "I merely need to leave without being seen by the Headmaster and then return again the same way."

Unblinking grey eyes stared at him. "Who are you?" she demanded as she cocked her head to the side. “You are not Harry Potter who I also sense within that body.”

“I am Daniel Jackson and how I came to be sharing Harry Potter’s body is a very long and involved story that I do not have time to go into right now.”

“Well you shall have to make the time.” Hogwarts voice suddenly sounded menacing as she made a grabbing gesture and Daniel found himself unable to move and his/Harry’s body was being pulled toward the little girl who claimed she was Hogwarts.

As soon as Daniel was within reach, she jabbed her hands into Harry’s head. Immediately Harry and Daniel were overcome as an excruciating pain seemed to rip through them for hours on end, but there were no screams of pain heard outside the room. Then they were released and Daniel found himself gasping for breath as he curled up on the floor trying to find a way to lose the pain still shooting through the body he shared with Harry.

"I did not know that the Headmaster had violated his oath to protect the children of this school." Hogwarts sounded sad as she made another gesture that soothed the pain that Daniel and Harry had shared. "Fawkes and I will have to have a long talk about what the Headmaster has been doing. I need to find out what else he has been up to besides ignoring my warnings."

“Are you going to allow us to leave and come back again without telling anyone we did so?” Daniel asked tentatively as he rubbed his head where Hogwarts had jabbed her fingers into his skull.

“Yes, I must," Hogwarts was bound by the magic within her to obey the commands of the Founders
and their heirs even if the person making the request didn’t know they were an heir as Daniel Jackson clearly did not. “To aid you in your tasks I will make it so this room only will respond to the form of magic you can do, Daniel Jackson. The wards will only allow you to pass in and out of Hogwarts from this location but only when you are using your magic as well as making this room invisible to all but you. It will save any possible strain on your combined system. And it will also avoid leaving an exploitable gap within the protections that are in place for my children.”

“Thank you,” Daniel got to his feet and a few moments later vanished from sight in a white glowing orb.

"Just a minute,” Petunia grumbled as the knock on her front door was repeated again. She wasn’t used to anyone disturbing her Saturday afternoons. Even Vernon and Dudley were usually out of the house. Dudley was spending time with his friends and Vernon playing golf or as he called it making useful contacts. Petunia had spent most of the past two Saturdays watching the Cooper’s teenage daughter and her boyfriend from her second floor bedroom window. She was smugly certain that if Mrs Cooper didn’t keep a better eye on her daughter that she was going to have a big surprise by the middle of next year if not shortly after the beginning of the year.

Looking at the young blond man wearing a dark suit and a grey tie standing there, she told him, “Whatever you’re trying to peddle, I’m not interested.”

“I’m not selling anything,” The young man spoke up quickly before she could close the door. “My name is Dr. Daniel Jackson and I am looking for Petunia Evans Dursley because I think we might be related, though it is a distant kinship.”

Petunia stared at him suspiciously, not letting him come in, even though he was an attractive young man and she wouldn’t mind the idea of being related to a doctor. It definitely would raise her standing the neighbourhood. “I’m Petunia Dursley. What makes you think we might be related?’”

“For a birthday gift, last year, a friend of mine had a genealogy done for me, so I could try and see if I had any family still living since my parents were killed in an accident at the New York Museum of Art when I was seven.” Dr. Jackson began. “Anyway it turns out my father’s family came to America from Britain in the early 1600’s and that while I had no remaining family in the US, I did have some in Great Britain, the Evans’. Were your parent’s names Elizabeth Rose Evans and Thomas Sean Evans?”

“Yes.” Petunia’s suspicions didn’t lessen.

“And was your maternal grandmother’s name Violet Marie Sutton?” Daniel wanted to know.

“Yes.” Petunia couldn’t see why he was asking these questions.

“Then that means that you and I are related through my father and your mother though it would be a good number of generations back.” Dr. Jackson told her. “It makes you a rather distant cousin, but one I am proud to meet.”

“And how do I know you aren’t simply making this up to try and get into my house to sell me something or rob me.” Petunia demanded.

Dr. Jackson’s face lost its pleasant expression and became solemn. “Madam, I have said I am not here to sell anything, nor do I intend to rob you. My name is Dr. Daniel Jackson. I hold three PhD’s in Anthropology, Linguistics, and Archaeology. I also work for the American government and have
for the past seven years as a diplomatic negotiator. I am currently in England working on some
negations with the Russian government as well as a few of the other former soviet block countries. I
merely wished to see if I could locate some of my more distant kin, but it is clear that you have no
wish to become acquainted with me. Good day.”

Petunia watched stunned as the handsome young man started down the walk toward the car waiting
in the driveway. Finally she called out, “Wait a moment, Dr. Jackson.” She hurried out to him,
quickly putting together a story. “I’m sorry for being so rude, but we have a number of burglaries in
Surrey and they are warning people to be cautious. Why didn’t you call before coming over? Then I
would have known to expect you.”

Jackson smiled, looking a little sheepish. “It was a spur of the moment decision. I was supposed to be
in a meeting today, but one of the parties who was supposed to be at the meeting had to cancel and
so the whole meeting was cancelled. I took it as providence since it would allow me the time see
about locating my relatives, given that I originally wasn’t going to be able to. I borrowed a small,
unmarked car from the Embassy in London and headed out before anyone could change their
minds.”

Petunia made tea for her guest, planning on how she might be able to exploit that fact that she had
such a brilliant man as her cousin, even if he was from America. The fact that he had worked as a
diplomatic negotiator for the past seven years for the American government could only improve her
standing in the community. She was also hoping he would be here long enough for Vernon and
Dudley to meet him.

Petunia chatted with Daniel about inconsequential matters as well as getting his opinion on the state
of things in the world in general so that she would be able to say later to her neighbours something
like ‘My cousin Daniel says . . .’ when they talked about the state of the government.

Just as Petunia raised the teapot intending to pour another cup of tea for Daniel, he checked his
watch and told her. “I will have to be leaving soon to get back to London before I am missed. I
would like to come back again the next time I am in England if that’s all right.”

“Please do, maybe we can have you over for dinner some night.” Petunia gushed.

“That would be lovely.” Daniel told her with a sweet smile. “Maybe I can meet your husband along
with Dudley the next time I visit. And perhaps I could meet your sister’s son, Harry Potter, as well. I
was surprised not to find any pictures of him in your sitting room.” Daniel gestured to the pictures on
the walls and mantel over the fireplace while keeping an eye on Petunia. “I mean there are a number
of you, your husband, and your son, but none of your nephew. Why is that?”

Petunia’s smile became fixed as her eyes narrowed in suspicion. “How do you know about him?
What are you? Are you one of those freaks?”

Daniel gave her a puzzled look. “Freaks? I’m afraid I don’t know what you mean by freaks. I’m an
American, but I told you that. Some might consider us freaks, I suppose.”

“No! Are you one of those w-w-wizards?” Petunia finally spat out.

Daniel cocked his head to one side an innocent expression on his face as if he were unaware of how
much she loathed wizards. “I can use magic if that’s what you mean. However in the States, we
simply call ourselves magic users. It avoids the complication of thinking you are better than someone
else at magic simply because you are male or female, though I will grant you that there is some magic
that women can work better than men and vise versa. You have no idea how surprised I was to find out I was related to Harry Potter, even though the kinship is somewhat distant.” Daniel seemed to say all of that in a single breath. “I was stunned and so were my friends. Even in the American magical community we’ve heard of him. When I checked with the American Dept of Magic and learned that you’ve had custody of your nephew since the death of your sister Lily and her husband, James twelve years ago today as a matter of fact, I was pleased that I might have the opportunity to meet him.”

“You are one of those freaks, like my sister!” Petunia shrieked. She was shocked that she hadn’t been able to tell that he was one of those abnormal freaks. She had been treating him like a normal person.

Daniel remained calm. It was important for their plan. Both he and Harry could hear the fear in her voice and they needed that. They needed her not to be thinking clearly, at least at first and he was about to make her a whole lot more desperate. “Then yes, in your terms I am a freak, but in a way dear cousin Petunia so are you… and your son.”

Petunia stared at him for a moment in silence before shrieking, “You’re a liar!” She got to her feet intending to drive him from her house. She wanted nothing more to do with him.

"Yes you are. You and Dudley are of the Evans line, like me and like your sister and therefore you have magic within you.” Daniel told her calmly. "However unlike us for some reason your access to your magic is blocked."

“That’s a lie! I’m not a freak and neither is my Dudley!” Petunia shrieked as she picked up her empty tea cup intending to throw it at the man seated across from her, for once not caring that it was very expensive bone china. “I am not one of your freakish kind. Why do you people insist on destroying my family?”

“Yes, Petunia, you do have magic within you and I can prove it!” Daniel countered calmly, pulling a tiny roll of parchment and small object wrapped in what looked like a dark blue silk handkerchief out of his pocket and enlarging them.

"What are those things?” Petunia asked snottily, glaring at the items in Daniel’s hand, her curiosity overcoming her desire to drive him from the house. 

"This stone,” Daniel explained as he opened the handkerchief and rolled the black stone toward her, "will glow in the presence of those who have magic within them, even if that person is unable to use their magic. The stronger the glow the more magic you have. The other is the family tree that my friend had done for me.”

Petunia crossed her arms in front of her chest defiantly when Daniel held the black stone out to her on his kerchief covered hand. “It’s trick. You’re trying to trick me like your kind has always done, ever since you left that detestable brat on my doorstep. Even before that when you took my sister away from me. I’m not touching that thing.”

Daniel waited a moment before making a flinging gesture with his hand, which sent the stone flying towards her. With a gasp, Petunia put up her hand to grab it before it hit her in the face. Her hand wrapped around the rock, hiding the majority of it from view, however while the stone was very narrow it was also longer than the palm of her hand so that the ends of rock stuck out beyond the sides of her clenched fist. And she could see the ends of the stone were glowing with a very faint light. Gasping in horror, Petunia dropped the stone and rubbed the hand that had come in contact with the stone on the fabric of her skirt as if she were trying to rid herself of some kind of
Daniel made a come here gesture and the stone rose and flew into his hand. The minute it made contact it glowed with an almost blinding light.

“And here is the rest of my proof.” Daniel commented as he unrolled the parchment. “This is a magical family tree for my father’s side of my family. Those in green are fully able to use their magic. Those in yellow are magical but not able to use their magic. What we in the States call latents. Those in black have no magic at all.”

Almost against her will Petunia took the family tree and saw that most of her family going back a number of generations were in yellow with only Lily and her freakish son in green. She recognized a number of them, having heard about them from her grandmother and her mother. There were a few black names including Vernon. Her heart sank when she saw her beloved Dudley was also in yellow instead of the black she was hoping for.

“You know Petunia,” Daniel said as if he didn’t know the direction her thoughts were going. “You might want to rethink your attitude toward magic. Given that Dudley is an latent like you, if he marries the right girl then he could have magical children.”

“What do you mean if Dudley marries the right girl?” Petunia growled. “You’re making my son sound like he’s breeding stock for your kind.”

“Well that’s not my intention,” Daniel hastened to assure her as Harry giggled in his mind at the thought of Dudley being thought of as some kind of prize stud and then explained. “If your son marries another latent, or what the British magic users call Squibs, then it is possible that one day you would have a magical grandchild. There is no way to tell who is and isn't a squib in Britain since most squibs live outside the magical world, in what you would call the normal world.”

"Why can’t you freaks just leave us alone?" Petunia wailed, her hands covering her face like a child who believed that if they couldn’t see the monster under the bed, then it would never find them. Before today all she had to worry about was her neighbours finding out about her freakish nephew and now she was being told she had to worry about the girl her son married being the wrong sort, a hidden freak. "It’s bad enough we get saddled with my sister's brat who we didn't want! Now you tell me I may have more freaks coming into my life from my own beautiful son!"

“What do you mean saddled with? That’s the second time you’ve implied you didn’t want to take care of your sister’s son. Wouldn’t she have done as much for you if you and your husband had died and Dudley had to live with her?” Daniel looked even more puzzled, even though he knew she loathed Harry. “If you didn't want to raise your nephew, then why did you take him in? I'm sure someone in the British magical community would have gladly taken custody of him.”

“We had no choice!” Petunia had wanted to get that off her chest for a long long time. “That meddling freak Dumbledore forced him on us and told us that as long as he lived with his mother’s blood kin we would be safe from his kind.”

Daniel looked thoughtful. “His mother’s blood kin. Those were his exact words?”

“Yes!” Petunia flung back at him. “I’m not likely to forget the words that saddled us with my sister’s freakish brat until he was of age.”

“Then I may just have a solution for you.” Daniel offered.

“What?” Petunia doubted he could come up with anything. Every time they had tried getting rid of contamination.
the brat, that detestable Dumbledore always brought him back and then do something to Harry to make sure he never remembered being abandoned.

“Well, no one should have to live where they aren’t wanted. I would be willing to take custody of him.” Daniel suggested, finally able to get to the point of his whole visit with this shallow, narrow-minded woman, “but only if he is agreeable to the change in custody. I fit the qualification of being his mother’s blood kin, even if the blood connection is a distant one, so I should fulfil the requirements set out by Dumbledore. Is he going to Hogwarts or another magical school?”

“Of course he’s going to Hogwarts, you think that meddling old man would let him out of his hands.” Petunia spat.

Daniel again had a thoughtful look on his face. “He should be in his third year there right?”

“Yes,” Petunia couldn’t believe her ears. This freak was offering her a way to get rid of the brat without bringing Dumbledore down on her family.

“Then, if I remember what I read about Hogwarts correctly, he should be able to visit Hogsmeade the little magical village nearby every so often. I will owl him and find out when his first Hogsmeade weekend is and meet with him to see if he is agreeable to a change in custody.” Daniel offered.

Petunia felt her stomach drop and the words escaped before she could stop them. “We didn’t sign the permission slip so he could leave the school.”

“Hmm,” Daniel got up and paced for a bit then asked, “Would you be willing to write a note giving him permission to go?”

“Anything, if it would get him out of our lives.” Petunia told him fervently. Here was one freak she might actually like… as long as he stayed away from her family and kept his word to take the brat away.

“Very well,” Daniel nodded. “If you would write it out, I will send it with my first owl to Harry asking him if he would like to meet with me on his first Hogsmeade weekend. If he is agreeable to the change of custody, I will contact a solicitor to get the papers drawn up so we can do a change of custody from you to me. We will need to do this quietly so Dumbledore can not interfere until it is too late to stop it.”

“You really want that brat?” Petunia couldn’t believe it. “He’s nothing but trouble. He’s always stealing from my Dudley and lying about it.”

“I will take custody, only if Harry is agreeable.” Daniel assured her. “If he is, then the next time you see me it will be with change of custody papers.”

As she watched Daniel start to wrap it up Petunia asked. “How much will you take for that rock?”

“What?” Daniel said as he looked up at Petunia in confusion. ”Why would you want it? After all I thought you didn’t want any of my kind of freakishness in you home.”

“I don't but I want some way to be able to tell if any girl my Dudley brings home is the wrong kind.” Petunia told him.

“And what if he loves the girl?” Daniel inquired. “Will you tell him why he has to give her up?’

“He will never know about that.” Petunia told him, her head held up with pride and determination. “And as for giving her up. My Duddikins will always listen to his mummy.”
Daniel heard Harry choke back a snort of laughter in his head. “Petunia, I have no interest in money. I have more than enough for my needs, even if I were to lose my job tomorrow, I wouldn’t have to worry about money.”

Petunia felt a sense of desperation. She had to have that rock. She racked her brain frantically for something she might be able to trade for it and then it hit her. “You came here looking for family right?”

“Yes,” Daniel couldn’t see where she was going with this.

“What if I gave you my sister’s things?” Petunia offered. “What they could salvage of Lily’s possessions were sent to me in a couple of trunks, by that freak Dumbledore and I never opened them. They are up in the attic.”

Daniel left Petunia smiling in her sitting room. He was certain that she was having visions of her life without Harry Potter or any others that she considered freaks in it now that she had one of the rocks Merlin had left behind to detect those with the gene marker for the Ancients. All in all Daniel felt he and Harry had come out ahead with 2 shrunken trunks of his parents possessions. Not to mention the fact that Petunia was soon probably going to get a bit of a reputation as a weirdo as she tried to get every female who came anywhere near her son to handle that rock to make sure they weren’t the wrong kind.

As Daniel glanced back at the house, he was glad that Petunia hadn’t followed him out of the house. It would’ve been a bit hard to explain why he wasn’t getting in his car and driving off, given the fact that the car was an illusion he had projected into her mind.

/That went a lot smoother than I thought it would,/ Daniel commented, strolling leisurely down the sidewalk in front of the houses on Privet Drive.

/I told you,/ Harry reminded him. /She would give me to the Devil himself if that meant she would be able to get me out of her house./

/I know. I guess I just never expected it would be that easy./ Daniel continued as he turned to head in the direction of the nearby park.

/Not to mention that we got two trunks of may parents things that I didn’t even know existed./ Harry put in.

/We’ll need to make a stop at Gringotts to leave them in your vault./ Daniel told him. /There’s no way we could explain how you suddenly came to be in possession of them./

/Yea, you’re right./ Harry sounded a little sad at that idea. He had wanted to look them over tonight.

/You can look at them over the summer, once we are away from Dumbledore./ Daniel promised as they entered the park.

Smiling, Daniel nodded to the parents and children he met and watched the kids at play for a few moments. Wandering on, he found a trail that seemed to lead into the trees and followed it until he was deep enough into the trees to find a secluded grove where he wouldn’t be interrupted.

A brief flash of light and the flight of some panicked birds were the only signs of Daniel’s departure from Little Whinging. No one wandering through or playing in the park noticed a thing.
Daniel reappeared in a dark almost pocket sized alley, close to Gringotts. The bright flash of his arrival went unnoticed by the human inhabitants of Diagon Alley, but startled an old alley cat that was foraging for food and sent it running for a safer hunting ground. The time they’d spent exploring Diagon Alley was going to really pay off now, given he knew the places in Diagon alley where no one would see him coming and going.

As the little pocket alley became shadowy once more, Daniel resumed his conversation with Harry.
/We need to find the post office so we can arrange for an owl to deliver my letter to you./

/No, first we need to change our clothing, so we blend in better,/ Harry told him. /You’ll stick out like a sore thumb in those muggle clothes. Then after we post that letter, we need to make sure we pick up some owl treats for Hedwig./

Daniel quickly changed the street clothes he was wearing into a deep blue robe with silver edging before stepping out into the crowds in Diagon Alley. Curious he asked, /Why do we need to get owl treats for Hedwig?/

/Hedwig is rather …possessive about who gets to deliver mail to me, so she’s going to be rather put out that you used another owl to send a letter to me, when you and I are essentially joined./ Harry explained. /She isn’t going to understand that we can’t use her otherwise it will raise all kinds of questions./

/Ah, yes the quirks of the female mind,/ Daniel commented sagely. /I gave up trying to understand them with my wife Sha’re. So we are going to be begging her forgiveness for daring to use another owl, even though we have a perfectly logical reason for doing so./

/Pretty much,/ Harry shrugged.

After a quick stop at Gringotts to leave the trunks in Harry’s vault, Daniel arranged for a barn owl to deliver the scroll and letter to Hogwarts for him and picked up the owl treats for Hedwig. His errands completed, Daniel left Diagon Alley through the Leaky Cauldron, making sure to switch back to muggle clothes as soon as he cleared the door of the Leaky Cauldron. Once he was on Charing Cross Road, Daniel went to the nearest tube station. Heading toward the station’s rest rooms, Daniel took possession of an empty stall. Daniel sat there patiently waiting until the rest room was empty before vanishing in a flash of light.

Teleporting back to Hogwarts was a slower process than leaving the castle had been. Even though Hogwarts was allowing him to use that empty room, to come and go from, Daniel still took care to match the energy patterns of the wards around it to avoid alerting Dumbledore to the fact that something had been allowed to pass through the wards.

Daniel vanished from sight and in his place stood Harry. Removing the ring from the second finger of his left hand, Harry placed it back on the chain around his neck.

/Time to rejoin the rest of the school./ Daniel commented as Harry headed for the door.

/Hey Harry,” Ron called coming toward him with Hermione following close behind. “Where have you been?”/ 

“You haven’t been brooding about not going to Hogsmeade have you Harry?” Hermione put in with her ‘I know best so you should listen to me’ tone of voice.
“No, I haven’t.” The annoyance Harry had felt toward Hermione had returned with that one comment from her. “It’s over and done with, but I don’t intend to let them deprive me of the next Hogsmeade weekend.” Harry turned his attention away from Hermione. "To answer your question Ron, I’ve been exploring some of the unused sections of Hogwarts. You know just to see what was there. I didn’t find much, lots of empty rooms, some filled with broken furniture, and bathrooms. Lots and lots of bathrooms.”

Even though Ron wasn’t usually the most observant person in the world, he could see that things were still tense between Harry and Hermione. Not wanting the two of them to start arguing again, he suggested, “Well, let’s head back to the common room. We picked you up as many sweets as we could from Honeydukes, including some samples of a new type of fudge they were handing out. And we need to get cleaned up cause the feast is starting soon.”

“Ron,” Hermione chided the red-head as she followed him and Harry back to the Gryffindor common room. “You stuffed yourself in Hogsmeade, how can you possibly be thinking of eating again?”

“’Mione, I’m a growing boy.” Ron countered, noticing the smile on Harry’s face, and hoping that his friend was out of his bad mood.

It didn’t take long for them to get back to Gryffindor tower and get ready for the Halloween feast.

####

During the feast Ron and Hermione told Harry about Hogsmeade and in return he spun them a tale of what he had seen while exploring the castle, including his talk with Professor Lupin and the potion that Snape had brought him. Ron was instantly suspicious of what had been in the potion, given that it was a widely known rumour that Snape wanted the Defence job.

Harry was on edge as the feast came to a close without incident. Harry’s eyes scanned the Great Hall as he waited for the other shoe to drop. Given what had happened during the previous two Halloween feats, Harry was fairly certain that no Halloween at Hogwarts would pass without problems of some kind for him.

Following their fellow Gryffindors back to Gryffindor tower after the Feast, Harry, Ron, and Hermione were surprised when they reached the section of hall where the Fat Lady’s portrait hung and found that no one was going in.

The Gryffindors were all bunched up in front of the portrait hole. Some could be heard asking questions about what the hold up was, others were chatting nervously about nothing important, but those at the front of the group were silent.

“Let me through,” They heard Percy’s voice call as he pushed his way through the crowd. “Let me through. I’m Head Boy and I need to see what’s going on. You can’t all have forgotten the password and it hasn’t been changed yet.”

As he reached the front of the group silence fell upon those who had been sorted into the House of the Lion so that they all clearly heard him call sharply. “Someone fetch the Headmaster and Professor McGonagall! Be quick about it.”

The crowd of students waited silently for the headmaster and their Head of House to appear so they could find out what was going on.

It was a few minutes before Dumbledore and their Head of House appeared. The Gryffindors moved
back against the wall to let them pass and then filled in the space behind them.

Harry, Ron and Hermione were quickest so they got very close to the front and could see what the problem was. The portrait that had held the Fat Lady was shredded.

“Professor McGonagall,” Dumbledore said in a low voice that unfortunately carried in the silent corridor, “Have Mr. Filch start a search for the Fat Lady.”

“You’ll be lucky if you can.” Peeves cackled from over their heads.

“What do you mean Peeves?” Dumbledore wanted to know. “Do you know what happened to her?”

Peeves stopped cackling. He knew he couldn’t treat the headmaster the way he did everyone else. “She’s hiding your headship. Embarrassed to be seen, she is. Saw her running through a landscape on the seventh floor.”

Now certain that Peeve knew what happened, Dumbledore asked. “What happened to drive her from her portrait and get it ripped to pieces Peeves?”

“Sirius Black happened.” Peeves cackled again as he dropped that unexpected bombshell. “He got real angry when she wouldn’t let him in. Nasty temper he’s got that Sirius Black.”
An Unexpected Branch On The Family Tree

Chapter Notes

(AN: While some of the words and actions belong to JKR, I hope I have changed them around enough to where they aren’t quite the same.)

/words, more words/ = mental conversations between Harry and Daniel

An Unexpected Branch On The Family Tree

As he stared up at the enchanted ceiling of the Great Hall from the pillow of his very comfortable sleeping bag, Harry wondered, /What do you suppose Black was after in Gryffindor Tower?/

/I doubt he was after you, even though that is what they will probably claim./ Daniel responded after a few moments. Whatever else he intended to say was suddenly lost as a hissing, gurgling sound began to come from Harry’s left where Ron was sleeping. It sounded like one of those old steam radiators Daniel had seen used in the older hotels.

Harry’s hand automatically went to his wand. A few moments later after making several gestures in Ron’s direction, silence was restored to the Great Hall. /Sorry about that,/ Harry apologized, putting his wand back under his pillow. /I forgot to put up a silencing ward. Ron snores, and no matter what we say, we can’t convince him that he does./

/And I thought Sam was bad./ Daniel commented with a snort. /She talks in her sleep. And on more than one occasion she’s had arguments with herself. Some of them were quite colourful if you catch my meaning. I was always amazed that she never managed to wake herself up with them./

After listening to the rustling sounds of students turn over in their sleeping bags as well as the sound of footsteps from the prefects patrolling the Great Hall for a few minutes, Harry returned to their original conversation./What makes you think Black wasn’t after me?/

/Because whatever else he may be, I don’t think Black is an idiot./ Daniel told him. /He managed to survive a number of years with the Sai’ki’eth or Dementors. Knowing what they were designed to do from my time with the Ancients, they should have drained him of every emotion and thought after a few years, and that means he was able to find a way to protect himself. Furthermore he found a weakness in supposedly impregnable defences around Azkaban that allowed him to escape. Given the fact that he managed to get past those same Dementors and into this castle, if he were after you, he would have waited until everyone was supposed to be asleep to make a try for you, not attempted to do it during a time when everyone was awake and active./

/So what do you think he was after?/ Harry asked again.

Daniel was silent for several moments before saying, /If I were to make a guess, I would say he was after Scabbers. We do know that Scabbers is an animagus hiding out in his animal form. What we don’t know is why. I think Black does and I think that whoever Scabbers really is and whatever he is hiding, is the reason Black broke out of prison. Remember Ron said Scabbers started looking
poorly shortly before or after their return from Egypt. I’m willing to bet Scabbers health problems started when he learned Black was out./

Harry mulled over what Daniel had suggested and found nothing wrong with his reasoning. /I wonder if that’s why Crookshanks is so interested in him too. Crookshanks didn’t bother any of the other rats in the Magical Menagerie but the moment Ron put Scabbers on the counter and Crookshanks saw him, he did pounce. And here at Hogwarts, Crookshanks is still trying to get Scabbers, even though there are other mice in the castle. Do you think Crookshanks somehow knows what he is?/

/It’s possible, though he may not know exactly what Scabbers is. I think Crookshanks senses something odd about Scabbers. By their nature cats are very curious creatures. I think he wants to play with Scabbers until he figures it out why this rat is stranger than the ones he was used to in the Magical Menagerie./ Daniel sounded thoughtful. /I wonder if he detected me too?/

/I wouldn’t be at all surprised if he had, every other magical creature we have run into seems to know you’re in there./ Harry responded jokingly. /At least Crookshanks isn’t stalking me. I don’t think I could handle a stalking cat. I have enough trouble dealing with Colin and trying to get him to leave me alone./

Daniel laughed at the notion of a cat stalking Harry with a camera ready to record his every move. However before Daniel could make a comment, they both heard a couple of people come to a halt a short distance away. They immediately turned their attention to the pair while pretending to be asleep.

“Everyone’s asleep, Headmaster,” they heard Percy tell Dumbledore. “Have they found him yet?”

“No, not yet. The teachers are now searching the lesser used sections of the castle, while the portraits and the ghosts monitor the areas that have already been searched just in case.” Harry saw Dumbledore glance around the Great Hall and noted that the Headmaster sounded calm and unconcerned as if he knew that they were in no danger. “Since they all appear to be asleep there is little point in waking them now to move them back to their dormitories. Sir Nicholas will be on call if there are any problems.”

“Yes sir,” Percy nodded. “Has the Fat Lady been found yet?”

“Yes, Professor Flitwick found her on the second floor, hiding in a map of Argyllshire. I’ve spoken with Mr. Filch and he has told me he will be able to restore her painting. Until then I’ve found a temporary guardian for the Gryffindor portrait hole, so the Gryffindor’s will be able to return to their tower.” Dumbledore told him.

“Did she tell you what happened?” Percy asked curious.

“According to what she told Professor Flitwick, Black got angry and attacked her when she refused to let him in.” Dumbledore related what had been told to him.

“Headmaster, I have completed my sweep of the dungeon areas and there is no trace of Black.” Snape joined the pair. “I also heard from several of the ghosts on my way here and the Owelry, Astronomy Tower and Professor Trelawney’s tower have also been searched.”

“Thank you, Severus,” Dumbledore acknowledged the report. “I really did not expect Black to linger once he was denied entrance…”

“Do you have any ideas about how he got in, Headmaster?” Snape inquired
“I have a number of them, each more improbable than the last.” Dumbledore countered calmly.

“I would remind you Headmaster of that matter we spoke of before the beginning of the term…” Snape spoke in a low hissing tone that Daniel and Harry could barely hear. “Black had to have help getting in here and there is one within these walls who….”

“I am certain that no one in this school would have aided Black in any way.” The Headmaster interrupted him.

“Then I would remind you of one other thing, Headmaster. There remains one place within Hogwarts that is unchecked, … the Chamber.” Snape countered. “If he had help… it is not the first time that he has used another to gain access to the school.”

“I took steps to insure that something like what happened to Quirrell would never happen within the walls of this school again and I redid the wards a second time after the events in the Chamber.” Dumbledore disagreed. “I doubt Black could be hiding there since it requires a parslemouth to open it and I am certain that the only one we know about wouldn’t co-operate with him. Now I must go inform the Dementors of the results of our search.”

“I’m surprised they didn’t offer to help sir.” Percy put in and then took a step back at the expression of loathing on Dumbledore’s face.

“Oh they did,” Dumbledore turned away. “But they will never set foot in Hogwarts while I am Headmaster here.”

/Finally something that meddler and I agree on!/ Daniel exclaimed. /Those things are worse than the Goa’uld./

Harry kept silent agreeing with the sentiment. If he never met another Dementor in his life he would be happy.

Eventually Daniel’s curiosity got the better of him. /Do you know what this Chamber is they were talking about?/

/Yea, Snape was talking about the Chamber of Secrets, built by Salazar Slytherin./ Harry told him. /Remember that battle with the giant snake you saw in my memories that took place in the Chamber. Right now I’m the only one that can open it. I’m currently the only living parslemouth. It means I can talk to snakes and make them obey me./

/I forgot about that cool ability you have to talk to snakes. I wonder if it can be learned and why do they call you a parslemouth?/ Daniel sounded pleased at the thought of being able to learn a new language. /I wonder if that ability of yours would work on Goa’uld or Tok’ra?/

Harry mentally shrugged.

Curious, Daniel asked. /Do you know if there is a written form of the language?/

/I’m beginning to wonder if you and Hermione might not be related, cause that sounds like a question she would ask./ Harry couldn’t resist commenting.

Understanding the reason behind the remark, Daniel laughed. /Jack says the same thing about Sam and I./

#######
When the morning mail arrived, most of Gryffindor House was surprised to see a barn owl land beside Harry Potter and stick out its leg. They couldn’t help wondering who would be sending Potter, a letter? He never got post from home and if his relatives had written to him then his own owl would’ve delivered it. Harry pretended to be surprised be the appearance of the post owl Daniel had hired the previous day, before untying the roll of parchment from its leg. He gave it a piece of bacon from his plate before it took off.

“Who’s it from, Harry?” Hermione asked before he even finished untying the parchment roll.

//A sucker bet if ever there was one on which of your friend’s is the noisiest. I wonder when her gloom and doom prediction’s will start./ Daniel couldn’t help saying.

/Not long./ Harry countered as he told her. “I don’t know Hermione, I haven’t even finished opening it yet.”

“Well, maybe you shouldn’t.” Hermione cautioned in a low voice. “Black could’ve sent it.”

/Heavens, she’s almost as bad as Trelawney on that one topic./ Daniel was amazed.

“How? There’s no way he could’ve gotten his hands on an owl to send a letter today, when he was being hunted last night?” Ron blurted out after swallowing a large mouthful of food. “Not to mention parchment and quill?”

“I’m just saying it’s possible.” Hermione huffed.

“Hermione, I’m not going to live my life being afraid to open my own mail.” Harry told her as a couple of smaller pieces of paper dropped out of the larger one.

Harry looked at the smaller piece of paper, even though he already knew what it said then smiled before folding it and putting it in his pocket. Then he turned his attention to the second piece that had fallen out.

“Who’s it from?” Ron finally asked when Harry seemed to give the two larger pieces of paper a puzzled look.

“My cousin.” Harry told him curious to see his reaction as he pretended to read the letter.

“Dudley?” Ron sputtered in disbelief. He knew how much those muggles hated anything to do with magic, so why would one of them send Harry a letter by owl post, not to mention how did he know where find the Owl Post Office. "Your cousin Dudley sent you something by owl post?"

“No,” Harry was quick to correct him. “Apparently I have an American cousin I didn’t know about. His name is Dr. Daniel Jackson and he just sent me a letter along with a magical family tree showing our relationship as proof of his claim. If I’m reading this family tree correctly, he’s a rather distant cousin and my mum wasn’t a muggle-born like everyone thought, but was the first magical child from a long line of Squibs.”

"Really?" Ron said as he swallowed another big mouthful. "What magical family is she descended from?"

Harry started to look at the name that was at the top of the family tree and then he remembered they hadn’t done a complete family tree, only thirty generations worth. They hadn’t thought it worth doing the whole family tree since he and Daniel were only concerned with where they could insert him safely. They might have to rethink that though and create a proper family tree in case there were questions later. “It doesn’t say. Looks like what he sent me only goes back to about the 1400’s. The
“That name sounds familiar,” Ron muttered as he grabbed hold of Harry’s wrist to pull the tree over a little so he could get a look at it. “I don’t know why but it does.”

“What is he a doctor of?” Hermione asked surprised at the muggle title the man was giving for himself. She’d never heard of a wizard doing that before. Her curiosity about why overwhelmed at least for the moment her suspicions about the person who sent this letter. The timing seemed a little too coincidental for her liking, given how much she knew Harry wanted a real family.

Harry gave the letter a quick scan. “His letter says he is a doctor of Linguistics, Archaeology and Anthropology.”

“But those are muggle degrees.” Hermione pointed out. “What magical masteries does he have?”

“He has a mastery in interspecies co-operation.” Harry answered after a few moments. “Which would make sense I guess since it says one of his jobs for both the magical and muggle government is as a negotiator in lots of different places and with lots of different races.”

“What is that?” Ron had never heard of such a branch of magic. “And how or why would anyone want such a mastery?”

Harry shrugged. Daniel had made the suggestion a few seconds ago and then commented they would have to make alterations to the letter to get that put in. “He doesn’t say.”

“If this Dr. Jackson usually acts as a negotiator then it is probably a mastery that enables him to deal well with all sorts of magical creatures and get them to trust him in complicated situations.” Hermione sounded thoughtful and felt more than a little worried. Such a man might be able to quickly figure out how to get Harry to believe almost anything about him.

Deciding to voice her concerns Hermione commented. ”It’s strange that a previously unknown cousin suddenly decides to contact you just a few months after Black’s escape. Don’t either of you find the timing the least bit suspicious?”

“Not really,” Harry looked at the letter again. ”It says here that a friend of his had it done as a birthday present for him back in July, since with the work he does for both the magical and muggle branches of the American government and he never had the time to get one done. It also says that this is the first chance he’s had to come over here for any length of time and he would like to meet with me on the next Hogsmeade weekend.”

“You’re not going to meet with him, are you? For all you know it could be a trap.” Hermione looked shocked. “You know it’s too dangerous for you to go outside the castle except for classes right now.”

“Of course I am,” Harry countered. “Since we just had one, it will probably be a while before the next one. That will give us time to become acquainted by owl post before we actually meet in Hogsmeade. It will nice to meet a relative who actually wants to get to know me and who doesn’t think I’m a freak because I’m a wizard.”

Hermione knew how much having a family that wanted him meant to Harry but she was worried that this man was working with Black or had his own agenda with regard to the Boy-Who-Lived and so she suggested, “Well maybe you ought to ask him to meet you at Hogwarts instead? That way you can meet him sooner and Professor McGonagall or the Headmaster can be there with you, just in case.”
“And why would I want to do that?” Though Daniel could appear as a separate entity, for their plan to work, none of the staff at Hogwarts, could meet Daniel until after the change of custody was completed, especially the Headmaster. They couldn’t afford for that man to even begin to guess what they were doing until it was too late or he would take steps to stop it. “They have no say in my personal life since they aren’t my guardians. The only ones who do are Aunt Petunia and Uncle Vernon and they are probably hoping that he will offer to take me off their hands.”

“Hey mate, if this Jackson does take you off the Dursley’s hands, do think he will make you leave Britain and go to school elsewhere?” Ron wanted to know.

“Dr. Jackson can’t do that!” Hermione was aghast at the thought of Harry being taken away from Hogwarts into an unknown and possibly dangerous place. “The Headmaster won’t let him.”

“If Daniel does take custody of me and decided to have me transfer to an American magical school, the Headmaster won’t be able to stop him since Daniel will be my guardian.” Harry pointed out.

“But you don’t know if Jackson is really your cousin!” She squealed. “That family tree could be a fake for all you know.”

“Hermione, it is impossible to fake a magical family tree, given it involves blood magic.” Ron put in, though his friends had a hard time understanding him since he was again talking with his mouth full of food.

“Well maybe it wasn’t done by magic.” Hermione countered. “It could have been forged using muggle means. If this Dr. Jackson is an archaeologist he may know muggles who specialise in that kind of forgery.”

“Hermione, please, I’m not an idiot.” Harry told her dryly. “If the Dursleys were good for nothing else they’ve taught me not to take anything at face value. I intend to have the family tree tested.”

“Well he might treat you worse than the Dursleys.” Hermione hissed.

“And he might treat me better.” Harry countered.

With a frustrated huff, Hermione gave up for now since it was clear that Harry wasn’t going to listen to reason, but not before she reminded Harry of one very important thing. “Well we won’t have to worry about you being set up by this Dr. Jackson now will we, since you don’t have a permission slip you can’t go. So you won’t be able to meet him unless he comes up to school.”

“Actually, I do have permission to go.” Harry pulled the small piece paper from his pocket. “Aunt Petunia sent a note giving me permission to go to Hogsmeade. Dr. Jackson sent it along with his letter. I’m going to write him back and let him know that I would love to meet with him, but that it will have to wait until the next Hogsmeade weekend.”

“Harry, if he travels as much as his letter seems to indicate, how is your letter going to get to him?” Ron put in. “I mean I know Hedwig is good, but she’s not good enough to follow someone all over the world. It might kill her.”

Harry quickly studied the letter. “It says here that he has set up a secure post box with Gringotts for a small fee and all I need to do is send any letters there and they will make sure they get forwarded to him.”

“You can’t actually be thinking of meeting someone claiming to be a relative, with Black out there on the loose.” Hermione couldn’t believe what she was hearing. Surely Harry couldn’t be that fixated on going to Hogsmeade that he was willing to risk his life just to go. “For all you know he
could be lying about the relationship, just so he can get you in a position where he can kidnap you and take you to Black.”

“Hermione, use your head. If Black had anyone to help him, would he have needed to break into Hogwarts last night?” Harry pointed out.

"How do you know he doesn’t?" She snapped back at him after a moment’s thought. "After all how else could he have gotten past the Dementors and the protections surrounding Hogwarts? The wards and protections surrounding Hogwarts are some of the best in the country if not the world.”

“Oh really,” Harry drawled. “If that’s so, then how is it that Voldemort went undetected on the back of Quirrell’s head? And how did that enchanted diary that Riddle used to take over Ginny, even make it past the front door? I don’t think the protections surrounding this castle are as strong as they once were. Maybe they need maintenance, only one who is supposed to be doing that is too busy with something else.”

The Gryffindor’s who were closest to the trio were listening intently to the discussion between Potter and Granger and passing what they heard on to their waiting housemates. It was clear that Granger believed as they did that Hogwarts was the safest place in Britain, while Potter claimed otherwise, even going so far as to claim that he-Who-Must-Not-be-Named had gotten into the school in his first year. It would no doubt be all over the school by the end of the day that The Boy-Who-Lived doubted the safety of Hogwarts.

"I... I..." Hermione stammered as she tried to come up with a logical reason. Suddenly she narrowed her eyes, "I'm sure it was something overlooked by the previous Headmasters; something completely unexpected therefore the wards was never created it. I'm sure that the Headmaster has the matter at hand."

“Oh yes, just like the protections on the Stone were the best.” Harry pointed out as he put the letter and other things he had gotten from this Daniel Jackson in his book bag. “First years shouldn’t have been able to get past them, but we did, remember Hermione.”

"I seem to remember you be accompanied by a chess genius.” Ron preened a bit at that comment as Hermione went on. “And you were also accompanied by someone people are saying is the smartest witch of her generation, Harry.”

"True, you are one of the smartest witches of our generation, Hermione,” Harry agreed and Hermione got a smug look on her face certain that he was going to finally give in and admit that she was right. "And Ron is one of the best chess players in the Wizarding world, but I seem to remember the Headmaster appearing as soon as the danger was over and not a minute sooner. Either his timing is impeccable or he was waiting in the wings to see what happened in my confrontation. You tell me, which was it, Hermione?"

Hermione held her head just a little higher as she defended the Headmaster. "And perhaps he Headmaster’s timing only seems impeccable because he had just returned to Hogwarts from the Ministry?"

“And just how long should it have taken for him to return to school after he’d found he’d been sent on a fool’s errand? He left in the late afternoon and we didn’t go to protect the stone until well after curfew.” Harry wondered. “Given we didn’t see him leave, I’m willing to bet he has a Floo connection in his office to the Ministry. And I also remember reading about something over the summer called a portkey that will instantly transport you to another location. Given he was at the Ministry, I’m certain someone there could’ve made him one if he were incapable of doing so for himself. He should’ve been back a lot sooner than that.”
"Unless he was delayed at the Ministry? He had no reason not to return to Hogwarts after he found out there was no call from the Minister unless he got held up by someone. Perhaps the Minister held him up." Hermione knew she had to make Harry see reason. This relative appearing out of nowhere was way too convenient, especially coming on the heels of Black’s break-in. And if Harry would stop being so stubborn about it, she was certain he would see that she was right and it was Black setting a trap for him. “The Headmaster wouldn’t intentionally place one of his students in danger. And he isn’t omniscient.”

“Well I don’t happen to share your blind faith in the Headmaster right now, Hermione.” Harry got to his feet and got ready to head for class. “And maybe you need to open your eyes with regards to him before something happens that you might regret.”

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Black’s attempted break-in to Gryffindor tower had all the gossips in school going, and each of their guesses were wilder than the last. So far the rumours had run from one gambit to another. One person suggested that Black had gotten in as a flowering shrub. Another suggested that he could turn himself invisible while some of the more twisted thought that he’d snuck in polyjuiced to look like Filch, though why anyone would want to was beyond most student’s comprehension. One of the more rational ideas was that he had apparated in, which Hermione had loudly shot down, pointing out that in *Hogwarts a History* it was written that you couldn’t apparate or disapparate from the school. Harry knew differently, and suspected that if anyone other than he and Daniel tried it, they would indeed fail, given how violently Hogwarts reacted the day they did it. Hogwarts took its duty to protect its charges very seriously, when Dumbledore wasn’t interfering. Harry couldn’t help wondering what it had found out about Dumbledore’s activities.

Daniel sighed as Percy joined them on their way to Transfiguration. He was only one of the many watchdogs that Harry seemed to have acquired since Black’s break-in and he was the least subtle about it. He and Harry both knew for a fact that Percy’s next class was three floors down and in the opposite direction. Harry thought he was doing this on his mother’s orders. Daniel wasn’t so sure, but since he didn’t have another reason to attach to the young man’s actions at the moment he went along with it. /Percy needs to learn something about delegating and subtlety. Kinsey wouldn’t have been nearly so obvious as he’s being and Kinsey is an idiot./

/I have a feeling he is obeying his mother’s orders to keep me safe./ Harry guessed. /Mrs. Weasley can be pretty scary when she is crossed. It would be interesting to see her go up against Apophis cause I think she would come out the winner./

/Maybe we should let Mrs. Weasley face off against Kinsey./ Daniel suggested.

Harry contemplated that for a moment, /nah it wouldn’t be a contest. Kinsey is a lot like Fudge. He’d cave in a heartbeat, assuming that he accepted there were people who could work real magic and that she wasn’t one of Satan’s spawn./

Daniel had to agree with that assessment. /Then how about making it a fair contest, a tag team cage match. Jack and Mrs. Weasley vs Fudge and Kinsey. Think people would pay to see that?/

Harry almost burst out laughing at the image Daniel sent him of Fudge wearing lime green trunks standing next to the pompous at least from Daniel’s memories Senator Kinsey trying to look dignified in his own dark blue trunks in one corner, while Molly and Jack were warming up in their corner. /I think it would be standing room only with the scalpers having a field day with the tickets./

/I wonder if we could sell it on pay per view?/ Daniel mused as transfiguration class started.
Harry just managed to contain his laughter at the thought of seeing Fudge and Kinsey fight Jack and Molly on pay per view. Only a small snort got out, but McGonagall heard it.

Staring at him she asked, “Something you would like to share with the class Mr. Potter?”

“No ma’am.” Harry quickly turned his thoughts toward class.

“You will see me after classes today, Mr. Potter.” McGonagall ordered.

“Yes ma’am,” Harry responded as Hermione and Ron gave him a worried look. Harry wasn’t too worried though, given what he knew now of the universe at large thanks to Daniel. He knew there were a lot more things to worry about than the loss of house points or detention and he also knew that he would play a part in trying to fix it because even at thirteen years old he, like Daniel, couldn’t stand by while people were being hurt if he could do something about it.

After Ancient Runes, his last class of the day, Harry went to Professor McGonagall’s office and knocked on the closed door.

“Come in.” Professor McGonagall’s voice ordered through the door.

“You wanted to see me, Professor McGonagall?” Harry stood in the open doorway, sounding uncertain as to why he was there.

“Yes, Mr. Potter, come in and close the door behind you.” McGonagall waved him toward a chair in front of her desk. “I have several matters I need to discuss with you.”

While there was nothing ominous in her tone or manner, both Harry and Daniel were instantly alert in case this was a trick of Dumbledore’s.

“Mr. Potter, I understand you got a letter a few days ago from someone claiming to be a relative.” McGonagall began.

/Looks like Hermione went to McGonagall./ Daniel sounded pleased. /I wonder if she told Dumbledore yet?/

“He is a relative, Professor.” Harry countered. “Professor Flitwick confirmed the family tree that was sent with the letter was genuine.”

“While I have no doubt of the accuracy of Professor Flitwick’s claim, I would like to see the family tree and the letter myself.” McGonagall requested. “I want to test them myself to make sure there were no spells missed that could indicate it was a fake.”

“While I doubt Professor Flitwick missed anything given he spent at least an hour testing the family tree, I have no problem with you testing it if you want to waste your time. The letter though is personal and you do not have a right to see that, since you are not my legal guardian.” Harry told her simply. “That responsibility unfortunately for me falls on my Aunt Petunia and Uncle Vernon.”

"While that may be true, I am the Deputy Headmistress as well as your Head of House and as such I am responsible for your safety within the walls of this school.” She reminded him. “If I believe that letter might endanger you or one of your fellow students I have the right to read it.”

“I don’t think you want to bring the subject of keeping me safe up, Professor, because even you would have to admit you and the rest of the teachers have failed miserably in that area over the last
two years.” Harry pointed out.
McGonagall’s lips thinned and she glared at Harry for a moment before saying, "I can assure you Mr Potter that all the teachers at Hogwarts have done their best to protect you and your fellow students. The events of the past two years were completely unexpected and we handled them the best we could. And I would like to remind you Mr Potter it was you who put yourself in those dangerous situations, not the teachers."

“Actually ma’am, during our first year you created the situation where Ron Hermione and I were forced to defend the Stone because you refused to believe us when we told you someone was after it. Our second year, you and the headmaster merely hired an inexperienced fop for Defence teacher and somehow a Dark object managed to make it past the wards of this supposed safest place in the wizarding world, just like Voldemort managed to get in on the back of Quirrell’s head during my first year.” Harry countered. “I will say it again Professor, there is nothing even remotely threatening in that letter. I’m sure Hermione will be more than happy to confirm that for you if she hasn’t already, given she tried to read it, without my permission I might add. It is merely a letter of greeting from a relative who is actually glad to be kin to me instead of loathing the very ground I stand on.”

"Never the less, I will be the one to determine that," McGonagall persisted, “and I must insist on seeing that letter.”

“Why? There is nothing in the letter that concerns you or this school nor do I see you invading the privacy of everyone else in Gryffindor House by insisting on reading his or her private mail. Furthermore I refuse to allow you to invade what little privacy I do have in the wizarding world.” Harry stated with a fierceness that surprised both he and Daniel, but he wasn’t going to give in. Daniel mentally applauded Harry’s taking a stand for himself without any help from him. The wizarding world was always poking its nose into Harry’s life thinking they had the right to well they didn’t. “Why are you so insistent on reading my mail? What makes me suddenly so special?” Harry knew why but wanted to see what she would say.

McGonagall stared at Potter surprised by how resistant he was being. It wasn’t normal behaviour for him. He normally just went along with what was requested. She raised her wand as and cast a quick revealing charm. Nothing showed up. The boy was under no compulsion charms. He was freely choosing to disobey her and she had no right to force him to give up his private mail even though they were trying to protect him.

“Mr Potter, you are aware that Black got into this school a few days ago,” McGonagall began. “We believe that…”

“He’s after me.” Harry completed tiredly. He’d heard variations on this theme from Hermione over the last three days as she tried to convince him to take Daniel’s letter to McGonagall.

McGonagall stared at him stunned at how calm he sounded about the most dangerous man since He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named being after him. “How did you find out?”

“I overheard Mr. and Mrs. Weasley discussing it the night before we caught the Hogwarts Express.” Harry lied. “He was certain that Black escaped to come after me.”

“Yes, and that’s why we have restricted you to the castle.” McGonagall told him. “He could take you quite easily from Hogsmeade. Several of the teachers are even wondering if being out on the grounds without a teacher is safe.”

“So you are thinking of removing me from the Quidditch team?” Harry asked. “Snape and Malfoy will be happy to hear that.”
“It has been discussed,” McGonagall admitted, “but it was decided that as long as Madame Hooch oversaw your practise sessions you should be safe enough.”

“It’s a pity you don’t extend the same concern to the other students of this school.” Harry commented. “If you were really worried about Black, then you would have banned all students from going to Hogsmeade not just me.”

"I can assure you Mr Potter the other students are completely safe. Unlike you they do not have an insane Death Eater after them.” McGonagall told him through clenched teeth.

Daniel sighed, /Witches and wizards don’t think outside the box at all./

/I don’t think they even know there is a box to think outside of./ Harry told him. /They have blinders on and won’t conceive of anything beyond what they see and believe to be true. If it wouldn’t mess up our plans so much I would’ve loved to see Dumbledore’s reaction to the fact that you and I are sharing my body./

/He would probably call me some kind of evil being given that I am encouraging you to think for yourself and not follow the wisdom of the Great, All Powerful, All Knowing Dumbledore. Just as well he’s not going to get a chance to look behind the curtain./ Daniel chuckled.

“They might,” Harry pointed out. “Black could easily decide that the easiest way to get his hands on me is to kidnap one of the pure blood children since the muggle-born and half bloods would be beneath his notice and hold them hostage until you turn me over. Some of them might even co-operate with him in getting me.”

“Black would never take one of the other children.” McGonagall seemed so certain. “The Ministry, Headmaster and all the teachers agree, you are the one he wants and he won’t be thinking of getting his hands on anyone else but you, so no one else is in danger. That is why you are being protected everywhere you go.”

“And the others are left to fend for themselves. Black got into Hogwarts when he shouldn’t have been able to, given the wards and the Dementors guarding it. What’s to stop him from kidnapping some pure blood child and demanding me in exchange? And if you didn’t turn me over to him, how would you explain to that child’s parents that you didn’t feel their child was worth swapping me for? And how would you explain your unwillingness to believe that Black might go after them and didn’t stop the Hogsmeade weekend visits until Black was captured, to protect all the children?” Harry finished. “Putting that aside for the moment Professor, I think you’re wrong about what Black is after. I don’t think Black is after me. I also don’t think Black lost track of either the date or time when he tried to break into Gryffindor tower. He was intelligent enough to get out of Azkaban when no one else has done it before.”

“And what do you think he was after?” McGonagall demanded stiffly.

“I think Black was after the animagus who is hiding in the boy’s dorm.” Harry dropped his bombshell.
McGonagall stared at the boy sitting calmly on the other side of her desk in stunned disbelief. Then certain that he was either lying or trying to pull a prank on her, she said, “Oh come now, Mr. Potter, why would an animagus be hiding in the third year Gryffindor boy’s dorm?”

Harry shrugged. “I don’t know. Why don’t you ask Scabbers? I assume there is a spell to force an animagus back in to human form again.”

“There is,” McGonagall agreed cautiously, joining her hands to together in front of her on the desk. “What makes you think that Mr. Weasley’s pet is an animagus? The Weasley family has had that rat for a number of years, given that Percy Weasley brought him to Hogwarts during his first four years here. I can’t think of any reason why any respectable wizard would want to spend all that time as a rat.”

“Who said he was a respectable wizard?” Harry countered. “All I know is that I get the same feeling from Scabbers, that I got from you when you were a cat. I feel it from you right now, it’s just not as strong as when you are a cat.’”

McGonagall’s eyes widened in shock at what the boy had told her. Potter was claiming to be able to do what even an animagi ward couldn’t do; detect an animagus when not in their animal form! That wasn’t supposed to be possible. “Mr. Potter how long have you been able to sense animagi? And more importantly have you detected any other animagi within the walls of Hogwarts?”

Harry shrugged. “Just since this summer, I think. I’ve handled Scabbers before and he didn’t feel odd until this summer. As for your other question, I’m not sure. The only person I’ve met in school who even remotely feels like you and Scabbers do to me is Professor Lupin and that’s only been since Halloween and it seems to be fading.”

/If I didn’t know better, I would think he was having a period./ Daniel quipped.

/Period?/ Harry didn’t understand the reference.

/I’ll explain later./ Daniel promised.

/Is it complicated?/ Harry wanted to know.

/Not really./ Daniel assured him. /It’s just sometimes very hard for a guy to understand. It’s a girl thing./

/Oh./ was all Harry said. He didn’t understand girls at all, nor did he understand the odd feelings he sometimes got when he thought about some girls, like the Ravenclaw’s new Seeker, Cho Chang.
Daniel had promised he would explain the Facts of Life (the Guy’s Version) by Harry’s fifteenth birthday, if he didn’t need it before then.

Stunned by Potter’s announcement that he had managed to also detect Lupin’s lycanthropy, even though he didn’t know what it was he found, it took professor McGonagall several minutes to come up with a response. “Very well, Mr. Potter. I will tell the Headmaster what you have found, so that he can take steps to deal with it.”

/I wouldn’t have thought she would be one of those to want to pass the buck./ Daniel commented. He was fairly certain that comment about Lupin feeling like her had shocked the woman, but he couldn’t figure out why. /She is your Head of House and is supposed to be concerned with your safety. I wonder why she isn’t going to check it out herself?/

“You aren’t going to check it out yourself, Professor?” Harry wanted to know the answer to that as well. He hoped that this wasn’t going to be like first year when he, Ron and Hermione had to save the Philosopher’s Stone, because she didn’t believe them when they told her someone was after it.

“Mr. Potter, even I am not so foolish as to confront an unknown animagus that has spent the last seven or more years hiding out as a rat without some kind of backup.” McGonagall told him stiffly. “Anyone willing to do that apparently has a lot to lose if they are found out and I would prefer not to have any students injured if the animagus decides to react violently once he is forced back into human form.”

/I agree that she shouldn’t confront this unknown wizard alone./ Daniel pointed out reasonably, /but why doesn’t she just get the Defence teacher and got check it out now. Delaying to tell the headmaster, who may or may not take action given his previous track record, will just give this unknown person time to escape./

Harry agreed with his reasoning and asked. “Professor, I can understand why you don’t want to confront him alone, but why don’t you just summon Professor Lupin or Professor Flitwick and have them go with you to check Scabbers out. I mean wouldn’t a delay give him time to get away.”

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“Oh I think he knows,” Harry countered. “He knows that Black is after him and not me like everyone else thinks, otherwise why would he be acting so scared even as a rat?”

McGonagall stared at him sternly certain he was trying to figure a way to get them to let him go to Hogsmeade on the next visit. “Mr. Potter, there is no reason to believe that Black is after anyone else, especially since the guards that were questioned all confirm that he kept repeating prior to his escape ‘He’s at Hogwarts.’ And you were the last thing on his mind as he was being sent to Azkaban.” She held up her hand, silencing what he was about to say. “If the animagus posing as Ron’s pet is hiding from Black there is no way he could know that he is here or even suspect it, whereas everyone knows that you are here. And that is one of the reasons why we do not want to allow you into Hogsmeade or upon the grounds unescorted. We do not want Black to get his hands on you.”

“Well, Professor you will have no way to bar me the next time, unless you plan on banning all students from going, because I have a signed note from my Aunt giving me permission.” Harry told her. “And you won’t have to worry about losing it this time, because I made copies.”

/Lots of copies,/ Daniel put in with a laugh.

McGonagall stared at him surprised. How had he gotten a note giving him permission to go to Hogsmeade? Dumbledore had said he was going to speak to Potter’s aunt and explain the danger to
her. Why would she be willing to risk her nephew’s life?

“Was there anything else you wanted to speak with me about, Professor?” Harry asked calmly as if unaware of the problem he had given her.

McGonagall opened her mouth to say something, but for the first time in her life, she couldn’t think of what to say. She closed her mouth and then opened it to try again, but still nothing came out.

“I guess that is it then, Professor. Good. It’s time for dinner and I am hungry.” Harry rose to his feet and headed for her office door.

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Dumbledore looked thoughtful as Minerva left his office. The news his Deputy Headmistress had brought him about Harry Potter had been stunning to say the least.

He had thought the only thing he would have to worry about with regards to Harry this year, was making sure that Sirius Black didn’t get his hands on him. Now thanks to information provided by Miss Granger through Minerva, he had to worry about a previously unknown magical relative and an American one at that. Given that Flitwick held a Mastery in Charms Dumbledore had no doubt that the family tree young Harry had in his possession was genuine and that this Daniel Jackson was indeed a relative.

Dumbledore was beginning to regret not doing a family tree on young Harry before placing him with his aunt then he might’ve been prepared for something like this. In hindsight, he knew it should’ve been done to make sure there were no other relatives in the maternal line to take Harry in. It seemed a waste of time though given that they all, including Lily, thought she was the first witch in her family and a magical family tree required a few magical relatives before it could be created.

He had thought it best to get Harry under the protection of the blood wards, given the Deatheaters that were still about. The blood wards had collapsed though before Harry’s fifth birthday because Petunia Evans Dursley had proven to be incapable of loving anyone outside her own little family, not that he would ever tell anyone that. When the others had questioned the need for haste, he had told them that it was better for Harry to have the stability of a loving family now that he had lost his own and that he needed time to bond with his Aunt’s loving family.

Thinking of the Dursley’s, reminded Dumbledore of something he had forgotten to do over the summer. He needed to have a talk with the Dursleys soon. They needed to be reminded of just what having Harry alive and in their home meant for them. Petunia might not care all that much for her nephew, but Dumbledore knew she would continue to tolerate his presence since it insured her son’s safety or so she thought. As long as she thought the wards were still there to protect her home and family she would make sure that her husband didn’t go too far. Dumbledore was not about to let that rampaging hippogriff known as Vernon Dursley kill the one destined to save both their worlds from Voldemort because of his stupid prejudices. He intended to make sure Petunia understood the cost of not keeping her husband’s abuses in check. He could undo memory charms as easily as he could place them and that would not be good for her son or her husband.

He also needed to make sure the Dursleys understood it would not be in their best interests to allow this Daniel Jackson to get custody of their nephew. In fact, he decided, it might be better if they believed this Daniel Jackson was a fraud intent on harming them and their son.

That would leave Dumbledore with only one loose end; preventing a meeting between Harry and this previously unknown relative, until he had the man convinced that it was best Harry stay with his Aunt… no matter what Harry might tell him about his life there.
This Daniel Jackson’s presence in Harry’s life wouldn’t have worried Dumbledore quite so much if the man had been a muggle or even a squib. His position as Harry’s magical guardian gave him more rights over Harry’s life that even his Aunt had. However until he admitted to Harry that he was his magical guardian, he couldn’t exercise those rights. That was something he wanted to avoid for as long as possible because he didn’t want Harry or anyone else asking questions about why he had allowed the situation at the Dursleys to go unchecked.

Given that Jackson was a wizard, if he found out how Harry was being treated, he might petition for a change of custody. And since the magical courts preferred for magical children to be raised by magical relatives, there was no doubt they would give him custody, negating the magical guardianship Dumbledore currently held. Dumbledore wouldn’t even be able to use the argument he had used when he placed Harry with the Dursleys that the boy was safest with his mother’s kin because Jackson fit that requirement as well, even if the kinship was a somewhat distant one. Allowing this American to gain custody of Harry wasn’t part of Dumbledore’s plan because if he did, the man might take Harry to America and worst of all was the possibility that he might pull Harry out of Hogwarts, removing even that small amount of control that Dumbledore had over Harry’s life.

Coming to a decision, Dumbledore wrote a quick note and sent it off to the Owlery with a house elf. The note to Daniel Jackson requested a meeting as soon as possible and Dumbledore made sure to imply that he had Harry’s complete trust and consent to meet with him, hoping to put the man off-guard. He needed to assess the American’s character before allowing Jackson anywhere near Harry. The Headmaster hoped Jackson wouldn’t be too difficult, because if he proved to be a threat to Dumbledore’s plans, he would take steps to remove the man, at least for now, from Harry’s life. Dumbledore experienced a brief moment of regret at the idea of having to take such action, but quickly rationalised it away since it was for the Greater Good of the wizarding world.

Fawkes stared at his bonded in disbelief. He’d thought his human had abandoned the arrogant attitude and belief system of his former friend Grindelwald after his sister’s accidental death at that man’s hands. Judging by his recent actions though it looked as though Albus had fallen back into old habits better left buried forever.

After his bonded had returned from the muggle hospital where he had wiped away young Harry’s memories, the phoenix thought he had made it clear that if his bonded caused harm to another innocent in his so-called quest for the greater good then he would leave. Apparently Dumbledore had ignored his warning because he was clearly planning to try and do harm to one of the most innocent and pure of souls Fawkes had ever encountered; Daniel Jackson.

It didn’t matter that he wouldn’t succeed given that Daniel was joined to Harry Potter. It was the fact that he so quickly contemplated harming a man he had never met and was able to rationalise it as being for the Greater Good that angered the phoenix the most. It was a mystery to him how his bonded had kept from him all these years the fact that he thought he knew better than the Lord of All what was the Greater Good for all and how to achieve it.

Fawkes decided to warn Harry and Daniel and then he would start keeping a closer eye on his bonded. Dumbledore was standing on the edge of abyss and had been for years. If the meddling fool took the step he was planning, Fawkes would have no choice but to leave him, even though it would tear the phoenix apart to do so.

Sighing, Dumbledore turned his attention back to the other information that Minerva had given him.
He was not pleased to learn that Harry had received another permission slip for Hogsmeade from his Aunt. Dumbledore was now forced into the position of trying to convince Harry that it would not be a good idea for him to go to Hogsmeade, until Black was caught. He knew that if he tried to override Harry’s Aunt’s permission for him to go, he would have to admit that he was Harry’s magical guardian and explain to the boy why he had never done anything about the Dursley’s treatment of him. The problem was how to go about it without revealing things he didn’t want Harry to know just yet. If he told Harry about Black’s betrayal of his parents that might have the opposite effect to what he intended, making Harry determined to go after Black on his own.

As Dumbledore popped a lemon drop into his mouth and sucked on it, he realised that convincing Harry to stay at Hogwarts was going to be a hard sell. Minerva had told him that Harry didn’t believe her when she told him that Black was after him. In fact she told him that Harry had countered her assertion by claiming that it was far more likely that Black was after the animagus hiding in their dorm as Ron Weasley’s pet.

Even though Dumbledore didn’t doubt Harry’s claim about the animagus especially since he had also detected Remus’ lycanthropy, he still used his connection to the wards surrounding Hogwarts to try and locate any unknown animagi within the school walls. Hogwarts reported the location of only one that was unknown to him in the third year boy’s dorm in Gryffindor tower. After asking Hogwarts to monitor the rat animagus, he withdrew from his communication with Hogwarts, shaking his head over how his imagination must be playing tricks on him, because it seemed like Hogwarts was angry towards him, or maybe sulky for some reason, but he didn’t know why that would be.

Given that the animagus hadn’t so far caused any harm in the twelve or thirteen years he had been with the Weasleys and at Hogwarts or as far as he knew transformed back while in the children’s dorms, Dumbledore decided to wait until summer to deal with him. He was fairly certain that the wizard had just tried to become an animagus without proper supervision and had gotten stuck with no way to reverse the transformation. He knew that the last thing Hogwarts could afford right now was another scandal coming so quickly on the heels of the Chamber of Secrets being reopened because of that damned diary and the press learning that an adult wizard had been living in dorms with students would have speculation running rampant of just what he might’ve been doing to or with the children and their certainty that it was something bad given he hid himself as an inoffensive rat.

Instead of getting back to the matter of how to convince a stubborn Harry not to go to Hogsmeade, Dumbledore’s mind kept returning to the singular abilities he had shown since the start of the school year, not to mention the amazing improvement in spell casting his teachers had all commented on. He knew they had to be connected with this latest one and he needed to figure out the cause before the child placed himself in danger or attracted the attention of the Unspeakables.

As far as the Headmaster knew, no witch or wizard had ever been able to detect an animagus without using some kind of ward spell, and those spells weren’t taught until seventh year. Not to mention that there were no spells of any kind to detect a werewolf prior to their transformation and yet Harry had detected Remus’ Lycanthropy even though he had mistakenly equated it to being an animagus.

Also as far as Dumbledore knew, there were no stories of any witch or wizard who had been able to destroy one Dementor, and yet according to Lupin, Harry had destroyed at least fifteen on the school train. The report Remus had given him about the incident on the train indicated that Harry had cast a spell that was similar to the Patronus charm on the one in his compartment and he was basing that on the silvery white light that had blinded them all. He also reported that Harry had done this unknown spell without a wand. Whether he had intended it or not, Harry had not only destroyed the Dementor in their compartment, but he had also managed to take out all the other Dementors in and around the
train. Remus was certain that they had been destroyed because he had been unable to feel even the remnants of their presence anywhere around the train and he should’ve been able to if they’d been nearby.

As Dumbledore got to his feet intending to check some of the oldest books in his personal library to see if he could figure out what was happening to young Harry, he couldn’t help thinking to himself that Harry was lucky that no one in the Department of Mysteries knew what he had done to those Dementors, or he might’ve found himself confined to a little room in the Ministry until they figured out how he’d done it. Dumbledore was fairly certain the Dementors hadn’t told their handlers that someone had managed to find a way to destroy them and he certainly hadn’t mentioned to the Ministry that there were fifteen less Dementors around the school than had originally been planned for.

Sighing, Dumbledore closed the last of his books and put down his quill. Two hours of steady research in his oldest books hadn’t turned up much, but it had given him a lead for the possible source of Harry’s new powers… his death and return to life in that muggle hospital. He was also beginning to suspect that ‘the power he knows not’ was not a power unknown to Voldemort like the power of love, but they were in fact the powers that were being awakened in Harry, given the boy no longer remembered dying and coming back to life.

Harry fit all the criteria he found for those few witches and wizards who had had their magical ability significantly increased and had been able to perform extraordinary feats of magic that no one had been able to duplicate since. The few that had been listed in his books had all been dead for many minutes before coming back to life and none of them had been brought back by magical means.

Dumbledore made a mental note to ask the staff to discretely monitor Harry to see if he displayed any other unusual abilities or showed any improvement in how quickly he could do new spells. He needed to know if Harry showed any dramatic changes in his ability to use magic so he could take steps if necessary to keep that information from coming to the attention of the Ministry or people like Lucius Malfoy.

“What did Professor McGonagall want to see you about?” Hermione asked as soon as Harry joined his friends at the Gryffindor table.

Harry said nothing as he put food from the nearby dishes on his plate and started eating.

Hermione wasn’t used to being ignored by Harry and hissed, “Harry!”

Harry just looked at her for a moment before returning his attention to his meal.

“You aren’t in trouble, are you, Harry?” Ron asked trying to head off another of the arguments that Harry and Hermione seemed to be having lately.

“No, I’m not in trouble,” Harry sighed. “Professor McGonagall wanted to tell me about Black. She also told me they were thinking about not allowing me to play Quidditch this year…”

“Not let you play Quidditch this year!” Ron was shocked. “What was McGonagall thinking?! Not allowing you to play Quidditch is just insane.”

“Maybe she was thinking about Harry’s safety.” Hermione put in tartly. “That is more important
Ron couldn’t believe Hermione would say something like that! There was nothing more important than Quidditch! “Are you out of your mind? Harry has to play! He’s the best Seeker Gryffindor has ever had and if he doesn’t play against the Slytherins, Malfoy is going to call him a coward.”

“Ron!” Hermione was surprised that he would put a stupid game above their friend’s life. “Harry’s life is more important than any game and Professor McGonagall knows it. Black is after Harry, remember!”

“Actually, Hermione,” Harry interrupted. “I will be playing. There will just be teachers overseeing the practise sessions.”

“You can’t be serious!” She knew boys could be stupid when it came to their favourite sports, but she hadn’t thought Harry would be idiotic enough to risk his life for a dumb game. “Surely a Quidditch game isn’t worth your life Harry!”

“Black wouldn’t be stupid enough to show up a Quidditch game!” Ron protested. “He’d be caught.”

“They thought he wouldn’t be able to get into Hogwarts either, but he somehow managed to do that.” Hermione reminded them. “And if he does show up at one of the Gryffindor matches, he could just jinx Harry’s broom, like Quirrell did our first year.”

“I’m playing.” Harry told Hermione with an air of finality.

Hermione just glared at him. “Can’t you see you will be playing right into Black’s hands? How can you be so willing to risk your life like that? Do you think your parents would want you to throw your life away because of a stupid game?”

Hermione knew she had said the wrong thing the minute Harry’s head came up and his fork hit his plate with a clang. The eyes that met hers were chips of angry green ice. Before she could even attempt to apologise, he snarled. “If my parents were here, then Black would not be a problem. What I do with my life is my own business Miss Granger. At least I don’t go running off to tell McGonagall about someone else’s private business!”

Harry left the Great Hall without another word and no one noticed his departure.

Hermione stared after Harry shocked and wanted to try and go after him to make him understand she had done what was best for him.

“I wouldn’t do it, Hermione.” Ron growled at her with his eyes narrowed. “I know you think I’m dumb, but only Malfoy would’ve been stupid enough to say something like that to Harry and that’s only because he would be one of those who would dance on Harry’s grave if he could.”

“I know that was the wrong thing to say, it just slipped out,” Hermione admitted, “but I was trying to make him understand that it’s too dangerous for him to be playing Quidditch right now.”

“No you’re trying to make his decisions for him. You were trying to control him as if he were still in nappies unable to think and reason for himself. Only Professor McGonagall can remove him from the team and she chose not to, so what does that tell you?” Ron snapped. “And it’s not only that, you’ve also been prying into his personal life when he’s told you it’s none of your business. Demanding to know what he discussed with McGonagall tonight. Bullying him about the contents of that letter a few days ago. And when Harry wouldn’t arrange his life the way you thought he should, you decided to involve our Head of House. I’m surprised that you didn’t go to the headmaster as
Hermione sputtered at Ron's tone of voice and his accurate observations. "Harry's not listening to reason. He’s putting himself in danger and since you weren't helping me make him see sense, I had to go to someone who would. I thought Professor McGonagall would be able to make him understand why it was better for him to meet this Daniel Jackson here at school instead of in Hogsmeade."

“It wasn’t my place to tell Harry where he should meet this Jackson.” Ron reminded her. “I am not his father and you are not his mother. The only one who can and should make decisions for Harry about his personal life is Harry. If he asks for my opinion I will give it to him, but I don’t have the right to make decisions for him and neither do you.”

Before Hermione could even come up with a response, Ron got up from the table. "I suggest you really think about what you're doing Hermione before you lose Harry's friendship for good."

About a week before the first Quidditch match of the season, that was to take place between Slytherin and Gryffindor, a storm settled over Hogwarts, bringing with it; cold temperatures, strong winds, sheeting rain and poor visibility.

After three days when the storms showed no signs of moving on, Flint who knew the strengths and weaknesses of his team mates, knew very well that if they played in this weather they would definitely lose. The problem was they needed a legitimate reason not to play or they would forfeit and he wasn’t going to forfeit.

Recruiting a couple of Slytherin seventh years he knew he could rely on, and who were not on the Quidditch team, Flint waited in the dark near the base of the stairs that led to the Slytherin dorms for the arrival of a certain third year.

One of his confederates hurried down the stairs, hissing, “they’re coming.”

Pointing their wands at the middle to lower level steps of the staircase, the three seventh years whispered, “glacius.”

A light film of ice that was not really visible in the dim lighting of the torches covered at least five steps.

Retreating into a nearby room, the seventh years waited.

The three third years were hurrying down the stairs, trying to make it to their common room before curfew.

Draco the smaller and lighter of the three was the first to encounter the icy steps. Because all three of them were running down the stairs, their forward momentum worked against them as Flint had hoped it might. They tumbled down the remaining steps to land in a heap a few feet away from the stairs.

“Ashton, check them, please. Jessup, keep watch.” Flint requested in a low voice as he removed the ice and made sure to leave some patches of water behind.

After casting a few advanced diagnostic spells his mother had taught him over the summer so that he would be ahead of his classmates at Healer’s College next year, Ashton reported. “All three have a mild concussion and Malfoy has a broken wrist and leg.”
“How long do you think Madame Pompfrey will keep him in the Hospital wing?”

“A couple of days at least,” Ashton replied after giving the results he had gotten a few moment’s consideration. “One thing is for sure though, she will not let Malfoy play on Saturday.”

“Good,” Flint smiled.

“We’d better get out of here.” Jessup hissed. “The prefects will be starting their rounds soon.”

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On the day of their last practise session before the match with Slytherin on Saturday, Oliver Wood came into the changing room with a gloomy expression on his face.

“What’s wrong Oliver?” Fred wanted to know.

“Professor McGonagall just told me that we won’t be playing Slytherin this weekend.” Wood told the team glumly. “We are going to be playing Hufflepuff.”

“Was the change made because Malfoy got hurt earlier this week?” Katie wondered.

“Yes!” Wood paced running his hands through his hair. “Even though he is perfectly fine now, Madame Pomfrey will not okay him to play on Saturday. I mean we’ve spent all this time practising moves for Slytherin and now they won’t do us any good. Hufflepuff’s style of play is completely different since they got their new Captain and seeker, Cedric Diggory.”

“I don’t know why you’re worried, Oliver,” George commented airily. “We’ve beaten Hufflepuff before…”

“But not since Diggory became their Captain.” Wood reminded him. “Plus this weather, if it lasts through the weekend, is going to favour him as a seeker.”

/You know if I were a suspicious person…like Jack, I would wonder if Malfoy or someone else didn’t plan his injury so Slytherin wouldn’t have to play in this bad weather./ Daniel commented.

/I don’t think that Malfoy is that much into pain that he would be willing to risk injury just to avoid playing./ Harry countered. /Now, if he’d already been injured, I could see him milking it to avoid having to play and possibly lose in this weather./

Daniel accepted Harry’s assessment of Malfoy’s character. /So do you think Filch would be so careless as leave the steps wet and not warn someone? Or could it have been that someone else decided to make sure Slytherin couldn’t play by injuring, though not severely, the only player not easily replaced./

Harry gave the matter some thought. /I doubt Filch would be that careless, even if he does hate the students. If it was a deliberate attack designed to make sure Slytherin couldn’t play, though not severely, the only player not easily replaced./

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The night before the Quidditch match, McGonagall stopped Harry as he was leaving the Great Hall after dinner. “Mr. Potter, the headmaster would like to see you in his office.”

“Now?” Harry asked as Ron and Hermione came to a halt behind him.

“Yes,” McGonagall told him crisply.
“Yes, ma’am,” Harry glanced at Ron and Hermione. “I’ll see you in the common room.”

They nodded and followed the rest of the Gryffindors back to their common room.

McGonagall led Harry to the Headmaster’s office, gave the password to the gargoyle and then gestured toward the stairs. “The headmaster is waiting for you.”

In response to his knock, Harry heard Dumbledore’s voice call out, “come in Harry.”

Both Harry and Daniel were on guard as they entered Dumbledore’s office. “You wanted to see me sir?”

“Yes indeed. Have a seat, Harry.” Dumbledore gestured to one of the seats in front of his desk. Holding out a bowl, he asked, “Would you care for a lemon drop?”

“No thank you Headmaster, I’m full from dinner.” Harry politely declined the offer as he sat down. “What did you want to see me about?”

“Harry, I understand that you received a letter from someone claiming to be a relative through your mother.” Dumbledore began.

“You mean someone who is a relative of mine through my mother, don’t you sir?” Harry contradicted him.

/I told you it was a sucker bet,/ Harry crowed

/Well it was bound to either be a discussion about me… or Black./ Daniel countered.

“Mr. Jackson’s relationship to you has not been confirmed as yet, Harry.” Dumbledore put in gently.

“It has as far as I’m concerned.” Harry countered firmly. “Professor Flitwick is a Charms Master and he has certified the family tree that was sent to me is genuine.”

Before Dumbledore could come up with a counter-argument, Harry added, “Headmaster, I don’t understand why Professor McGonagall and now you are trying to involve yourselves in my personal business.”

Dumbledore knew that he was on the defensive here and didn’t like it. He also knew that he would have to choose his words with care to avoid revealing too much or alienating the boy. Harry wasn’t yet ready for all the knowledge he was holding onto concerning Voldemort and himself. “Harry, while I have no doubt the family tree might be genuine, the person who sent it might not be…”

“I’m sorry, sir, but what you’ve just said makes absolutely no sense.” Harry told him. “Until his letter arrived, neither I nor anyone else had any idea that Dr. Daniel Jackson existed or that he was related to me. And no one knew that my mother was in fact not a muggle-born, but the first magic user from a long line of squibs…”

“True,” Dumbledore agreed though Harry didn’t hear him.

Continuing as if Dumbledore hadn’t spoken Harry asked, “So why would anyone go to the trouble of looking for someone they didn’t know existed just to steal a family tree and then pretend to be that person?”

“You have a valid point,” Dumbledore conceded. “But how do you know this Daniel Jackson has honourable intentions toward you? What I mean to say is that even without your reputation as the
Boy-Who-Lived, the Potter name means money and power in the British magical world.”

“I doubt I will have much trouble figuring out if the man intends to use me, Headmaster.” Harry assured him. “Thanks to the loving care, I received from my family, I won’t have much trouble figuring out if Dr. Jackson is simply out to use me.”

“Those who wish to make use of you and your position in the wizarding world are not always obvious.” Dumbledore tried to sound like a kindly grandfather giving advice, ignoring the slight twinge of guilt that was reminding him that he too was using Harry.

Harry barely managed to strangle a snort or laughter. Talk about the pot calling the kettle black A perfect example of Dumbledore’s warning was sitting on the opposite side of the desk, staring at him with twinkling blue eyes. He still didn’t know what use Dumbledore was planning to make of him, but given what had happened at Hogwarts over the past two years, Harry was willing to bet the contents of Merlin’s vault that it involved Voldemort in some way.

Harry sighed. “Sir, I will tell you what I told Professor McGonagall. Since this is not a school matter and neither of you is my legal guardian, you do not have the right to pry into my personal business. The only ones who have the right to tell me what to do with regards to Dr. Jackson are Aunt Petunia and Uncle Vernon. And,” Harry pulled a small folded piece of paper out of his pocket and waved it in Dumbledore’s direction, “given that Aunt Petunia sent me a note giving me permission to go to Hogsmeade that arrived with Dr. Jackson’s letter, she clearly doesn’t object to me writing to or meeting with him.”

Harry handed the slightly crumpled piece of paper to the headmaster who set it down on his desk unread.

Dumbledore set the note on his desk, unread. “You could’ve given that to your Head of House, you know, Harry.”

“No sir, this way I save time since you seem to be taking an interest in whether or not I go to Hogsmeade.” Harry countered straight-faced. “Oh and don’t worry about losing it, sir. I made copies. Lots of copies.”

Dumbledore gave him a concerned look. “Harry, I really don’t think it is a good idea for you to go to Hogsmeade. I know Professor McGonagall told you about Black being after you, so I am sure you will agree that it is best that you remain at Hogwarts until he is captured.”

Daniel felt some kind of spell try to take hold of Harry and quickly negated it. The effects felt similar to Nish’ta, so it had to have been some kind of mind control spell.

Harry was furious when Daniel told him what Dumbledore had tried to do and let the linguist take over, so he wouldn’t say the wrong thing. “Actually sir, I do not agree that it is best for me to do that. Unless you intend to bar all students from going to Hogsmeade, I will be exercising my right to go.”

Dumbledore quickly hid his shock over the fact that the wandless compulsion charm he’d cast on Harry had failed. “Harry, surely you can understand the danger that Black poses to you? How can you possibly consider putting yourself in harm’s way?”

Daniel shrugged and answered the last question first. “I’m a Gryffindor. As for the danger posed by Black, everyone keeps telling me the man is after me, but no one will tell me why he is. Personally, I think he is after Scabbers and not me. Perhaps Headmaster, you would like to tell me why you and the rest of the wizarding world are so convinced that Black is after me.”
Daniel met the headmaster’s gaze expectantly, and after a few moments Dumbledore looked away from his emerald green gaze.

When the silence stretched on, Daniel let out a sigh. “I see. This is going to be like my first year where you decide I am too young to know and choose to keep the information to yourself. Not a good way to establish trust. Believe me when I say sir, that I am not too young to know. My life with the Dursleys insured that I never had a childhood of any kind.”

Dumbledore looked thoughtful, his fingertips pressed against his lips. He was going to have to tell the boy part if not all of the truth about Black’s connection to his family if only to try and re-establish the trust he seemed to have lost with Harry. Though he didn’t know how or why he’d lost it, it was clear from Harry’s reaction to him and his answers that were bordering on disrespectful that he no longer had the boy’s trust and he needed to get it back.

“Very well, Harry.” Dumbledore sounded as if he were doing this reluctantly. “Sirius Black was responsible for betraying your parents to Voldemort. Because he was your father’s first and best friend, when they went into hiding under a spell called the Fidelius Charm, he was chosen as Secret Keeper and that allowed him to betray them to Voldemort.”

“Why did he do it?” Daniel wanted to know, a little of the anguish that Harry was feeling bled through into his voice.

“Who knows.” Dumbledore told him. “It was believed by many at the time, that he wanted to be Voldemort’s right hand man.”

Even though he already knew that black hadn’t had a trial, Daniel asked, “What reason did he give at his trial?”

The Headmaster’s face went blank for a moment, before quickly recovering, but Daniel had caught it. Clearly Dumbledore hadn’t expected that question.

“I don’t know,” Dumbledore finally answered. “I was not present at his trial, given I had a number of other things to deal with after Voldemort’s disappearance.”

Daniel had to applaud the ancient wizard’s skill at being able to lie so well. A couple of the books he had read while trying to learn more about Black and the trials after Voldemort’s defeat had indicated that while Dumbledore hadn’t presided at the Deatheater trials, he had been at most of the major ones and that would’ve included Black’s.

“Well since you can’t tell me, who do I have to contact to get a copy of the transcript of his trial?” Daniel wanted to see how deep Dumbledore would dig the hole before he admitted the man had never gotten a trial.

Knowing there would be no transcript, Dumbledore tried to stall. “Harry, I am not sure they would provide you with that information, given you are an under-aged wizard.”

Daniel shrugged Harry’s shoulders. “That shouldn’t be a problem. All I have to do is ask cousin Daniel to see if he can get hold of the transcript or if he can get a solicitor to get hold of a copy for me. I don’t think I will have too much trouble convincing him to help me find out why someone chose to betray my parents.”

Dumbledore was silent for several minutes before he telling him. “I will check with my contacts at the Ministry and see if they can locate the trial records for me.”
“Thank you sir.” Daniel just managed to keep a straight face at the thought of Dumbledore asking someone to find records that didn’t exist. “Was there anything else sir? It is getting late and the match is tomorrow so I need my sleep.”

“Not right now, Harry.” Dumbledore told him looking thoughtful. “Sleep well.”

/He lies better than Kinsey./ Daniel observed to Harry as they switched back and headed down the stairs.

/He’s been at it longer, so he should be better./ Harry commented dryly. /I wonder what excuse he will come up with when I ask him for progress?/

/Probably that they are having trouble finding the records./ Daniel decided.

######

/I wish you could do something about this weather./ Harry commented as another strong blast of wind fought with him over control of his broom.

/I wish there were something I could do as well, but while the Ancients were able to manipulate the weather, they used technology to do it./ Daniel was currently using his powers to keep Harry warm in spite of the driving rain and almost arctic winds. /They should’ve delayed this game. Even American football players wouldn’t play outside in weather like this. I will be very surprised if you and the other players don’t wind up coming down with pneumonia or at the very least severe colds./

/Madame Pompfrey can take care of that with a potion./ Harry assured him as he tried yet again to wipe the rain off his glasses. The rain on his glasses was making it impossible for him to see more than a few feet in front of him. How was he supposed to catch the snitch if he couldn’t see it until he was almost on top of it?

/Cool,/ Daniel hated being sick, then he wondered. /Do you think those potions would work on non-magical people?/

/Dunno,/ Harry shrugged as bolt of lightening tore across the darkened sky. /I think your biggest problem if they do work on non-magical people is to get past the Secrecy Statute so you can use them./

Before Daniel could comment, they heard Madame Hooch’s whistle blow. Looking around, Harry saw Wood gesturing toward the ground. Harry landed with a muddy splash near Oliver and hurried to join the rest of the team under a large umbrella near the edge of the field.

“What’s the score?” Harry asked as he wiped the rain off his glasses.

“We’re up by fifty points, but if we don’t catch the snitch soon, this game is going to turn into a night game.” Wood told him.

Oliver, there’s no way, I’m going to be able to spot the snitch, with these.” Harry waved his glasses at the Gryffindor team captain. “The rain is making it impossible for me to see more than a few feet at best.”

Hermione who had been standing nearby had a sudden flash of inspiration. “Harry let me have your glasses for a minute.”

As the team watched, she tapped the lens of Harry’s glasses with her wand and said “Impervius!”
Handing them back, she told Harry, “Now they will repel water and that should help you see better.”

Harry gave her a grateful smile as he put them on and Hermione was pleased he hadn’t rejected her help, given that their relationship had been strained for the last couple of weeks.

“Mount up everybody,” Wood ordered after giving Hermione a grateful hug.

Once they were back in the air, Harry was pleased to see that the spell Hermione had put on his glasses had done the trick. He was now able to see clearly through the storm. Now he just had to contend with the cold and the wind in his quest for the snitch.

As Harry turned intending to head back toward the middle of the field, a flash of jagged lightning illuminated the stands and he caught sight of a large, shaggy, black dog standing motionless in the empty top row of seats.

/There’s something wrong./ Daniel sounded a little worried.

/What?/

/That dog shouldn’t’ve been there./ Daniel told him. /No species of dog I know of would willingly stand out in the rain. He should’ve been under the stands./

“Harry! Behind you!” Wood’s shouted warning pulled Harry’s attention away from the dog and he saw a gold speck fluttering halfway between himself and Diggory.

Quickly throwing himself flat along the length of his broom, Harry sped off toward the snitch.

As the snitch darted away with Harry and Diggory in pursuit, the cold suddenly intensified and the sounds of the people and wind disappeared from around Harry.

Oh Lord, the Sai’ki’eth! Daniel quickly made the connection.

Looking down, Harry saw the shapes of the Dementors moving onto the field and they were looking up as if following the game. The frigid cold the Dementors brought with them, quickly enveloped Harry and Daniel as if they were drowning in icy water.

Daniel felt the paralysing effects begin to overwhelm Harry as he got lost in reliving the last moments of his mother’s life and quickly took control of Harry’s body. He didn’t have much time. While being Ascended gave him a little protection, it wasn’t much and there were too many of them for even him to last long. He wouldn’t be able to kill them, but maybe he could drive them off. Unfortunately he would need to get closer and he could mentally hear Jack calling him an idiot for even considering it.

Not the smartest of ideas, Daniel had to agree with the Jack voice in his head, but I don’t see where I have a lot of options.

Once he had the broom about fifty feet from the ground, Daniel gripped the broom tightly with his knees and raised both hands in the direction of the Sai’ki’eth.

A burst of white light illuminated the Quidditch pitch, startled everyone because it wasn’t lightening.

Diggory who had almost caught the snitch, lost sight of it as the burst of light blinded him for a moment. A moment later he heard several shrieks from his fellow players and turning saw the body of the Gryffindor Seeker fall from his broom.
Choices And Changes

Chapter Notes

/words more words/ = mental conversations between Harry and Daniel
\$words more words\$ = phoenix speech

Choices And Changes

Dumbledore shot quickly to his feet as the burst of white light vanished, his wand out and ready.

The Dementors on the Quidditch pitch had been driven back slightly by the Patronus like spell that Harry seemed to have cast, but they were still on the field.

Dumbledore quickly cast the Patronus charm and as his Patronus headed on to the field, it was quickly joined by others as every teacher who could cast the spell did so. Then remembering what Lupin had told him about the last time Harry had unconsciously cast this Patronus like spell, Dumbledore scanned the darkened sky, looking for the boy. His heart nearly stopped beating as he saw the boy's limp body slide off his broom.

Pointing his wand at the falling body and putting all the force behind it he could, Dumbledore shouted, "Winguardium Levosia!"

Harry's body stopped its downward plunge and Dumbledore gently guided the unconscious boy's body to the spot Professor McGonagall was clearing in front of him.

As Madame Hooch's magically magnified voice ordered all of the players to the ground, Dumbledore told McGonagall, "Professor McGonagall, please take Mr. Potter to the Hospital wing. I think he has managed to magically exhaust himself again."

Once the pair vanished, Dumbledore turned to the remaining teachers, "Please insure that all the students make it safely back to the school because there may still be some Dementors lurking about, while I go make sure the Dementors understand this behaviour will not be repeated in the future."

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The teachers as well as those few seventh years who had mastered the Patronus spell quickly took up positions on the outer edges of the group of students as the fifth and sixth year prefects led them back to the castle.

Lupin who was walking near the rear of the group with his wand out and ready, noticed that Harry's friends Ron and Hermione were walking a short distance in front of him and seemed to be talking in low voices as if they didn't want to be overheard. It was a pity that they didn't know that someone with sharper than average hearing, even though it wasn't the full moon yet, was walking right behind them and could hear every word.

"How bad is it?" Hermione asked worriedly.

"Not sure," Ron shrugged then pointed out, "It would've been a lot worse, if Dumbledore hadn't caught him before he hit the ground. One thing's for sure, I've never seen the Headmaster that angry
Lupin had to agree with that sentiment. The Dementors who'd come on to the field, were very lucky that looks couldn't kill otherwise they wouldn't have had to worry about the Patroni that had been sent their way. He couldn't recall ever seeing the headmaster that angry before either, not even when Padfoot set Snape up to be attacked by him during the full moon. That had been a source of pain for the Marauders for a long time until they had managed to work through it, but he should've seen it for what it was, an early indicator that Sirius could betray anyone's trust, given he'd betrayed Lupin's.

"...that makes four times," Hermione's voice pulled Remus' thoughts back to the present. "It has to be damaging his magical core. We have to find some way to stop it from happening again."

"Well there's only one way I can see, Hermione, and that's to keep the Dementors away from him." Ron tried to hide his own worry because he knew she was right. Harry couldn't keep draining his magical core like this. "Every time they get near him, he has another burst of overcharged accidental magic, trying to drive them off."

Hermione was silent for several minutes before she countered with, "or maybe he just needs to be shown a different way to drive them off that won't drain his magical core. The professors cast some kind of spell that drove them off completely and we just need to find out what it was."

"Hermione, while that sounds like a good idea, that particular spell, might be one that can only be done once you reach magical maturity and even then not everyone may be able to cast it. I noticed that only a few of the teachers and a few of the seventh years were able to cast it and some of them only produced silvery mist, like Harry did, though not on quite the same scale." Ron reminded her.

"We have to try and find out what that spell was, Ron," Hermione persisted. "Because the next time the Dementors get near Harry they could kill him."

Remus had to smile at the determination in Miss Granger's voice. She was a lot like Lily when she decided on a course of action she wasn't going to let anything stand in her way. She also did have a valid point about the Dementors and Harry's reaction to them being dangerous. It would be best if he were taught the Patronus spell before something bad happened. Remus had no doubt that Harry would be able to master the spell, given the Patronus like light he seemed to produce through accidental magic whenever Dementors were around. He made a mental note to speak to Harry after the next full moon to see if he wanted to learn the spell.

#####

Harry woke to an uplifting trilling sound and as he became aware of his surrounding, he realised he was sleeping on something that felt like a rough blanket, which didn't make sense if he was in the Hospital wing. That was where he'd expected to wake up after that encounter with the Dementors. When he opened his eyes and could see his surroundings clearly, he realised he was in a dreamscape world again and it looked like Daniel's home on Abydos.

What truly startled him was when he located the source of the trilling. Fawkes was sitting in the open window of the stone wall of the house singing.

"Fawkes! How did you get here?" Harry wanted to know.

"I'm kind of curious to hear the answer to that myself." Daniel commented from the opposite side of the room. "I especially want to know if that nosey old man you are bonded to can use the same method to get in."
No Dumbledore can not get in the way I did. He is not a phoenix, not even in his animagus form. *Fawkes was quick to assure them.* It is only because you heard and accepted my song that allowed me entrance into this safe haven you have created, White Lord.

"Well, you certainly make the most interesting alarm clock, I've ever seen, Fawkes." Daniel commented. "Definitely one of the few I wouldn't hit the snooze button on."

There was a gurgling sound from the phoenix that both Harry and Daniel took for laughter.

"Not that I am not happy to see you Fawkes," Harry spoke up, "but why are you here?"

I wanted to make sure that neither of you had taken any harm, since you were not awakening and Poppy was beginning to get worried because of that. You have been unconscious for over a day now. *Fawkes told them.* Last time you encountered the Dementors, you were not out this long.

"And since we are in my home on Abydos we are still unconscious," Daniel concluded.

"That's just as well, since we need to talk before you return to the real world." An older voice spoke from the doorway that let out on to the street.

"Merlin!", “Mryddin!” Harry and Daniel greeted the older Ancient in surprise.

Merlin! *Fawkes fell from the window sill, giving the phoenix equivalent of a surprised yelp as he tried to catch a glimpse of the Mage even phoenix elders spoke of with awe.*

Merlin’s eyes widened slightly in surprise when Fawkes Landed on Daniel’s shoulder and proceeded to look him over curiously. “Where did the phoenix come from?”

“This is Fawkes, the Headmaster’s familiar.” Harry told Merlin. “He got worried about us cause we were still unconscious after our most recent encounter with Dementors.”

“He means the Sai’ki’eth.” Daniel put in helpfully.

“And you destroyed them with another burst of power which is what the Others detected.” Merlin concluded. “Those abominations need to be dealt with.”

Daniel shook his head. “I tried, but the distance was too great. I collapsed shortly after the energy burst.”

**He did drive them back, Great One.** Fawkes sang.

“Great One!” Merlin was surprised by the title.

**You Merlin are revered by all phoenix kind for saving the great Mother and her eggs from a Basilisk.** *Fawkes told Merlin.*

“You fought a Basilisk?” Harry couldn’t help being surprised at the thought that he and Merlin might have something in common besides Daniel.

“Not exactly,” Merlin stepped into the main room of Daniel’s dreamscape home and conjured a comfortable chair to sit in. “I came upon a basilisk who was after a phoenix and her eggs. I didn’t want to kill the basilisk, but I couldn’t let it kill the Phoenix. She was the first of her kind I had seen on Earth. Fertile, nesting phoenixes are even rarer than Goa’uld Queens. I knew the phoenix was intelligent enough to figure out she needed to move her nest and would if given enough time, so I gave her that time.”
“How big was it?” Harry wanted to know. “How did you by the phoenix time without killing the basilisk?”

Merlin shrugged. “It was a young basilisk, about thirty feet long and I distracted it. I pinned the back half by pulling the earth over it and then created a phoenix of contained elemental fire, since the earth wouldn’t keep it imprisoned for long. I used my firebird to distract the basilisk. I set it to encircle the serpent’s head so it couldn’t risk lowering it to get at the mother phoenix. Elemental fire will harm even a dragon, but you have to have superb magical control to keep it from getting out of control and then being able to disperse it.”

“What would’ve happened if you had lost control?” Daniel wanted to know.

“You are familiar with wildfires?” Merlin asked. At Daniel’s nod, he told them. “If the caster loses control of an elemental fire creation, it would be worse than a hundred wildfires, burning everything in its path until there was nothing left to burn and nothing would have been able to put it out.”

“Sounds as uncontrollable as a naquadria bomb.” Daniel commented.

“It can be.” Merlin agreed, “Which is why the wizarding world calls it FiendFyre.”

*That is why the Great Mother and all Phoenixes revere you, because you risked so much to protect her and her young. Fawkes sang. She knew that if you lost control of the Fiendfyre, then all in that area, including you would die.*

Merlin bowed his head slightly in acknowledgement of Fawkes’ praise, “Thank you Fawkes for the honour you’ve done me in remembering me, and while I would love to speak with you some more, I really do need to speak privately with Daniel and Harry and we don’t have much time since Harry’s body wants to wake up.”

Fawkes trilled his farewell before vanishing, reassured that young Harry would soon be back among his friends.

########

“He’s lucky he was so close to the ground when he fell off his broom.” Harry heard a voice that sounded like Ron’s say.

“And that Dumbledore was quick with his wand.” He heard Hermione’s voice add.

Harry opened his eyes, fairly certain that he was back in the hospital wing given how softly his friends were talking.

/With our luck that’s a given not a guess./ Daniel observed.

Harry saw a few members of the Gryffindor Quidditch team were standing nearby and when Hermione called, “Harry! Your finally awake!” they moved in closer as she slipped out of the group to let Madame Pompfrey know.

“Harry, how are you feeling?” Harry didn’t know which of the twins had asked that, but he could see that both of them looked very worried.

“We were beginning to get worried.” Ron put in before Harry could respond. “You’ve been out for more than a day.”

“What happened?” Harry finally managed to get out after several attempts to make his mouth work.
“You fell off your broom, after that bright burst of light you gave off trying to drive the Dementors back.” Fred told him. “You were about twenty feet off the ground when you fell and Dumbledore kept you from hitting the ground too fast.”

“There was a rumour going around school that you were dead.” Alicia put in. “At least there was until the Headmaster told them at dinner you were in the hospital wing suffering from magical exhaustion and exposure to the Dementors.”

“What happened at the match after I fell?” Harry asked.

“They declared it a draw because of the Dementors’ interference. We will have a rematch later in the year.” George told him.

“At least we didn’t lose.” Harry sighed.

“Is that all you can think about, Harry.” Hermione chastised him having heard his comment as she returned. “You could’ve died if Dumbledore hadn’t been so quick with his wand, or at the very least broken every bone in your body when you hit the ground. Not to mention you managed to magically exhaust yourself again.”

“Well if the Dementors had stayed away, none of it would’ve happened.” Harry pointed out. “Does anyone know why they came on the field?”

The five Gryffindors around his bed shook their heads.

“Dumbledore was furious with them though.” Hermione put in. “He really let them have it. We overheard part of it. They’ve been positioned at the very edges of the school grounds and I think if they come in again without his permission, he will have them sent away.”

What about my broom?” Harry wanted to know.

From the quick glances they gave each other, Harry had a feeling he wasn’t going to like the answer.

“Did someone manage to catch my Nimbus?” Harry asked again.

“Well…” Hermione began hesitantly when none of the others spoke up. “It got blown away… and we were concentrating on you…”

“What happened to it?” Harry asked.

“It hit the Whomping Willow.” Ron finally said bluntly. “You know how that Willow reacts to being hit. It ripped your broom to shreds.”

“Professor Flitwick was able to rescue most of it, once the Willow calmed down.” Hermione put a bag she had picked up off the floor on the bed and opened it.

Harry looked inside and felt slightly sick at the sight of the remnants of his Nimbus 2000.

Madame Pomfrey came over and hustled them all out as Harry closed the bag over what remained of his faithful broom.

#####

On the first day of classes following Gryffindor/Hufflepuff match, the students were still talking about how the Dementors had interrupted the game and the strange burst of light Potter had given off before falling off his broom. It was as everyone was finishing up breakfast, that a lone owl entered
the Great Hall. The mail for the day had already been delivered so the arrival of one owl surprised everyone so they watched it wanting to know who the owl was here for. Silence fell over the Great Hall as for the first time anyone could remember the Headmaster publically received a letter. None of the teachers or older students could ever remember seeing the Headmaster receive mail in the Great Hall before. The teachers had decided long ago that since Dumbledore had control of the wards, he either had all his mail rerouted to his office or else had assigned a house elf to the task of collecting it and delivering it to him later.

Dumbledore removed what looked like a rolled up envelope from the small grey owl’s leg and it took off as soon as he had done so. He looked at it for a moment and then set it down on the table beside him.

McGonagall was surprised when the Headmaster simply set it off to one side and resumed eating his breakfast. Given that the letter had not been delivered the usual way she was fairly certain it had to be something important, otherwise the wards would not have let the owl deviate from the normal routine. “Headmaster, are you sure that letter shouldn’t be read right away? Given that it wasn’t delivered in the usual way, it might be quite urgent and need a quick response.”

“I sincerely doubt that Professor McGonagall, or the person sending it would have identified him or herself.” Dumbledore handed her the letter, so she could see what he meant.

The letter was addressed simply:

*Albus Dumbledore*

*Hogwarts*

Having taught most of the people who might have had a reason to write the Headmaster, McGonagall was surprised to find that she didn’t recognize the handwriting. She was also surprised at the neat and clean script, so unusual for someone who uses a quill daily. There were no ink splatters, or even the smallest smears of ink that usually marred any correspondence written by quill. If she hadn’t known better, she would’ve thought that a Muggle had written it, but she knew that was impossible since the parents of the muggleborn students sent any official correspondence to the school to a special mailbox and it was forwarded on to her, not the Headmaster.

“Besides,” Dumbledore reminded her, “for important matters, most people use the Floo, it is much quicker than owl post and not as easy to intercept. I am going to have to check the wards to see how this got through, given all my correspondence is routed to my office.”

McGonagall didn’t know what to say to counter that, because he was right, the letter shouldn’t have been able to be delivered to him in the Great Hall. The wards prevented even Howlers from being delivered to the Headmaster here.

Dumbledore left the head table a few minutes later the strange letter in his hand still unopened, which he knew annoyed Minerva no end. Cats were curious creatures after all, and cat animagi seemed to be even more so.

########

Fawkes trilled a greeting as Dumbledore came into his office and then spotting the envelope in his hand the trill ended on a questioning note.

“An owl managed to get past the wards to deliver this letter to the Great Hall.” Dumbledore told the phoenix.

Fawkes sang again sounding slightly concerned.
“No, I don’t think it’s anything harmful,” Dumbledore assured him. “It appears to be a muggle envelope and no one who wants to harm me would stoop to using anything muggle.”

Taking a seat at his desk, Dumbledore slit open the envelope and pulled the single sheet of paper out of it. The letter appeared to be rather short, with only half the page covered in small script. Curious to know who would be sending him a letter written on muggle stationary and probably written with a muggle pen, Dumbledore looked for the signature. Dr. Daniel Jackson.

It took the Headmaster a few moments to place the name… The man who was claiming to be Harry Potter’s American cousin.

Fawkes trilled a questioning note.

“It’s from Daniel Jackson. The American who is claiming that he is Harry Potter’s cousin.” Dumbledore told the phoenix. “I wrote to him a few weeks ago to arrange a meeting with him.”

That information produced the most unusual reaction Dumbledore had ever seen from the phoenix. He left his perch and settled on the back of Dumbledore’s chair. Then as the Headmaster watched, the phoenix peered intently at the sheet in his hand as if he were reading the letter. A moment later, his familiar looked at him and trilled in a way that Dumbledore over the years had interpreted as phoenix laughter.

Dumbledore glared at the phoenix. “I know I am considered a little senile by a number of people, but there is no way you can make me believe you read that letter.”

Fawkes gave him a knowing look and laughed again before pulling his head back so that his companion could read the letter sent by the white lord.

Mr. Dumbledore,

I must say I was quite surprised to receive a letter from you, given we have never met or corresponded before. I was especially surprised to learn that you wished to see me as well as your reason for wanting to meet with me. Due to my busy schedule as a negotiator for the United States government on both magical and normal diplomatic issues I find that I do not have time to meet with you to discuss the conditions under which you will allow me to meet a member of my family. Believe me when I say, I fully understand the responsibility you must feel regarding the safety of the children under your care and can assure you that I intend no harm to my cousin. I would no more harm him than I would harm myself. That is why I asked him to meet with me Hogsmeade. In a public place like Hogsmeade, between the watchful eyes of the teachers and older students that I am certain that you as a contentious headmaster make sure are always on hand to insure the safety of all students, and the watchful eyes of the good citizens of Hogsmeade itself, I am sure nothing is going to happen to my cousin while he meets with me.

Furthermore, while I know that you hold the positions of the Chief Warlock of the Wizengamot of Britain and of Supreme Mugwump the ICW, in addition to your duties as Headmaster of Hogwarts, I also know that the authority of those offices does not extend to interfering into what is private family business, unless you can prove I am a threat to my cousin. I think you will find that a bit hard to do. You should also know sir, that prior to meeting with my cousin, Petunia Evans Dursley, I had my government contacts check the records to find out who is listed in both the magical and normal communities as the guardian of record for Harry Potter, given I did want to meet him along with the rest of my family. You, sir, were not listed as his guardian of record on any paperwork that my sources were able to locate, so you can not refuse me the right to visit my kin. My cousin Petunia Dursley is listed as her nephew’s sole guardian in both the magical and normal communities and as such she is the only one who could say yes or no to my visit with Harry. She has given her approval for me to meet with him.
In addition, Mrs. Petunia Evans Dursley has requested that I act as her agent for any business dealing with our family in the magical world given that she wishes to have as little contact with the magical world as is humanly possible. I will be filing her signed declaration that I act as her agent with the Ministry of Magic as soon as possible, so if there are any school issues that need to be discussed such as Harry’s education or disciplinary issues, please contact me and I will try and schedule some time for you.

Sincerely yours,
Dr. Daniel Jackson,
Doctor of Linguistics, Archaeology, and Anthropology

The letter that Dumbledore held in his tightly clenched fist caught fire as he glared at it and he dropped it into the metal wastebasket by his desk in surprise. It had been some time since he had been angry enough to have an outburst of wandless wordless magic, not since he faced his former friend Grindelwald in fact. The outburst then had been bigger and had been what had enabled him to get the upper hand on Gellert and win the duel.

How dare that American interfere with all his carefully laid plans? How dare Petunia allow him to speak for her in the wizarding world? He had no doubt the American had been the one to suggest it to her because it wouldn’t have occurred to the vengeful woman that she could appoint someone to speak for her within the wizarding community. She wouldn’t have been aware of it otherwise. He knew the woman took great pride in ignoring anything that didn’t fit her definition of normal… unless she had no choice.

The last thing he wanted was for the status quo he had set up and carefully maintained over the years to change. He had told the wizarding world of how Harry’s mother’s sacrifice had protected Harry and that he had to be raised by his mother’s blood kin to keep that protection. It had been the only thing stopping a large number of magical families from trying to petition for guardianship. They weren’t related to Lily Potter by blood, so they couldn’t protect the boy while gaining status as his guardians. This American could undo all of that, once it became known he was blood kin to Lily.

Given the arrogance the American had shown in his letter, Dumbledore had no doubt the man would try to petition the magical courts for custody once Harry told him about his home life. And it would be granted through the magical courts since they always preferred a magical relative raise a child whenever possible, which would open a large container of flobberworms for him, because they would find out from the sealed records that he had been appointed Harry’s magical guardian.

No wizard or witch knew that he was Harry Potter’s magical guardian and he wanted to keep it that way. Not even Lockhart who he’d blackmailed into doing the oblivations on the member’s of the Wizengamot knew who had been appointed Potter’s Guardian. In a way he was kind of glad the man had been a victim of the only type of magic he had ever been good at – memory wipes because it insured that the man could never reveal to anyone that he had prevented anyone from ever finding out who Harry Potter’s magical guardian was or even that there was one.

Dumbledore made a mental note to go see Petunia this weekend. He needed to make sure she didn’t sign away custody of Harry to that American.

Fawkes wept in sorrow, though his tears went unnoticed by his bonded because he was so deeply involved in his scheming. They wouldn’t have been useful in a healing potion anyway, given that they were tears of anguish. He quietly closed off their bond because his bonded was out of the Light and until he came back into it if he ever did Fawkes would not communicate with him. The White Lord would have to be informed of what Albus was planning for this weekend and then Fawkes would go away for a while. Maybe some time without him would remind his bonded of what his actions could and would cost him, if he continued down this path, not only the loss of his familiar but
also in terms of the wizarding world’s respect.

#####

Harry and Daniel sat quietly listening to the other students complain about the two rolls of parchment that Snape assigned them on werewolves, their minds on other things, like trying to find a place for Merlin to teach them how use Daniel’s ascended powers within the limits of Harry’s very human body. The problem was finding a safe place to do so that wouldn’t be detected by Dumbledore, or destroying parts of Hogwarts.

As Harry listened to the lecture on Hinkypunks, Daniel was privately considering some of the things he had read in order to prepare the report Snape had assigned to the class the previous week. That man did nothing without a reason and there was a reason he wanted them to know about werewolves. Given the antipathy that the Potions Master had shown to Lupin and the way Lupin felt a little like an animagi, Daniel was willing to bet the Stargate that the Defence teacher was a werewolf. He would confirm it for sure next month. If Lupin wasn’t available for classes or to talk to during the time of the full month or was reported to be ill, he would have his answer.

If he was a werewolf, then Dumbledore had to know. There was no way he couldn’t know, so why was Lupin here, beyond doing a good job as far as Daniel could tell in teaching Defence Against the Dark Arts?

Lupin had been a friend of Harry’s parents and so it was a fairly safe bet that he must have known Sirius Black as well. Had Dumbledore brought Lupin in to try and stop Black if he got into the castle? Or was he there as another means of control on Harry because he had known Harry’s parents and could tell the boy things about them that no one else could… or would? If Harry and Daniel hadn’t been suspicious of Dumbledore’s motives, it might have made the boy feel even more grateful to the Headmaster for bringing him into contact with someone who could tell him about his family and his family’s history.

Daniel’s attention was brought back to the present as Harry got to his feet putting his things away. They were almost to the door when Lupin called. “Harry, would you please wait, I would like to speak with you.”

Harry nodded to his friends and they headed out of the classroom.

As Lupin put the cover on the Hinkypunk’s box, he said, “I heard about what happened at the Quidditch match. Is the damage to your broom repairable?”

“The Whomping Williow tore it to shreds.” Harry looked a little sad over losing what had given him his first real taste of freedom, because when he was on a broom he was the only one to control what happened to him, no one else. Then he hesitantly asked as part of his and Daniel’s plan to find out if there were a way to protect themselves without winding up magically exhausted. “Professor, do you know why the Dementors invaded the game? And why they seem to be attracted to me?”

“Invaded?” Lupin looked surprised at his choice of words. “Yes, I guess you could say they invaded, but I don’t think they were only after you. They are getting hungry. They feed off the positive emotions that we humans generate and their normal source of food isn’t as readily available here because Dumbledore will not allow them on to the grounds. You know I can’t recall ever seeing Dumbledore as angry as he was when they appeared on the Quidditch pitch. From what I heard we were lucky that none of the students or faculty were attacked, though a number of the first and second years had to be checked out by Madame Pomfrey.”
“Did anyone else react as badly to them as I did?” Harry wanted to know.

Lupin hesitated then said, “While no one else passed out, several second years from various houses wound up spending the night in the Hospital wing because of bad reactions to the effect that Dementors have on people. The Dementors got a little too close to the section of the stands where the first and second years were sitting in before they were driven off. In a way it’s a good thing it happened, because Madame Pomfrey was able to find out about a case of abuse and arrange to have it taken care of.”

Harry drew in a sharp breath. “Who?”

“I can’t tell you.” Lupin shook his head. “The situation is being handled confidentially. Apparently the child’s muggle mother had a problem with her child being magical that she hid from those who should have seen it. The muggle police have been contacted so they can take care of it.”

“But no one else passed out,” ‘other than me’ was the unheard part of that statement.

“No one else managed to try and cast the Patronus charm without a wand… It’s a spell that even Dumbledore can’t do without a wand and that most… full grown wizards can’t do even with a wand.” Lupin countered. “You are somehow unconsciously trying to cast the spell that will drive the Dementors away, though how you know about it is anyone’s guess.”

Daniel felt relieved that there was a way to control the horrible creatures, or at least drive them off since there was no real way to control them long term. /I knew they had to have found or created a spell to control the Sai’Ki’eth. Otherwise those damned things would’ve swept over the earth like a plague./

“Can you teach me this Patronus charm?” Harry wanted to know.

“I think I will have to.” Lupin told him. “The Dementors are going to be here until Sirius Black is captured and so the chances are pretty good you will encounter them again. It’s going to have to wait until after the winter break though, because we have a lot to get through and I picked a very poor time to fall ill. Not to mention I have to figure out a way to replicate the effects of a Dementor without bringing one into the school or taking you out to them.”

Harry left the classroom pleased that he would be able to learn the spell that would help keep the Dementors away. Now he and Daniel wouldn’t have to worry about being knocked out every time they were trying to drive the Dementors off.

Daniel made a mental note to himself to see if the library had any information on this Patronus charm.

#####

After dinner that evening in the Great Hall, Professor McGonagall stopped by the Gryffindor table before Harry and his friends could head for their common room. “Mr. Potter, the Headmaster would like to speak with you in his office, if you would come with me please.”

“We’ll see you in the common room, ok, Harry?” Hermione told him as she and Ron started to follow the rest of the Gryffindors out of the Great Hall.

Harry nodded as he and Daniel followed Professor McGonagall up to the Headmaster’s office.

She came to a stop in front of the gargoyle that guarded Dumbledore’s office and said “Milky Way Midnight.”
When the gargoyle slid out of the way, she told Harry, “Go on up, the Headmaster is waiting.”

The door at the top of the stairs was open.

“Come in Harry.” The Headmaster called to the teen standing in the doorway. “Have a seat.”

Harry/Daniel moved into the room wondering why they were here. There hadn’t been an announcement yet of a Hogsmeade weekend and neither of them had expected to be brought into Dumbledore’s office until the next one was announced. Daniel was fairly sure that Dumbledore and McGonagall would try and keep Harry out of Hogsmeade again and wondered if they would go so far as to try detention to keep him from going to Hogsmeade since Harry had told them both he had plenty of copies of the permission note from his aunt, so they couldn’t claim to have lost it this time.

“Why did you want to see me sir?” Harry took a seat at the furthest edge of Dumbledore’s desk.

Fawkes once again surprised Dumbledore by flying over to land in Harry’s lap with a trill. The Phoenix had been silent toward him ever since that letter arrived from Harry’s American cousin, going so far as to close off the bond between them for the first time in a very long time. His familiar just didn’t understand that some times things that were not pleasant had to happen for the greater good of all. Harry had a destiny here in Britain, not in America.

§White Lord, I will be seeing you later. I have important news for you.§ Fawkes had trilled as he landed in Harry’s lap.

/Harry and I will make sure the silencing and notice me not wards are up./ Daniel told him.

The phoenix settled down into Harry/Daniel’s lap and nudged his hand.

As the silence in the room continued with Dumbledore staring at his familiar with worried eyes, Harry had finally had enough of it and repeated his earlier question. “Why did you want to see me, sir?”

“I wanted to make sure you were ok after what happened at the Quidditch match.” Dumbledore told him.

“I’m sure Madame Pompfrey kept you well aware of my condition sir.” Harry countered dryly. “I don’t remember hearing about a parade of second years being brought up here, because you wanted to check on them after their exposure to the Dementors. What makes me so special?”

“There was no need to worry about them,” Dumbledore pointed out calmly. “They didn’t try and cast wandlessly… not to mention silently a spell I wouldn’t even attempt without a wand. Expending that much energy in an undirected spell can have serious consequences.”

“Oh you mean the Patronus Charm.” Harry concluded. “I wouldn’t worry about it. Professor Lupin promised to teach me how to cast it properly.”

Dumbledore leaned back in his chair, staring at the boy seated on the other side of the desk from him, wondering why Lupin had made the offer. “I am pleased that he offered to help you, otherwise I would’ve had to ask him to teach you how to cast the spell properly.”

Harry shrugged, “Oh he didn’t offer. I asked him to teach it to me once he told me what the spell was and what it was supposed to do. I figured it was better to know how to cast the charm properly, rather than risk my life every time I have to drive the Dementors off since they seem to be attracted to me… though no one will tell me why.”
Dumbledore looked vaguely apologetic. “I do not think you were their main target. The Dementors feed on emotions and those around the school have been rather limited in what they can feed on and those are only the ambient emotions that manage to make it beyond the castle walls. Dementors use their ability to pull to the surface painful memories to freeze their prey in place because they become trapped in the misery generated by those memories. With you trapped in your worst memories, they are free to feed on good emotions you have within you. The closer they can get the more they are able to get a hold on you. Prolonged exposure leaves one as little more than a husk trapped in a world of misery. That’s part of the reason they are the guards at Azkaban, They feed on the prisoners and we know where they are and that they are not causing harm elsewhere.”

Having felt the effects of the Dementors himself, Harry couldn’t resist saying. “It would be better to kill them.”

Dumbledore chose to deliberately misunderstand what Harry has said, because he was certain the boy was talking about his desire to kill Black because he was responsible for Harry’s parent’s deaths. “There is no way to kill the Dementors that we are aware of. The best we have ever been able to do is restrain or drive them off with the Patrons charm.”

“I was talking about those imprisoned at Azkaban.” Harry told him. “I think Voldemort is the only one I would wish the Dementors on.”

“Ah, the reasoning of the young,” Dumbledore sighed. “It’s a pity most things in life are not that simple.”

Harry shrugged. “Maybe you’re right, because if they were killed, then Sirius Black would be dead and I would never know why he betrayed my parents, or even if he really did it,” /given we still have that animagus hiding in our dorm./ Harry put in as a mental aside to Daniel. “Have you located the records for his trial yet, Headmaster, or should I ask my cousin to see if he can get hold of a copy?”

“I still have people looking. There were a lot of trials during that time so there are a lot of stored records to go through. They will let me know as soon as they locate the records.” Dumbledore assured him and then sounding casual as if he were discussing the weather, he asked. “When was the last time you heard from your cousin?”

Harry shrugged. “I got a letter from him recently. Were the Dementors all you wished to discuss, sir?”

Given he had no real reason to press on the matter of Jackson and he had at least confirmed that young harry was writing to the other man, Dumbledore nodded. He would have to take steps to have Harry’s mail screened even more closely. He couldn’t stop everything Jackson sent from getting through, but he could slow down their communication and make Harry think the man was too busy to spend time with him.

Harry nudged the phoenix off his lap and got to his feet. The bird gave him a reproachful look before returning to his perch.

####

Fawkes flamed in as quietly as possible. He knew that the White Lord would put up wards to prevent the others in the dorm room from noticing his arrival, but it was still better to avoid attracting the attention of curious younglings. He didn’t want the other third year Gryffindors to comment on the fact he was visiting Harry Potter late at night. The boy already had enough attention focused on him as it was.
Daniel Jackson was sitting there waiting for him while young Harry slept.

Staring back and forth between the two, Fawkes trilled, §*How can you appear separate from him unless on the dream plane?*

Daniel gestured to the ring on the sleeping boy’s right hand before saying softly. “A gift from Myrddin. He made that so we could appear as separate entities when needed, though not for long. Harry needed his sleep, so we set it up so that I was here to wait for you. Now what was it you needed to tell us?”

§*I thought you should know that he got your letter today and because of it he is planning on visiting Harry’s aunt this weekend. He wants to make sure she doesn’t give you custody.* § Fawkes trilled softly so that he wouldn’t risk waking up the other boys in the dormitory.

“He’s moving a little sooner than I’d planned, but as Jack says no plan survives its first encounter with the enemy, so you have to stay on your toes and be flexible.” Then Daniel could resist commenting. “You do realize you sound like a wizard who is talking about Voldemort, when you mention Dumbledore that way, don’t you?”

§*I will not use his name because I no longer respect him.* § If it were possible for a phoenix to look ashamed, Fawkes managed it. §*He has slipped away from the Light and until he comes back to it, I no longer consider him my bonded.* §

“So what are you going to do?” Daniel wondered.

§*Leave.* § Fawkes told him sadly. §*I have to. For a phoenix a bond is like marriage and for Him to fall from the Light is like finding out you married an adulterer, or a potential child molester. While may not yet have actually assaulted a child yet, it may take very little for him to take that final step.* §

“Can he compel you to stay?” Daniel wanted to know.

§*I don’t know. He is a powerful wizard and he knows I am not happy with him.* § Fawkes ruffled his feathers. §*If he did so though, it would be the final step, he would become irretrievably Dark, because that is one of the greatest crimes that can be committed on a Light creature like myself or a Unicorn.* §

Daniel was silent for a moment. “Maybe you should hold off on leaving until the weekend, when Dumbledore is out of the castle trying to Find Petunia, because I will make sure she is not on Privet drive this weekend. That should give you several hours at least to get out so that he can’t bring you back.”

§*You’re probably right,* § Fawkes bobbed his head in agreement. §*But it will be hard, everything about me says to leave as soon as possible.* §

“Whatever you decide, I will help you as much as I can, and I know Harry will too.” Daniel promised the phoenix

#########

Petunia heard the mail slot in the door clink and knew that Thursday’s mail had finally been delivered. The mew mailman was beginning to be a bit annoying. The mail was getting delivered later and later in the day. When she had called to complain, the manager of main branch for Little Whinging post office had simply told her that the postman’s route had gotten larger with the new block of flats that had been built on the other side of the park and that had added a couple of hours to his delivery time since the route he was required to take was to start with the locations furthest out
and work his way in.

As Petunia bent to pick up the mail, she noticed an envelope sitting off to one side. When she picked it up, the first thing she noticed was that the stamp was foreign. Looking for a return address she found it in the upper left corner of the envelope.

_Dr. Daniel Jackson_
205 Currie Road,  
Slippery Rock, PA 16057 USA

Petunia stared at the letter in amazement for several minutes. She didn’t think witches or wizards ever did anything as normal send something by mail. Not even her sister had done so when she attended that dratted school, not that she had written Petunia all that much. She might actually begin to like this distant cousin… a little… if only because he appeared to care that she really didn’t want any sort of magical contact and had sent her a regular letter, clearly written with a pen and not a quill, by normal mail.

Putting the other mail down on the hall table, Petunia opened the letter, hoping that Jackson wasn’t writing to tell her that he had changed his mind about taking the brat off her hands, or that the brat had been stupid enough to decline the offer.

_Petunia,_

_While this is short notice, I realize, I will be in London on Saturday November 13, 1993 from about noon to 6pm before I have to catch a flight to Bulgaria to deal with a diplomatic situation there. I was hoping we could meet that day to take care of that business we spoke about._

_I have spoken with Harry and he is agreeable to the change. However in his last letter to me he reported that the Headmaster… Dumbledore seems to be taking an unusual interest in this matter, so I think it would be a good idea if we conclude the paperwork as soon as we possibly can._

_If you are not able to meet with me because this is short notice, I will understand, but I do need to make you aware that I have learned from several unimpeachable sources that Dumbledore intends to pay you a visit this weekend to try and convince you not to change the custody arrangements, so if you are not going to be able to meet with me, you and your husband might want to plan a long trip until around Christmas time so he can’t locate you. Because the next time I will even have a chance to get near England is going to be the 2nd or 3rd weekend in December when I am to pass through London on my way to an archeological conference in Egypt._

_If you will be able to meet with me, then please come to the Food Hall at Harrods anytime between 2 and 4pm._

_Sincerely,_
_Daniel Jackson_

Petunia was not pleased to read that Dumbledore intended to interfere. For that past twelve years that man had been ruining their lives, well no more. He had made it clear that Lily’s child had to live with maternal kin for them all to be safe, well Jackson was kin and the fact that he was American didn’t seem to matter to anyone but Dumbledore. Apparently that man had no intention of giving up his hold on her family. Well she was going to put a stop to that starting today. It was time to take her family back. First she needed to check a few things out and then have a long talk with Vernon tonight, because once those papers were signed, she was going to make sure they disappeared…
though if things worked out the way she hoped it would be a long time before that meddlesome old goat knew they were gone. It was time things went right for the Dursley family.

############################

At precisely 2 pm on Saturday Petunia Dursley strode into Harrods followed by her husband.

Vernon couldn’t help feeling nervous at the idea of meeting a wizard. All their previous meetings with adult wizards hadn’t gone that well, but his wife had assured him that this one would take Potter off their hands forever and the prospect of that was something he was actually looking forward to. He just hoped this one had at least dressed like normal people should.

They went up and down the isles of the Food Hall, with Petunia looking everyone over.

“I thought you said you would know him when you saw him, Pet.” Vernon hissed as his wife garnered another strange look from a nearby shopper.

“I will Vernon.” Petunia told him. “There are just a lot more people here than I expected.”

They wandered into the bakery section, and Petunia and Vernon spent several minutes looking at the works of art that were in the glass cases.

“Cousin Petunia,” A gentle male voice called. “I’m glad you were able to meet me.”

Vernon turned and found himself looking at a slender young man who he guessed was in his thirties with golden brown hair and dressed in a conservative brown suit. He had to admit at least to himself that this man definitely didn’t fit his conception of a wizard.

“Cousin Daniel, this is my husband Vernon,” Petunia gestured to the man standing beside her.

“Pleased to meet you Vernon,” Daniel extended his hand. “I’m Dr. Daniel Jackson.”

Vernon took it with barely concealed reluctance and shook his hand but didn’t return the greeting.

As if Daniel sensed his reluctance, he nodded, “Let’s get down to business, shall we?”

He led them over to a table in the nearby ice cream shop that Harrods had put there so people could take a break from shopping if they wanted to. Opening the leather document case he had brought with him Daniel pulled out a sheaf of papers.

“I had these drawn up by a lawyer who specialises in both normal and magical law.” Daniel even though he kept his voice so other’s wouldn’t hear this discussion, couldn’t help noticing Vernon’s wince at the word magic. “Mr Dursley, I gather from the way your reacted to me that you do not like thinking about anything outside what you view as normal, but sir even in science there are things that happen that do not fit the current view of what the world considers normal. If it helps you any, think of your nephew and I as being on a slightly different evolutionary path than you.”

“My wife and son aren’t part of this so called evolutionary path are they?” Vernon hissed. “They are normal. The way everyone should be.”

Daniel looked at Petunia and it was fairly clear from the blank expression on her face, that she hadn’t told Vernon about the possibility of his grandchildren being magical. ”No they are not but not everyone is. Robert Heinlein a famous author in one of his books wrote and I am paraphrasing here: ‘There is no such thing as normal. Everyone has one quirk, one fetish, one fear that keeps them from fitting the definition of normal.’ Some people are divinely blessed by a higher power with gifts or
abilities that no one else has in things like music or the sciences, and they are considered prodigies. And still others are blessed by that same higher power with the rare ability of being able to heal with the touch of their hands. If it helps you understand those blessed with my ability any better, think of Harry’s and my gift as being like a prodigy.”

“There is no way that can be considered as a gift.” Vernon hissed. “It serves no useful purpose.”

“I’m sorry you feel that way, Mr. Dursley. I’m also sorry that you will miss out on a lot of the wonder in the universe because of your narrow view of the world and the purpose of our creator.” Daniel shook his head sadly and then took a deep cleansing breath. “You are a lot like a Senator I know. His world view is rather rigid and unyielding. He is firmly convinced that his way is the only way things should be done… for the greater good of course.”

“Vernon!” Petunia hissed grabbing his arm and shaking it. She didn’t want Jackson backing out at the last moment because of how they felt about his freakish ways.

“He’s not doing this out of the goodness of his heart and because of him we are going to have to make major changes in our life.” Vernon hissed back.

“Actually, Mr. Dursley I am and I am going to have to make a great many changes in my life too to have Harry in it, because I am single and my work among other things will be affected, but I have been where Harry is as an orphan and no one should have to grow up where they are not wanted.” Daniel countered firmly. “And what changes are you talking about? The only change I can see for you once these papers are signed and finalised in a month or so is that you will no longer have custody of your nephew Harry Potter.”

There were several minutes of silence as the Dursleys stared at each other and then Petunia finally spoke. “When I read that section of your letter about Dumbledore, I realised that he was never going to relinquish his control and would always be trying to force us to take the boy back.”

“Ah,” Daniel nodded in understanding “Say no more. We in America have noticed that habit of his, which is why our representative at the ICW wears a charm to protect him from compulsion spells no matter how minor. Dumbledore’s habit of trying to subtly or not to impose his will on others, saying it is for the ‘greater good’. Which is a fine thing if you as an individual are deciding to make some sort of sacrifice that involves giving up all or part of your life for the good of others, like his decision to face Grindelwald which helped shorten WW II, because that removed one of Hitler’s main areas of support so that the Normandy invasion remained a secret. However when someone is are making a decision for another, then that makes that person, a dictator, especially when it becomes clear the situation as it is cannot be maintained. Do you need help relocating?”

“Thank you but no.” Petunia declined his offer of help.

Daniel nodded. “Then let’s make this part as quick and painless for you both as I can.” Daniel handed the sheaf of papers to Petunia and her husband to look over. “I asked the solicitor to draw up documents for an uncontested change of custody, that way neither you or I have to appear in court to explain why it is being done. Once they are signed by your wife as Harry’s Guardian of record and properly filed by my solicitor here in the UK, then you and your wife will no longer have custody of your nephew Harry Potter.”

“How long do you think it will take?” Petunia wanted to know.

“For it to be finalised?” Daniel asked.

“Yes,” Petunia took each page from Vernon after he finished reading it and signed where he
“That I was told will depend on the levels of bureaucracy these documents have to go through on the non-magical side,” Daniel told her. “Once they have been finalised on your side of the court system the record on my side will immediately be updated with the new information and no one will ever see it, unless they ask to see the records. And even then they will have to fill out a ton of paperwork to get access.”

Signing the final page and handing it back to Daniel, Petunia Dursley smiled at the thought of that meddling fool Dumbledore being buried under a mountain of paperwork as he tried to find out who now had custody of Lily’s brat.

Dumbledore had left Hogwarts for the day, telling his Deputy Headmistress he had some personal business to take care of. It was a pity he was not in his office around 3pm because he would have undoubtedly panicked when one of the devices on his desk that he had keyed to the wards on Privet Drive started wailing.

Fawkes had been about to make his departure when the monitoring device had gone off. Before he could do anything, a girl with long dark hair and dressed in a style that hadn’t been seen since the time of the Founders appeared in office. She waved her hand at the portraits of the previous headmasters that decorated the walls and they suddenly went to sleep then she stepped over to the desk and placed her hand firmly on the screeching silver orb.

It went silent.

“Hello Fawkes,” the girl greeted him.

§Hogwarts!§ Fawkes fell off his perch.
Always Have A Backup Plan

Chapter Notes

words more words/ = mental conversations between Harry and Daniel
§words more words§ = phoenix speech

Always Have A Backup Plan

The girl released her hold on the silver sphere and hissed with satisfaction. “There that should put a crimp in that meddling old fool’s plans.”

§What did you do?§ Fawkes inquired curious.

“I’m sorry but I cannot tell you,” Hogwarts sounded as if she regretted that she couldn’t.

§You do not trust me?§ Fawkes managed to sound slightly insulted. §I am a creature of light. I would not betray what you tell me.§

“It is not you I don’t trust, it is your bonded.” Hogwarts countered.

§I understand.§ Fawkes sounded sad. §He has lost his way, so much so that I can no longer remain here.§

“You have broken your bond with him?” Hogwarts stared at him in surprise. If the phoenix had done that, then things were worse than she thought.

§No,§ Fawkes disagreed. §I have hopes that he can find his way back to the Light. But until he does, I can no longer remain here.§

Staring at the young girl representing Hogwarts from his perch, Fawkes trilled, §May I ask you a question?§

“You can ask, but I may not answer.” Hogwarts told the phoenix as she checked the office for any other devices that might be monitoring young Potter and by extension Salazar’s only legitimate son who was sharing the boy’s body.

§Understood.§ Fawkes agreed. §I just wanted to know if the Founders gave you the ability to create your own avatar.§

“They didn’t,” Hogwarts turned her attention back to the phoenix. “Myrrdin, or perhaps I should say, Merlin did. He paid a final visit here, after the four who created me were no longer in this world. He said that he was going to give the children of his people one final bit of help. He told me that there was always the possibility that one day someone would be in a position of authority here who would do things that were not in the best interests of the children. He gave me the ability to act, if the leader or leaders of this school proved to be unable or unwilling to deal with situations that endangered the students I was meant to protect and nurture. The current Headmaster is not living up to his responsibilities, so I am forced to act. The foul creatures that invaded the Quidditch match are just the
most recent example of his long list of failures. They should not have be allowed anywhere near the
grounds."

§I agree, but that was not his choice.§ Fawkes told her. §They were put here by the Ministry because
of Sirius Black. It was believed they would be able to capture him outside the castle.§

“If this Ministry can dictate terms to the Headmaster, over how to protect this school, then why did
he not take steps to insure that the Ministry provided aurors for the times when students were outside
in quantities large enough to attract the attention of the Dementors? Or insure that they put up
additional wards to keep them outside the boundaries of the school grounds?” Hogwarts asked. “He
should have known there was a chance that the Dementors would try to invade, given the
concentration of students outside the castle wards. He should have known that the emotions they
would be generating would be like catnip to a kneazle. One thing is for sure, if Dumbledore doesn’t
start paying more attention to his responsibilities here, I will exercise my power and remove him from
his position as holder of the wards and defences for this castle.”

Fawkes bobbed his head in understanding. The last time a Headmaster had been removed as holder
of the castle wards had been over four hundred years ago. If that happened, it would mean that
Dumbledore would no longer be Headmaster because the wards would transfer to McGonagall as
Deputy Headmistress and that would make her Headmistress. He wondered how the transfiguration
professor would react to being made Headmistress, while Dumbledore was still alive and hadn’t
announced his resignation. He also couldn’t help wondering what Dumbledore would do if that
happened.

#######

Mrs. Evanovich in Number #8 just shook her head in amazement as she peered through the curtains
at the thin, elderly man walking up the sidewalk toward the front door of #4. Knowing how the
Dursley’s reacted to anything outside the norm or non-British like her husband, she couldn’t help
being a little grateful that they weren’t home. The bearded elderly man dressed in golfing clothes that
had been popular in the 20’s and 30’s literally screamed non-conformist and would have raised Mrs.
Dursley’s hackles for sure.

She also couldn’t help wondering what business the odd man had with the Dursley’s. If she had been
a betting woman, she would’ve put money on it having to do with Petunia’s nephew, the one she
bad-mouthed every chance she got. He was also the one that Petunia and her husband claimed went
to St. Brutus’ Secure Centre when he left their home every year.

It was a pity that Petunia hadn’t done any research with regards to that place. If she had she
would’ve chosen a different location as the place her nephew disappeared to every year, given that
there really was no place such as St. Brutus’. Between her former work in Social services as a
visiting nurse and her oldest boy’s job as an Inspector at New Scotland Yard, she knew that for
certain. There was no such place and she was saving that bombshell for a time when Petunia said
something particularly cutting about her or her husband, Nicolas. It would destroy Petunia’s
credibility completely.

She watched the man knock several times on the front door and his knocking got fiercer with each
attempt. Worried that he might do himself an injury, Mrs. Evanovich stepped outside to the fence
dividing their properties and told him, “The Dursleys aren’t home. They left several hours ago.”

Dumbledore looked in the direction of the voice and spotted an elderly woman standing by the fence. Walking quickly over, but making sure to stay a safe distance away so she wouldn’t misinterpret his actions, Dumbledore asked, “Would you happen to know where they went or when they will return?
I have a serious matter regarding Mrs. Dursley’s nephew that I need to discuss with them.”
Mrs. Evanovich smiled slightly catching sight of Mrs. Dabney listening near the corner of the Dursley’s house. “Oh are you from St. Brutus’?”

“St. Brutus’?” Dumbledore stared at her puzzled.

“Petunia told us all that her nephew is confined to St. Brutus’ Secure Centre for Criminal Boys, during the year and comes home for the summer.” Mrs. Evanovich put in helpfully. “I do hope the boy hasn’t gotten himself in to further trouble. Did they know you were coming? If they did, it might explain their sudden decision to leave, given they don’t like talking about him.”

It took Dumbledore a few moments to figure out what she was talking about. He hadn’t expected Petunia to tell the neighbours that Harry was a criminal. “No, they didn’t know that I was coming today. It was a rather spur of the moment decision. And while I am not from this St. Brutus’, I do need to speak to them regarding Mr. Potter. Can you by any chance tell me when they will be back?”

“Well sir, I am afraid you will have to come back next week.” The Dursley’s neighbour told him. “I heard her telling one of the other neighbours that she and her husband were going to be spending the weekend away from home. And I would suggest leaving them a note to let them know you are going to be coming so you won’t miss them again.”

The Dursley’s neighbour turned and headed into her house before Dumbledore could say or do anything.

Dumbledore stood there for several minutes debating what he needed to do. The only bright spot he could see was that with them gone, Jackson wouldn’t be able to contact them either. Walking back up to the front door, Dumbledore shielded it from view before tapping the doorknob with his wand. The monitoring charm would let him know when the Dursleys returned.

Satisfied that the spell would do what he needed it to do, Dumbledore walked toward the nearby park and took the portkey he wore around his neck and said, “Office.”

Once he was in his office, Dumbledore moved quickly to the silver sphere on his desk and tapped it with his wand linking the monitoring spell that would let him know when the Dursleys returned to the rest of the spells that were monitoring the Dursley home.

With that done, Dumbledore waved his wand and transfigured his clothes back into his usual robes with a sigh of relief. He didn’t know how Muggles could stand to wear those clothes. How could they possibly relax in those clothes and yet his books clearly showed they wore them when engaging in the strange sport they called golf.

A moment later he realised that Fawkes hadn’t greeted him on his return. Looking toward the phoenix’s perch, the Headmaster was surprised to see he wasn’t there. Worried Dumbledore looked around the room. He knew the bond between them hadn’t been broken, otherwise he would have felt unimaginable pain, but when he reached within himself, the bond that would have told him where the phoenix was, was still closed off.

Fawkes had just gone off to sulk then. Dumbledore was sure of it. He would be back. His problem was going to be explaining where Fawkes was if he stayed away for more than a few days. He didn’t need rumours starting up that he was going Dark and it was a well-known fact that no phoenix would stay with someone who practiced Dark Magic.
“Hey Harry!” Ron called catching sight of Harry heading down the stairs from one of the smaller unused towers of Hogwarts. “Where were you? Hermione and I have been looking for you for hours.”

“Well, neither of you were up when I went to breakfast and I got a letter, so I went somewhere where I could read it in peace and then do some thinking.” Harry told his friends.

Given that everyone Harry usually corresponded with was at school with him Hermione quickly realised who the letter had to be from, Harry’s American cousin. “And what’s the latest news from your cousin, Dr. Jackson?”

Harry shrugged, “Not much, just letting me know what he’s been up and asking how I’ve been doing. He’s been pretty busy since he last wrote me. Doing some translating work. He’s gone to help a friend on an archaeological dig, and was involved in some high level negotiations for the non-magical US government.”

Before Hermione could comment, Ron spoke up, “You mean you spent almost the whole day thinking about a letter you got! That’s the sort of thing girls do when they go all gooey over someone like Lockhart. There are other things to do on the weekend you know.”

“Yes,” Hermione put in, “like finishing your homework…”

“No,” Ron hastily interrupted. “Like relaxing. Maybe even going outside. It’s nice today. Let’s not spend any more time in the castle.”

Harry considered this for a minute and nodded. “Why don’t we go see Hagrid? We haven’t had a chance to visit with him outside of class yet this year.”

“Good idea.” Ron agreed enthusiastically. “We haven’t seen him for ages.”

Hermione shook her head. “Harry, you know you aren’t supposed to leave the castle. Black is still out there… remember Ron.”

“Hermione,” Harry glared at her. “I am not going let Black dictate how I live my life. I will not give him that much power over my life.”

“Harry, Professor McGonagall said you shouldn’t go outside unless one of the teachers was with you.” Hermione reminded him.

“And we are going to see a teacher, Hermione.” Harry reminded her as he moved down the steps. “We do not have an escort every time we go to Care of Magical Creatures class, so Professor McGonagall must consider Hagrid adequate protection.”

“But Hagrid can’t do magic!” Hermione reminded them, trying to stop Harry.

Following Harry down the stairs, Ron called, “Come on Hermione! What’s the worst that can happen?”

“Black could catch us.” Hermione pointed out gloomily.

“Come on, Hermione, he may be a dark wizard but he’s not stupid.” Ron countered. “He broke out of Azkaban. And you can’t be stupid and do that. He’s not going to be stupid enough to try anything in broad daylight. We still have a few hours before sunset. We just have to make sure we get back by then.”
The trip down to Hagrid’s was made in silence, with Hermione radiating disapproval the whole way.

Finally Harry had enough and turned on her before they reached Hagrid’s door. “Hermione, if you can’t be pleasant while we are there, then go on back up to the castle. I don’t need you spoiling the rest of my day. You, McGonagall and Dumbledore all seem to think you have the right to control how I live my life, but you don’t get a vote Hermione. *It’s my life!* You are not my guardian and if Aunt Petunia had any say, she’d cheer Black on as he killed me as long as he didn’t come any where near her precious *Duddikins*!”

Hermione’s jaw dropped in surprise. “I’ve never….”

“What?” Harry interrupted unwilling to let her get started. “ Tried to tell me what to do? Never ordered me around like Aunt Petunia does. Wrong Hermione. You try every chance you get and up to now I let you because you are my friend, but Hermione I am not a child. I am the same age as you are. I may not be as bright as you are, but I can think and reason things out for myself. I don’t need you to do it for me.”

Hermione stared at him in shock. Harry had never spoken to her like this before. There had to be something wrong with him. Could that letter he got from his cousin have had some kind of spell or potion on it intended to exert control over Harry? Could his cousin or someone else working through his cousin be trying to take control of Harry like that diary had over Ginny last year?

Hermione knew that Malfoy’s father a Deatheater had been behind that plot and that no one knew who all the Deatheaters were so it was possible there were some in America as well. Could his cousin have been an unmarked Deatheater or might he know someone in the American magical government who was and who he trusted enough to tell them about his well-known cousin? If so, they might have cast some spells or put potions on the letters Jackson was sending Harry to take control of him. That had to be it! Harry never would’ve said those unkind things otherwise. She had to get him to Madame Pomfrey to get him checked over before the spell or potion had taken hold too deeply.

“Harry, I think you need to see Madame Pomfrey.” Hermione tried to say in a calm tone of voice. “You are not acting right. You never would’ve said those kinds of things to me otherwise.”

When Harry gave her a look that said she had to be an idiot, she growled in exasperation and grabbed hold of his arm and tried to drag him back toward the castle and the Hospital wing.

Harry however dug in his heels and refused to go. “I’m fine Hermione. There’s nothing wrong with me.”

“Ron, help me.” Hermione begged. “We need to get him to Madame Pomfrey.”

Ron thought about it for a second and then grabbed Harry’s other arm and proceeded to help Hermione drag him back to the castle. Harry fought them all the way back.

“Et tu Ron,” Harry growled, as Daniel felt his pain at the very obvious betrayal of Harry’s friends.

Even though they were going about it the wrong way, Daniel was fairly certain he knew why they were or at least Hermione was doing it. They thought Harry was in danger and that he needed to be protected. In some ways they were a lot like Jack in thinking that Harry couldn’t even step out the front door without risking life and limb. Well this pair was going to have to learn the same lesson he still had to occasionally pound into Jack’s thick skull, that they could take care of themselves. Daniel started making plans on how to get the pair back for their very clear betrayal of Harry. He was going to have to teach Harry the lessons that Jack had taught him. That it was ok and even right to stand up...
or yourself. Both of them had grown up in a similar environment and learned early on that it was best to remain in the background and avoid drawing attention to yourself. He would teach Harry how to use those skills to get back at those who hurt him, using all the skills Jack had taught him. He had even been able to use them quite successfully on Jack a few times when the man had pushed him too far. He still remembered very fondly the month where Jack hadn’t been able to get any blue jello from the commissary.

“Huh,” it took Ron a minute to realise that Harry thought he was siding with Hermione in thinking he was possessed or cursed and quickly said in a low voice so that Hermione couldn’t hear him, “Look Harry, I know there’s nothing wrong with you but the only way we are going to convince Hermione that there’s nothing wrong with you is to get Madame Pomfrey to say so. Once she’s proven that no one is making you act like Ginny did last year then we can make Hermione eat crow for a long time to come.”

Once they reached the Hospital wing, Hermione had Ron wait with Harry so he wouldn’t try and leave and so she could try and explain things to Madame Pomfrey without the boys overhearing.

“Madame Pomfrey,” Hermione went into her office. “Could you please come check Harry over?”

“What’s wrong with him?” Pomfrey asked looking up from her paperwork.

Hermione bit her lip, knowing this was going to sound stupid. “I think he’s been hit by some kind mind control spell. He is saying the hateful things to me and I know if he were in his right mind he wouldn’t have said them. He’s acting a lot like my mother does before her time every month, you know.”

Knowing that Miss Granger was not one to be overly dramatic, Madame Pomfrey grabbed her wand and went out into the main room, a little worried. Harry Potter was always such a polite child. There were a few curses that could have given someone a change in personality. She just hoped it hadn’t been the Imperious curse.

A few diagnostic spells later including a discrete one to check for the Imperious curse, Madame Pomfrey announced, “There are no spells of any kind on Mr. Potter that could be affecting his personality. Nor did I detect any potions that could be affecting him.”

Hermione looked relieved and annoyed at the same time.

Before she could say a word about Harry’s treatment of her, Harry glared at Hermione. “Are you satisfied, Hermione? Instead of believing that I had the right to be angry with you because you were trying to interfere in my life, you decided that I had to be under the effects of a spell or potion. One that you insisted had to be placed on me by my cousin, a man I have yet to meet!”

“Harry!” Hermione protested. “I was worried because you aren’t acting the way you usually do.”

“So, just because I don’t give in and do what you want, that gives you the right to treat me like a five year old who can’t be trusted to cross the street by myself. Let me clue you in on a few things Hermione. Just because you are a friend of mine that does not give you the right to say how I should live my life or act like you’re my mother because you aren’t. You can offer your advise, but I am not required to take it. Given that Aunt Petunia and Uncle Vernon wouldn’t care if I fell off the face of the world, unless it inconvenienced them, I have gotten quite good at taking care of myself for quite some time, so you do not get to act like my mother. The only person in the magical world I will allow to act like my mother is Mrs. Weasley.” Seeing that she wasn’t getting the point, Harry threw
up his hands and stalked away from her before turning and pointing. “You know what Hermione, right now it doesn’t matter. I would suggest that for the remainder of the weekend you stay away from me, cause if I see you I might just hex you.”

Harry turned sharply on the heel of his shoe and walked out of the Hospital wing leaving behind a stunned Hermione and Madame Pomfrey.

“How could he say that to me?” Hermione demanded. “I was worried that there was something wrong with him and he attacks me for worrying about him.”

“No you weren’t, Hermione.” Ron’s voice cut across her tirade. “He wasn’t following the command of Hermione who is the fount of all knowledge which annoyed you and since he wasn’t obeying your orders as he always has before, he had to be under a spell. You basically told Harry he didn’t have any right to disagree with you because you know better than he does how he should live his life.”

Silence followed Ron out of the Hospital wing a few minutes later, and he didn’t bother to hide the slightly smug grin on his face.

Hermione entered the Great Hall alone for the first time since her first year here. Harry and Ron hadn’t bothered to wait for her. She hoped it was just Ron’s usually bottomless pit that had made them leave without her. After all Harry should be over what happened that afternoon, she’d been worried that he was acting out of character and wanted to make sure he was safe after all.

She spotted the two boys seated near the end of the Gryffindor table and headed over to join them in the empty seat across from Harry. Before she could sit down though, Harry pulled his wand out of his pocket and silently set it on the table, pointing at the seat she intended to occupy. The expression on Harry’s face was clearly unwelcoming and Ron’s expression while clearly not unwelcoming, indicated he didn’t want her sitting there either. Hermione bit her lip, clearly wanting to say something but then she moved down the table a few places and sat down.

“It’s a good thing I read that book on life debts.” Harry told Ron after a few minutes, knowing that Hermione was listening in.

“Oh why?” Ron asked his mouth full of food.

“Went down to Hagrid’s after I left the Hospital wing and it looks like Malfoy went running to Daddy like I expected telling him all about the big bad hippogriff that attacked him during his first Care of Magical creatures class.” Harry announced. “Hagrid told me that Malfoy senior has managed to get Buckbeak brought up on charges and he is going to have to take him to London in April for a hearing in front of the Committee for the Disposal of Dangerous Creatures.”

“Is Hagrid going to have to answer charges as well?” Ron wanted to know. “He was in charge of the class and I wouldn’t put it past Malfoy to blame him as well.”

“Not according to the letter he showed me.” Harry told him. “It said that Dumbledore convinced them he wasn’t at fault.”

“Pity he couldn’t do the same for Buckbeak.” Ron commented.

“Yeah,” Harry shrugged. He’d given up trying to figure out why Dumbledore did anything he did.

“So what are you going to do?” Ron asked eagerly.
“According to that book if a life debt goes unpaid for the equivalent of two generations or eighty years, then the person who owes the debt and all their descendants will lose their magic. Given I have an American cousin, all I have to do is write Malfoy senior and hint that if anything happens to Buckbeak that I will arrange to go live with my cousin in America and not return to Britain for at least that long.” Harry explained.

“But you can’t do that!” Hermione burst out.

Harry simply pointed his wand at her. She got the message and returned her attention to her dinner as Harry returned his attention to Ron. “Malfoy and his father judge everyone by how they would act and that is something they would do if they thought it would give them leverage against another wizard.”

“You wouldn’t really leave would you?” Ron asked in a low voice.

“Britain is my home.” Harry met his friend’s gaze calmly, bolstered by Daniel’s quiet support and in an even softer voice since he could see Hermione trying to eavesdrop on their conversation told Ron. “I might disappear for a few months over the summer Holidays where Malfoy can’t find me, but unless I am forced to leave, Britain will always be the place I call home.”

“What if Malfoy Senior calls your bluff?” Ron inquired in a low voice. “He might not believe that you would be willing or able to leave Britain, give you are still underage. He also might not believe your claim of an American cousin who would take you in.”

“Well, I doubt he has any way to prove that Daniel doesn’t exist and isn’t related to me. Daniel has already offered to get custody of me from the Dursleys if I want him to.” Harry announced in a slightly louder voice, making sure that Hermione could hear him. “I haven’t said yes yet, because I want to meet him to see if we will even get along. The last thing I need is to wind up with someone worse than the Dursleys.”

“He’s really made that offer?” Ron gulped at the thought of Harry leaving Britain. While it would be better in the long run for Harry if he were away from the Dursleys, he didn’t want Harry to leave Britain.

Hermione couldn’t believe what she’d just heard. Harry was planning on leaving the safety of Britain! A place where Dumbledore, the only one Voldemort was truly afraid of and the greatest wizard of the age lived! How could he be so foolish? So stupid? Even if he had been old enough to do so not to mention a fully trained adult wizard, how could he think of being on his own and away from the safety of Britain? Harry knew Voldemort spirit was out there, not to mention his Death Eaters, just waiting for him to do something stupid and yet he was not only thinking about any of it, he was actually planning to do it.

Hermione started to say something to Harry but he just touched the handle of his wand as he saw her looking at him and she kept quiet. She would talk to Professor Dumbledore. He would make Harry see reason she was sure of it. Harry couldn’t go gallivanting off with some stranger to some unknown place where he would not be protected. And since Harry didn’t seem to realise he was putting himself in danger it would be up to wiser heads to protect him from his own actions once again.

/How long do you think it will take her to go to Dumbledore or McGonagall?/ Daniel wondered as Harry returned his attention to his dinner.

/Do you really think she will after what happened this afternoon?/ Harry wouldn’t have thought Hermione would be that stupid.
Yes, I do. Remember she doesn’t know what really happened this summer thanks to the memory charms Dumbledore seems to like to throw around./ Daniel reminded him. /She still sees him as someone worthy of respect and trust. And he says you are in danger as does everyone else in a position of authority that she knows so she is going to trust them and do what he says in spite of what you want or think./

/Not to mention she seems to think that every word that comes out of his mouth should be treated as sacred and followed blindly./ Harry put in dryly.

Daniel laughed because he knew a few people like that. /I also think she sees it as her duty to protect you from yourself because you don’t seem to realise you are putting yourself in danger by your own actions. Before I ascended, my team saw that as their duty with regards to me, though they didn’t go behind my back to do it. Their treating me like I needed a full time minder was rather annoying at times. About the only difference between my team and her is they learned when not to push. Your friend Hermione hasn’t learned that yet./

Harry gave a mental shrug. /I hope Hermione figures out that she’s going about this the wrong way soon, because she’s rapidly getting to the point where I won’t trust her with anything. I mean she would stay a friend, but she wouldn’t be a… good friend, if you know what I mean./

/Hermione reminds me a lot of Steven and a few of the Egyptologists who basically drove me out of Archaeology. While she can absorb knowledge at a fairly quick pace from what I’ve seen of her in your memories, Miss Granger seems incapable of thinking outside the box and if she doesn’t learn how, when she leaves school, she will be little more than an over-educated talking parrot./ Daniel responded after a few moments. /A true scholar has to be willing to question things and go against established beliefs if they find proof to back them up. The senior archaeologists I presented my paper to weren’t even willing to listen to the evidence I’d found. They didn’t even want to think about the inconsistencies surrounding the pyramids or the Sphinx on the Giza plateau./

/That pretty much describes Hermione as well. If she can’t find it in a book, or didn’t hear a teacher say it, then it isn’t true or can’t be done./ Harry made a snorting sound that had Ron wonder what he was thinking.

Lucius Malfoy looked up in surprise as an unfamiliar owl came flying while he was eating breakfast with a letter attached to its leg. He wasn’t expecting any correspondence. Narcissa was off visiting some friends in France so he had the manor to himself for at least a week.

The owl landed on the back of a nearby chair and held out its leg so Lucius could take the letter. Once the letter was removed the owl flew off out the same window it had come in through. Apparently the sender didn’t expect an immediate reply.

The letter was addresses simply: Lucius Malfoy. But given he didn’t recognize the handwriting Lucius wasn’t foolish enough to open it without a thorough check. It was entirely possible that the letter could’ve been sent by someone with a grudge against him or his family, so Lucius subjected it to several checks to make sure there was nothing harmful contained in or on the letter.

Malfoy set the unopened letter off to one side and proceeded to calmly finish his breakfast, ignoring the letter.

Once he was done, he picked up the letter and headed to his office. Once he was seated behind his desk, Lucius picked up the dagger he used for a letter opener and slit open the envelope. The he carefully set the serpent dagger that had been a gift from his father after he successfully passed his NEWTS back down. The emerald eyes of the snake stared at him reminding him however
unintentionally of the brat with emerald coloured eyes who’d confounded his plans to sow chaos at Hogwarts last year so he could finally take control using the diary that the Dark Lord had left in his care.

With a snarl he ripped letter out of the envelope and opened it.

*Mr. Malfoy,*

*I am willing to bet almost all the gold in my vault that a letter from me is the last thing you ever expected to receive, but I felt it was necessary since what I have to discuss directly affects your son Draco and the future of the Malfoy line.*

A jolt of fear ran through Lucius Malfoy as he read those words. Who was threatening his son? Malfoy looked to see if the person who was threatening his son had been stupid enough to sign the letter.

There was a signature: *Harry Potter*

That dratted boy! Lucius flung the letter on to the desk and got up to pace.

How dare he threaten Draco? What made that boy think he could possibly be any threat to Draco? Draco was the pureblood son of two ancient and noble magical houses.

Realising he didn’t know enough yet to counteract the threat, Lucius picked up the letter hoping the boy had been stupid enough to tell him his plans.

*I rather imagine you now view me as a definite threat to your son, but nothing could be further from the truth. It is your actions and his that have resulted in this course of action. I have no idea what tale your son told you about what happened during his first Care of Magical Creatures class, but the injuries your son sustained were the result of his ignoring the instructions of the teacher and antagonising the hippogriff Buckbeak.*

*Also Mr. Malfoy, you should also be aware that I was the one who saved him from being killed at risk to myself because I pulled him out of the paddock using magic while I was still recovering from magical exhaustion. Your son has publicly acknowledged this debt between us. He did it in potions class so Professor Snape will be able to confirm it for you if you bother asking him.*

Lucius stared at what had been written in disbelief before crumpling up the letter in his angry grip.

How could his son be so stupid? He had been teaching him ever since he was old enough to understand that Malfoys never admitted to anything that could be damaging in the long run. Obviously the boy had not learned the lesson well if he could let his mouth run away from him like that, not caring what came out of it. Where had Draco’s head been? Clearly he was not using the cunning that every Slytherin was supposed to have nor was he using the intelligence that Malfoy’s for centuries had been blessed with.

Lucius had no doubt that events had transpired exactly as Potter had described them. Draco had always been a little arrogant and sure of himself and he wouldn’t have listened to any instructions given to him by that gamekeeper that Dumbledore had turned into a teacher. It was a pity that Dumbledore had managed to convince the Board to retain the oaf, but Malfoy didn’t have the clout on the Board he had once had, given the fiasco last year. Part of Dumbledore’s price for his silence about Malfoy’s involvement had been that Malfoy resign from the Board of Governors.

He knew from his own father the requirements placed on one who publicly admitted a life debt and the consequences for failing to pay the debt. The clock was racing and while Draco currently had
time, it wasn’t limitless. The important question was, did Potter know the rules and more importantly what did he want to keep the Malfoy line from losing its magic forever.

Smoothing the letter back out on the desk, Lucius leaned over and read the rest of it.

Before you start thinking I am ignorant of what the requirements are for both parties in a publicly admitted life debt, I will tell you I am not. I know that Draco or his heirs have 80 years from the time the debt was incurred to repay the debt by either saving my life or the life of someone in my immediate family. If that does not happen within that time frame then the Malfoy line will no longer be magical. I find the idea of that to be a rather interesting form of poetic justice. Your son and his heirs will become the thing you hate most… muggles… not squibs, they will be muggles.

You may be wondering why I am telling you this since it would not bother me in the least if your family lost its magic forever. It’s quite simple…. Buckbeak. You will withdraw the complaint against the Hippogriff that you have filed. If you do not, then I will insure that Draco never has the chance to even try to save my life, because I will leave. Before you say I have nowhere to go other than the muggle world and you could find me there you should know I do have a Magical relative in America has offered to get custody of me if I want it, which means I could leave Britain and never come back. I can assure you that neither you or Draco would be able to find me there given who my cousin works for in America.

The choice is yours Mr. Malfoy, but be aware if Buckbeak dies or is harmed in any way because of you or Draco, then at the end of the year I will be gone.

Harry Potter

Malfoy slid the letter into his top desk drawer for now. He was going to need to meet with the Potter boy and make it quite clear that the Malfoys bowed to no one else’s demands. But just in case he was unable to make that damned brat change his mind, he headed for the family safe that only he and Draco could open, to have a look at the marriage contract between himself and Narcissa. It wouldn’t do for the Malfoy family line to lose its magic because of one of its children who couldn’t control his mouth. He was going to have a back up plan in place just in case.

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“I can’t believe you are actually trying to blackmail Malfoy’s father!”

On one hand Harry was glad that the amount of food in Ron’s mouth muffled what surely would’ve been a shout loud enough to be heard over the other conversations going on around them if his mouth had been empty, but on the other he wasn’t pleased with the splatters of partially chewed food that spewed from Ron’s mouth to land on the nearby plates, his among them.

“Ron!” Hermione sounded disgusted. “Please don’t talk with your mouth full. None of us want to have your partially chewed food spewed all over our plates.”

Ron reddened slightly, chewed and swallowed what was in his mouth, then said, “Sorry ‘Mione, Harry.”

Harry nodded accepting the apology. Truthfully had had expected Ron to shout and that’s why he’d waited until breakfast to tell him and by extension Hermione since she was sitting nearby about his visit to the Owlery last night to arrange the delivery of the letter to Malfoy Sr. The only thing he had not planned on was Ron having his mouth so full of food when he was told that the food would come flying out.
“Do you really think that Malfoy would be stupid enough to tell his father that A) he lied about Buckbeak, even though I am willing to bet his father suspects he did and B) that he publicly admitted to owing me a life debt?” Harry asked reasonably. “Draco Malfoy may be many things but he is not an idiot. If he is as well taught as he claims in pure-blood traditions, he knows he has only eighty years or his line loses its magic forever. He won’t want his father finding out about that one little fact. From what I’ve seen of Malfoy being a pure-blood wizard is the most important thing to him and his family. If he lost it, his father would most likely remove him and then try and replace him with another heir so that their unbroken magical line would continue. To preserve his current life, there is no way Draco Malfoy would tell his father, so I did it for him.”

“Harry! Why would you do that knowing what might happen to him?” Hermione sounded shocked that Harry would so cold-bloodedly consider helping bring about the death of another human being, even if that person was Malfoy.

Harry sighed, wishing he could just ignore her, as he had been doing for over a week, but he was fairly certain she would be as stubborn as a pit bull until she got an answer. “I fully expect Malfoy Sr. to try and preserve the status quo. It is after all the easiest course of action for him, but he is also Slytherin enough to know it might not work and make backup plans just in case to insure that there will be a legitimate, magical heir.”

“How can you be so sure?” Hermione countered surprised at how blasé Harry sounded. Something was very different about him, but what could be causing it that Madame Pomfrey’s spells couldn’t detect.

Harry shrugged. “If Malfoy’s father is anything like him in temperament, then I doubt he will exert himself anymore than he has to to make things go the way he wants. Also long as Draco is useful to him he will do what he has to to try and preserve him Family is after all very important in the wizarding world…at least as long as they are magical.”

Percy Weasley knocked on the door to Professor McGonagall’s class and then stood there, nervously waiting for her to acknowledge him.

/What do you want to bet he is here for us?/ Daniel asked rhetorically as Harry and the rest of the class looked up to see who was interrupting.

/No bet./ Harry told him. /It certainly took Malfoy Senior a while to decide on a course of action./

It had been almost two weeks since Harry had sent the letter to Lucius Malfoy. They had both agreed that Lucius Malfoy would not be able to approach Harry directly, especially given what happened the previous year. The man had to know that any attempt to approach Harry outside the presence of an adult that Harry trusted would be rejected utterly with Harry taking off to avoid any spells that the man might want to throw. Both Harry and Daniel had no doubt that Malfoy senior was going to try and force Harry to give Draco the only one out that was available for him. He had to get Harry to freely forgive the acknowledged debt.

“Yes, Mr. Weasley.” McGonagall spoke to him after she had corrected the wand movement that Neville was trying to use to turn a tortoise into a teapot.

“Sorry to interrupt your class Professor,” Percy began, “The Headmaster would like to see Mr. Potter as soon as possible.”

McGonagall nodded. “Mr. Potter, you have successfully completed the transfiguration project, but I
will need twelve inches of parchment on animate to inanimate transformations by Friday.”

Harry nodded and put his book and parchment away before following Percy.

Percy strode quickly in the direction of the Headmaster’s office, making Harry have to run to keep up with him.

“Slow down, Percy.” Harry finally requested when they reached the first flight of stairs.

"The Headmaster demanded your presence immediately because there is someone waiting to speak with you in his office. If Professor McGonagall had acknowledged my presence a little earlier, we wouldn’t be in such a hurry. As it is I am going to be late to my next class.” Percy told him not slackening his pace.

“Well I don’t think it would be a good idea for me to show up in front of the Headmaster looking like I’d just run a race, because you think your time is better spent elsewhere.” Harry pointed out “If you didn’t want the intrusive, time-consuming responsibilities that go along with being the Head Boy you shouldn’t have taken the job.”

Percy turned, his face red and his fists clenched. He opened his mouth as if to say something, then his jaws snapped closed, and he strode off albeit at a much slower pace.

Percy strode off after giving the password to the gargoyle and gesturing for Harry to go up the stairs.

/He and Steven Raynor have a lot in common. I wonder how long it will be before he runs into something his arrogance will not get him past?/ Daniel wondered as they headed up the stairs.

Harry shrugged, not really sure how to answer. /He’d better hope that he never meets anyone like your friend Jack in or out of the wizarding world./

Daniel snorted. /He would be to Jack like catnip is to a cat. Jack would slowly destroy him./

/In that case./ Harry added as they reached the door to the Headmaster’s office, /we have to make sure that he and the twins never meet. I forsee the destruction of life as we know it if that happens./

/I wonder how much havoc they could cause among the Goa’uld?/ Daniel laughed as they knocked on the door and then readied himself in case he needed to deal with anything the two wizards in the room might try to do to Harry.

/Maybe they would think the real Sokar had come to pay them for their sins./ Harry got in the last word as Dumbledore smiled at his entrance. “Headmaster, Percy said you wanted to see me.”

“Yes, Harry,” Dumbledore gestured for him to take a seat as Lucius Malfoy stepped out of the shadows near the stairway on the far side of the Headmaster’s office.

“Why is Mr. Malfoy here?” Harry remained near the door as if he were expecting to need a quick way out of the room.

Lucius Malfoy studied the boy intently trying to figure out what was off. Though it had been Lucius’ intention to startle the Potter brat, it was clear to the former Slytherin from the lack of surprise in the green eyes that the boy had clearly expected him to be here. However the way he held himself and his question to Dumbledore seemed to say that Malfoy’s presence was unexpected. Lucius had a feeling because of that little contradiction that he was going to regret his promise to Dumbledore to
remain silent and let the Headmaster handle this.

"Mr. Malfoy is here because of a letter he claims that you sent him concerning his son and a life debt. He also told me that in your letter you have threatened to somehow prevent young Draco from repaying the life debt you claim he owes you." Dumbledore tried to get Harry to look at him so he could try and get an idea of what was on the boy’s mind, but Harry kept his gaze fixed on Malfoy as if he felt that man was greater threat to him. “Your parents would never have done anything like that and I refuse to believe that the son of Lily and James Potter would do such a thing.”

“Well given I can’t really remember my parents, I can’t say what they would or would not have done.” Harry gave the Headmaster a brief glance before returning his attention to Mr. Malfoy. “What is it you are claiming that they would not have done? Are you saying they would not have gotten Malfoy to publicly admit the fact that he owes me a life debt? Or that they wouldn’t have done what Malfoy is claiming I have done, attempt to blackmail him?”

“While I can not speak to the validity of your claim that Malfoy has publicly admitted he owes you such a debt, since I don’t remember any time recently where his life was in serious danger and you intervened, putting your own life at risk,” Dumbledore hedged carefully, “I can not believe that the Harry Potter I have grown to know would stoop to blackmail or would prevent someone from honouring a just obligation.”

Harry saw Lucius Malfoy twitch at the Headmaster’s claim and he could tell the man was just barely restraining himself from trying to hex Dumbledore, so he and Daniel decided to fan the flames a little and Harry let Daniel have control. “Oh you don’t remember defending Hagrid when he had to appear in front of the Department of Magical Education because Draco Malfoy was stupid enough to ignore Hagrid’s instructions about how to handle Buckbeak?”

Dumbledore’s expression was solemn and his eyes lost their twinkle. “Ah yes, that was a slight misunderstanding. I’m sure that if Mr. Malfoy had been willing to sit down and discuss the matter then the incident would never have needed to be brought before the review board at the Department of Magical Education…”

“Nor would the other complaint have gone to the Committee for the Disposal of Dangerous Creatures.” Daniel interrupted. “It was that incident as you call it that caused life debt to be incurred.”

“Perhaps you would care to tell us how.” Dumbledore suggested in his best grandfatherly air.

"Please Headmaster given that you defended Hagrid at his hearing, I know that he told you everything that happened in that first class.”

Lucius had to admire the expression that the Potter brat directed at the Headmaster. It reminded him of one that Severus had given to a third rate Potions maker at the Ministry with an over-inflated opinion of his own skills. Lucius smiled as he remembered the man hadn’t lasted too long at the Ministry after that meeting.

"I don't see,” Potter continued, “how you can pretend ignorance especially given that Malfoy wound up with detention as a result of that class and I once again wound up in the Hospital Wing, this time for about three or four days. Now that I think about it I have to wonder did Madame Pomfrey have someone check me over after my second collapse to make sure that no damage had been done to my magical core? I have nothing but the highest regard for her skills but given she works at a school how many cases of magical exhaustion has she seen?”

“She’s seen quite a few actually,” Dumbledore felt compelled to defend his school medi-witch. “She worked at St. Mungos during the times of Grindelwald and Voldemort.”
Malfoy stared at the young Gryffindor with quickly concealed surprise. The Potter brat had managed
to force Dumbledore on to the defensive, something that even those with years of skill at getting
information out of stubborn bureaucrats had never managed to do with the wily old man. Even those
who were former members of Slytherin House hadn’t managed to accomplish what this brat had in
the few minutes he’d been in Dumbledore’s office. Lucius made a mental note to have a closer eye
kept on this apparent snake who had managed to hide among the lions.

“That does not explain why you felt compelled to write to Mr Malfoy to tell him that you were going
to take steps to insure that young Mr. Malfoy would be unable to fulfil this obligation.” Dumbledore
continued quickly.

While he had some leverage against Lucius Malfoy because of that Dark Artefact he’d planted on
Ginny Weasley last year, the last thing he needed was for Harry to reveal some of what had gone on
at Hogwarts in the last few years. Dumbledore much preferred that the Ministry remain in ignorance
about some of the things he’d had to do to mould the hero the wizarding world would need when
Voldemort returned. While he could keep Malfoy silent…at least for now he had no way of insuring
that Lucius wouldn’t pass the information on to someone Dumbledore had no control over. If the
Ministry ever learned about some of those things he would be removed as Headmaster faster than
you could say Quidditch.

“It’s quite simple, Malfoy deliberately antagonised Buckbeak, ignoring Hagrid’s instructions about
how to treat the hippogriff.” Daniel looked at Mr. Malfoy as he answered Dumbledore’s question. “I
simply want the complaint against Buckbeak withdrawn, since it was in his nature to act as he did.
Otherwise it would be like trying to punish a poisonous snake for biting someone because they were
stupid enough to poke it with a stick. Malfoy treated Buckbeak with contempt and would’ve been
ripped apart if not for me. If Mr. Malfoy gives me a magically binding oath that he will withdraw the
complaint and that he will not have someone else initiate it on his family’s behalf, then his prat of a
son has nothing to worry about, at least not until we go our separate ways after we leave Hogwarts.
And given the previous two years I’ve had here at Hogwarts, I’m sure he will have no trouble
finding some way to repay the debt he owes me.”

“And if I do not?” No matter what Dumbledore claimed it was obvious to Lucius that the
Headmaster would not be able to resolve this situation to his satisfaction by getting the brat to forgive
the debt and so he could no longer remain silent. It had been entertaining to watch Dumbledore lose
to a third year student, even though it apparently wasn’t to the
Headmaster, that the Potter brat no longer trusted Dumbledore. He couldn’t help being curious about
what had caused such a change in the last five months, given that prior to today, Malfoy had been
sure that Potter thought of Dumbledore as being on par with Merlin.

Lucius also found himself getting an interesting if somewhat confusing insight into the way the Boy-
Who-Lived’s mind worked. The Potter brat no longer appeared to be as impetuous as he had been
the previous June. It was clear to him that Potter was thinking and planning things out with an almost
Slytherin like precision. It was also clear to Lucius even though it apparently wasn’t to the
Headmaster, that the Potter brat no longer trusted Dumbledore. He couldn’t help being curious about
what had caused such a change in the last five months, given that prior to today, Malfoy had been
sure that Potter thought of Dumbledore as being on par with Merlin.

Potter’s face was solemn as he told Lucius, “If you choose not to then I hope you have a good
backup plan for continuing the Malfoy line.”

“Harry!” Dumbledore sounded shocked by Harry’s response. He had never thought the boy could
sound so uncaring about another. "That is wrong. It's immoral! How could you consider something
like that?"

“And what Mr. Malfoy wants to happen to Buckbeak isn’t?” Harry’s green eyes briefly met
Dumbledore’s but not long enough for him to get any idea of what was going on in the child’s mind. “Buckbeak is the innocent one in all this. Is it right that one man should be able to decree the death of an innocent creature, because his son was too arrogant to listen to the teacher who was instructing the class, because to him the man teaching it was beneath his notice. The decision is Mr. Malfoy’s I have told him and now I will tell you, if anything happens to Buckbeak because of him or Draco, then I will leave Hogwarts at the end of the year and never return.”

Dumbledore almost commented on why he was so willing to return to his relatives, but quickly stopped himself. He didn’t want Harry to be aware that he knew how the Dursleys treated him. “What about your friends here? Why would you want to leave them? And what about your education?”

“They understand that it’s about doing what is right,” There was definite pause before Daniel added, “sir. And do you really think Britain has the only school that teaches magic in the world. I will be able to continue my magical education no matter where I go.”

Lucius hissed, “Where do you think you can go where I can’t find you if I put my mind to it?”

“America.” Potter told him. “As I told you in that letter, I have a magical relative who lives in America who has offered to let me come live with him. I am considering it, given the relatives I currently live with loathe my very existence. As for your claim of being able to find me, I don’t think you will be able to. My cousin works for both the magical and non-magical American government, and he has told me that if need be they could hide me so well that not even my godfather Sirius Black the Azkaban escapee could find me.”

“Black might not be able to find you, but I’m fairly certain I could.” Lucius countered attempting to appear confident.

Daniel was silent for a minute before saying. “Is that your answer sir? You really want to put it to the test to see if I will or will not leave? Very well sir, Draco’s life will be on your head.”

“I’m certain that isn’t what Mr. Malfoy meant to say.” Dumbledore put in quickly before things could escalate too far out of his control.

“Then maybe he needs to speak more clearly, cause that definitely sounded like a threat.” Harry spoke up taking back control for a bit. “And headmaster while we are on the subject of possible threats, did you ever get those court records on Black’s trial I asked you for?”

Dumbledore really had hoped that Harry had forgotten about that, since he hadn’t brought it up in the last month or so. “I’m afraid not yet.”

Harry shrugged, “Okay, I will asked Daniel to see if he can get them through his contacts.”

“Why are you interested in the Black trial?” Lucius asked, thinking that if he could locate the records, he might be able to trade that for Potter for the forgiveness of Draco’s life debt since the boy really seemed to want it.

“I want to know why he betrayed my parents… if he did.” Harry told him curious to see what Lucius would do with the information.

“Is there some doubt about that?” Lucius’ curiosity was piqued.

“That’s why I want to see the records.” Harry repeated. “To know for sure. Looks like I’m going to have to ask my cousin to try and see if he can get a look at the records when I see him in Hogsmeade next weekend.”
Dumbledore was the Head of the Wizengamot. He should’ve been able to lay his hands on any trial records he wanted, unless they had been sealed by the Unspeakables, so why was he telling Potter he hadn’t found them… unless Black had never had a trial! Malfoy hadn’t really paid too much attention to whether or not his wife’s traitorous brother had gotten a trial or not, but no matter what he personally thought of the blood traitor as a pureblood Black should’ve had a trial. Lucius debated briefly with himself as to whether or not he should have a look for those records and then decided he would. Not only would it be ironic if Black wound up indebted to Malfoy because he got him the trial he’d been denied but it might be enough to indebted Potter to him so that even if he wouldn’t forgive the life debt his son owed him, he might be able to make him stay in Britain since it was quite clear the boy didn’t want to remain with his current guardians and as Potter’s godfather Black would have first call to get custody of him once he was freed… if he were not in fact guilty. And if Black was guilty or he found the records of the trial then that information might give him leverage to use with Potter.

“Was there anything else you wanted to talk about Headmaster?” Harry asked politely.

“Yes, Mr Potter, next Saturday you will be serving detention with your Head of House.” Dumbledore told him.

“What for?” Harry wanted to know.

“For being rude to a guest in my office,” Dumbledore told him.

“I was not rude to Mr. Malfoy.” Harry countered. “I may not have been sweetness and light toward him, but he knows full well why given what he tried to do last year. I think he would’ve thought I was under a spell if I’d acted like we were friends, wouldn’t you Mr. Malfoy?”

Malfoy said nothing, just inclined his head slightly in agreement.

“Why don’t you tell the truth Headmaster?” Harry wondered. “This is just another attempt by you to keep me from meeting with my cousin, given you can’t use the excuse of having lost my permission slip again.”

“The detention stands.” Dumbledore said firmly.

Harry gave him a disappointed look. “Sooner or later, I will meet with my cousin and you will not be able to stop me.”

“That will be all, Mr. Potter.” Dumbledore dismissed him, with a slight pang of guilt over his actions.

“Very well, headmaster.” Harry turned to leave and then turned back. “By the way Headmaster, where is Fawkes?”
When Harry joined Ron and Hermione in the Great Hall for lunch, he had barely taken his seat, before Hermione asked. “What did the Headmaster want to see you about?”

For a brief moment Harry entertained thoughts of telling Hermione it wasn’t any of her business, until Daniel reminded him that the one he was really mad at was Dumbledore, so he simply told her, “Malfoy,” before he ignored her in favour of the food on the table.

“How did Dumbledore find out about your plans for Malfoy?” Ron asked through such a large mouthful of food that Daniel was amazed that he wasn’t choking because of it.

“How does he find out anything?” Harry countered, stabbing a chunk of potato. “In this case it was Malfoy Sr. who told him. Malfoy may have been hoping that Dumbledore could either guilt me into forgiving the life debt, or else he thought that either he or the Headmaster could subtly bully me into withdrawing my demand that he drop the complaint he’d made against Buckbeak.”

“And did he succeed?” Hermione hadn’t been real confident that the plan to blackmail Malfoy’s father would work, given the amount of political and financial clout that the man seemed to have. He had gotten off on the charges of being a Death Eater after Voldemort disappeared, and he’d managed not to be charged after giving that diary to Ginny the previous year.

“Dumbledore certainly tried.” Harry admitted. “The Headmaster wasted very little time in telling me how disappointed he was because of what I was threatening to do to Malfoy. Then he said my parents would have been just as disappointed as he was that I was trying to blackmail Malfoy Sr. and prevent Malfoy from honouring his obligation to me.”

“Why is he taking Malfoy’s side?” Ron wanted to know. “Malfoy is in the wrong. He’s trying to get Buckbeak killed because his son was a prat and didn’t listen to Hagrid.”

Harry shrugged. “The only one who knows what’s going on in Dumbledore’s mind is Dumbledore and sometimes I’m not even sure that he knows.”

“HARRY!” Hermione was scandalised by Harry’s disrespectful comment about the Headmaster. “You shouldn’t say such thinks about the Headmaster. He is a brilliant wizard, and a great leader.”
Trying to divert an argument before it could start, Ron asked, “Is Malfoy going to withdraw the complaint about Buckbeak?”

Harry swallowed a mouthful of roast beef and shook his head. “Not yet. I think he is going to try and see if he can find something to try and trade for the life debt, or at least for a magical promise that I will stay in Britain so that Malfoy has a chance to try and repay the life debt.”

“What do you think he might try and use as a trade?” Ron asked curious.

Harry shrugged. “I doubt he will get desperate enough to think of trying to use you or Hermione to get to me. I think he will probably drop the complaint against Buckbeak before taking that risk. He did seem interested though when I mentioned Black’s trial records to the Headmaster and when I told Dumbledore that since he couldn’t locate them I was going to get my cousin to look for them. Malfoy may think that finding those records will give him leverage.”

“And why do you want a copy of Black’s trial records?” Every time Harry mentioned Black’s name, Hermione worried that he was going to do something foolish like hunt the man down or at least try to get himself killed in the process.

“I want to know why he betrayed my parents.” Harry told them.

“Harry, even if you get hold of the record, they might not tell you what you want to know.” Hermione pointed out logically. “And even if Malfoy’s father brought you documents claiming that they were Black’s trial records, could you really trust that they were the real thing and not something he made up?”

“Yea mate,” Ron put in. “From what my Dad said after Black broke out of Azkaban, the man was acting crazy when he was arrested, so I doubt they got much out of him at his trial. Not to mention that his time at Azkaban has probably made him even crazier.”

“I still want to know.” Harry insisted, “I have a right to know.”

/And we will find out,/ Daniel assured him. /We will get Black the trial he was denied and then we will know if he did betray your parents or not and why he may have done it./

Hermione barely managed to keep from saying something she would later regret. She knew that Dumbledore’s tenure as Headmaster had covered the time Black and the Potter’s had gone to Hogwarts, so he had to know what the man was capable of. Given that fact, she was fairly certain that the Headmaster had a good reason for keeping the trial records from Harry. The problem was that Harry was just too stubborn to realise that Dumbledore was doing it for his own good.

Because Harry was so stubborn, Hermione was willing to bet he had deliberately mentioned Black’s trial records in front of Malfoy’s father to either goad him into looking for them, or to force the Headmaster to give in and show them to him. Hermione was fairly certain that Dumbledore wouldn’t do that, given he hadn’t gotten the records for Harry to see when he first asked about them. She also doubted that the Ministry would allow an American access to any trial records, even with Malfoy’s help.

“Let’s talk about something else okay?” Ron broke the silence that had begun to build. “I know, how about we decide what we are going to do in Hogsmeade next weekend?”

“I’m not going,” Harry announced, sounding annoyed.

Harry’s statement startled Hermione given how adamant he’d been about going last month. Her first thought was that Harry had come to his senses and realised it was safer for him to remain at
Hogwarts until Black was captured. Of course she had completed missed Harry's tone of voice and his body language as she congratulated him. “I am so glad you’ve decided not to go to Hogsmeade until Black is caught, Harry. That is a very mature and sensible decision you have made. You will be much safer here and look at all the studying you will be able to get done since the common room will be a lot quieter.”

“You know Hermione, I have to question your idea of Hogwarts being much safer for me given what has happened at Hogwarts over the last two years.” Harry countered coldly. “And let us not forget Black got in to Hogwarts just last month… remember?” Then before Hermione could say anything he added. “And I did not suddenly decide not to go to Hogsmeade. The Headmaster decided to give me detention to be served on Hogsmeade weekend.”

“Why?” Ron spoke up before Hermione could. “Dumbledore claims that it was because I was rude to Mr. Malfoy.” Harry viciously stabbed several of the potato chunks on his plate. “And before you ask Hermione, I wasn’t rude…to anyone I was civil to Mr. Malfoy and he even agreed that I hadn’t been rude.”

“Why would the Headmaster give you a detention you didn’t deserve?”

The tone of Hermione’s voice had Daniel wondering what she was annoyed at Harry for. Was it because she felt he was ignoring the advice of those older and wiser than him or because he had dared to accuse Dumbledore of acting in a less than honourable fashion?

/I would say it’s a little of both./ Harry commented, /but mostly because I am accusing her hero of acting like Snape./

/Well he is./ Daniel agreed with him. /While he is not acting out of spite like Snape does, his actions today seem to indicate that he needs to retain control of you and who has access to you for some reason./

/Well, one thing is for sure, he wants to keep me away from anyone he thinks can take me away from the Dursleys, and given he knows about the abuse, that means he is willing to turn a blind eye to it./ Harry put in.

/Agreed,/ Daniel said solemnly. /And given what has happened to you over the last few years, I would say he is trying to condition you into behaving a certain way, like one of Pavlov’s dog’s, but the question is why and for what?/

/Well whatever it is, he is going to fail./ Harry countered /I have no intention of co-operating with him any further. And I am about to make Hermione even more annoyed at me./

“Malfoy was just an excuse, Hermione.” Harry told his friends. “Dumbledore’s main reason for giving me detention was to keep me from meeting my cousin in Hogsmeade as we had arranged.”

“Harry, I know how much family means to you.” Hermione began. “But both you and I know it’s just not safe for you to go to Hogsmeade or anywhere outside Hogwarts while Black is still on the loose. You should just ask your cousin to contact the Headmaster. I’m sure he would be happy to arrange for the two of you to meet in his office. That way you are safe and you can have nice long talk with him.”

“No.” Harry flatly refused. “I am not going to let the Headmaster monitor my meeting with the only family that seems to care about me.”
“Harry, even though the family tree you have is real, you can’t be sure the person writing you is really your cousin. He could be a plant by Black or some other former Death Eater out to kidnap you. You need to meet him somewhere safe with someone who can take steps to protect you if it turns out he does intend to harm you.” Hermione persisted. Why did boys have to be so stubborn?

“Hermione I am not a fool even though for some reason you seem to think I am.” Harry told her.

“Harry, I don’t think you are a fool,” Hermione sighed. “I just think you want a family so bad you may do something you’ll regret later trying to get that family. Besides you do not even know what he looks like, how are you going to recognize him in Hogsmeade?”

“I intend to meet Daniel in a public place for that very reason, Hermione.” Harry told her. “If he is planning to trick me it will be harder to do in a public place. And he told me he would be easy to spot because he was going to be wearing desert robes like they wear in the Middle East and a bronze amulet with the Eye of Ra on it. And once we do meet I will be asking him to swear a magically binding oath that he is indeed related to me by blood and that he doesn’t intend me any harm. If he is unwilling to do so then I will be running far and fast.”

Hermione just shook her head. She knew she wouldn’t change Harry’s mind right now. She had a good idea about why he was being so stubborn about this Daniel Jackson person. Harry wanted what she and Ron had… a family that while they may disagree at times, cared about them. Truthfully while she was hopeful that Harry had actually found a family member who wanted him, she didn’t want it to be this Daniel person, because if he got custody of Harry then he would take one of her few friends away to America. She highly doubted he would let Harry continue to go to Hogwarts.

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After leaving the Headmaster’s office, Lucius Malfoy headed toward the dungeons, intending to catch Snape before he went to lunch in the Great Hall. He needed to find out what was going on at Hogwarts, particularly with regards to the Potter Brat. He also needed to find out if his son had indeed been foolish enough to admit owing a life debt… to Potter of all people. Lucius’ main concern was that if the Debt remained unpaid when the Dark Lord returned, then his son’s life expectancy would be measured in minutes if Voldemort found out about it. Lucius was fairly certain of that, given the man would not want a follower who owed a life debt to the one who managed to banish him from the known wizarding world for over twelve years.

Snape was leaving his office when Malfy found him.

“Severus,” Malfy greeted the Potion’s Master.

“Lucius,” Snape returned the greeting. “What brings you by my office?”

“I need to speak with you privately.” Malfy told him.

Snape looked at him impassively for a moment before reopening the door to his office.

“Put up your privacy wards please?” Lucius requested.

That got a raised eyebrow from Snape, but he complied with his fellow Slytherin’s request.

“What did you need to speak with me about?” Snape asked.

Lucius paced as he spoke. “Did my son really admit to owing Potter a life debt in front of witnesses?”
“Unfortunately yes he did,” Snape sighed. “Potter somehow tricked him into doing it in Potions class in front of third year Slytherins and Gryffindors. How did you find out about it? Did Draco tell you?”

“No,” Lucius growled. It was worse than he thought. If other Slytherins knew, the Dark Lord would know about the debt once he returned. “As for how I found out, it was the Potter brat. He is blackmailing me with it.”

That caused both of Snape’s eyebrows to go up and Malfoy barely managed to keep his mouth from twitching into a smile at the reaction that screamed to him louder than words that this was the last thing that Draco’s godfather had expected to hear that a stereotypical Gryffindor would have done. It would be on par with the Dark Lord proclaiming all of a sudden that muggleborns were to be left alone.

“Would you mind repeating that, Lucius?” Snape requested. “I think someone must’ve hit me with a confundus charm because I thought I just heard you say that Potter, someone who fits the stereotype of a noble, self-sacrificing Gryffindor so well it makes me sick, is blackmailing you and that it involves Draco somehow.”

“That is what I said.” Malfoy finally stopped pacing and sat down in the nearest chair. “Potter is threatening to disappear and prevent Draco from repaying the Life Debt owed to him. How could Draco be so foolish? I have told him over and over again… think before you speak.”

“He is not the only Malfoy to have trouble with a Potter while at Hogwarts.” Snape reminded his fellow Slytherin with a smirk. I seem to recall several incidents between you and the brat’s father.”

Malfoy nodded slightly conceding the point, “but even I would not have been so foolish to publicly admit to owing the man a Life Debt. Not even you were that stupid. The other problem I am going to have to deal with is that given Draco’s Slytherin yearmates know about the Life Debt, how long will it be before the Dark Lord knows? Draco’s life will be measured in hours if not minutes once that happens.”

Snape leaned forward drawing his friend’s gaze to him. “For now we need to focus on Potter. If the debt is still unpaid when the Dark Lord returns, I have friends who can get Draco to Australia or America. Since he is not yet marked, it will be harder for our Lord to summon or track him. What is Potter demanding from you?”

“He wants the beast that attacked Draco to go free.”

“Ah,” Snape nodded. Now the Potter brat’s actions made sense. He was threatening the Malfoy heir for someone else. “So you are going to drop the complaint against the hippogriff?”

“It appears I may have to,” Malfoy growled. “As you know Narcissa is unable to bear another child and if I were to nullify the marriage for anything less that valid proof of infidelity, the penalties imposed by our marriage contract would be severe, given she did fulfil her main obligation and provide the Malfoy line with an heir.”

“So you have not told her about the blackmail yet?” Snape concluded.

“No, and I have no intention of letting her know how foolish her son has been until I absolutely have to.” Lucius told him.

“You said you may have to give in to Potter’s demands, why do you say that?” Malfoy’s choice of words had piqued Snape’s curiosity. “I would have thought you would definitely be doing so.”
“You mean aside from the fact that giving into a blackmailer just invites them to return with further demands?” Malfoy inquired.

“I do not think that is something you will have to worry about with Potter.” Snape commented. “He is too much the noble Gryffindor to ever think about doing that, especially given that he is firmly under Dumbledore’s control. I am fairly certain that he like the rest of those in Gryffindor tower think the Headmaster is one of the few who could tickle a sleeping dragon and get away without harm.”

“I think you may need to revise your assessment of the Potter brat.” Malfoy disagreed. “I doubt he fits the mould of a stereotypical Gryffindor any more.”

“What makes you say that?” Snape hadn’t noticed anything different about Potter’s behaviour.

“You didn’t see him in the Headmaster’s office, a little while ago.” Malfoy looked thoughtful. “He managed to avoid giving into what the Headmaster wanted him to do with an almost Slytherin like skill, and I don’t think the Headmaster has realised that he did it. Also, I do not think the brat is as enamoured of the Headmaster as he used to be. Something about him has changed since I saw him last spring and it has turned him into a much more clever opponent. Did you know that Potter has requested copies of Black’s trial record and it appears as if the Headmaster is doing his best to avoid or delay showing him the trial transcript. Though for the life of me I do not know what the Headmaster gains by refusing to hand over the information.”

Snape stared at him stunned. He didn’t doubt what Lucius was saying. Malfoy was very good at reading people and if he thought the Headmaster was stalling about handing over Black’s trial records then he probably was. ‘That makes no sense. I would think that he would want his ‘golden boy’ to understand just how dangerous Black is. I know for a fact that since he has a signed permission slip the Headmaster has ordered all the teachers to try and find a way to give him detention that has to be served on Hogsmeade weekends so he will be confined to the castle, since the brat refuses to admit he is what Black is after. I even heard him arguing with his Head of House and pointing out that if the headmaster truly thought Black was that dangerous then he would not allow any students to go into Hogsmeade, since they would be in danger of being kidnapped so that Black could get his hands on Potter.”

“I agree that it makes no sense,” Malfoy told him, “though not for that reason. I would think that Dumbledore would want to keep on the Potter brat’s good side, even if only to insure his future power and reputation. It is not obvious yet at the Ministry, but Dumbledore’s days of being able to get things to go his way at the Ministry are slowly coming to an end. The only hope he has to continue to control the policies made by the Ministry and those within it lies in keeping the brat largely clueless about how things work, so that Potter will have to come to him for the answers and help navigating the murky political waters. What I don’t understand is how he managed to lose control of the brat in the first place. Not to mention how he could be so totally oblivious to the fact that Potter no longer trusts him and that at best his control over the boy is tenuous right now.”

“While I do not doubt your observations, Lucius, I would have said the stars in the sky would all go out before a Gryffindor like Potter would doubt anything that Dumbledore told him.” Snape commented slightly worried about Malfoy’s observations. He knew that when Malfoy bothered to exert himself he could read people very well and predict which way they would go in a given situation. He also knew from what little Dumbledore had told him that Potter was important to the final defeat of Voldemort and for that to happen the brat had to trust Dumbledore implicitly. They couldn’t afford for Dumbledore’s long-term control over Potter and his actions to be weakened in any way. If Malfoy was right about how Potter was feeling toward the Headmaster, then some kind of damage control would have to be done as soon as possible to insure that Dumbledore regained control. “From what I have observed all the Gryffindors would go cheerfully to their deaths if
Dumbledore told them it was for the Greater Good.”

Malfoy nodded in agreement with that assessment “Gryffindors as a whole are a bunch of brainwashed fools with regards to the Headmaster and given what I saw at the end of last year of the Potter brat, I would have said he was well on his way to becoming another member of the cult worshipping Dumbledore, but something changed. It is subtle and if you were not looking for it you would miss it, but Potter clearly no longer trusts the Headmaster. Do you have any idea what might have happened before the beginning of this school year to radically change Potter’s opinion of Dumbledore? Not to mention make him act more like a Slytherin instead of a Gryffindor in his dealings with the old fool?”

“I have no idea,” Snape was forced to admit. He was going to have to start monitoring Potter more carefully because something had happened over the summer to place Dumbledore’s *great plan* for dealing with Voldemort once and for all in danger. “The only incident that I was informed of by Dumbledore happened before the start of the school year and it resulted in the Potter brat being allowed to stay in Diagon Alley unsupervised for several weeks because of his use of accidental magic up a family member as if they were a balloon. The Headmaster said he left him there in order to allow tempers of both Potter and his family time to cool down.”

“Well what ever caused the distrust, I doubt it happened in Diagon Alley, or we would have heard about it by now” Malfoy was sure of that. “No matter how much control Dumbledore thinks he has over the shopkeepers of Diagon Alley, they are the biggest bunch of gossips outside of the Hufflepuff dorms, so if the reason for Potter’s distrust toward the headmaster started there, it wouldn’t remain a secret for long.”

“The source of Potter’s distrust might be more recent event,” Snape felt compelled to point out. “I might have more to do with Black and those trial records you say he mentioned.”

Malfoy shrugged an elegant shoulder. “True, but if that is indeed the source of Potter’s antagonism, then I can only wonder what Dumbledore hopes to accomplish by keeping those records from the brat. One thing I do know is I want a front row seat when Potter does find out that he lied about not being able to locate the records.”

Snape looked at his fellow Slytherin some what surprised. Dumbledore could usually distract people away from an issue he didn’t want to deal with better than that. Even he knew that unless the trial records had been sealed by the Unspeakables, a Chief Warlock could get copies of any trial records they wanted. While Snape personally doubted that the Unspeakables would have a reason to seal Black’s trial records, he would have thought that would have been the excuse the Headmaster would have used, given it would be next to impossible to disprove it.

“I am surprised that he did not tell Potter that the records had been sealed by the Unspeakables.” Snape finally commented. “I wonder what has him so distracted?”

“I have no idea, there is nothing going on at the Ministry, other than the hunt for Black.” Malfoy reported “But he is off his game, because it was fairly obvious to both Potter and I that he was stalling. May be he hoped that Potter would forget after he made his first request. Whatever game Dumbledore is playing with Potter, it is going to backfire on him. Potter mentioned getting some cousin of his involved…”

Snape knew what the unfinished sentence was asking. “According to rumours, Potter got a letter around Halloween with a partial family tree from an American calling himself Daniel Jackson. It appears as if Lily Potter was not a muggle-born, but in fact the first witch from a long line of Squibs.”
“No chance of the tree being a fake?” Malfoy queried surprised by this bit of news. The idea of Potter being a Pure Blood, which he would be, even if the line had contained nothing but Squibs for centuries, required a major shift in Malfoy’s worldview.

Snape shook his head. “Not unless someone came up with a way to get their hands on some of Potter’s blood and then came up with a way to get the genealogy spell to produce false results good enough to fool a charms master and all other tests that have been performed upon it.”

“What does this Jackson do for a living?” Malfoy wanted to know. “Potter has implied that he could hide him so well that even the Dark Lord couldn’t find him.”

"Given that Potter has been remarkably closed mouthed about him, all I have heard are rumours. Supposedly Jackson works for both the magical and muggle governments in America doing several different jobs. It is also said that he has three muggle masteries and they would make him the muggle equivalent of a curse breaker. Also according to the same rumours he apparently works as a negotiator among the various races and is quite successful at it.” Given he had some familiarity with what it took to earn that many the masteries at muggle institutes of higher learning, the respect Snape felt for any man who could accomplish so much could be heard in his voice.

"His muggle masteries mean nothing in our world," Lucius tapped his chin with his index finger, looking thoughtful. "What do you remember of Black trial, as I recall yours was around the same time?”

“I wouldn’t be so quick to discount those muggle masteries if I were you, they indicate he is a very intelligent and adaptable wizard” Snape countered. “and remember we have no idea what his magical masteries are. As for Black’s trial, I have no memory of it at all. While I was waiting for my trial, they kept me in isolation in one of the low-level security cells at Azkaban. While the Dementors weren’t bad in that section they were still there, so that time is kind of muddled in my memory. The only thing I remember really well during that time was Dumbledore coming to visit a few times. I do not remember hearing anything about Black’s trial either before or after I was released from there.”

“I am beginning to wonder if the reason that Dumbledore has not produced the records that Potter wants is because there was no trial for Black and therefore there are no records for him to show the brat?” Malfoy commented wanting to see how Snape would react.

Snape snorted. “As if the Black family would let that happen. Black was the only remaining son and with his betrayal of the Potters he stopped being the black sheep as far as Walburga Black was concerned. She would not have allowed him to be put into Azkaban without a trial.”

“Maybe, maybe not” was Malfoy’s only comment.

“Was there anything else you needed, Lucius? Because I would like to get some lunch?” Snape asked him.

“Yes, one more thing,” Malfoy remembered the last thing the Potter brat had said before leaving the Headmaster’s office. “How long has Dumbledore’s phoenix been gone?”

#####

As Harry’s body slept in the Gryffindor third year boy’s dorm, his mind and spirit were elsewhere as they had been every night since Daniel’s arrival. In the mindscape that Daniel’s ascended powers allowed him to create he was teaching Harry things that most people learned as they grew up either from family or friend. Things that normally gave people a sense of self-worth. He hadn’t been able to undo all the mental abuse the Dursleys had inflicted on Harry, but they both felt they had made a
good beginning. Harry was now starting to stand up for himself in most situations without Daniel having to take over for him.

Daniel had been teaching Harry other things as well, like self-defence, languages used in other European countries, and basic diplomatic skills that could be used to deal with just about anyone, but that he swore were particularly effective on bureaucrats, unless the bureaucrat was a total idiot.

Harry found that Daniel was a very good and patient teacher, even if he did get bogged down in details when discussing history. The only thing that Harry wished was that Daniel would show him more of the worlds beyond Earth, but Daniel had told him he needed to understand how things on Earth worked first before they looked into how things were done on other planets.

Tonight, though Harry didn’t understand why, Daniel had insisted on teaching him how to dance. The partner Daniel had provided him with for these lessons, Harry recognised from the older man’s memories as Cassie the alien girl from Hanka who had survived the massacre of her entire race by a Goa’uld called Nirti. Even though the person standing in front of him was a mental creation of Daniel’s, Harry still felt like he had a lot in common with the real Cassie. An evil being with delusions of godhood had destroyed everything she had ever known because she saw the Hankan’s contact with the Tau’ri as a threat. However unlike Cassie, Harry still didn’t know the reasons behind Voldemort’s assault on his family, but given the way Dumbledore evaded his questions when he was in the Hospital wing at the end of his first year at Hogwarts, he was fairly certain he wasn’t going to like the answers when they were finally provided. Harry made a mental note to ask Fawkes, if he knew what the reason was, assuming that he could figure out how to do it without causing the phoenix further pain at the thought of Dumbledore’s actions.

As he once again stepped on the feet of the imaginary Cassie, Harry brought the dance lesson to a halt. “Tell me again why I need to learn this?”

“There are a number of reasons,” Daniel told him. “Though the two most important for you right now are that it will help you learn to be quick and graceful on your feet, which is also useful if you ever find yourself in a fight because it will help you to stay on your feet. I have found a number of dance moves that proved very useful in a fight. And the other main reason though you probably won’t appreciate it for a couple of years yet, is that girls and women love to dance, even those who can’t dance.”

At the look of disgust on Harry’s face at the thought of actually dancing, Daniel smiled. “Harry, believe me when I say that in a couple of years you will be very glad you had these lessons. A guy who knows how to dance will go further with girls than one who doesn’t, believe me.”

“Ah, young Harry, is Daniel teaching you about one of the great mysteries of life?” A slightly familiar male voice spoke up from off to their left. “And I can’t help wondering if the males of the Tau’ri have had any better luck in figuring out the female species than we Alterrans did?”

“Merlin!” “Myrddin!” Harry and Daniel identified the speaker at the same time.

“Hello Harry, Daniel,” Merlin smiled then turned to face the older of the two. “Well have you, Daniel?”

Daniel just gave him a slightly sour look. “What makes you think we poor human males have had any better luck than you did?”

Merlin chuckled. “That seems to be a universal constant doesn’t it. No matter what the species, the females always lead the males on a merry dance. Unfortunately it’s a dance that no male knows the steps to. Nor do they know when or how the music will change forcing them to adapt or get left
behind.”

Harry looked back and forth between the two men as they talked in such mysterious terms. He began to get the feeling that girls, if he ever did develop an interest in them as Daniel claimed he one day would, might prove to be far more trouble than they would be worth.

“Why are you here, Myrddin?” Daniel asked curious.

“I finally managed to convince those stuffed shirts on the council that the child who had made a sudden evolutionary leap in their Alterran gifts needed to be properly trained before he caused great if unintentional harm to himself or to the Earth.” Merlin told them.

“Is such a thing possible?” Harry asked a little worried.

If you are in the right place like say… Hogwarts or Stonehenge, then the energy feedback along the huge cluster of ley lines would be the equivalent of a psionic tsunami.” Merlin told him.

“While I agree we need the training as soon as possible,” Daniel began, “I know of at least a couple of things that will interfere with your plans.”

“And what are these things?” Merlin didn’t doubt Daniel’s claim, because he was fairly certain there were some things that none of them had considered that would interfere. It was the way things tended to work.

“First and foremost, unless you intend to reappear as Merlin reincarnated and claim Harry as your apprentice, then the lessons are going to have to be done in secrecy.” Daniel paced as he spoke. “The current Headmaster of Hogwarts… Dumbledore has way too much interest in Harry’s life and in controlling access to him and how much anyone can have. Given that fact, as I see it your lessons can only happen at night and while that wouldn’t pose a problem for me, it would for Harry. He has to sleep sometime.”

“Yes he does,” Merlin agreed. “When is the next time students will be allowed to visit nearby Hogsmeade?”

“Day after tomorrow,” Harry told him, “but the Headmaster gave me detention to be served that day. He claimed I was rude to a visitor in his office.”

“And you weren’t,” Merlin guessed, based on Daniel’s comment about this Dumbledore wanting to control who had access to Harry.

“No,” Harry was glad that Merlin hadn’t immediately assumed that he had been. “Daniel and I think he was looking for any reason to keep me away from Hogsmeade and since I hadn’t been kind enough to allow one of the other teachers to give me detention, he had to.”

“Why? Why would he want to keep you from Hogsmeade?”

Harry glanced at Daniel to see if he wanted to explain it, but Daniel gestured for him to continue. "We're not exactly sure. The excuse he uses is that Sirius Black, who they claim killed my parents, is after me. But I have not been able to review the trial records so I'm not sure if I believe that or not. Dumbledore is also trying to stop me from meeting my cousin.”

“Why would this Black person be after you?” Merlin asked.

"Given that magical Britain, if not the whole of the magical world thinks I killed Voldemort when I was a baby those in a position of authority over my life think he is after revenge for what I did to his
master.” Harry told the ancient wizard.

“And did you kill this… Voldemort?” Merlin barely kept from sneering at the gullibility of some people. Whoever had concocted that story must’ve been an excellent politician to be able to make that pile of dragon dung believable.

Harry licked his lips. “Not exactly… I was told my mother did something but…”

“Right now, Voldemort is kind of like Anubis.” Daniel put in helpfully. “Though I doubt he figured out how to Ascend.”

“Oh?”

“In my first year here at Hogwarts, I drove his spirit off when he possessed our Defence teacher to gain access to the school so that he could steal something Dumbledore was keeping here. And last year thanks to the actions of one of his followers, I met a copy of him from when he was student at Hogwarts and was going by his real name Tom Riddle. He had possessed one of the first year students, nearly killing her by stealing enough of her lifeforce to gain a body.”

"A copy?” Merlin sounded thoughtful.

“It’s the only thing I can think of to call it. While I destroyed the diary he’d used to gain possession of Ginny Weasley, before he could finish draining her, I do know that the diary acted as if it were some kind of communication device with a real person on the other end.”

“And how do you know that?” Merlin began to have a bad feeling. What young Harry was describing sounded very familiar to him, but he couldn’t place it yet.

“Ginny managed to get rid of the diary for a while and I found it. I wrote in it not knowing what it was at the time and the copy of Riddle inside it acted and responded as if he were a live person on the other end of a phone. I don’t know how Riddle made the diary come alive, but he hasn’t given up on his attempts to regain a body.” As Harry reviewed his memories of the events of last year, he realised something. “The odd thing is I didn’t react to the copy the same way I did when Voldemort possessed Quirrell.”

“What was different about them?” Merlin still couldn’t put his finger on why what Harry was describing sounded very familiar.

“Whenever I was around Quirrell, my scar hurt and when he looked directly at me, it felt like my head was going to burst apart. Harry told him. “I felt nothing when I handled the diary and my scar didn’t hurt when I confronted his copy in the Chamber of Secrets.”

“Hmm,” Merlin had a thoughtful, slightly worried look on his face.

“Does that mean something to you?” Daniel asked.

“It sounds familiar, but I’m not sure why.” Merlin told them. “Let me look into it and I will let you know what I find out. For now let’s get back to the reason I came and figure out how we can make it happen. Daniel, can you get to Gringotts Saturday morning?”

"Headmaster, are you sure we are taking the best course of action with Mr. Potter?” McGonagall asked once the other teachers had departed at the end of the weekly staff meeting.
“Minerva, you know we have to keep him safe.” Dumbledore reminded her.

“I understand that and agree with you that Black is a threat to Mr. Potter and we are only trying to protect him. I am just concerned that we might be going about it the wrong way.” McGonagall told him then paused. “Miss Granger came to see me last night because she is worried about how Potter is reacting to our attempts to protect him from Black. If what she told me is correct then he is seeing our actions not as an attempt to keep him safe, but as an attempt to control him and who he has access to, given the fact that he intended to meet his American cousin this weekend in Hogsmeade. She also confided in me that Mr. Potter’s trust in you as Headmaster, me as his Head of House, and her as a friend is eroding because of what we have done to keep him safe.”

“Tell Miss Granger not to worry, all of this will be forgotten once Black has been caught and things will return to normal. Mr. Potter is a very forgiving child and he will understand that we were doing what was best for him.” Dumbledore hoped he sounded more confident than he felt. He needed to make sure when he finally caught up with the Dursleys that they withdrew their permission for Harry to go to Hogsmeade at least for now. It would make it easier to keep him where Black could not reach him easily.

“I wish I could be as confident of that as you are Headmaster.” McGonagall countered. “If this had been last year when everyone thought Potter was the Heir to Slytherin, I would have said you were right, but something is different this year. I do not recall Mr Potter being this stubborn or openly rebellious toward the staff in his previous years here. I have also heard from the other Heads of House that some of their students are wondering why all of the Hogsmeade visits have not been cancelled until Black has been captured. The students are also questioning why Aurors are not patrolling Hogsmeade when they are there. Pomona told me that one of her muggle born Puffs pointed out that it wasn’t like they could go to a Dementor for help. The students are taking very seriously Mr Potter’s claim that Black is not just a threat to him and that they might possibly be in danger from him as well.”

“Black is no threat to the other students at Hogwarts, Minerva.” Dumbledore was certain of that.

“I am afraid the students are not as convinced of that as you and I are, Albus.” McGonagall told him crisply. “They know he managed to get into the school around Halloween and that he got past the Dementors. That incident combined with the incidents that have occurred over the past few years have some of the older students and a lot of the muggle-borns wondering why the faculty is not doing more to keep them safe.”

Dumbledore closed his eyes and took several deep breaths to get himself back under control. The last thing he had expected was that the students would start questioning whether or not he could keep them safe. Everything that he had done and allowed to happen had been for the greater good and safety of the majority of the wizarding world.

While it was true a few unexpected things had occurred as a result of Dumbledore having to guide Harry down the path he needed to follow to become the self-sacrificing hero he must be when the time came to fulfill his destiny, no one had been in any real danger. He was certain of that because Hogwarts would’ve told him if there was a threat that couldn’t be dealt with by anyone other than him. He was the Headmaster after all.

“Minerva, please tell the other Heads not to worry.” Dumbledore instructed her. “I will contact the Ministry to see about getting some Aurors stationed in Hogsmeade on Saturday. And in the morning I will have a meeting with the Head Boy and girl and the prefects so they know what to tell their housemates about why Black is not a threat to them.”

####
On Saturday morning, Ron sat in his usual place in the Great Hall, shovelling food in to his mouth as fast as he could make space for it while sitting across from Ron, Hermione looked around worriedly for Harry. He hadn’t come in for breakfast yet and according to Ron, Harry’s bed in the third year boy’s dorm had already been empty by the time he woke up.

“Hermione, don’t worry,” Ron mumbled around a mouthful of food, “Harry’s fine. He is probably wandering around some of the unused sections of the school trying to work off his frustration. Given he has no broom at the moment, because the Whomping Willow smashed it to bits, it is the only way he has to work off his anger.” Ron put some more eggs on his plate. “And even you have to admit he has been very angry for the last few days. Right now I think he could give Snape a run for his money in the ‘Who is the most vicious git’ department.”

“Ron, Professor McGonagall and the Headmaster are just trying to keep him safe.” Hermione reminded him with a put upon sigh. Some times boys could be so stupid. “That is the most important thing.”

Ron shrugged, “Maybe, maybe not, but it is fairly clear that is not how Harry sees it. All he can see is the Headmaster has the staff ganging up to prevent him from going to Hogsmeade, something everyone else with a signed permission slip is allowed to do. Professor McGonagall is constantly telling Harry that Black is a danger to him and yet according to Harry nothing is being done to protect the other students when they are in Hogsmeade.” Ron took a drink from his glass. “There is a saying that Bill told me cursebreakers like to use a lot. ‘Just because something looks safe or harmless does not mean it is.’ I mean if Black is so dangerous why are Harry’s friends not being protected too? In chess it is always a good idea to take out the lesser pieces to get a better chance at the King.”

“This is real life Ron, not chess,” Hermione commented.

“Hermione, the strategy is the same in real life and in chess,” Ron pointed out. “And if you think about it Harry’s right when he said more than once that the Headmaster seems determined to keep him prisoner and control who and what he has access to in the magical world. Now I am not sure if the Headmaster is really doing this or not but you have to admit that Hogwarts is not exactly as safe as the teachers claim. Black apparently knows a way to get around the wards since he was able to get into the castle, so if the Headmaster claim that Hogsmeade is safe for us why is not it safe for Harry.”

“Well… umm… because Black has no interest in us. He does not know who Harry’s friends are,” Hermione countered. “And as for the rest, you and Harry are wrong after all Harry had access to Diagon Alley unsupervised for almost three weeks this summer…”

“Only because he blew up his Uncle’s sister,” Ron reminded her, “and according to my father, Fudge and Dumbledore thought it best that he not go back to the Dursley’s right away. And I doubt that he was unsupervised. The shopkeepers would have kept an eye on him even if no one else did.”

Before Hermione could come up with a response, Harry sat down next to Ron. While his face was like an expressionless mask, both Ron and Hermione were fairly certain that he was still furious because of his icy green eyes. Harry’s eyes were one of the more expressive parts of him.

As Harry started serving himself from the platters on the table, Hermione poured some pumpkin juice into a nearby goblet for him. Harry nodded his thanks and started eating without a word being said to anyone.

Hermione gave him several minutes to relax a little, before she enquired, “Where have you been Harry? You nearly missed breakfast.”
Harry just stared at her silently for several minutes, before returning his attention to his food. He wasn’t all that hungry given that he and Daniel had had a rather filling meal at an Indian place Daniel knew about near Oxford, but if he hadn’t eaten something there would’ve been awkward questions from Hermione at the very least. Harry hadn’t ever had Indian food before Daniel had taken there and he’d found it rather spicy but very good. That time watch that he and Daniel had gotten from Merlin’s vault this morning, well technically they were picking it up now, was going to come in very handy. It was going to make it easier for them to do what they needed to make sure Harry was free of Dumbledore’s plots by the end of the year, without arousing anyone’s suspicions. They just had to be careful not to overuse it or they would both wind up physically exhausted and drained of energy.

It was also going to make it easier for him to get the training he needed to be able to merge Daniel’s power with his without nearly killing them both. They were going to start the training during the two week Christmas break that was due to start in a couple of weeks, because it would be easier for Harry to disappear for hours at a time without having to use the time watch… unless someone got very nosey and then once school started again, they would move the training sessions to the weekend using the time watch.

/Don’t forget, we need to check out this Chamber of yours sometime soon,/ Daniel reminded him. /We need to make sure it can handle the destruction we are probably going to inflict on it without bringing the castle down on top of us. I don’t think Hogwarts would be too thrilled if we reduced her to a pile of rubble./

/Let’s just get through the detention with McGonagall first./ Harry requested. /If we get done early enough, then we can try and go check it out today./

“Harry, you did not answer my question. Where were you this morning?” Hermione repeated her question. "We were worried about you. You left Gryffindor tower without telling anyone where you were going. That is not like you.”

Harry looked her in the eye and asked “Hermione, do I have the right to privacy? Or is that a right denied to me because I was lucky or maybe unlucky enough, depending on your point of view to survive an attack on my family by Voldemort?”

“You are both, mate.” Ron interrupted. “You are lucky you survived but because everyone knows you survived that makes you famous and they think they have a right to know every little detail about you. And I would not complain too much, that fame kept you from having your wand snapped this summer after you blew up your Uncle’s sister. If it had been anybody else, that would have happened faster than you can say Quidditch.”

“Ron, they do not snap someone’s wand for doing accidental magic, nor do they expel them.” Hermione informed them. “And Harry, you have a right to some privacy, but what if you had gotten hurt while you were off wandering Merlin knows where. It could have been quite a while before anybody found you.”

"Blood hell you sound like my mum."

Daniel snorted in Harry’s mind. /Ron is sounding a lot like Jack. His mouth engaged without checking in with his brain./

Harry barely held back a snort of his own. /Ron is worse than Jack at that, especially when Hermione is in her bossy ‘I know better than you’ mode. I am not too fond of her when she gets like that either, I’ve just never said anything about it until this year./

Daniel sighed. /You do know she means well, Harry. Unfortunately she’s looking at everything with
blinders on. She doesn’t see that it appears as if she’s trying to take control over your life and run it as she sees fit./

/I know./ Harry replied /But I’m tired of everyone tell me how to live my life. The only person who has any say in that is you, Daniel./

“I doubt that would have happened.” Harry responded to Hermione’s comment and not Ron’s. “From what I have read, since Black’s break in, the Headmaster is tied into the wards of the castle at least enough to be alerted to when a student is in real danger. That is assuming the wards are communicating correctly with him and you could not prove that to me given what has happened over the last couple of years.”

Before Hermione could speak up in the Headmaster’s defence, Harry added, “I just wanted some time to myself, without anyone monitoring what I did, given I have been made a prisoner in the supposedly safest place in magical Britain, next to Gringotts, even though I committed no crime.”

“Be grateful for that. At least Fudge has not decided you need to be moved somewhere safer.” Ron gestured around the Great Hall with his fork. “If he did, there is no telling where you would end up.”

“Ron!” Hermione hissed. “The Headmaster would never let the Minister take Harry away from Hogwarts.”

“I have to agree with Hermione on that.” Harry nodded. “Dumbledore would do whatever he had to in order to keep Fudge from interfering with his plans for me.” And after a mouthful of food, he added, “Whatever they may be.”

Hermione snorted sharply. “Oh for Merlin sake! I do not understand why you are so paranoid about the Headmaster! After all he is only trying to keep you safe. If I were you, I would be more worried that cousin of yours who has suddenly come out of the woodwork.”

“Well he does not seem to apply the same level of safety to the rest of the students here… especially those that the wizarding world know are my friends.” Harry pointed out then added. “And Hermione, you really need to remove those blinders you have on regarding authority figures. The blind trust you are showing in Dumbledore seems to have made you forget how life really is in world beyond the walls of Hogwarts.”

Before Hermione could snap back that she hadn’t forgotten anything, McGonagall walked up to where they were seated and told Harry. “Mr. Potter, I will expect you in the Transfiguration classroom in ten minutes.”

As she walked off, Harry got to his feet and delivered a final parting shot to Hermione. “And before you claim that you have forgotten nothing about how things are in the real world outside Hogwarts, consider this: According to what facts there are on Voldemort and the raids conducted by his Deatheaters in the history books, they were not picky about who they killed to get to their target. They took out friends, family and innocent bystanders. And let us not forget the terrorists in the muggle world. They are not really picky about who gets killed either as long as they take out their target.”

Harry walked out of the Great Hall before Hermione could come up with a response.

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When Harry entered the empty Transfiguration classroom, he saw there was some parchment and a quill sitting on a nearby desk and written on the chalk board was the statement: *I will not be rude to
“You will write was is written on the board two hundred and fifty times.” Professor McGonagall instructed him before Harry had a chance to comment on what was written on the board.

As Harry headed for the assigned desk, Daniel couldn’t resist commenting, /I’ve always wanted to participate in a sit in./

Harry looked over at McGonagall and saw she was no longer paying attention to him, instead she was reading what looked like a Transfiguration journal. Apparently she was expecting him to do what he was told like a good little boy.

/How long do you think it will take her to notice I am not writing anything?/ Harry wondered.

/Thirty minutes maybe,/ Daniel told him. /Certainly not more than an hour unless she is like Binns and completely oblivious to what is going on around her. Just remember what we talked about and try and stay calm./

Daniel’s guess wasn’t that far off. They had been discussing Hermione’s reaction to meeting Daniel for the first time at the Three Broomsticks, when McGonagall spoke up. “Mr. Potter, why are you not following my instructions?”

“I showed up here because you ordered me to be here,” Harry told her calmly, “but I have no intention in co-operating in this farce of a detention assigned by the Headmaster.”

“This detention is not a farce Mr. Potter! A student being rude especially to a guest in the Headmaster’s office is a serious issue.” McGonagall snapped. “And in addition to losing ten points for disobeying your Head of House, you will also be writing out one hundred times ‘I will give the Headmaster the respect he is due’.”

“I am giving the Headmaster far more respect than he is currently due,” Harry countered. “I have not asked my cousin, you know the one I have yet to meet thanks to the Headmaster’s interference, to file a complaint with the Boar of Governors on my behalf because the Headmaster seems to want to keep me a prisoner.”

“I never would have thought you were capable of such exaggeration, Mr. Potter, or that you could have such a vivid imagination. The Headmaster is most certainly not keeping you prisoner.”

McGonagall tried for a dismissive sounding tone, even though she knew that Potter was right. It stung her sense of honour hard to know that in their attempt to keep James and Lily’s child safe, both she and the Headmaster had to act in such a deceitful manner.

“Oh really,” Harry drawled. “We both know this detention is about as legitimate as a bronze Galleon. Given that I made lots of copies of my Aunt’s note giving me permission to go to Hogsmeade, the Headmaster could not use the excuse that you lost it again, so he had to come up with another way to keep me confined at Hogwarts. I am fairly certain he was counting on Snape to give me a detention, since the man seems to loathe the very sight of me, but apparently some higher power had other ideas.”

Harry had to hide his smirk because the higher power in this case had been Daniel. Daniel had done a little mental misdirection or what he called mental three card monte on Snape every time they had been in his class. Snape had known Harry was in Potions class, but every time he would deliberately look for Harry to take points or hand out a detention, he couldn’t see him.

“The Headmaster should take some lessons from Snape in how to come up with believable excuses
for his detentions.” Harry mused. “At least Snape comes up with some unusual and questionable ones for the points he takes and the detentions he assigned. The Headmaster just seems to have grabbed the most flimsy excuse he could find.”

“Mr. Potter, you will call him, Professor Snape.” McGonagall corrected him automatically. “He has earned the title and it should be used. And we are not here to discuss whether the point deductions or the detentions assigned by Professor Snape are valid. We are discussing is your refusal to complete the detention assigned to you by the Headmaster. You earned it because of your actions in his office and if you continue your present behaviour, you will earn another one from me this time.”

“And I will refuse to serve that one as well because it is being given simply because I am doing what no one else will do for me. I refuse to allow the Headmaster to control where I can go or who I am allowed to see outside of school by assigning a phoney detention.” Harry informed her.

“Your rudeness has just earned you another detention to be served with me next Saturday.” McGonagall told him stiffly.

Emerald green eyes met hers, as Harry calmly told her. “No, ma’am, I have been neither rude nor disrespectful towards you. I am simply standing up for myself against a false charge concocted by the Headmaster. If I served this detention the way you and he want me to, then I would be making his lie into the truth, by accepting the Headmaster’s claim that I deserved it because I was rude to Mr. Malfoy and I was not. I am certain that if you were to ask Mr. Malfoy whether or not he felt I was behaving rudely toward him, he would deny it. In fact he did agree in front of the Headmaster that I was behaving civilly to him. I have said it before Professor and I will say it again, even though you are not listening to me; the Headmaster was looking for something even a trumped up excuse to keep me from exercising my right to go to Hogsmeade.”

“If Lily and James were alive... well they would be extremely upset over your behaviour here today, Mr Potter. While your father was one of the most notorious pranksters at Hogwarts in his day not even he would have acted the way you have toward me today. In fact your behaviour since you started school this year has been beyond what I would have expected from their child.” McGonagall couldn’t understand the change in this child who had once been so compliant and easy to handle.

She knew from all her years of handling children that as they grew older, children would test the boundaries put in place by adults, but no matter how stubborn, they usually gave in and did what they were told to, including the Slytherins. Even the Marauders at their worst had never defied her as James’ son had just done. Young Harry Potter seemed determined to become her worst nightmare.

Harry got annoyed at her for bringing his dead parents into this. “Well if they had been alive, then we would not be going through this now would we. Because if they were alive that would mean that Black would not be in Azkaban for their deaths because he would not have betrayed them to Voldemort. It also means that he would not be trying to kill me or do something possibly worse now. Then there is the fact that if my parents were alive I would not be serving detention with you today because the Headmaster would not have had this obsessive need to keep me prisoner and lie to me about why he is doing it.”

“Mr. Potter, I have never had a child behave so impertinently to me before. If you continue to speak to me in this insolent fashion I will have no choice but to bring this matter up to the Headmaster and you could be expelled.” McGonagall was at her wits end.

/I doubt Dumbledore will allow that to happen,/ Daniel told Harry. /He wouldn’t have gone to all the trouble of trying to wipe your memories in that Hospital room, if he didn’t need to maintain some control over you. Especially given that we found out from the Goblins he was listed until recently as your magical guardian./
Harry had to agree with that assessment and decided to push McGonagall just a little further. “Well, Professor, you might as well fetch the Headmaster and set about expelling me because I have no intention of doing this detention or any others assigned to me that relate to it, so you may as well save yourself the time and trouble.”

He paused for a few moments enjoying the shocked look on her face. “I tell you what, to save you some time and trouble, I will go up to Gryffindor tower and pack my things while you go find the Headmaster so he can expel me. Then someone can walk me down to Hogsmeade so I can meet up with my cousin. This will just advance our plans for him to get custody a little quicker. Merlin knows the Dursleys do not want me back and they will sign the paperwork for a change in custody as soon as we can find them. Funny thing is I doubt the Headmaster will expel me, given how much he seems to want keeping control of me. You see the way I figure it, there was a way I could have gone to Hogsmeade and still stayed as safe as you insist I need to be. If one of the Professors had gone with me to keep an eye on me, I would have been perfectly safe in Hogsmeade. Professor Lupin would have been the obvious choice, given he is the first competent Defence teacher we have ever had, but that would not have fit into what seems to be the Headmaster’s plan of keeping me isolated and controlling what access I have to the wizarding world.”

"Mr Potter, I will not stand here and listen to you insult one of the greatest wizards of all time.” McGonagall told him through gritted teeth. “I have known the Headmaster for many years and he is not the type to behave in such an underhanded fashion.”

“Why am I not surprised that you would defend Dumbledore’s actions and not speak up on my behalf?” Harry looked up at the ceiling. “In the little over two years since I was introduced to the magical world and Hogwarts, I have never seen you defend the members of your House even half as well as Snape. You always seem to assume that we are in the wrong, even when we are not.”

“Mr. Potter!” McGonagall was shocked by his words. “How dare you accuse me of not taking proper care of the students in my House. I have always done my best for my lions.”

“If you really were doing the very best for the members of Gryffindor House, then why have you not done anything about the animagus in our dorm?” Harry asked her. “As far as I know, given Ron’s lack of reaction to what Scabbers really is, you have not even bothered to check in to it. Why is that?”
A Few Home Truths

Chapter Notes

/words more words/ = mental conversations between Harry and Daniel
§words more words§ = phoenix speech

A Few Home Truths

The few witches and wizards who had business to conduct with Gringotts in the early morning hours, received an unexpected bonus for being willing to get up so early on a Saturday… something that others would probably have a hard time believing. These early risers were given the opportunity to witness several goblins bowing in respect to a wizard with golden brown hair and dressed in strange blue robes. Those who saw the goblins actions were confused about why they would give this unremarkable looking wizard the respect and courtesy they wouldn’t even grant to Dumbledore, the greatest wizard of the age.

The next to be given a bit of a surprise was a red headed cursebreaker who was passing close enough to hear the golden haired wizard make a request of a nearby guard, in gobbledegook that while slow was better than he could manage. While Bill couldn’t understand all of it, he did catch that the man’s name was Daniel Jackson and he was apparently there for a meeting with senior account manager Glaive and was asking the guard to let him know that he was here. Bill was about to intervene and refer the man to one of the occupied tellers so they could let Glaive know he was there, when the guard bowed slightly and apparently headed off to do as he was asked.

Bill stared after the guard surprised. They had never done that for any wizard before. They usually just stood there without saying a word, staring at the witch or wizard in question as if they were dragon dung waiting to be removed. If it was one of Gringotts most important clients then the guard would summon another goblin to carry the message, but they normally would never leave their post for any witch or wizard.

Bill stared at the wizard dressed in what he recognized as casual desert robes, though they were not in a colour one would see in the desert, not even among the magical community, wondering what was so special about this Daniel Jackson? Since he started working for Gringotts a few years before, the goblins had been very thorough in letting their human employees know which witches and wizards they were likely to encounter that were to be treated with the utmost respect, so that they avoided giving offence, and he couldn’t remember the name Jackson being mentioned at all. He made a mental note to see if his father had ever heard of this wizard. Jackson must be someone of importance if the Goblins reactions were anything to go by, because even the Minister and Dumbledore didn’t rate the reception that Jackson had received.

A few moments later the guard returned with another goblin who Bill recognised at Glaive’s personal assistant and Bill watched as Jackson bowed to the guard and thanked him in gobbledegook telling him that he brought much honour to his clan by being willing to help a stranger.

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As Daniel stepped through the doorway into Glaive’s office he bowed respectfully to the goblin on the other side of the desk and said in slow careful gobbledygook. “May our business together be profitable and may your family be prosperous in all its dealings so that they bring honour to your clan.”

“May your business always be profitable and your vaults full of gold honourably won.” Glaive returned without pause then added. “Your familiarity with our tongue is much better, Advisor Jackson. Amazing considering you only started learning it a few months ago. From what I have heard our human employees say ours is not the easiest of languages to learn.”

“I’ve always had a gift for languages, and those books you provided that allowed me to see and hear the pronunciation of the words were a great aid.” Daniel told him modestly.

“Shall we get down to business then,” Glaive asked. “I have the paperwork you will need to be legally recognized as a citizen of both magical and non-magical America. The name on all the documentation as you requested is Daniel J. Jackson and you are in all American systems as Daniel Jonathan Jackson.”

Daniel studied the passport, driver’s licence, social security card, American Express gold card, and other paperwork with an expert eye. He was used to having to spot forged old documents and sometimes to having to do the same with more recent documentation for the SGC, and had to admit that whoever worked for the goblins was good… very good.

Sliding the documentation into the bag slung over his shoulder, Daniel told him, “Thank you. Also please thank your people for their excellent work.”

Glaive nodded, “I will pass on your thanks. That credit card will act for you like a Head of House’s signet ring and is tied to Merlin’s vault so any charges will be drawn against it for purchases you make in either the magical or non-magical world. It will cause less questions than if the funds were taken from the Potter vaults, since those are still supposed to be locked down because Mr. Potter is still considered a minor by those outside of Gringotts. The wallet works the same way, it is keyed to your combined magical signature and when you need it the correct type of currency will appear within the wallet.”

Daniel nodded his understanding then asked. “Given that access to Merlin’s vault is so tightly controlled, do we need to move the gold and gems from that vault into to one more accessible to your people?”

“That is not necessary.” Glaive assured him. “The magic within the walls of all our vaults insure that the required amount can be taken out without a goblin having to move it. Rest assured that the magic we use to transfer funds will not touch the other items he left for you in there.”

Daniel nodded. “I was not worried about that in the least. Even among those who do not like you, it is well known that Goblins have a reputation for living up to the letter of their agreements. I have no doubt that even if a goblin were foolish enough to sell his or her honour to try and gain something from that vault that they had no right to, the security measures Myrrdin put in place would prevent them from taking it.”

“Merlin was the greatest of the Old Ones.” Glaive agreed. “Dumbledore even though, many compare him to Merlin, is not even a close competitor for the title Greatest Wizard of the Ages.”

“I have to agree with that,” Daniel told him, earning a toothy smile. “From my observations of the man he is one of the greatest puppeteers around with how he uses people’s perception of how he is infallible, his political position’s and magic to manipulate others into following his direction. With
Riddle, I sometimes wonder if perhaps he manoeuvred the young man into becoming a danger to the magical world, into becoming the next Dark Lord after Grindelwald because Dumbledore perceived that he was a threat to the power that he had. I mean until recently, no one even knew that Voldemort and Riddle were the same person, except for Dumbledore."

"I would not disagree with that," Glaive replied. "I know of many who have stood in Dumbledore’s way only to meet unfortunate ends, and up until recently that usually meant death at the hands of Deatheaters or Voldemort."

And he may have had a hand in getting Black sent to prison. Daniel privately thought and felt Harry murmur his own agreement. “Glaive, have you had any luck in trying to get the trial records for Sirius Black?”

“Our sources state there are no records to be found,” Glaive reported. “Which means that Sirius Black the current Lord of House Black never received a trial. If the records had been sealed by the Unspeakables for any reason there still would have been a record of the trial, we just would not have been allowed to see it.”

Daniel had expected that. “I thought that might be the case based on what someone at the Leaky Cauldron told Harry, but I needed to be sure. Did you manage to arrange a meeting with a representative the US Department of Magic for me for today?”

“It took a little effort to convince the head of the office for the Department of Magic at the American Embassy here in London to do so, but McBride finally agreed to meet you here at 10 in one of our secure meeting rooms.” Glaive informed him.

“And what is the Department of Magic office called?” Daniel asked curious.

“In Britain the Department of Magic is called the Department of Weights and Measures. It goes by other names in the Consulates and Embassies of other countries, but it will always be the one that should get the least amount of muggle traffic.” Glaive told him.

Daniel thought about it for a minute and decided it made sense. They would be able to hide in plain sight that way always the best option if you had a choice. “Glaive, I know you probably have a busy day ahead of you, but would you have time to take me down to Merlin’s vault before my meeting? I need to retrieve something he left for Harry and I.”

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At a little before 10am, Sam McBride arrived outside the London branch of Gringotts bank in Diagon Alley. As he walked up the white marble steps two emotions were vying for dominance in his mind: Curiosity and Worry.

He was curious about why any normal American magical citizen would feel the need to have the Goblins arrange a meeting for them. This “Jackson” should’ve had no reason to go to such an extreme if he/she had legitimate business with the magical offices of the US Government. Before going abroad, every magical citizen of the US was given a list of the magical embassy and consulate offices for the countries they would be travelling to, in case they needed help. If this Jackson person was indeed a magical US citizen then he/she should’ve had no reason to go to Gringotts, or even the British Ministry of Magic to get in contact with them.

There was only one possible reason that McBride could come up with for someone to arrange a meeting under what was the closest to Class 10 security outside the underground meeting rooms in the Department of Magic in DC and he desperately hoped it was not that.
What worried him the most was that Jackson might be one of the few magical citizens working in Covert Ops. People working in undercover operations normally had established lines of contact that were very rarely if ever gone around and then only in the case of an extreme risk to the US or her allies. If Jackson were a deep cover operative who was going outside the normal channels to pass on information without breaking his/her cover then whatever information Jackson had would be bad and something that would have to be passed on immediately. Or it could be even worse. Jackson found out about a pending attack and had to break cover to get the warning out and as a result he/she couldn’t use their regular contact channels out of fear of blowing that person’s cover as well which also meant the bad guys were probably hot on this agent’s trail and he was going to have to render any and all assistance if that were the case.

Sighing and preparing himself for the worse case scenario, McBride walked up to the nearest available goblin teller and told him. “My name is Samuel McBride. I have an meeting at 10am with Account Manager Glaive.”

The Goblin looked up at him briefly and then gestured to one of the waiting messenger goblins. “Let Account Manager Glaive know that his 10 o’clock appointment is here.”

The messenger goblin nodded and left returning a few minutes later and gesturing to McBride to follow him.

McBride followed the goblin down several hallways until they stopped at a door with a pair of goblins standing guard.

“Go in,” the goblin told him. “Manager Glaive and the other party are waiting for you.”

McBride nodded his thanks before opening the door.

Inside the room seated off to one side was a goblin that McBride assumed was Glaive, but it was the person on the far side of the room leaning up against the wall that held McBride’s attention. He didn’t look like one would expect a covert operative to look like. Jackson, at least McBride assumed this was Jackson, had golden brown hair and was dressed in jeans and a fleece jacket over what looked like a white pullover sweater.

McBride couldn’t help noticing that even though the man was studying him intently, as if expecting and preparing for the worst, there was still an air of trusting innocence about him that one usually only found in children.

Glaive broke the silence between the two men by performing introductions. “Advisor Jackson, this is Mr. Samuel McBride Head of the London office of the US Department of Magic. Mr. McBride this is Advisor Jackson.”

Advisor? McBride had never heard that title given to anyone in Magical Britain before. It didn’t tell him anything about who or what the man standing on the other side of the room was. Nor did it tell him what he did. “Advisor?”

“It is a title the Goblins have given me because of a job I do.” Jackson told him with a slightly embarrassed smile as he stepped away from the wall. “Thank you for agreeing to meet with me, Mr. McBride. I know this is not a place you would normally come to meet a stranger, but I am very grateful that you did.”

There was something was off about this meeting, only McBride couldn’t put his finger on what it was. Jackson was way too calm to be either a Magical American who had gotten caught up in something illegal and who now had criminals after him. Nor was he acting like a covert operative
that had a warning he had to make sure was delivered or whose cover had been blown because he found out something he shouldn’t have. “What is it you needed to see me about?”

Gesturing to one of the seats at the small table, Jackson told him. “That is going to take a while to explain but before I can go into it, I need to ask you to take a magically binding oath, that what we will discuss will remain between us unless I give you permission to involve others. It is to protect all those involved, including yourself… if you chose to give me that oath. In return for your oath, I will be swearing a magically binding oath that as far as I know what we are going to talk about is in no way a threat to the United States or her interests either magical or non-magical.”

“That nothing was said about me having to swear a magical oath as a condition of this meeting.” McBride didn’t take a seat or move from his position near the door.

“Would you have come if you had known?” Jackson countered calmly.

McBride crossed his arms over his chest. “What kind of a fool do you take me for? For all I know it is something very illegal that you want to get me involved in.”

Jackson’s face softened into a smile again. “From what the goblins have told me about you, Mr. McBride, you are a man who will do his job to the best of his ability and right now I need your help. I promise you that it does not involve anything illegal. I’m under a time constraint and it will take a lot longer than I think I have to do it on my own since I don’t know the key players they way you do.”

McBride gave him a dry look that reminded Daniel a lot of Jack when he thought he was being conned into something. “You need to practice your suck up skills, Jackson. My five year old son can do better.”

“I’m not trying to suck up to you.” Daniel told him honestly. “I was speaking the truth. I am a stranger here and I need help with several things that the Goblins are unable to help me with.”

That surprised McBride. There wasn’t much the goblins couldn’t do or arrange to have done for the right price, since they had contacts just about everywhere. He glanced at Glaive. “I take it Account Manager Glaive that you are aware of Mr. Jackson’s secrets?”

“Of course,” Glaive confirmed. “We willingly swore the oath during our first meeting. We agreed it was best for all if the information remained confidential.”

McBride nodded his head in understanding then turned back to face Jackson, “I can not and will not in good conscience swear a blanket oath like the one you want without some idea of what I am going to be swearing to be silent about.”

Jackson looked thoughtful for several minutes before saying two words. “Time travel.”

McBride blinked. That was the last thing he’d expected to hear the man say. He took a few moments to consider that. It would go a long way toward explaining Jackson’s actions in arranging for this meeting through Gringotts. It was probably one of the few quasi-permanent institutions that a magical person could expect to find in either the past or the future.

“I take it that you are talking about coming back more than the couple of days or week at most you could get from a time turner.” McBride commented.

Jackson nodded but gave him no indication of just how much time he was talking about.

McBride swore softly to himself. “He did not need this today. As a matter of fact he didn’t need or
want this any day. This was worse than a covert operative whose cover had been blown. He couldn’t help wondering just what god it was he had pissed off to get handed this clusterfuck!

For decades humans both mundane and magical had dreamt of travelling in time but only those in the magical world had managed it, even if only a few knew it had been done. Time travel back a few hours or even a few days was very tightly controlled by every magical government in the world, including when and why someone was allowed to travel back in time and more importantly who was allowed to do it. Partly out of fear over the amount of damage a person could do by either accidentally or deliberately travelling back in time more than a few hours or a few days and partly out of fear of the chaos an accidental traveller might do. While it was not yet possible to travel forward in time some of the greatest minds had concerns about what would happen if a time traveller could go forward in time and then return to the present with the knowledge they’d collected from their trip. A person with that kind of foreknowledge could control or destroy any government or country they chose. And now the greatest fear of every magical government, other than a very powerful Dark Lord bent on world domination, was standing in front of him in an office at Gringotts in the form of one Daniel Jackson claiming he had done what many of the greatest minds had hoped to one day do and yet feared to because of the possible consequences.

Time travel was the magical equivalent of the chicken and the egg argument only on a nuclear scale among those who knew that it was real and not just a fantasy dreamt up by the mundanes.

While the mundanes had yet to figure out how to travel in time, even they knew of the dangers involved in it. Mundanes called it the Grandfather paradox. The mundanes basically summed it up as: A person goes back in time and accidentally killed their grandfather before their father was born and with that being the case they were never born so how could they have gone back and killed their grandfather?

Wizards on the other hand knew that paradox could very easily become reality if the traveler was not very very careful. All it would take was someone getting their hands on a time turner and going back in time a few days to try and undo some wrong committed either against them, someone they knew, or the magical world in general. Or even worse if some idealistic wizard or witch figured out how to go back more than a few days and deliberately did so to remove someone like Voldemort or Harry Potter thereby instigating the Grandfather paradox on a massive scale causing history to go in a different direction.

What no one had been able to determine was just how much history would be changed, by removing such a pivotal figure. Would humanity be destroyed or would it cause what mundanes called an alternate dimension to be created.

Now all McBride had to do was figure out how he was going to get someone outside Gringotts quickly enough to pick Jackson up… without making him suspicious or angering the goblins. The rules were very clear: It didn’t matter if the trip through time had been deliberate or accidental, any time traveler, who traveled more than the few days a time turner was capable of, when found, had to be captured and contained before they could cause any harm.

As if he’d been reading McBride’s mind, Jackson gave him a knowing smile and said, “I’m fairly certain you are trying to figure out how to get someone in here to make sure I am properly contained before I can accidentally cause a paradox, but you have to understand that there is more going on here than you know and some of it I’m not allowed to tell you, even after I have your oath. I realize I’m asking a lot, but you have to trust me when I tell you that trying to have me placed in ’protective custody’ or whatever you want to call it, could be much worse for the world than anything I could ever do, since you might be causing the very paradox you are trying to prevent.”
Daniel mentally shrugged. "I didn’t plan this trip, but if Myriddin’s prophecy is accurate, then some power higher than the Ancients brought me to you in that cellar, so it technically must have."

McBride looked at him skeptically. "If you were sent here from the future by the US Department of Magic why didn’t you come to the Embassy immediately? Why go through the goblins to set up this meeting?"

Jackson shrugged and told him. "I can’t say anything more until I have your oath."

McBride's nostrils flared. "Will you give me an oath that you mean no harm to the mundane or magical worlds and that you will not use your foreknowledge to benefit yourself before I take the oath you are demanding from me?"

"Then we would get into the field of semantics." Daniel countered. "Because what I might consider helping another person might view as me causing harm."

McBride mentally conceded that Jackson had a point. What one person viewed as helping, another might view as harming. "Well then will you swear that your foreknowledge won’t be used to control the mundane or magical worlds. Also, that you will not use it to influence the economies of the world? Or share it with others who might use it for that purpose?"

Jackson nodded. "If you swear the oath I have asked for, I would be willing to do that. As I said earlier I will be swearing an oath that what we are to discuss as far as I know is in no way a threat to the sentient races in either the magical or non-magical parts of the world. The only others who know what I am are the goblins and as you know they’ve already taken an oath to keep it confidential."

"You really expect me to swear an oath that leaves me no way to alert others to what you are if you suddenly become a threat?" McBride persisted.

Jackson looked thoughtful. "Your concern is justifiable, but I hope you understand that I can not take the risk that your oath gives you an unspecified out so that if you decide I am a threat to the world, based solely on your perception of my actions, you can tell anyone you think should know. Not to mention that if someone else knew you had spoken to a time traveler, they might wonder what you had been told that might be useful... to them. Foreknowledge that I might have accidentally let slip to you would be just as dangerous as if I had told someone directly."

McBride had to concede that that was a valid point, so remembering that the goblins knew what Jackson was, he suggested. "What if we let a neutral third party decide?"

"Who?" Jackson wanted to know.

McBride turned to Glaive. "Account Manager Glaive, if Mr. Jackson is agreeable would you be willing to act as the final judges of whether or not my concerns are enough to release me from my oath of silence if I believe his actions are a serious enough threat to either the magical or non-magical world?"

Daniel looked over at Glaive and shrugged. "Account Manager Glaive, the choice would be up to you and your people. I have no objection to you acting as the final arbiters over whether or not Mr. McBride should be released from his oath if he has proof that I am a threat to either the magical or non-magical world."

Glaive was silent for several minutes before nodding. "I will stand surety for his oath and release him
if needed. And if I am not available, I will arrange for another to make the decision. Is that acceptable, Mr. McBride?"

McBride nodded.

Jackson thought about it and realized that McBride had missed something very obvious. If he did ever decide to go in for global domination like the Goa’uld or Ori wanted to, then McBride would be the first person he would have to take out because the man knew he was a time traveler.

/You wouldn’t really do that would you?/ Harry asked a little worried.

/No,/ Daniel assured him. /I know a few people who wouldn’t hesitate for a second if he was viewed as a threat, but fortunately for McBride, I value life and will fight to defend it even at the cost of my own life./

When Harry said nothing more, Daniel picked up a quill and quickly wrote out something on two separate pieces of parchment then handed them to McBride. “Assuming we are in agreement these will be the oaths we will be swearing.”

McBride read both oaths over a few times before nodding in agreement.

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Once the oaths had been given on both sides and they were seated at the table, McBride asked his first question. “How far back have you come?”

Jackson shrugged. “A decade give or take a bit.”

McBride winced. It wasn’t as bad as it could have been if he’d come from further in the future. “And why are you here?”

“I have no clue, other than it seems my presence here saved a life.”

Jackson’s reply stunned McBride into several moments of silence. ”You don’t know why you were sent back?”

“My trip wasn’t planned. One moment I was in my own time and the next I was here. I believe I was sent back at least partly to save a life.” Jackson then shrugged his shoulders. “Other than that I’ve just been winging it and trying to keep a low profile.”

“Whose life?” McBride interrupted him feeling his gut tighten. If it was someone who should’ve died things might already be fubar’d.

“Harry Potter’s.”

"Harry Potter? The boy who survived the Avada Kedavra curse? That Harry Potter?” McBride was surprised by the claim.

According to his sources the boy was currently at Hogwarts in his third year of schooling there and there had been no reports of any attacks on him. Like the magical part of most country’s, that didn’t have the seemingly undying adoration of all things Dumbledore that Britain’s magical community had, America monitored Potter as much as they could which wasn’t much given the level of security that Dumbledore had placed around the boy. Most of their information was second or third hand. Even their shared contacts in the Department of Mysteries that had been built up during World War II, couldn’t get much information on the boy’s status, which McBride knew stung their sense of
pride. It also worried everyone in a position of power who wasn’t in Britain because up until this past summer, seers around the world, many of them in government service, had been asking about Potter, claiming that the boy was in danger. However when their concerns and warnings had been brought to the attention of Dumbledore or the other British representative at the ICW, they would say the same thing over and over; that the boy was fine, that he was safe and well protected.

Mc Bride's assistant Cordelia Chase, who had sporadic visions, some of which had been about young Potter, had come to him at the end of July saying that Potter was no longer in danger. When other seers in the US and other government services had been consulted, they had quickly confirmed her claim. It had been very odd considering that Black had escaped from Azkaban around that time and was supposedly after the boy. Was that when Jackson had arrived? Had he saved Potter from Black? Was that why Black couldn’t be found by anyone?

“Yes,” Jackson confirmed. “Someone had beaten him to death or rather he would have died if I hadn’t interfered.”

Wanting to know why word of the attack hadn’t spread throughout the wizarding world given the attention paid to young Potter McBride played skeptic. “That’s impossible. You couldn’t have hidden an attack on Harry Potter. It would’ve made the front page of the Daily Prophet at the very least, given the level of security Dumbledore and the Ministry claim to have surrounding Potter.”

“Not if the attack was covered up by Albus Dumbledore with the help of the Minister of Magic Cornelius Fudge,” There was a brittle smile on Jackson’s face. “They couldn’t afford to have the supposed protection around Potter called into question. It would’ve also exposed a skeleton that Dumbledore wanted to keep well hidden behind a curtain of lies. I personally doubt that even Fudge knows the whole truth. He strikes me as a man who looks out for number one and to hell with anyone else. If he thought anything about Dumbledore’s arrangements for Harry would come back to bite him in the ass, he would sell Dumbledore out so fast it wouldn’t be funny.”

McBride looked at the other man thoughtfully. It sounded like Jackson was implying that Black hadn’t been the attacker. In fact from the way he was talking it sounded as it he’d seen a side of Dumbledore that a few suspected existed, but no one could ever remember seeing. McBride also didn’t know whether to feel shocked or pleased that the government of wizarding Britain not to mention Dumbledore now had egg on their faces figuratively speaking and that it had been put there by an American.

Wanting to confirm his suspicions about why Black hadn’t been seen since his escape, McBride asked. “Was it Black who attacked the boy? Did you deal with him? Is that why no one has seen him since he escaped from Azkaban?”

“No,” Jackson told him sadly. “While Black is one of the things I want to talk to you about, Harry was nearly beaten to death by his uncle.”

“His uncle?” Remembering how often the seers had mentioned their concerns about Potter, McBride was willing to bet that it hadn’t been the first time the boy’s uncle had beaten him. “How bad was it?”

Jackson was silent for several minutes before saying, “He almost killed him and that was the culmination of almost twelve years in hell. Prior to going to Hogwarts Harry was treated as a combination of slave and whipping boy. And I am willing to bet that they carried their beatings too far a number of times.”

“How was it hidden?” McBride wanted to know. “The non-magical police should’ve become involved even if no one else did.”
“I think Dumbledore altered the memories of anyone in a position of authority who knew and could get Harry removed from his relative’s home. After I’d healed the worst of his injuries from that last assault, I took Harry to St. Bart’s but no one at St. Bart’s remembers him being there thanks to Dumbledore and the Ministry.” Daniel told him. “The only reason Harry and I both remember is because Dumbledore didn’t know I was there when he attempted to remove Harry’s memories of his uncle’s attack on him.”

“Are you trying to tell me that Dumbledore tried to obliterate a thirteen year old boy?” McBride growled. “Why?”

“Yes.” Jackson confirmed. “As for why, I think he is trying to condition Harry like one of Pavlov’s dogs to do something, but I don’t know for sure what that is. I have my suspicions though, given that Dumbledore needed to get Harry to willingly return to his relative’s home, which wouldn’t have happened if Harry remembered his Uncle had almost killed him. I personally think that given the other things that have happened to him while he was at Hogwarts, Dumbledore is trying to condition Harry into being a willing martyr for the British magical people.”

Dumbledore no matter what he claimed was first and foremost a politician and McBride knew that politicians were very skilled at manipulating people into doing things they wouldn’t ordinarily do, so he didn’t doubt Jackson’s assessment of what Dumbledore was grooming the Potter boy for. The problem was that he couldn’t do anything to change that… at least not yet, but he could do something about Potter’s mundane relatives. A word in the right ear would see them suddenly having lots of problems in their lives “And who are his relatives?”

“They aren’t your concern. I have already taken steps to remove Harry from their custody.” Jackson told him.

“They need to be punished for what they tried to do!” McBride growled in protest.

“And given that no one remembers the harm they have done to Harry, how are charges going to be brought in non-magical court?” Daniel reminded him. “Don’t forget that Dumbledore will do everything he can to insure that never happens. Besides given the way they act, Harry’s relatives will get into major trouble sooner or later and without Dumbledore to protect them this time, they will finally get what’s coming to them.”

With some grumbling McBride reluctantly had to agree that Jackson was right. It was a well-known fact that if someone thought they would never get in trouble for their behavior they wouldn’t change it. He also had to admit that Jackson was also right about one other thing, Potter’s relatives would soon be caught once their protector no longer had a reason to keep them safe. And given the oath he’d sworn, he couldn’t tell anyone about the attack on Potter, no matter how much he wanted to give those people some payback. He hated those who abused children with an almost holy passion. He made a mental note though to have a watch placed on Dumbledore’s activities and have Cordelia do some research into the man’s past actions. Dumbledore had to have some skeletons hidden in his closet. The trick was going to be finding them and that girl was very good at ferreting out secrets. Dumbledore had gone to a lot of trouble to cultivate that kindly grandfather image of his. The kind who was only interested in helping everyone and it would be a tough nut to crack but it had to be done. That man had knowingly aided and abetted child abusers. He was going to do his best to put roadblocks in Dumbledore’s way. He probably wouldn’t be able to do much but even a little irritation could sometimes cause a big change.

“So what is it you needed from me since you claim to have everything with regards to Mr. Potter under control?” McBride wanted to know.

Daniel took a deep breath. They were now at the main reason he’d wanted this meeting. “I need to
get papers for Harry that show he has American citizenship and all the back up documentation a 
native born citizen would have. I’ll be his guardian of record in the magical and non-magical Britain 
by the beginning of the New Year, but I need this paperwork pushed through without Dumbledore 
or the Ministry of Magic finding out until it is too late to stop it.”

A thoughtful look appeared on McBride’s face. “Getting the passport and other paperwork needed 
for the mundane world will be easy but I have no contacts who could get similar paperwork done for 
Magical Britain.”

“I’ve already gotten that taken care of thanks to Glaive and his people.” Daniel assured him. 
“Besides if Harry and I have to leave we won’t be using magical means. I’ve noticed that the magical 
people of Britain know next to nothing about how things in the non-magical part works and I intend 
to use that against them.”

McBride smirked. “Yes they are a bit behind… by about a century.”

“A century?” Daniel snorted. “Actually I think its closer to two.”

McBride returned to business. “I will get the paperwork taken care of for you, but I don’t think it 
should be under the name Potter. The Ministry of Magic has a few latents working among the 
mundanes who alert them to things they need to be aware of. What name do you want on the 
paperwork?”

/Do you have another name you want to go by, Harry?/ Daniel asked.

/I don’t know./ Harry told him. /I’ve never given it much thought. I’ve always been Harry Potter./

/Well it will need to be something totally different from your birth name./ Daniel gave it some 
thought then suggested. /How about William Alexander O’Neill?/

/I wonder what Jack would say about your choice of a last name?/ Harry couldn’t resist commenting.

/Not much./ Daniel countered. /Jack is a man of few words. Do you want to use it?/

/Sure./ Harry mentally shrugged. /It is not like I will be using it for long./

“Have his paperwork set up under the name William Alexander O’Neill.” Daniel requested. “And 
once they are ready let Account Manager Glaive know. He has already said he will contact me when 
they are ready to be picked up and I will get in contact with you to make arrangements to get them.”

“All right,” McBride agreed. “It there anything else?”

“There’s just one more thing,” Daniel told him. “Would it be possible through the ICW to force 
the British Ministry of Magic to give Sirius Black a trial?”

#####

“Hermione, given all the books in the library why do you want to waste your time in a bookstore on 
one of the few days you have free from school.” Ron protested. “Do you not know what it means to 
relax? It means to do something for fun. It does not mean that we should visit the bookstore in 
Hogsmeade just so you can get more books, that I will most likely wind up having to carry back for 
you.”

As she opened the door to the Bell, Book, and Candle, Hermione just gave him a look of 
exasperation. “I am not looking for a book for me. I am looking for a present for Harry.”
"Are you getting Harry his own copy of Quidditch through the Ages?" Ron wanted to know as he followed her in.

"There is more to life than Quidditch, Ron. " Hermione told him loftily and then ignored the glare he sent her way for daring to utter such a blasphemy. "I want to see if they have an advanced book on Runes. Harry has taken to it like a duck to water and I thought he might appreciate a more advanced book on them."

"I would think he would appreciate a book on Defence Against the Dark Arts more.” Ron commented.

Hermione said nothing as she scanned the titles looking for the books on Runes.

After a few minutes of watching Hermione pull this book or that off the shelves and mutter to herself, Ron started to get really bored. And decided to wander around. As he wandered the aisles he noticed that some older witches were pointing at someone at the back of the store and he heard the oldest witch mutter.

“Disgraceful! Dressing like a ragbag. Surely he could have dressed in proper fashion before coming out in public, no matter how he dresses at home. There are impressionable young minds in town today. Last thing they need to think is that that is considered fashionable.” She huffed.

The older woman’s words piqued Ron’s curiosity so he went looking for the man who had incensed the elderly witch so much. In the back of the store he found a man dressed in strange robes studying a thick book. His robes looked like ones he had seen the curse breakers in Egypt wear only theirs had never been blue. Then he remembered Harry’s comment at breakfast about his cousin being easy for him to spot because he would be wearing desert robes.

Hurrying back over to Hermione, he hissed, “Hermione, I think I may have just seen Harry’s cousin.”

“Where?” Hermione demanded wanting to get a look at the man who thought he could take Harry from his friends.

“Over there,” Ron pointed toward the back of the store.

Hermione quickly stalked off in the direction Ron had indicated.

As she came upon a man with golden brown hair wearing a set of blue desert robes, she came to an abrupt stop as she heard him mutter. “Why is it even magical rune books reference Budge? That man was an idiot.”

Hermione’s eyes widened in shock and everything she intended to say to him about how he was not going to take Harry away from his home and his friends, flew out of her head as she listened to this man… this American's words as he insulted a man her Ancient Rune’s teacher thought very highly of. It didn’t matter that this man might be Harry’s cousin she wasn’t about to let him insult a very well known scholar. Professor Babbling respected Mr. Budge’s work and that was enough for Hermione.

"I will have you know, sir, that Sir Ernest Alfred Thompson Wallis Budge while a Squib was not an idiot. He was the greatest linguist of his day, speaking at least five languages. His work on Egyptian Hieroglyphs is considered the definitive work for Egyptologists. His translation of the Egyptian Book of the Dead provided us with unique insights into the world of the ancient Egyptians and their runic system. And he also wrote one of the earliest and most well known books on the paranormal."
Daniel could hear Harry snickering at her totally predictable response to someone insulting a book and the person who wrote it as he looked at Hermione, pretending not to recognise her. “Ah yes the *Golden Bough*. Who are you? You look a little young to be an accredited Egyptologist, Cursebreaker, or even a Rune Mistress.”

“Hermione Granger. Currently a student of Hogwarts, studying under Professor Bathsheba Babbling, our Ancient Runes teacher,” Hermione said snidely. "I have been studying Egyptian Hieroglyphs under Professor Babbling in addition to other ancient runes. Professor Babbling has great hopes of me following in her footsteps and becoming a Runes Mistress. And for your information Sir Ernest Budge’s work is the mainstay of that section of not only our class, but any Ancient Rune work that deals with Egyptian Hieroglyphs. And just who are you?”

“I am Daniel Jackson holder of three non-magical doctorates in Archaeology, Anthropology, and Linguistics and I hold a mastery in Ancient Runes. I currently speak and read over thirty languages fluently and have more than enough skill with at least five others to get by. And my current occupation is acting as a negotiator for both the Magical and non-magical governments of the United States.” The man told her. “As for your claim that Budge is the mainstay of Ancient Rune work or even Egyptology, I hate to tell you this, Miss Granger, but apparently your Professor Babbling is the one of the few who thinks that. Budge’s work is only briefly mentioned in any school I have ever visited because further research has proved that his translations were wrong, especially with regards to his translation of the Egyptian *Book of the Dead*. When the Hieroglyphs are correctly translated, a good many magical spells and runes that had been categorised originally as failures because of the incorrect translation that occurred because of Budge’s work have given us incredible advances in the area of magic.”

"You are wrong!" Hermione sputtered. "Professor Babbling is a Rune’s Mistress. If Budge’s work was no longer valid she would not be teaching it. Teachers especially those who have their Mastery would not teach something that was false!”

“Are you sure about that?” Jackson countered. “Hogwarts has a Board of Governors that has some say in what is taught as does the Ministry of Magic. They do not want the magical citizens of Britain thinking they have been passed by and are now considered backward by other countries outside of Europe. I did some research on Hogwarts since my cousin is going there and am well aware that once he graduates if he chooses to leave Britain he will have to take at least another five years of schooling if he is to have a hope of fitting into any magical community outside of Europe.”

“You are wrong!” Hermione clenched her fists. She really wanted to hit him because of the lies he was telling. “Hogwarts is the premiere school of magic. I did my research before deciding to go here.”

“And did you research all the magical schools in the world, or just the ones in Europe?” Jackson asked with a gentle smile. “If you only researched the ones in Europe; Durmstrang and Beauxbatons then you would be right, but if you had been able to get hold of information about schools in the Americas or Asia… oh sorry, I forgot the Ministry doesn’t want anyone in Magical Britain to know there are other choices outside of Europe, if they don’t already know. Didn’t you ever wonder why if there were only three schools of magic in the world they are not filled with students from other countries in addition to those from their own countries? I mean they would have to go to Hogwarts, Durmstrang or Beauxbatons wouldn’t they if those were the only schools of magic in existence.”

“The Americans go to school at Salem Witches’ Institute,” Ron put in as he stepped up to stand beside Hermione. He was trying to help since she seemed to be stumped.

“Among others,” Jackson agreed. "And you are?"
"Ron Weasley," Ron said as he held out his hand. Anyone who could out argue Hermione without sounding condescending or like a know-it-all was all right in his book.

"Daniel Jackson," Daniel replied as he shook Ron's hand. "I was explaining to Miss Granger that Hogwarts, Durmstrang and Beauxbatons are not the only magical schools in the world."

"Of course not," Ron said in surprise. "It would be a bloody nightmare if they were. I mean could you imagine trying to get everyone from around the world to the proper school on time? And not everyone speaks the same language so it would make it a nightmare trying to learn if you could not understand your teacher."

"Or slow the teachers down because they have to repeat the same course material in several different languages." Daniel agreed. "The big problem with a translation spell is if there is not a corresponding word in the other language you could accidentally wind up insulting someone without meaning to. And that’s not even taking into account the cultural and religious differences of the various countries. It is not really a good idea to trample on someone’s cultural or religious beliefs."

"Tell me about it." Ron agreed. He’d encountered some of that in Egypt and it was about the only part of their trip this past summer that he hadn’t liked.

"Would you say that people in the magical Britain know about the schools in other countries?" Daniel asked.

"Yeah, of course, you have to be have born under a rock or muggleborn not to know that," Ron replied.

"Can you think of some reason why the teachers who go to talk to the Muggleborns don’t tell them about the other schools?" Daniel asked.

Ron scratched his head. "Well... for one thing why would they want to go anywhere else? I mean I would not want to go to a school in a place like Egypt if I did not have to. When we were in Egypt this past summer we couldn’t find anywhere to get bacon and I like bacon. Bill told me there was none in Egypt because it was part of the religion of the magical and muggle parts of Egypt that you couldn’t eat any pork. I would hate to live there ten months out of the year. You should go to school in the area where you were born and live. The area you know best and are comfortable in. But aside from that if a person did not ask why would you tell them?"

"But I did ask." Hermione finally protested.

"And just how did you phrase your question?" Daniel wanted to know.

"I asked Professor McGonagall to tell me about the schools that were equal in quality to the education she said I would be receiving if I went to Hogwarts?" Hermione told him.

Daniel nodded. "And since the only schools that are equal to Hogwarts in terms of education are the European ones, she only told you about Durmstrang and Beauxbatons."

"No, Professor McGonagall did not lie to me." Hermione countered.

"I did not say she did." Jackson told her. "She told you the truth, but based on how your question was worded it allowed her to omit the options she didn’t want you to know about because she only provided the information you asked about. Harry has told me about the blind trust you seem to have in the written word and those in a position of authority. That is not always a good thing because it stops you from questioning them about those things you see that are wrong. Everyone, even someone like Mother Teresa, has an agenda of some kind, even if it is only to make it through their
job every day and get paid for it.”

“And what was Professor McGonagall’s agenda.” Hermione demanded snidely.

“To get your parent’s money,” Jackson told her as if it were the most obvious thing in the world. “Hogwarts is not a school everyone can go to freely. The tuition is two thousand galleons a year just for the core classes and housing, which at the current rate of exchange of Five Pounds to the Galleon is about ten thousand Pounds a year. Once a student is in their third year, Hogwarts collects an extra five hundred pounds a year per elective class taken which is usually no more than three for an extra fifteen hundred pounds a year for the next four years. That means that Hogwarts makes at least fourteen to twenty thousand galleons for your whole seven years of schooling at Hogwarts. Why would they want to tell you here were schools in America or elsewhere that might be better than Hogwarts and risk losing your tuition fees? Not to mention risk losing a new or maybe I should say a recovered bloodline for magical Britain...”

“Hermione is taking way more than three electives,” Ron interrupted. “Though Harry and I have not figured out how she is managing to do it.”

“I wonder how she is getting enough time.”

Noticing the emphasis Jackson put on that last word and the look he was giving her, Hermione quickly set out to distract both Harry’s cousin and Ron before the man figured out her secret. Someone who worked for a magical ministry just might know about time turners. “Recovered bloodline? What are you talking about? What is a recovered bloodline?”

Jackson smiled as if he knew what she was trying to do but answered her question anyway. “I doubt you are the first in your family to ever wield magic. I’m sure if you had a magical genealogy check done, you would find that like Harry’s mother, you are merely the first from a long line of latents to have enough magic to be able to use it. Most who think they are the first ever really aren’t they are just the first in their family after a very long time.”

“You are lying.” Hermione ground out. “If that were such a well known fact then Professor McGonagall would’ve made sure I got tested.”

“What makes you think she knew?” Jackson seemed unperturbed by her anger. “It’s something known only to a handful of people and I doubt they would want it spread around to upset the balance of power.

“Professor Dumbledore would have told us.” Hermione countered. “He’s in a position of authority to know such things.”

“Exactly and why would he want the balance disturbed?” Jackson went on. “By keeping silent and acting as if he is on the side of what Magical Britain calls the Muggle born, he gains their devotion and trust. They believe him and are willing to do things for him because they think he has their best interests at heart. I realise you probably are going to deny this even to yourself, but this is a hard lesson that you need to learn. Those in a position of authority will always do things that are in their best interests but the things they do may not necessarily be in your best interest. And I will give you a second piece of advice. I’m sure you’ve heard the phrase: History is written by the Victors before. Remember it. No book written about a period in history or a person is ever unbiased. They are always written by someone with an agenda, either to gloss over something ugly and make you forget it ever happened or to convince you a course of action taken was right or justified by listing it as being for the greater good.”

“You are wrong.” Hermione growled. “Professor Dumbledore is not some kind of Machiavelli.”
“Oh, then tell me where is my cousin? Given how Harry spoke of you Miss Granger and Mr. Weasley in his letters, I would’ve thought the three of you would be together as you explored Hogsmeade.”

“Harry got detention from the Headmaster.” Ron put in before Hermione could stop him.

“Hmm,” Jackson looked at Hermione, “and you still want to insist that Dumbledore doesn’t have an agenda? He seems to have with my cousin and at least part of it seems to be keeping him from meeting me.”

#######

Daniel Jackson’s return to the tower room he had just left a few moments before surprised Fawkes.

§Is something wrong, White Lord?§ The phoenix asked concerned. §I had thought you would be gone most of the day.§

“No I have completed the business I needed to do and I was gone all day.” Daniel extended his wrist so that Fawkes could see the watch adorning his wrist. Fawkes didn’t remember seeing it before.

“Merlin left a watch in his vault for our use that will allow one to travel in time. I picked it up when I went to Gringotts for the meeting this morning. It allowed me to conduct my business without Dumbledore even being aware that Harry was gone.”

§Merlin was truly the greatest wizard of all time.§ Fawkes trilled.

“Yes he was. He planned for just about every thing.” Daniel vanished from Fawkes’ sight to be replaced by Harry Potter.

§Have a good day, Harry, Daniel.§ Fawkes trilled as Harry removed and pocketed the watch to avoid awkward questions before heading out of the door of the tower room to join Harry’s friends at breakfast and serve his detention.
No Plan Ever Survives the 1st Encounter With The Enemy

by Corwalch

It was Saturday afternoon, and while Daniel was meeting with Hermione and Ron, Harry was heading towards Moaning Myrtle’s bathroom. Daniel had wanted to check out the Chamber of Secrets to see if it could be used as a training room so that Harry could get used to channelling the power of Ancients. Myrddin had told them he would start training them during the Christmas Holidays which was to start the week after next, since it would be easier for Harry to disappear for a while without anyone asking awkward questions. But before they could start their training, they needed to find a fairly durable room to do it in. Harry had suggested the Chamber since it was underneath Hogwarts and might be able to handle the damage, given the basilisk’s death throes had not brought it down.

As Harry rounded the corner into the hall that lead to Myrtle’s bathroom, he heard, “Psst, … Harry.”

Harry turned and saw the Weasley twins headed toward him.

“You are a hard person to catch up with,” one of the twins commented.

“Yea,” the other put in, “we almost thought you had found a way out of the castle when we saw you were headed this way.”

“Why were you looking for me?” Harry asked suspiciously. “I mean I would have thought you would have thought you would be in Hogsmeade like everyone else.”

“We were in Hogsmeade earlier and just got back.” The twin that Daniel had identified for Harry by his magical signature as Fred, told him.

Then George told him. “We have a gift for you that we wanted to make sure to give it to you before we left for the Christmas holidays.” “Come with us.”

The twins led Harry to a classroom just down the hallway from Moaning Myrtle’s bathroom. It was empty and covered in a thick layer of dust.
George closed the door then both twins turned and began beaming at Harry in a way that had him starting to get a little worried.

“We have an early Christmas gift for you, Harry,” George told him as Fred pulled something out of the pocket of his pants and set it on one of the very dusty desks.

Harry stared at the large blank square of parchment waiting for the joke. When nothing happened after several minutes, he finally asked, “What is this,” he tapped the parchment, “supposed to be or do?”

The twins looked at Harry as if he had lost his mind before patting the parchment fondly. “This… is the secret of our success.”

“And how could this piece of old parchment be the secret of your success?” Harry gave them a sceptical look.

“Old parchment… old parchment” Fred looked as if he had been insulted, by Harry’s casual dismissal of what they were giving him. “Please explain its value to him, George.”

“Gladly,” George began the tale. “Many years ago, back when we were younger and more innocent…”

This caused Harry to snort in laughter and Daniel to mentally chuckle, because they were both fairly certain these two had never been innocent.

“Well, more innocent than we are now,” George amended then went on. “We had just started our first year at Hogwarts and wound up in a spot of trouble with Filch…”

This earned another snort of laughter from Harry. The twins were always in trouble with Filch.

“We had set off a dung bomb in a corridor and it upset him for some reason.” Fred put in helpfully.

“So he hauled us off to his office…” George continued. “He was threatening us with detention…”

“…disembowelment…” Fred added reminiscing. “… the usual stuff.”

George got the tale back on track. “We ignored him for the most part and while he was walking around ranting we noticed a drawer in a cabinet that had been marked Confiscated as well as Highly Dangerous”

Harry had a feeling he knew where this tale was going and he felt Daniel start to grin with him.

“What did you two miscreants do?”

“Miscreants?” George looked slightly offended at the label. “We are mischief makers par excelance thank you very much. Only one other group at Hogwarts has ever been greater, and it is one of their greatest treasures we are giving to you.”

“And just what is it?” Harry repeated his earlier question.

“We know Filch never figured out how to work it.” Fred continued to draw out the suspense. “Otherwise he would have certainly destroyed their greatest work.”

George nodded in agreement. “This piece of parchment has taught us more than all the teachers in this school.”

“You still have not told me what it does.” Harry reminded them. “I am beginning to think you are
winding me up for something.”

“You wound us,” Fred gave him a hurt look before reaching out with his wand and tapping the parchment with it as he intoned, “I solemnly swear I am up to no good.”

Harry watched in amazement and from where Fred’s wand had touched the paper spidery lines began appearing radiating outward until the almost filled the page and at the top of the page in green ink were scrawled the words: Messrs Moony, Wormtail, Padfoot, and Prongs Purveyors of Aids to Magical Mischief-Makers are proud to present THE MARAUDERS MAP

As Harry studied the map he realised it was map of Hogwarts and on it were moving dots. It took him another moment to realise the dots were labelled with who they were supposed to be. Harry quickly studied the map looking for his own name, wanting to make sure that Daniel’s name wasn’t showing beside his. It would raise awkward questions, given what had happened last year with the twins’ sister, Ginny.

As the twins pointed out various features on the map to Harry, Daniel commented, /Useful tool to have. I wonder what has prompted them to give it to us./

“Are you sure you two do not still need it?” Harry asked.

“While we would like to keep it, your need is greater, and we already know what we need to from it.” George told him. “With this you can avoid detentions and still get out of Hogwarts and into Hogsmeade. It will also come in handy if you decide to go in for a little mischief making of your own and to think that you and we all owe it to Messrs Moony, Wormtail, Padfoot, and Prongs, who did their best to insure that new generations of law breakers would have the tools they needed.”

“Now just remember when you are done with it say: Mischief managed and that will turn it off, otherwise anyone can read it.” Fred warned him. Last thing he wanted was for the map to fall into the hands of one of the teachers. He shuddered to think of what someone like Snape could do with such a map.

After Harry promised he would do so the twins showed him some of the passages that would lead him into Hogsmeade, including the one into Honeydukes cellar that had Daniel practically drooling at the thought of all that chocolate a short walk away.

“While it is a bit late for you to get to Hogsmeade today,” George observed. “From now on, you can pretend to go along with the Headmaster’s attempt to keep you confined in school and then sneak out and meet your cousin.”

Both Harry and Daniel caught the implied message: and so you will not wind up in detention any more.

########

As McGonagall entered his office, Dumbledore could not help noticing how flustered she seemed to be. Given that his deputy was usually fairly unflappable, Dumbledore rechecked the wards just to make sure he had not missed any potential problems. His link to the wards of Hogwarts continued to report all was well, just as they had when he got back from yet another fruitless trip to locate the Dursleys and insure that they did not sign custody of Harry away to this unknown American.

The first words out of his Deputy Headmistress’ mouth told Dumbledore exactly what or rather who had ruffled her fur. “Headmaster, you may want to rethink the current strategy you are using to try and keep Mr. Potter safe. I have never had a student treat me as disrespectfully as he did today.”
Dumbledore sighed. “I assume that Mr. Potter’s disrespectful behaviour occurred during the detention I had him serve with you, today?”

“You mean the detention he refused to serve.” McGonagall corrected stiffly.

That was the last thing that Dumbledore had expected to hear. The Harry Potter he knew had always been an obedient child. “He did not serve the detention I assigned to him?”

“No, he showed up as I instructed him to do,” McGonagall told him, “but he refused to write the lines I assigned to him. He told me he had no intention of co-operating with your attempts to keep him a prisoner.”

“I am not trying to keep him prisoner.” Dumbledore lied glibly. “I am trying to keep him safe from Sirius Black.”

“Well he does not seem to see it the same way.” McGonagall countered. “Mr. Potter also told me that he no longer intends to co-operate with your attempts to control his life. When I threatened him with expulsion for his disrespect toward you as Headmaster and me as his Head of House, he told me to go ahead and do so. He even offered to go to his dorm and pack while I went to find you, so that someone could walk him down to Hogsmeade to meet up with his cousin after you expelled him.”

Dumbledore was stunned into silence. That was the last thing he had ever expected to hear. “I am sure that Mr. Potter was merely expressing his frustration with the current situation. I know he loves being at Hogwarts.”

“I would not be too sure of that if I were you, Headmaster!” McGonagall disagreed. “I have a feeling that if you try to prevent him from going to Hogsmeade next time, for anything less than a real infraction then at the very least we will lose him as a student next year.”

“Mr. Potter needs to be kept safe.” Dumbledore reminded her. “Not just from Black, but from other things as well.”

“Well, I have a feeling that Mr. Potter disagrees with your idea of safety, especially as it relates to Hogwarts.” McGonagall told him. “And it is apparent that Mr. Potter objects to your intention of wrapping him in cotton wool and keeping him from meeting with his cousin.”

“Surely you have explained to Mr. Potter that Hogwarts is safest school for him to attend? Not to mention that the wards protecting Hogwarts are some of the most impenetrable in the magical world and they are there to protect all the students.” Dumbledore wanted to know as he mentally began running over a list of potions or spells he might be able to use on young Potter to regain control over him and just as quickly discarded the list. Mr Potter had been very public with his anger and refusal to co-operate. If he were suddenly seen to have reversed course and started agreeing with what Dumbledore wanted all sorts of awkward questions would be asked if only by those who knew Harry well. He couldn’t risk obliterating everyone in the school to make them forget his behaviour these last three months. It would cause a firestorm among the purebloods even if he did currently have Fudge in his corner with regard to Potter.

“I have mentioned it several times, but Mr. Potter’s reply to any reminder of the school’s safety is to remind me of Mr. Weasley’s pet, despite the fact I have assured him several times that the rat is no threat to anyone. Mr. Potter continues to insist that the rat is an adult animagus that needs to be dealt with.” McGonagall told him. “It is quite evident that Mr. Potter does not believe me when I tell him that Mr. Weasley’s pet is no threat to anyone, though he has yet to accuse me of neglecting my responsibilities toward my House. And the only reason I have not isolated the rat is because of your assurance that Mr. Weasley’s pet is no threat to the children.”
“And he is not.” Dumbledore reassured her, though his conscience poked him with the reminder: *He is no threat … yet.* “I will speak to Mr. Potter. I am sure he can be made to see reason.”

“I wish you luck with that, but from what I have seen, I doubt you will be successful.” McGonagall barely managed to contain a snort of disbelief. While she had hoped that Harry Potter would be like his mother and be a quiet respectful child, it was apparent that he was starting to show traits from his father, who could be rebellious when there was a need for it. Deciding that topic had been covered fairly thoroughly, McGonagall turned her attention to the other matter that involved Mr. Potter. “There is one other matter that needs to be taken care of.”

“And what is that?” Dumbledore inquired politely.

“While your attention has been focused on Mr. Potter and trying to keep him safe from Black, you have missed something else that may affect Mr. Potter and the other students of this school.”

Dumbledore blinked a couple of times wondering what he could possibly have missed. “And what is that?”

“Though I never thought I would hear myself saying such a thing, but a possible rebellion among the students,” McGonagall told him simply.

“Over what?” Dumbledore was surprised. The paintings that monitored the common rooms and hallways had reported no problems.

“Mr. Potter’s presence here and how it affects their safety.” McGonagall told him. "According to some of the conversations I have had with Professor Sprout and Professor Flitwick over the past month, some of the muggle-born and wizarding children are beginning to wonder if having Mr. Potter here is such a good idea given the incidents that have occurred since he started attending Hogwarts. While they are proud of having a hero in their midst, they would not be sad to see him go. One of the Ravenclaw muggle-born even told Professor Flitwick that Potter was right in one thing. Muggle terrorists will do whatever they have to to achieve their goals. According to Professor Flitwick when he tried to reassure her that nothing would happen to them that Black was only after Potter, she told him that she had proof to the contrary. Apparently this past February she lost a cousin who had just started an internship in British company based in America and that cousin had been kill by muggle terrorists who set off a bomb in the underground garage of something called the World Trade Centre in the United States. The terrorists disagreed with the American government, but decided to strike terror into civilians to make them scared so they would force the government to give into their demands.”

“That was in the Muggle world.” Dumbledore reminded her. “It will never happen here. We will stop it long before it gets that far. As for Black, his time in Azkaban has insured he is only focused on his goal, getting Harry. He is not even capable of thinking about taking hostages to force an exchange.”

“I wish I could be as certain of that as you are.” McGonagall sighed. “I have also been told that a number of the muggle-born may be reconsidering their attendance at Hogwarts given what has happened since Mr. Potter started attending Hogwarts: the Troll and the Heir of Slytherin incident last year. Add to that the Dementors this year along with the worry about Black and the fact he did manage to get past the Dementors and into Hogwarts and a lot of them are scared.”

“Tell the Heads of House to reassure their students.” Dumbledore assured her. “I have strengthened the wards and Black will no be able to get in again. None of them are in danger.”
“So you found out how he got in the last time?” McGonagall wanted to know.

“No,” Dumbledore was forced to admit, “but I have increased the wards around all possible entrances, even the ones that are no longer used. He will not be coming in again.”

“I hope so, Albus” McGonagall told him “I trust what you say because I know you, Albus but that trust will only go so far if the children wind up being placed in danger because of your actions. I know you would never do anything to deliberately endanger the children who are students at this school, but the incidents over the past couple of years have come very close. If I ever thought you would set a child up for deliberate harm, you would find me a formidable enemy.”

“I really hoped I would never have to come back down here.” Harry commented as he and Daniel moved through the passageway that led from Moaning Myrtle’s bathroom to the Chamber of Secrets.

“Understandable,” Daniel studied the carvings on the walls. “This place does kind of go overboard on the creepy vibe, doesn’t it.”

“I think whoever designed this place was going for the sinister vibe.” Harry disagreed. “It has evil mad scientist bent on world domination written all over it. Maybe they should have read that Evil Overlord’s list you told me your friend Jack reads all the time.”

Daniel nearly choked on the snort of laughter that came out. “I doubt they had an evil overlord’s list back in the 7th century and even if they did I doubt they would have read it. The current ones don’t.”

When they reached the Chamber Daniel held up a hand and a globe of blue-white light filled it illuminating the area around them and stared at the carcass of the gigantic snake. “Are you sure you are not related to Jack? I mean that is a big snake and you went up against it with a sword. That sounds like something Jack would do.”

Since he knew how much Daniel respected the other man, Harry took Daniel’s comparing to Jack O’Neill as a compliment, as he reminded him. “I had Fawkes’ help. If he had not blinded the basilisk, I would have been dinner for it and Voldemort would have returned to life, killing Ginny in the process.”


“Well, I did not have much of a choice.” Harry repeated. “We had gone to Lockhart for help but he turned out to be a total fraud.”

“I know and it is another dark mark against Dumbledore.” Daniel told him. “With the exception of Lupin, who I think was hired primarily because of his connection to your parents and Black, the other Defence teachers were at best a joke and at worst totally incompetent. None of them were worth the space they took up within this school.”

“Well, I have heard rumours that the position was cursed,” Harry told him, “by Voldemort.”

“Perhaps. Or perhaps it the person who does the hiring that is cursed?” Daniel mused. “I am assuming it was Dumbledore who hired all of them.”

Harry shrugged. “They never said either way.”

“I wonder if they ever thought of having someone else do the hiring, just to see if they could keep a qualified person more than a year.” Daniel continued to muse then rejected the idea as he recalled
what he had seen so far of the magical world both in person and from Harry’s memories. “Never mind. I forgot that with some people magic and logic do not go together. Otherwise they would know it is far better to have more than eleven teachers to teach over three hundred students, if only to teach to the level the student is capable of understanding and handling.”

Harry shook his head at the thought of trying to divide the classes based on skill level instead of actual age and couldn’t help wondering if Hermione would be in a class all by herself, then he returned to the matter at hand. “Do you think the Chamber will do for our training sessions?”

Daniel raised the blue white orb of light to look over the chamber to try and make out more detail. It illuminated more but the furthest corners were still dark so Harry pulled out his wand and said “Lumos,” turning the tip of his wand into a spotlight.

They moved around the cavernous chamber checking it out, but Daniel stopped when the light illuminated a huge statue. “Is that supposed to be Slytherin?”

Harry nodded.

“Actually, it’s not.” A third voice joined their conversation from the shadows off to the left. “That is actually a statue of Salazar’s second child, Sylvanus.”

“Hello, Myrddin,” Daniel greeted the owner of the familiar voice as the two younger men turned to face him.

“Hello Daniel, Harry,” Merlin nodded to the pair as he and the dog accompanying him stepped clear of the shadows.

While Harry could not take his eyes off the large but very lean grey dog standing at Merlin’s side, he also couldn’t resist asking, “Are you saying that Voldemort is descended from Slytherin’s second child.”

“His illegitimate second son,” Merlin corrected. “After Amaris died, Salazar refused to remarry, despite the number of witches who tried to snare him.”

“Let me guess, Sylvanus’ mother would not take no for an answer.” Daniel concluded.

“No she did not,” Merlin agreed as he cast a bright orb of light at the ceiling so the whole room would be illuminated. “Ciera used potions to get pregnant believing that he would marry her once he knew she was carrying his child. He, of course, refused citing the fact that she had used potions to get pregnant.”

“And made a lifelong enemy of his second child,” Harry concluded.

“Yes,” the expression on Merlin’s face was sad. “I do not know if things would have been any different if Salazar had acknowledged the boy or not. Once he was dead though, Sylvanus became the Head of the Slytherin line, and did everything he could to destroy his father’s reputation. It is because of him that the legend of Slytherin hating the children born to non-magical or I should say dormant Alterran lines began.”

As Merlin surveyed a chamber he had not been in for over a thousand years, he stared in shock at the basilisk corpse. Moving closer, he studied it before asking, “Who killed Cynethrayth?”

“I did.” Harry told him hesitantly. “I had no choice if I was to get out of here alive with Ginny.”

“Ginny?” Merlin did not recognise the name.
“The last child of Slytherin’s line, Tom Riddle aka Voldemort tried to use Ginny Weasley to get a body rebuilt by draining her of a life force.” Daniel explained. “He set the basilisk on Harry when he tried to rescue her.”

“He also possessed Ginny for most of last year and used her to make the basilisk attack people in the castle.” Harry put in. “I think it was only luck that they were only petrified and not killed.”

Merlin nodded. That confirmed his belief that Riddle had learned how to split his soul like the Ori, and use those soul pieces to possess others. “I am sorry you had to do that. Cynethryth was meant to be a protector for the school from underground predators like the goblins, but her instincts would also have compelled her to obey any command given in parseltongue. What do you intend to do with her body, Harry?”

“What do you mean?” Harry did not understand why Merlin was asking him. The carcass was not his.

“By old laws that I do not think have been taken off the books, any magical creature slain in defence of yourself or in defence of others is the victor’s to dispose of as they choose.” Merlin advised him. “And given you were the one who slew her, you have the right to decide how Cynethryth is disposed of. I do not know if they still have the skill or knowledge on how to make them, but when I was last here, basilisk parts were highly sought after for potion ingredients by Potions Master and the skin was especially prized.”

“Why?” Daniel asked curious.

“The hide of any Dragon or Basilisk that is over one hundred years old is nearly impenetrable to the majority of spells and only goblin made blades that are magically enhanced can penetrate it.” Merlin told him.

“Like a bullet proof vest.” Harry put in.

Merlin shrugged, “It has never been put to that kind of test, but I would say it should be able to withstand most non-magical armament as well. The oldest hide I have ever seen in use as armour, seemed to be capable of handling the damage a Stargate could take.”

“Really!” Daniel’s eye widened at the thought of something being capable of taking that level of damage. A Stargate was damn near indestructible. Studying the large carcass, he made a mental note to check into seeing if those laws were still on the books and if they were who he and Harry could hire to render the carcass down without gouged too badly.

After giving the basilisk one more thoughtful look Daniel made a mental note to speak with Harry about using part of it to arrange a truce if not an actual peace agreement with a sharp-tongued Potions Master. Returning his attention fully to Myrddin. “What is the other reason you came looking for us, Myrddin? I thought we wouldn’t be seeing you again until around Christmas.”

“I needed to confirm something.” Merlin told them. “I am fairly certain that due to what happened to Harry when Riddle tried to kill him, he was made an accidental vessel for a piece of Riddle’s soul. But I also believe that when Harry nearly died at the hands of his uncle and you, Daniel became one with him... that piece of Riddle's soul was destroyed and is no longer within Harry. It has been sent on to its final destination, but it has left traces that Auryon can follow to the other pieces.”

Harry stared at Merlin in shock. He had had a piece of Riddle inside him! He had had a piece of the monster that had killed his parents within him! He had been like that diary!
Daniel saw Harry’s face grow very pale and felt his rapid heartbeat through the bond they shared. Moving quickly he wrapped his arms around Harry, lowering the young man to the floor and rocking him the way he remembered Sha’re doing for him one time when he had woken out of a fevered sleep, remembering his parent’s deaths.

“It is alright Harry.” Daniel murmured. “Merlin said that Riddle is gone. He can not hurt you or use you to hurt anyone else.”

As Harry clutched Daniel’s shirt, Daniel looked at the Ancient wizard. “Did you have to say it that way?”

There was a look of regret on the older man’s face, but he pointed out. “Daniel, there is no easy way to tell someone that they are or in Harry’s case that he had been carrying around a fragment of someone else’s soul, especially someone as evil as Riddle clearly was.”

They were all silent for several minutes the only sound being Harry’s panicked breathing. The grey hound had moved closer sniffing around Harry’s head for several minutes, before licking the boy’s face from chin to forehead. Harry felt a slight tingling in his scar that vanished almost immediately and it also seemed to calm him.

As he recovered, Harry’s mind started working again and he remembered something Dumbledore had told him last year when they spoke after Ron had taken Lockhart up to the Hospital Wing. Dumbledore had known!

“He knew!” Harry hissed angrily. “Dumbledore knew!”

“Knew what?” Daniel asked.

“That I had a piece of Voldemort’s soul in me!” Harry shrieked in such fury that it made the debris around them dance. Then realizing that if it had not been for Daniel’s arrival in his life, he might have been taken over by that evil spirit, Harry wrapped his arms across his chest as if he were hugging himself and began shivering. “Dumbledore told me that Voldemort had transferred some of his powers to me and Dumbledore let me think it was just that he had given me the gift of speaking to snakes. Why would Dumbledore do that? Why would he lie to me?”

Merlin knelt in front of Harry, trying to keep his expression neutral as his fists tightened with the desire to beat Albus Dumbledore bloody for his condoning if not allowing what happened to the young wizard. Harry did not need to think the anger was directed at him. It was clear to Merlin that Harry had been forced to grow up too soon but was still very much a child silently crying out for someone to love and care about him. “It may be that Dumbledore did not know how to safely remove it, without killing you and was afraid of how you might react to the news. Soul magic like this is the darkest kind of magic because it requires the death of an innocent to split the soul of the murderer in such a way that it can be separated and then stored. It is rarely ever done with a living thing since they can easily die. The only people, I know of, who might have been able to remove the soul piece and place it in something harmless for later destruction would be those who practice what is called these days Vodoun. Their ancestors were the ones who came up with a way to drive the soul pieces of the Ori out of a living body.”

“Dumbledore still should have told me last year when he told me what the diary did and how it contained Riddle’s memories until I stabbed it with one of the Basilisk’s fangs.” Harry insisted, crossing his arms over his chest. “I had a right to know exactly what it was that Voldemort had done to me that enabled me to be a parslemouth, and not just have me thinking that some of his powers had been transferred to me at Voldemort’s death. I was a second year magic student, how was I supposed to know it meant more than that unless it was explained to me.”
“I agree,” Daniel seconded. “It might seem cruel, but a person deserves to know. If it is explained calmly and at their level of understanding, I have seen children who have been told they have cancer handle it better than their parents did. When I was a teen I had a friend who was having problems. They put him through a number of tests and in the end it came down to two possibilities; a genetic disorder or Cushing's disease, which is a tumour on the pituitary gland. He took the news after the initial finding that it might be cancer a whole lot better than his parents did.”

Merlin nodded his head in agreement with Daniel’s comments, before turning his attention back to Harry. “I think Riddle’s making you into a soul receptacle was an accident. I think that by the time that he came to kill you and your family, his soul was so badly fragmented that when the magic spell used by your mother to protect you destroyed his body the piece that had been separated by the death of your mother fled into the nearest available receptacle… you. However as I said earlier, because of what Daniel did to heal you and save your life when he joined his life force to yours, that piece of Riddle’s soul is no longer within you. You may still have whatever traits leaked out of it into you such as the skill at being a parslemouth, but you need have no fear of being possessed by him.”

“How can you be so sure?” Harry wanted to know.

“Auryon.” Merlin told him simply. “If the soul piece had still been there and active she would have reacted a whole lot differently to you. She would have growled at the very least.”

“What is Auryon?” Daniel wanted to know.

“She is a Hound of Annwn.” Merlin told him.

“Annwn?” The name sounded familiar, but Daniel couldn’t place it.

“A hound of the Wild Hunt. You might call her a spectral hound.” Merlin explained. “I borrowed her from Hearne to hunt down and retrieve the soul fragments Riddle left behind. I brought her here to get the scent of the soul fragment Riddle had left in Harry, so she would be able to find it a little easier.”

“Surely Riddle would have put protections around them or had one of his Deatheaters do it.” Harry pointed out. “Is Auryon going to be safe from them?”

“Auryon will be perfectly safe.” Merlin assured him. “She is a creature of the Sidhe and they exist in a different kind of reality from the Tau’ri. She can if she wills it be touched by things within this dimension, but for the most part she is slightly out of phase with it and that allows harmful things like spells and bullets to pass right through her.”

“What are you going to do with the soul fragments once you have them?” Harry asked.

“Depending on what he used as vessels for them, I intend to either destroy them outright or arrange for the soul anchors to be moved to a less important object and then destroy them.” Merlin told them. “Assuming that Riddle is not possessing a creature or another being then as soon as the last soul anchor is destroyed, he will be dead. If he is possessing another body of any kind then he will either die when it does or when he tries to move to another body.”

Harry looked at the hound and then back at Merlin, a slow smile spreading across his face. “When do we start?”

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On Sunday morning as the Gryffindors headed for their table in the Great Hall an unusual sight met their eyes. Hermione Granger was there with Potter and Weasley as usual, but without a book! Was
As he took in the determined expression on Hermione’s face, Harry asked Daniel /What do you think is on Hermione’s mind? She looks a lot like your friend Sam when she had been told what she wants to do is impossible./

/If I were to make a guess, I think she is still trying to figure out a way to prove me wrong, either about Hogwarts being a substandard school, or about my claims that Budge was an idiot who could not translate anything correctly./ Daniel told him. /She was very quiet last night. She didn’t even ask how your detention went and given how nosey she tends to be where you are concerned, I would have expected her to ask./

Before Harry could comment further, they heard the flutter of wings and a number of owls appeared in the room. When a large colourful owl with long feather tufts on top of its head landed near Harry bearing a scroll with something tied around it, it was enough to distract Hermione from whatever she was thinking about.

Harry handed the owl some bacon before taking the scroll with the medallion bound around it from the owl.

“Thank you,” Harry told the owl.

Once it had eaten the bacon Harry had given it, the owl hooted and took off.

Harry undid the leather strand binding the medallion to the scroll and opened it.

Given that she had not recognized the owl, Hermione asked. “Who is it from?”

“My cousin Daniel,” Harry told her simply before turning his attention to the scroll.

He read it for a few minutes before joining the two strands of leather together and knotting them. Then pulled the leather thong over his head.

When Hermione saw the medallion on his chest, she all but screeched, “Are you out of your mind? You have no idea where that came from. It could be from Black for all you know and you just put it on without a care in the world as if you were invincible.”

“I told you the scroll was from my cousin Daniel Jackson.” Harry countered calmly. “I told him about how attracted the Dementors seemed to be to me and he sent me an Eye of Ra amulet, that he was willed by a curse-breaker to try and keep me safe from them.”

“How can you be so sure of that?” Hermione threw her hands up in exasperation. “You have never met this Daniel Jackson so you have no idea what his intentions toward you are. For all you know that medallion could be cursed. Why are you so willing to trust someone you have never met?”

“But you met him.” Harry countered. “According to his letter, he met both you and Ron yesterday in the bookstore in Hogsmeade. You know the place I was not allowed to go to because of the Headmaster’s fraudulent detention. Did it not occur to either you that I might want to know what the man was like?”

“I did not have a chance to talk to him much,” Ron told him through a mouthful of food. “Spent most of my time trying to keep Hermione from hexing him. Then once he was gone, spent the rest of the time trying to calm Hermione down.”

“I was not going to hex him,” Hermione countered hotly, “though he deserved it, the arrogant prat.
He was wrong about everything he said regarding Hogwarts and he had the **nerve** to call Sir Ernest Budge an idiot.”

Harry had to bite back a smile at her seeming righteous indignation while he could feel Daniel trying to restrain his mental laughter at her reaction. “That explains this note that cousin Daniel wrote about you then.”

“And what did the arrogant prat have to say?” Hermione demanded hotly.

Starting at what was the pertinent section, Harry read, “I’m sorry that your Headmaster feels the need to control everyone you have contact with, but if my work schedule permits, I will try and get back to Hogsmeade after the new year, just let me know when there is a Hogsmeade weekend then. I did enjoy meeting your friends, Ron and Hermione. I have to agree with you that both Ron and Hermione are the kind of friends who will back you up no matter what. Your friend Ron reminds me of a guy I used to know, Charlie Kawalsky. He was a guard on one of my digs. He was not the type of person you are probably picturing when I say he was a guard. He was not some dumb brute but a cunning man who saw what was going around him and when the situation called for it he was always at your back ready to help. He was one of those guys you could trust you life to and someone who could lighten your mood when you’re feeling down.”

Ron’s chest puffed out at that.

“As for your friend, Hermione, I think you underestimated how determined she can be and how spirited she is in her beliefs. In some cases that can be a good thing, because that means she’s the kind of person who will stand up for who and what she believes in, no matter what. However Hermione’s case other than meaning that she will have your back when needed, it’s also showing how narrow her view of the world is.”

Hermione smirked at the compliment. Jackson at least had recognised her intelligence and how she would always do the right thing, but as she heard the last words she scowled. “Narrow?” Hermione seethed. “The man was wrong and he still is not admitting it and he has the **nerve** to call me narrow minded.”

Harry went on. “She tried to defend magical Britain’s belief in Budge’s work with Egyptian runes even though a number of people the non-magical world and many in other magical fields have dismissed his work as inaccurate and in some cases dangerous to try and use. She never once asked me where I had gotten my facts she just declared that I was wrong. I know you believe that she will be making a number of great discoveries in whatever field of magical study she chooses to go into once she leaves Hogwarts but I am afraid you are wrong, unless she changes her view of how the world works.” Harry continued to read and heard something metal slam hard against the table. “My brief meeting with your friend Hermione has me believing that she is far more likely to be an archivist than a true researcher.”

“What?” Hermione growled, making Ron back away from her.

Ron wondered how Harry could be so oblivious to the explosion building up on the other side of the table as he continued to read from the scroll. “Your friend Hermione looks up to and trusts those who are in a position of authority too much, which means she never questions their actions or even if they have the right to take a certain action. My brief exposure to her showed me that her talents are more geared to search and retrieval than pure research that includes original thought.”

“I swear I am going to get Ginny to teach me that Bat Bogey hex and the next time I see that arrogant prat, I am going to use it on him.” Hermione threatened in a low voice.
“He is right, Hermione,” Harry interrupted the reading of Daniel’s comments about Hermione’s character. “You always think that the teachers are right and that they would never do anything wrong.”

“Harry has a point,” Ron agreed. “You have defended the fake detention the Headmaster gave Harry and you will not even admit it was the wrong thing to do.”

“He was trying to protect Harry.” Hermione argued.

“From who, my cousin?” Harry countered. “If he was that worried, he could have sent a teacher with me to make sure nothing happened to me. Instead he treats me like I am a prisoner.”

“He only wants what is best for you, Harry.” Hermione pointed out.

“And which road is it that is paved with good intentions, Hermione?” Harry reminded her of the old adage. “Now do you want to hear the rest of what he had to say about you?”

“There is more!” Hermione could not believe it. The man had already insulted her intelligence and abilities and there was more!

“Yes,” Harry told her simply.

“Finish it then.” Hermione ordered.

Harry picked up where he had left off. “I have no doubt you may think I am wrong about your friend, Harry. However given what you have told me about her and what I observed yesterday as well as my previous experiences in dealing with archivists, they tend to look at the written word and place it in their mind as unalterable truth until someone can provide many examples to the contrary. Even then, they tend to regard the first thing they read or learned with much reverence, even when it has been proven to be wrong. Also most archivists really do not know that much about the real world, given their world is one of books and papers, and have to rely on their boss who is usually their only real world contact for information on how to deal with real world situations because their boss knows more about how to deal with the real world than they do. I have also noticed that most research done by an archivist tends to produce no new information, just a reinterpretation of old facts. They summarize work done by others so that researchers and other scientists can more quickly get the gist of it if they need they need the information to aid in their own research. One thing I am grateful to archivists for is that they protect and renew old books and information. There are many books and documents that would no longer be around if not for them. They also use new techniques when available to interpret old information and preserve the old documents, though they still read the books, and summarize the data while filing them away is their forte. I have found this to be especially bad in Egyptology, where new theories tend to be buried for years, if not decades since the new theories are not supported by the older documents which, to the archivist, carry more weight.”

The expression on Hermione’s face as Harry finished reading what his cousin had written reminded Ron a lot of how his mother looked when Bill and Charlie had told her what their career choices were and that they were not going anywhere near the Ministry. They were still finding and repairing damage to the house because of those explosions.

He was starting to plan an escape route that would allow him to take Harry with him, when Malfoy’s drawling voice spoke up. “Potter’s cousin sure pegged you right, Granger. A pity that Potter is too thick to realise what his cousin did after meeting you one time. All you have ever been and ever will be is a useless little bookworm who spews out useless facts and figures when they are not wanted and are most likely wrong as well. You are nothing but an annoying know it all who thinks she is better than she really is.”
Malfoy went on not realising how close Hermione was to exploding, “You are nothing but a stupid, arrogant little mud…”

Silence filled the Great Hall as Draco Malfoy slammed into the Ravenclaw table, sending several of the gold plates crashing to the ground.

A number of the Ravenclaws stared at Granger in amazement as she stood over Malfoy her fists raised.

Malfoy shook his head trying to clear the ringing out of his ears as he heard Granger growl. “Say something like that again… and the Malfoy line will end with you.”

“Miss Granger!” McGonagall chastised her favourite student surprised by what Miss Granger had done. If she had not seen it with her own eyes she would not have believed that her prized student would attack another student so violently. “Fifty points for striking a fellow student and starting after the holidays for one month you will be serving two hours of detention every night with Professor Snape.”

“But he…” Hermione tried to speak up in her own defence, pointing at Draco, but McGonagall interrupted.

"No buts Miss Granger," McGonagall snapped. "I saw exactly what happened and if you do not want me to increase your punishment I would suggest you remain silent."

“Professor, Malfoy called her…” Ron began to speak up in Hermione’s defence.

“I am not interested in hearing what Malfoy said, Mr. Weasley.” McGonagall interrupted. “There is no excuse for striking another student.”

“And once more we have evidence of just how willing the lioness of Gryffindor is to defend her cubs.” Harry observed.

“Fifty points from Gryffindor, Mr. Potter for disrespecting your Head of House.” Snape spoke up before McGonagall could, a smirk of triumph pulling at the corner of his lips. “Also Miss Granger, you will arrive for your detention precisely at seven, if you are early or late I will take fifty points from Gryffindor for each minute you are early or each minute you are late.”

/I wonder if Snape’s clock will be running fast or slow?/ Daniel commented.

/It will not matter./ Harry told him. /If Hermione does the tempus spell, she can prove she was on time./

/You really think that will stop him from claiming she was either early or late?/ Daniel sounded disbelieving.

Harry mentally shrugged. /He will only be able to get it away with it once or twice. McGonagall will start escorting Hermione to her detentions if he does it too much. McGonagall is very competitive when it comes to the House cup./

/True./ Daniel had observed that about her.

Unaware that she had been discussed and found wanting, McGonagall turned and looked at him. “Mr. Potter, the Headmaster is expecting you in his office by nine to discuss your detention from yesterday. The password is cockroach clusters.”
Harry debated for a moment just sitting there and forcing Dumbledore to come looking for him, but decided he might as well get it over with.

As they rode up the stairs to Dumbledore’s office, Harry asked, /Daniel, would handle this meeting?/
/Sure./ Daniel agreed, /but aside from Dumbledore’s tendency to try poking around in your head, is there another reason, why you do not want to be in control for this meeting?/
/I do not want to accidentally say something that will give away our plans./ Harry told him. /I am not quite as bad as Ron is when it comes to speaking before I have thought things through, but sometimes if I get mad enough I tend to say things I should not./
/Another trait you share with Jack./ Daniel observed.

Harry sent a mental raspberry in Daniel’s direction, which made the older man mentally laugh and smile as he knocked on the door to the Headmaster’s office.

As they both heard a voice say, “come in, Mr. Potter,” Daniel set Harry’s face into an expressionless mask and put up the strongest mental shield he had to keep the old man from snooping.

“Professor McGonagall said you wanted to see me.” Daniel sounded unconcerned about the fact that he had been told to come to the Headmaster’s office to discuss his detention from the previous day.

“Yes Mr. Potter, have a seat.” Dumbledore gestured to the chair in front of his desk.

Daniel took the indicated seat and then sat there silently, his eyes fixed on Dumbledore in an unblinking stare.

Dumbledore started to get a little nervous when Harry just kept staring at him not saying a word. The eyes facing him were Lily’s eyes and they were slightly accusatory, though just what they were accusing him of, Dumbledore did not know.

The silence had reached an uncomfortable point when Dumbledore decided to break it. “Do you know why you were called up here?”

There was a sight smirk on Harry’s face as if he scored some point or other against an unseen opponent, before he said, “Professor McGonagall said it was about the detention I served yesterday.”

“A detention you failed to serve correctly, Mr. Potter.” Dumbledore countered calmly. “You did not write the lines you were given to write for your punishment.”

“You would have me accept a lie as the truth Headmaster?” Daniel asked him. “I showed up as required, but the lines that Professor McGonagall had for me to write were a lie. She expected me to write that ‘I will not be rude to guests in the Headmaster’s Office.’ If I had written those lines, I would be saying that a lie was the truth. I was not rude to anyone in your office.”

“You were rude to Mr. Malfoy when he asked to meet with you,” Dumbledore reminded him, “and that is why I assigned the detention to you.”

“I was not rude to Mr. Malfoy and at the time he agreed I was not.” Daniel countered. “I refused to write those lines because to do so would have meant I agreed with your lie.”

“Mr. Potter, I do not lie…” Dumbledore began.
“No you just get creative with the truth, like all politicians.” Daniel interrupted him. “After all a lie is only a lie if you get caught or someone gets hurt because of it. What was it Fudge said last year when he was having Hagrid shipped off to Azkaban… oh yes ‘Got to be seen doing something’ and all you did was make some mild protests about how he had your full confidence and that it would not help fix the situation. You did not interfere as you could have. As Chief Warlock you could have demanded a trial for Hagrid before he was shipped off to Azkaban, but you let Fudge do what he wanted and if my experience with the Dementors is anything to go by you allowed Hagrid to be placed in Hell even if it was only in one of the lesser areas. I saw Hagrid when he first got back and he looked like he had stared death in the face and lost. And even though it has been proven that Hagrid could not have opened up the Chamber of Secrets in his third year, neither you or the Ministry have done anything to get his expulsion reversed and his wand replaced.”

“I think you overestimate the level of power and influence I have, Mr. Potter.” Dumbledore told him cautiously. The boy sitting across the desk from him was frustrating Dumbledore no end. He kept trying to gain access to the boy’s thoughts and was unable to do so.

“Perhaps…. Perhaps not.” Daniel said cryptically. "But given you are one of the most respected wizards in the magical community you could use that influence to help those that need it and yet surprisingly you do absolutely nothing to help anyone. I remember hearing once, that to one whom much is given, much is expected in return. I wonder how those who have given so much to you to insure you reached this point in your life would feel about how you have failed to live up to their expectations. For that matter how do think my parents would react to the fact that you seem to have this absurd need to control every aspect of my life to the point where you are neglecting your primary responsibility which is the safety of the students of this school.”

“You are wrong about that, Mr. Potter. You only have a small idea of who I am beside your Headmaster and what I have done to protect and help our world.” Dumbledore disagreed stiffly

Daniel shrugged. "I will admit my view of the wizard world is rather limited. My total experience beyond the walls of Hogwarts consists of my first visit of Diagon Alley with Hagrid, few days spent with the Weasleys last summer (after being rescued from the Dursleys), and then the last couple of weeks of this summer exploring the Alley, thanks to Minister Fudge wanting to get on my good side cause he sees my fame and hopes to make use of it. When you total up all my time and experiences in magical Britain, I find it cannot convince me that the magical Britain is a very safe place. And since most of the danger appears to happen within the walls of this very school, I am left wondering why is it that the staff ignores their primary duty which is to protect the students of this school? If Black is really such a threat then there should be teachers going with each group of students going to Hogsmeade and they shouldn’t be allowed to wander around anywhere they want, because it would take only one time for Black to kidnap a child and threaten to kill them unless you exchange me for that child. Then what will you and the teachers do?”

Dumbledore sighed. It seemed as if Minerva was partially correct. Harry was losing his trust in the magical world and he was going to have to figure out how to get it back. The first thing he had to do was reassure the boy that Hogwarts was indeed safe. “The other students are not in any danger from Mr. Black, only you are. As long as you remain within the walls of Hogwarts you will be safe from him.”

“You will have to forgive me if I refuse to believe the claim that I am safest here, given the experiences of the last two years.” Daniel countered dryly. “But if you really believe that, then are you willing to put it to the test?”

“What do have in mind?” Dumbledore asked.
“You and the other teachers swear a magically binding oath to the effect that you believe that Black is no threat to any other student in this school.” Daniel told him. “If however a student is injured or kidnapped by Mr. Black in an attempt to get to me, you will lose your magic as a result, because you will have proven your security is totally inadequate to protect your students.”

Dumbledore sighed. “I take it you found out about magical oaths and vows while you stayed in Diagon Alley this past summer?”

“Yes,” Daniel agreed. “Flourish and Blotts was very useful in helping me learn things I did not know about the magical world. I must remember to thank the Minister for allowing me to stay there, otherwise there would still be things I did not know that I needed to about how things in the magical world work.”

Dumbledore sighed, he should have someone monitoring Harry’s activities while he was in Diagon Alley, but he had forgotten to do so in the rush to try and make sure that Harry did not remember almost dying at the Dursley’s hands so they could get him back under their protection next summer and that he was also someplace safe for the summer. He made a mental note to have the elves that took care of Gryffindor tower to go through Harry’s trunk and see what books he had purchased at Flourish and Blotts. There were things he was not yet ready for Harry to know about and he had to make sure the boy was still ignorant of them.

Returning to the topic at hand Dumbledore wanted to know. “Assuming that I and the other members of the Hogwarts staff do agree to swear that oath, what would we get from you in return?”

“My oath not to leave the grounds until Black is recaptured.” Daniel told him. “However if you will not swear that oath, then I expect to be escorted by a teacher to Hogsmeade every time there is a Hogsmeade weekend, given I do have a valid permission slip signed by my aunt since you apparently have no faith in my ability to keep myself safe.”

Dumbledore shook his head. “No I will not swear the oath you ask for and neither will I have my staff do so. Nor will I allow a teacher to escort you to Hogsmeade.”

“I knew you did not have the stones to back up your claim that Hogwarts was indeed the safest place in Magical Britain.” Daniel deliberately chose the most insulting expression he could find.

“That will be enough, Mr. Potter.” Dumbledore gave him a piercing stare. “I will not tolerate your disrespect of myself or any other member of the teaching staff.”

“Respect is something that must be earned back once it is lost,” Daniel countered, “and you and Professor McGonagall lost my respect some time ago, though until this year I had no reason to show it.”

“Mr. Potter,” Dumbledore tried to sound reasonable. “I do not understand all this hostility you are showing me. There is no reason for any member of the staff to swear an oath to a child to prove that this school is safe, because we know it is the most secure place in all of magical Britain. While I know you do not like or understand why we must take the actions we are taking, we have done nothing but try and keep you safe from those who would harm you. Now since you do know about magical oaths I am sure you will do the sensible thing to keep yourself safe and swear a magically binding oath to me to remain within the grounds of Hogwarts so that you will continue to be safe. We only want what is best for you after all and we as adults know how best to achieve that goal of protecting you.”

“No,” Daniel countered. “I have the right to go to Hogsmeade. My Aunt signed a permission slip giving me that right and you want to deny it to me. You claim that the reason you are refusing me the
right to go is because I would be in danger from Black, but those students who will be in Hogsmeade who are not Slytherins will be in just as much danger and you refuse to admit that fact. I wonder who will pay the price this time for your refusal to admit that Hogwarts is not as safe as you claim it to be. Last time it was almost Ginny Weasley who paid the price and before that it was nearly Ron, Hermione, and I, because your supposed finest security around the stone was able to be gotten around by three first years.”

Dumbledore ground his teeth in frustration. There was no way he could obliviate on Mr. Potter again. Any sudden turnaround in his behaviour given he had been quite public in his determination to not give in on the matter of Hogsmeade would arouse people’s suspicions and that he did not need. “Very well Mr. Potter, you leave me with no choice since you have shown you are not willing to be reasonable with those who have your best interests at heart, since the holidays are almost upon us your punishment will start next term. From the first weekend of the new term, you will be serving detention every weekend with Professor Flitwick for remainder of the year, because of your rude and insulting comments to me as the Head of your school. Or else swear the oath I have asked for and I will forget your rude and insulting comments.”

“No, I will not.” Daniel told him and he could feel Harry’s agreement with his actions. Harry had trouble believing what he had heard. He knew that the Headmaster seemed to want to control who had access to him, but surely even the Headmaster could see that his desire to retain control over Harry was placing other students at risk. “Was there anything else you wished to discuss with me… Headmaster?”

Chapter End Notes

(AN: Before you go complaining that I have Hermione’s character all wrong, I don’t think I do. In all 7 books, Hermione never really lost her belief in the ultimate truth contained in the written word and never would admit even to herself that authority figures might not be all-knowing and might even be wrong even by book 7. She also maintained that she was the only one who knew the right course of action as evidenced by the fact that even thought he house elves didn’t want to be freed, she still insisted she was going to free them going to far as to form SPEW and leaving clothes around where the could be found. She never bothered to find out what the consequences of her actions might be for those house elves and thus she became a Dark Lady to the elves. Also she REFUSED to change the course of action that Dumbledore set down even though in the end the suggestion by Harry to go back to Hogwarts and look for Horcruxes there would have saved a lot of time and possibly a lot of lives. I realize this is being written during book 3, but unless Hermione starts doing some independent thinking, then the only really path Daniel could see open to her was that of an archivist given her reverence and worship for the written word.)
Happy Christmas Harry!

Chapter Notes

/words, words/ = mental speech between Harry and Daniel and Hogwarts

Happy Christmas Harry!

U. S. Embassy Dec 21, 1993

Daniel walked up to the guard desk, situated between the two winding staircases that led from the ground floor to the first floor of the American Embassy.

This was their second stop of the day. He had already taken Harry to Stonehenge to catch the Winter Solstice sunrise, though they were still debating on whether or not to watch the sun set there as well. Daniel was determined to see that Harry had the best Christmas this year to make up for all the years the Dursleys had denied him a normal Christmas.

He introduced himself to the waiting guard. “Hello, My name is Daniel Jackson and I have a 10:30 appointment with Mr. Samuel McBride.”

Cordelia Chase moved away from the wall behind the guard station toward the man who was slender with golden brown hair. He was dressed in jeans and a white pull over sweater with a fleece jacket over that. To Cordelia the man’s appearance screamed both innocence and yummy. This was someone she would not mind finding under her Yule tree as a gift.

When McBride had given her this job this morning she had not been real enthusiastic about doing it. She knew why he had done it. He’d wanted her to do a reading on Mr. Jackson, because he suspected something might be off about the guy. After looking Mr. Jackson over, Cordelia decided that unless this guy turned out to be a Demon Lord or Waerloggia/Dark Lord, then her boss was going to get a very nice Yule gift this year.

“Mr. Jackson, my name is Cordelia Chase. I am Mr. McBride’s assistant.” She held out her hand to him. “He asked me to meet you and bring you to his office.”

“Thank you for coming to meet me, Ms. Chase.” Daniel took her hand.

As soon as their hands touched, Cordelia stiffened slightly in surprise. She felt as if she were being bathed in the pure silver light of a full moon while drinking her grandma’s homemade hot chocolate.

“Are you all right, Ms Chase?” Daniel asked worriedly when she stayed silent for more than a couple of minutes. He knew from experience that most government aides excelled at small talk if only to avoid the long awkward silences that could leave the other person feeling offended.

“Yes.. yes,” Cordelia quickly reassured him, “I’m fine. You just... I just remembered something I have to take care of later.”
Daniel was fairly certain that she was hiding something, but decided not to push the issue for now. “I hope it’s nothing too serious.”

“No,” She assured him, then added, “I just remembered that I forgot to send my Grandmother her Yule gift. I’ve got to get it sent out today. It’s going to be late, but there’s nothing I can do about that now.”

“True,” Daniel agreed, “unless you happen to have a time machine handy.”

Cordelia looked at him sharply for saying that in front of a normal and then realized he was joking.

Smiling, she gestured with her hand toward the left stairwell “If you will follow me, Dr. Jackson, Mr. McBride is waiting for you.”

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McBride looked up at the knock on his office door. “Yes?”

His aide opened the door and announced, “Dr. Jackson is here for your meeting.”

“Show Dr. Jackson in,” McBride ordered, having caught the title she had given to the time traveller.

He also noticed the long lingering look that she gave Jackson as he came into McBride’s office. It told him what was on her mind was at the moment, but the fact that Jackson didn’t correct her when she called him Doctor, meant that she had gotten something useful about the man before her mind went ga ga over Jackson’s appearance.

The fact that Jackson had accepted the title of Doctor without contradicting Cordelia, told McBride that it was a title he had had for so long that it was part of his identity. It also told McBride that Jackson had had extensive contact with the non-magical world because that was the only place he could have earned a Doctorate.

And that one piece of information was going to give McBride a way to find out more about the time traveller without breaking his oath. He knew from his contacts in the normal world that Doctorates could take years to earn and that it was not something you could do in a haphazard fashion. That meant Jackson’s younger self had to be working on it now if he didn’t already have it.

Daniel stepped up to McBride’s desk and held out his hand. “Thank you for taking the time out of your very busy schedule to meet with me today. I know from past experience that this time of year is usually one of the busiest, no matter who you are.”

“That is quite true, Dr. Jackson.” McBride wanted to see how the man reacted to the use of that title and was pleased to see there was almost no reaction, as if Jackson expected to be addressed that way. It also meant that the man was unaware he had slipped and given McBride a way to check up on him. “Most of the embassy offices will be closing later today so that those with family or who need to get home for Christmas can.”

Daniel smiled. “That’s nice. No matter what a person’s religious beliefs or lack thereof, this is a time for family and friends.”

McBride handed him a thick sealed manila envelope. “On that topic, do you have any plans for the holidays? I mean it’s not like you can visit friends or family, given the risk you might bump into yourself.”

“True,” Daniel agreed absently as he opened the envelope and studied the documentation that had
been created to give Harry American citizenship. “I intend to spend the holidays insuring that Harry
has the best Christmas possible. Based on our conversations, I got the impression that he hasn’t really
had a good Christmas since his parents died. I’m not counting the past two holidays that he spent at
Hogwarts, since based on what I have found out, there’s not much in the way of celebrating that
goes on for those who stay at school over the holiday break.”

As he sat back down at his desk, McBride commented. “I’m kind of surprised that Dumbledore is
letting him leave school to meet with you, given that you told me he is aware of your intention to
gain custody of the boy. I know for a fact that he has worked very hard to keep control over who has
access to Potter.”

“What that meddling old fool doesn’t know, he can’t stop.” The bland, matter-of-fact tone brought
McBride’s attention back to the time traveller’s face and had him questioning the man’s sanity, or if
the man was more powerful than he originally thought given how powerful Dumbledore was known
to be.

While most in magical America had had no contact with Albus Dumbledore, those who did didn’t
trust or respect the man all that much, unlike the magical British. Also those who did have contact
with the wily old wizard tended to tread very cautiously around him because he was a very powerful
wizard.

Jackson, on the other hand, was acting as if he considered Dumbledore a powerless petty bureaucrat
who thought he was far more important than he really was.

In a way Jackson’s attitude reminded McBride of some of his father’s friends who had helped the
British magical community get Dumbledore into Grindelwald’s stronghold so the German Dark
Lord, who was helping Hitler, could be taken out.

After that mission, a number of them had flatly told the British magicals that while they respected the
fact that Dumbledore was a powerful wizard, that unless they had no other choice, they wouldn’t
fight beside him ever again. They all reported that the man’s priorities were screwed up because he
preferred to cast spells to incapacitate an enemy instead of taking them out. To a man, they had all
stated quite bluntly that they couldn’t trust him to do what was necessary to protect those who fought
beside him.

“So, I take you are not one of Dumbledore’s fans?” McBride couldn’t resist commenting.

Channelling a little of his inner Jack, Daniel asked, “What gave you that idea? Could it be the fact I
don’t give a tinker’s damn what the man thinks is the right thing to do. Or the fact that I do not care
about what he's supposedly done in the past to protect humanity. I am far more concerned about what
the arrogant ass is doing right now. Personally, I can’t help but wonder if he used a PR firm to
convince the magical community that he’s the second coming of Merlin, given the way some people
worship him. I think if Merlin heard about it, he just might come back if only to knock Dumbles on
his ass.”

McBride chuckled at the thought and wondered if it could be set-up as a magical Pay Per View. “I
know a few of my Father’s friends who served in the magical part of the American Army during
World War II who would agree with you about Dumbledore. They would also cheerfully pay money
to see Merlin or anyone else who wasn’t evil kick Dumbledore’s butt. When I was younger, I heard
a couple of them say that he was a waste of magical talent. They also said they wouldn’t piss on him
if he were on fire to put the fire out.”

They shared a few moments of companionable silence as Jackson pulled a small bag out of his jacket
pocket, enlarged it and put the documents he had been given into it.

“So, how do you plan on getting Potter out without Dumbledore finding out?” McBride asked genuinely curious.

“Let’s just say that Hogwarts keeps her secrets very well,” Daniel told him mysteriously, “especially if you annoy her and Dumbledore has.”

McBride didn’t know how to respond to that. A number of people had long suspected that the ancient castle was sentient, but they had never been able to prove it. He couldn’t help wondering how Potter had found out about it, not to mention what kind of connection he had managed to forge with the castle’s genius loci and why Potter was the one it had chosen to reveal itself to.

“Can you tell me if the ICW found out anything about Black’s trial yet?” Jackson’s question pulled McBride’s thoughts away from the puzzle of Potter and his connection to Hogwarts.

“The British representative reported he was unable to provide any of the requested records.” McBride told him. “Our representative has been trying to get a stay of execution put through for Black, given there is no verifiable proof of guilt and the Dementors are Class 1 Dark Creatures, but he hasn’t been able to make much headway yet.”

“Why not?”

The look on Jackson’s face told McBride he already suspected the reason. “Given that Dumbledore is the Supreme Mugwump the European members, who make up the largest part of the ICW, are reluctant to interfere in Britain’s affairs unless he asks them to and he hasn’t. He is after all considered a very powerful wizard after his defeat of Grindelwald and because he has the reputation of being the only one Voldemort is reluctant to face. He is also seen as a major leader of the Light by them.”

“And how much of that reputation of his as a leader of the light is because he has a phoenix?”

“I would say that is the biggest reason they believe that he is, is because phoenixes are known to only associate with those who are on the Light side.” McBride conceded.

“Then I can’t help wondering what the ICW members would think if they knew that Dumbledore’s Phoenix was no longer with him.” Daniel commented in an off-hand manner.

McBride suddenly looked very predatory. “Dumbledore’s Phoenix is gone?”

“According to a letter I got from Harry, Dumbledore’s Phoenix, I think his name is Fawkes, disappeared some time before Halloween and hasn’t returned yet.” Daniel told him. “I did some research after he told me that and based on what I found, I don’t think the familiar bond has been broken… yet. Otherwise, given how long they’ve been together, there would have been some kind of reaction from Dumbledore that would’ve been obvious to everybody.”

A slow smile appeared on McBride’s face. ”That might be something we can use."

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As Harry wandered through the four cars that made up the Swindon-Cricklade Christmas train, he made sure to keep an eye on where Daniel was. If Daniel suddenly vanished into thin air, because he had wandered too far away, there would some very awkward questions.

As Harry moved into the next car, he had to admit to himself that his mental roommate had definitely
gone all out to make this Christmas one to remember. He had certainly enjoyed everything they had done since leaving McBride’s office earlier today.

As he was studying the lovely old ornaments on the tree in the corner of the car, thinking they looked a lot prettier than the gaudy stuff Aunt Petunia preferred, Harry heard, “Hello, my dear.”

Turning, he saw a white haired lady with a holly wreath on her hair was standing there in a floor length flowing, white skirt and a red old fashioned style jacket top that had a silver fur neckline. Holding out his hand, Harry greeted her in return. “Hello, ma’am.”

Angela could not help smiling at the joyful expression on the dark haired child’s face. If she were to hazard a guess at the boy’s age, she would have put it at around eleven or twelve, though he would be a bit on the small side for a twelve year old. She also reflected that it was not often you saw a child over the age of ten who still had all the joy and wonder that a much younger child had at Christmas time.

“Are you enjoying the trip?” She asked.

“Yes ma’am, I am,” Harry told her honestly.

“Are you looking forward to meeting my husband?” She asked next.

“Your husband, ma’am?” Harry did not understand the question.

“I am the wife of Santa Claus,” Angela introduced herself as the character she was portraying for the trip.

“Oh,” the boy’s emerald eyes widened in surprise. “I did not know you would be on the train.”

“I enjoy meeting the children who are coming to see my husband.” Angela told him. “It makes me feel young again seeing their joy and anticipation. Are you looking forward to seeing Nick and telling him what you would like him to bring you for Christmas?”

“I have already received the greatest gift, I ever expected to receive from Santa Claus or anyone else.” Harry told her. “So, I can not think of anything more he could possibly give me this Christmas that would top insuring that I have someone who wants me as part of their family. That is a gift I have wished for and wanted all of my life.”

“Well, I am sure my husband will be pleased to hear that you have gotten your greatest heart’s desire…”

Harry could tell by her silence that she wanted his name so he told her, “My name is Harry, Mrs. Claus.”

“Harry,” she nodded, “and where is your new family?”

“Over there,” Harry glanced over to where Daniel was standing near one of the worktables watching the elves work. “That is my cousin Daniel, from America. According to the solicitor who is handling things for him here, assuming nothing happens to throw a spanner in the works, Daniel should have full custody of me from my Aunt around the first part of January.”

Angela saw the slender blonde man glance in their direction as if he knew he was being talked about and she saw him smile at Harry, before returning his attention to what Geoffrey, her friend Emily’s teenage son, who was pretending to be one of Santa Claus’ elves, was making.
“So what do you do in your spare time?” Angela asked him.

“Besides, playing on one of my school’s sports teams, when I have time, I like to draw.” Harry told her. “When my cousin saw my drawings, he told me I have quite a talent for it. One of my teachers in primary school said the same thing. In fact, Daniel told me that once I get out of school if I wanted to go with him, he would take me along on one of his Archaeology digs to see how well I can draw the pictoglyphs, among other things.”

Angela could tell Harry was quite proud of the fact that his cousin thought he was good enough at art to be trusted with an important task like drawing things for the man’s job. She could not help wondering, judging by the huge smile on Harry’s face if anyone in his Aunt’s family had ever told him he was good at something. She had a feeling that they had not.

She made a mental note to check and see if there were any art supplies in the Grotto, that Ed who was acting as Santa Claus today could give him as a surprise gift.

“Well, you enjoy your visit to my husband’s workshop, and may you have a joyous and blessed Christmas.” Angela told him.

“Thank you, Mrs Claus, and may you and your husband also be blessed with a joyous Christmas.” Harry told her seriously.

###

Returning to Hogwarts a few hours after he and Daniel had left for Stonehenge, Harry delivered a present of fresh fruit to Fawkes before pulling out the map the twins had given him. He needed to make sure there was no one nearby. Even though the students and teachers would not be able to find this room, thanks to Hogwarts, he wanted to avoid any awkward questions about why he was in this out of the way section of the school.

The map indicated large groups of people were gathered in what he was willing to bet were the common rooms and dorm areas for each House. The map also showed a few people wandering about the hallways. Harry was willing to bet that most were finishing up their last minute packing and getting ready to get on the Hogwarts Express to go home to spend a happy Christmas with their families and that those out and about were either saying good-bye to their friends or else staying at Hogwarts over the break and wanted to avoid getting caught in the chaos in the dorm area.

Not that there would be many staying at Hogwarts he idly reflected. There rarely were many staying over, given that most if not all had families who cared about them and wanted them home. Unlike his family Harry could not help thinking. The Dursleys were not family to him. Truthfully they never had been. And as long as he had a choice he would never live with them ever again.

Turning his thoughts away from the slightly depressing topic of the Dursleys, Harry debated for a moment on where he should go once he left the tower room. He was fairly certain that if he went to the Gryffindor common room, he would be met by Ron or Hermione wanting to know where he had been and why he had not joined them for breakfast. He decided to ask Daniel.

/Where do you think we should go?/

/The library./ Daniel suggested after a few moments consideration. /We need to get that document we want Snape to sign written up and make sure there are no loopholes in it that he can use to wiggle out of our deal once he has what he wants, before we talk to him tonight. Not to mention it would either send Hermione into a tizzy thinking you might outrank her this year. Or else she will think that you are finally listening to her advice and studying. Either way it will throw her off the scent if we appear to have been there since early that morning… studying./
It might also have Ron wondering if I have gotten sick since I will appear to be studying over the Christmas Holidays without being hounded by Hermione to do it/ Harry commented.

Daniel laughed. /I wonder what he will think if we can get Snape to agree to our deal?/

As he headed out the door of the tower room with Fawkes singing his thanks in the background, Harry asked, /What do you think the odds are that Snape will accept our offer?/

/To have a chance to get some potions ingredients from a thousand year old basilisk…/ Daniel mused /…I think he would give up his chance of ever having a child. Snape reminds me a bit of Sam when she gets her teeth into a scientific puzzle. She will some times forget to eat or sleep./

/Are you sure you are not thinking of yourself, Daniel?/ Harry asked in a joking tone. /I seem to remember a few of the memories you shared with me when we first got together, where Jack kept having to drag you off to get something to eat or make sure you got some sleep because you got so absorbed in some project./

/I should never have shown you those things./ Daniel groaned, but was inwardly pleased that Harry felt secure enough to know he could tease him and there would be no repercussions of the harmful kind.

He knew that Harry was still basking in the joy that had come from the events of what for them technically the past week. Daniel had to admit he had had a good time as well. He’d never really had a Christmas where he’d experienced what others called the wonder of the season, but seeing it and experiencing it with Harry first hand had given him a new appreciation for what was called by many, regardless of their religion, the season of hope and joy.

He remembered well the joy he had felt from Harry when they were on the train going to Santa’s Grotto and the even greater joy he had felt when Santa presented him with an unexpected gift in the form of a sketchbook and coloured pencils to draw with. And that reminded him, they needed to come up with some kind of explanation of the sketchbook in case Hermione and Ron ever saw Harry with it.

Daniel was abruptly pulled back to the present when he and Harry ran into a blonde girl in the hallway, who was clearly a year or two younger than Harry.

“I am sorry,” Harry apologised as he helped the girl back to her feet. “I did not see you.”

The girl shook her head and told Harry, “It was my fault. I was so busy trying to find some of the things I needed to pack and was not paying attention to where I was going.”

“Why are you looking up here, I would think they should be in your dorm should they not?” Harry asked curious

It was at that moment that Daniel noticed the girl’s bare feet. Something was wrong. No one would voluntarily go wandering around a stone castle in the middle of winter in bare feet. /Ask her where her shoes are?/

“And where are your shoes? It is too cold to be wandering around without them on.” As Harry relayed the question, Daniel noticed the girl was studying Harry intently and it had him wondering for a moment if she was somehow able to detect him like Hedwig did. He hoped not. The last thing they needed was for a witch or wizard to know he was sharing Harry’s body.

“They were taken,” the girl told them simply. “I was hoping they might be up here, because my fellow Ravenclaws have hidden my things up here before. They think it is great fun to take my
clothes and other things and steal my homework before I can turn it in.”

At the blonde girl’s words all of Harry’s joy vanished to be replaced by anger.

Harry was struck dumb at the realisation that there were bullies in the other Houses. He had only thought of Slytherin as the house of the bullies before this moment and that Draco was the biggest of them. He supposed he should have known there were that were was other bullies at Hogwarts, just not as noticeable as Draco and his friends, but he supposed he had not wanted anything to disturb his thoughts of Hogwarts as a safe haven for him. The blonde girl’s words had just ripped that comfort away from him as well by making him realise that there had to be bullies in the other houses and they were just as bad as Draco. They just hid better because their Houses did not have the reputation Slytherin did. He also realised that labelling all of Slytherin House as bullies was probably unfair but given the fact that the other members of Slytherin House turned a blind eye to the actions of Draco and his friends, it made them as guilty of being a bully as he was, at least in Harry’s mind.

His anger though was quickly replaced by confusion as she added a few moments later, “I am sure you know what that is like Aingeal Coiimhdeachta.”

“Who are you talking to?” Harry gave her a puzzled look as Daniel mentally translated the Gaelic phrase Aingeal Coiimhdeachta into English and came up with Guardian Angel.

That phrase again had Daniel wondering if the girl could see him and her next words confirmed it.

“Your companion, Danyer, or maybe I should call him your Protector.”

/I think she can see me./ Daniel told Harry when the girl used the Abydonian pronunciation of his name.

/How can she see you?/ Harry wondered.

/Miss Luna Lovegood is a Seer./ a female voice that both Harry and Daniel recognized as Hogwarts’ answered. /Her gifts woke early. /

/I wonder if she will be any better at predicting things than Trelawney?/ Harry wanted to know.

/I would imagine that Miss Lovegood will be very good at it once she has been properly trained./ Hogwarts told them. /Right now, she can not properly explain what she sees. I expect that will change as she grows older. As for Trelawney./ Harry and Daniel could hear the contempt in Hogwarts voice as she said the Divination teacher’s name, /I have only ever heard her give one prophecy in a manner different from the way she does in her class and that was this summer. She was alone in her quarters and she spoke in a manner completely different voice than the one normally uses. She also didn’t remember it happening afterwards./

For a brief moment Daniel and Harry wondered if that prophecy had been spoken on the night their lives had been joined together then decided they were better off not knowing. Given their confirmed status as what Jack O’Neill would call trouble magnets then there was a better than ninety percent possibility that the unheard prophecy concerned one or both of them and they already had too many damn prophecies hanging over them between the prophecy of Merlin that the goblins had been entrusted with and the one they had heard in the Hall of Prophecies thanks to the help of an Unspeakable named Croaker that primarily concerned Harry. Daniel was also willing to bet there was one out there about him that no one knew about and it was just waiting to be sprung on him. For all he knew he was the one who had been prophesied to reopen the gate to the Universe.

“Danyer, could we talk about the things you have seen and the places you have gone through the Chapp’ai?” Luna Lovegood’s voice piped up pulling Daniel and Harry’s thoughts back to the
Since Harry was wearing Merlin’s ring on the finger that would allow him to appear as a separate entity and Daniel had no doubt that Hogwarts would keep others away for now, Daniel decided to do the polite thing and appear to answer her question.

Bowing slightly to the young blonde, Daniel told her, “It would be my pleasure, one day, when you are older and more worldly. Some of my adventures are not meant for those who have not seen the real evil that man can do.” Then he made a request, “Luna, I would like to ask that you not tell anyone I am here, please.”

“That will not be a problem, Danyer,” Luna assured him. “No one would believe me even if I did say anything. Besides I know you are not a threat to the school or Hogwarts would have evicted you by now.”

“Thank you. Now, allow me to help you a little,” Daniel extended his hand and a gentle blue glow left it to encompass Luna’s feet.

A moment later a pair of sheepskin filled fuzzy slippers covered the girl’s feet.

“Oh, thank you,” Luna squealed, looking down at her feet. “They feel so warm and comfortable.”

“I am glad you like them, and they will not vanish.” Daniel promised. “All you have to do is think of them and they will appear on your feet.”

/Hogwarts, do you know where Luna’s things are?/ Harry asked the castle.

/Yes./

/Could you arrange to have them returned to her trunk?/ Harry wanted to know.

/And would you do the same for the possessions of any others who are being treated as Luna has been, regardless of which house they belong to./ Daniel added, knowing there had to be others like Luna.

/Yes./ Hogwarts knew she would be allowed to do so since it was an Heir of one of the Founders making the request.

/And Hogwarts, would it be possible to return the favour to those who seem to enjoy taking someone else’s things, by arranging for some of their most loved possessions to go missing and turn up in... inconvenient places?/ Harry requested, hating people who behaved like Dudley and got away with it, no matter what the reasons were.

/And if any of the thieves are in a position of authority, such as a Prefect, the Head Boy or Girl, the more inconvenient and embarrassing the place... the better./ Daniel added in.

/Of course,/ Hogwarts was pleased that both Daniel and Harry were concerned for the children who were being bullied in all of the Houses.

“Miss Lovegood,” Daniel told the girl, “I have made arrangements to have your things returned to your trunk and you should no longer have to worry about losing your things. So with your permission I am going to have Harry escort you back to your dorm.”

“Thank you Danyer,” Luna bowed her head to Daniel before he vanished from her sight, but she did not lose the feeling he was nearby keeping an eye on things. “Shall we go Harry?”
As Hogwarts watched Harry and Daniel escort Luna Lovegood back to the Ravenclaw Dorms, she finally understood the feelings of joy she sometimes felt from the children who remained within her walls during the Yule Holidays. There were always great bursts of joy when they opened the gifts they had received from family and friends and she was now feeling it for herself. She had been given her first real Yule gift. Daniel the heir to Salazar Slytherin and his companion Harry Potter, had given her the right to determine how to protect the children within her walls as individuals, instead of just being allowed to protect them if the whole school was being threatened. True the permission was given and only to be used in the case of bullying and outright theft, but it was a start.

She had noticed that the bullying problem within her walls had gotten worse over the last one hundred and fifty years because of the current Headmaster and the two who had been Headmaster before him. They were not the only ones at the school though who had been turning a blind eye to the bullying. Because of the apparently tacit approval of the Head of the school, others in a position of power at the school like the Heads of the Houses and the other teachers on the staff had also ignored any accusations of bullying that they personally did not witness, especially if the offender had powerful family connections and those they picked on, like the muggleborn, did not. All reporting the incidents had ever led to, was increased abuse, until the children who were picked on decided it was safer for them to stay silent.

Being unable to do anything about some of the things she had been forced to witness over the years had frustrated Hogwarts no end especially since the reason she had been unable to interfere, until today, had been because of the magic used to create her. It limited what independent actions the school’s genius loci was allowed to take and left those decisions in the hands of the Headmaster and Headmistress at the time. Only they could order her to take any actions when needed. The only exceptions set up by Merlin and the Founders that had allowed her to take independent action prior to Daniel’s orders to her were limited to acting in defence of all students, or if a Headmaster or Headmistress had been so derelict in their duties to the children of the school that they were placing the entire school in danger because of it. That loophole was one of the reasons she had been able to take actions on Potter’s behalf, as well as some of the other students. Dumbledore was so focused on controlling Potter and everything around him that he was clearly neglecting his duties to the school as a whole, which was leading to the students being placed in great danger like when that soul piece of Riddle that had controlled Ginny Weasley last year. It had forced her to set the basilisk intended to protect the underground portions of Hogwarts lose on the muggleborn students, and it was only due to her interference that there had been no deaths only students petrified until Potter had been forced to deal with Riddle’s soul piece. Which in Hogwarts mind was another black mark against Dumbledore.

A twelve year old child should not have to face a Basilisk unprepared!

Well thanks to Daniel’s instructions, she now had more freedom to act and she was going to take it!
AN: I had intended this to be part of the previous chapter, but started to get close to the 18 page limit I seem to have when uploading to a few sites on my dial-up (and yes I do unfortunately mean dial-up) Internet so wound up having to break the chapter up into 2 pieces. So you guys technically get 2 for one… enjoy.

/words, words/ = mental speech between Harry and Daniel and Hogwarts

**Christmas Redux**

Down the hall from the potions lab, Harry and Daniel hid under Harry's cloak. They were both staring at the Marauder's map; watching the dot that had the name Severus Snape connected to it as he moved through the school. Both of them hoped and prayed that Snape would head towards his office instead of his private potions lab. If he headed to the potions lab then there was a higher chance that they would interrupt him while he was brewing a potion and everyone knew that would lead to an explosion... both figuratively and literally.

They sighed with relief as Snape's dot made it's way into the office.

Harry waited a few minutes to make sure Snape was going to be staying there before putting the map and cloak away. He unconsciously checked to make that samples of basilisk hide and a fang were still there. He might need them as proof if this bargain was going to work

/Do you want me to take care of this?/ Daniel asked.

/No,/ Harry told him, /I need to see if I can do it./

/Alright,/ Daniel agreed, pleased that Harry was willing to try and face things that made him very uncomfortable, like Snape, /but if you change your mind, let me know./

/I will./

Knocking on Snape’s office door, they heard a voice inside say, “Come.”

Instead of seeing one of his Snakes, Snape was surprised to see Potter come through his office door.

“What do you want, Potter?” He growled. “I would have thought that this would be the last place you would want to be.”

“I came to try and see if a truce could be worked out between us.” Harry told him simply.

"A truce," Snape echoes the words back at Potter. "And why would think I would be interested in that? For there to be a truce there would need to a war between us and there is no war.”
"Then how about calling it an improvement in relations between us," Harry countered. “My cousin suggested it might be worthwhile to see if I could try and convince you to see me as Harry, son of Lily Potter, instead of just as the son of James Potter.”

Snape quickly hid his reaction to the reminder that this person was Lily’s son, too. “So, your supposed cousin is just as arrogant as you. He probably thought you could just walk in here and change my mind about you because you asked for a truce. I have never met the man but it is apparent that he is just as arrogant as you and your father. Why would either of you think I would see you as something you are not?”

“Because I have something to trade in exchange for you agreeing to my terms,” Harry told him simply.

Snape eyes narrowed as he rose to his feet. "You come into my office demanding a so-called truce and think you can bribe me into agreeing to it?"

“No,” Harry met the man’s dark gaze and Daniel felt a probe, which he quickly deflected to one of Harry’s memories of the last Dementor attack at the Quidditch match, which included the woman’s voice pleading for someone not to kill Harry.

Snape quickly pulled his eyes away, breaking the connection between them.

“I was going to make you an offer if you were willing to sign a magically binding contract… but if you are not interested in having part of a thousand year old basilisk to experiment with…” Harry shrugged and turned on his heel as if he were going to leave.

The door slammed shut in front of Harry, then he heard Snape growl. “Is there no end to your arrogance, Potter? You expect me to believe that you out of all the wizards in magical Britain were able to get your hands on the rarest of all magical creatures… a basilisk… and one that you claim is a thousand years old? Where did you make this supposed find?”

“The Chamber of Secrets.” Harry told him simply as he turned back to face his Potions teacher.

“If such a creature exists, its corpse is the property of Hogwarts,” Snape gave Potter a condescending look, “not an arrogant brat, like you.”

“Actually, sir, according to my cousin Daniel who checked the old battle laws that are still in effect in magical Britain, because I killed the basilisk, in defence of myself and others, it is mine to dispose of as I choose.”

Snape opened his mouth and having a feeling he was about to be threatened with the Headmaster in order to try and force him to give the Basilisk up, Harry beat the man to the punch, “Taking me to the Headmaster will insure that no one will ever see the basilisk, but me. As of right now I am the only one who can open the Chamber and I will not do so for the Headmaster or anyone else who tries to force me to do so.”

Snape’s mouth snapped shut at the determined look on Potter’s face. It was one he had been seeing a lot on the brat’s face over the past few months and it reminded a lot of the expression Lily wore when she had made up her mind about something and was not going to give in on it.

Snape’s mind was racing. Dumbledore had never told them what the creature was that had been attacking the muggleborn students last year, and there were only a handful of magical creatures whose attacks could result in the students being petrified. One of them was the basilisk, though
unless the person was very lucky the basilisk’s stare usually resulted in death not in the victim being petrified.

His problem was, did he really want to have to make a deal with Potter of all people to get his hands on the corpse of such a highly magical creature. That was also assuming that Potter was not lying to him to play a giant prank on him just like his father had done a number of times.

As the silence began to stretch out more than a few minutes, Harry had to fight back a grin. Daniel had been right. Snape wanted the Basilisk or rather what he could get of it... badly.

When Snape had still made no comment after a few more minutes, Harry decided to give him a little push. “Do you want to hear my offer… or are you going to unlock the door and I will just leave. Be advised though if I leave without making my offer, you will have forfeited your chance of ever hearing it or getting any part of the basilisk and it can all be sold by the goblins.”

“And why should I believe you even have such a creature?” Snape demanded. “After all you are just as much of a liar as your father was.”

Harry’s face went flat and expressionless. “You know nothing about me. Nor have you ever bothered to find out anything about who I really am. You have just assumed I am like my father with no real proof. Given he did not have a chance to raise me and neither did my mother, and I do not remember much about either of them, I find it hard to believe that I could be that much like him… at least in behaviour. After all everyone keeps telling me I look so much like him, it makes me wonder if I might not be a clone of him instead of his son.”

The magic holding the door shut ended and the door swung open slightly.

"I see you made your choice, professor,” Harry commented. "I am giving you a chance to leave before you made a fool out of yourself with this deal of yours.” Snape countered flatly.

Harry bowed his head slightly in acquiescence before stepping around Snape and moving over to his desk. He placed a pouch on it, then headed for the door and stopped for a moment in the doorway. “Just remember… you chose this…. not me.”

Harry stepped into the hallway and left without closing the door.

Snape stared at the open door for a few moments before closing it himself.

Returning to his desk, he was greeted by the sight of the Bloody Baron on the other side of it.

“Good evening, Severus,” the ghost greeted him as he floated in place in front of Snape’s chair as if he were sitting in it.

“Baron,” Snape greeted him with a nod of his head.

“Severus, when you became the Head of Slytherin House, many years ago, you asked me for a favour, do you remember what it was?” The Baron asked him.

After thinking about it for a few moments, Snape told him, “I asked you to let me know when and where I was going wrong… especially it would impact Slytherin House.”

“Exactly,” the Baron nodded, “and you have just made a huge mistake.”
“By ignoring Potter and his so called truce?” Snape could not believe what he was hearing.

“By dismissing a source of power and political influence,” the Bloody Baron told him sharply. “While Potter is still a child in the eyes of the magical world, he currently has a great deal of influence within the magical community and not just here in Britain.”

Snape stared at him silently, the expression on his face clearly one of disbelief.

“You are bound to two different masters, who will ultimately destroy you in the end.” The Baron went on. “I do not know who is the bigger fool… You for turning away your one chance to escape the clutches of your masters, because you are unwilling to forget old grievances, or those two you have tied yourself to.”

Glaring at the Bloody Baron, Snape told him, “Potter has no power despite the adulation of the masses and his own arrogance. He can not free me for either of them.”

The Baron shook his head. “You may think Potter is the stereotypical Gryffindor, but you have no idea of who he really is, or what he is capable of. I have been a ghost in this castle for centuries and have seen students come and go throughout that time. I tell you that Potter is about as much of a Gryffindor as you are. And I am not the only one who thinks so. Sir Nicholas agrees with me about him.”

Seeing the expression on Snape’s face change to one of scepticism, the Baron told him. “While I doubt it will tell you much, you might want to ask the Sorting Hat what it looks for when it is sorting the children into their Houses. Then see if it will tell you how Potter wound up in Gryffindor instead of where he really belonged. And if you still doubt me, I suggest you take a look at what he left on your desk for you.”

The Baron turned and started floating toward the wall as Snape opened the pouch and dumped its contents out on to his desk.

As he stared at the fang that was half the length of his forearm, Snape heard the Baron’s parting words. “If a boy of twelve can defeat the creature those came from with only the help of a Phoenix and a sword, then just imagine what he will be able to do once he becomes a man.”

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In the third year boys dorm in Gryffindor Tower Harry rolled over to stare tiredly up at the red canopy of his bed, listening to Ron snore. He had no idea what time it was, but it felt like it was a few hours before sunrise. Harry wished that he could fall asleep and stay asleep like Ron and the other boys seemed to be able to do, but he kept waking up as his mind kept replaying the wonderful week he had spent with Daniel before using the time watch Merlin had created to return to Hogwarts on Dec 21st

Harry had to admit that this Christmas had been the best one he had ever had. He also had to admit that prior to coming to Hogwarts, he did not have too many to compare it to but this had been the greatest in his life so far.

The week they had technically been away from Hogwarts, had started with visit to Stonehenge to witness the sunrise ceremonies that marked the start of the Winter Solstice.

Standing there silently as part of the group watching the sunlight appear through what looked like a narrow stone doorway to Harry, but that Daniel had called a set of Sarcen Stones, and spill over what was known as the heel stone to mark the turn of the year back toward summer, had been a
remarkable sight. The part that was the most awe inspiring to Harry was the fact that the light had been coming through that narrow opening every year since the stones had been raised into place over a thousand years ago and never missed it. He could not even begin to guess at how complex the calculations had been to be able to make sure that happened every time and it had all supposedly been done by non-magical means.

Then there had been the train ride to Santa’s Grotto and being presented with the unexpected gift of a sketchpad and coloured pencils by Santa.

That had been followed up over the next few days by their wanderings through the heart of London. He and Daniel had done things like looking at the Christmas displays in the store windows at places like Harrods and Selfridges, as well as going to several Christmas shows and pageants across the country.

The two things Daniel had taken him to that were the most humbling and yet left him feeling the most inspired though were the Christmas Eve service at Westminster Abbey and the lit Christmas tree in Trafalgar Square.

The service at Westminster Abbey had been simple and yet there was such a feeling of warmth and love wrapped around Harry that for a few moments he had wondered if his parents were holding him in their loving embrace.

The Christmas Tree in Trafalgar Square had been a reminder of a time when people had been willing to sacrifice a lot to win against a great evil. When Harry had read the plaque that was beside the tree that said it had been sent here every year since the end of World War II by the people of Norway out of respect for what the British had done during the war, he stared at it for a long time in silent admiration and respect for people who were willing to do what was needed even if it might cost them their lives.

Harry also remembered with pleasure the smile he had gotten from Daniel when he had left money with some of the groups near Trafalgar Square that were collecting funds to be able to provide gifts and food for the needy during the Christmas season.

Harry’s thoughts had gotten to the only sour note of the week learning about the prophecy made by Trelawney, when he heard that snoring grunt sound that Ron usually made just when he was about to wake up and decided to get up as well.

Ron looked around blearily and saw that Harry was getting up. He then noticed the small pile of presents at the foot of his bed and called out, “Presents!” before pouncing on the pile.

Harry noticed there was a pile at the end of his bed too and moved to start unwrapping them a little more calmly than Ron was doing.

As he heard Ron mutter, “another sweater from Mum… maroon again… She never remembers I do not like maroon.” Harry decided to start with the smaller packages first and work up to the bigger ones.

/We forgot to make sure there was a package from me in the pile./ Daniel commented. /It is going to cause a few comments if there is not one./

/We will just arrange to have one containing the sketchbook and pencils arrive sometime in the next few days with a note saying you had gotten involved in some high level negotiations that you could not leave./ Harry told him. /That should take care of any comments anyone cares to make./
Harry found a sweater from Mrs Weasley as well as some of her homemade treats. He was all the way to the bottom when Ron came over to inspect his haul and saw the long slender package lying there.

“What is that?” Ron gestured at the package with a hand that was holding a pair of maroon socks.

“Dunno,” Harry told him. “No card on the outside.”

Harry took off the wrapping and they both gasped as the gleaming broomstick appeared.

Ron jumped on Harry’s bed knocking some of the gifts onto the floor as he leaned over to get a better look at the broom lying on the pile of paper. “It’s a Firebolt!” he breathed “Who sent it?”

“Dunno. There is no card.” Harry repeated. “About the only thing I am sure of is it was not the Dursley’s.”

As Harry started to reach for the broom, Daniel spoke up quickly, /Let me check it first./

Harry stood there studying the broom that lay on the bed as Daniel reached out with his ascended senses to check the broom and make sure there were no hidden hazards.

/It is clean./ Daniel told him.

Ron was sure he was imagining it, but he thought he saw Harry’s whole body with a pale white light as he stared intently at the broom. He quickly forgot about it though when Harry picked up the broom. Ron’s eyes followed it eagerly and then stared it in silent awe as it hung there held it at eye level so they could both see it. Reaching out his hand, Ron stroked the broom reverently with his fingertips.

After a moment more of silence, Ron told Harry, “I bet it was Dumbledore who sent it to you.”

“Why would the Headmaster send me something like this?” Harry wanted to know. “Remember he and I are not exactly on speaking terms right now.”

“Well, he sent you that Invisibility Cloak.” Ron reminded him.

“It belonged to my father and he was just returning it to me.” Harry countered. “There is no way the Headmaster would spend hundreds of galleons on a broom. That would be showing favouritism.”

“That is why there is no card.” Ron pointed out. “That way no one knows.”

“You could just as easily say my cousin sent it to me.” Harry offered as an alternative, really hoping Ron was wrong.

Ron shrugged. “Why would he not include a card then?”

“Maybe he forgot.” Harry offered, and decided to lay the groundwork for a lack of gift now. “I know from his last letter that he was getting ready for an important meeting that was expected to last a while. He sounded kind of distracted in his note.”

“What are you two carrying on about up here?” Hermione’s voice spoke up before Ron could say anything further.

Both boys turned to see Hermione standing near Seamus’ bed with Crookshanks in her arms.

/Does she always come in here without knocking?/ Daniel asked Harry.
/I think the only other time she came in here was last year to let us know the Polyjuice potion was ready. I think she was very excited that she had managed to make a very advanced potion that she forgot to knock./ Harry told him, /but I am kind of surprised that she did not this time./

/I wonder if she bursts in on her parents the same way? If so, she might get quite an eyeful every now and then, depending on what they get up to./ Daniel could not resist commenting then added in a more serious tone, /Harry, you might want to suggest to her that she should stop coming into the boy’s dorm, even if she has been invited in./

/Why?/ Harry wondered.

/Because she might acquire a reputation she does not need or want… At the very least that of a Peeping Tom or maybe Thomasina would be more accurate, given her current age. But if she continues to come in to the boy’s dorms, she might be labelled something else by the school gossips… someone who is easy, or whatever the magical equivalent is./

/Why would Hermione coming into the boy’s dorm to see Ron and me give her either of those reputations?/ Harry knew what both terms meant because he had heard Aunt Petunia use them a number of times to describe one of the neighbours daughters.

/Ok, I’m going to have to pull a Jack here./ Daniel mumbled to himself. /Given her current age they would claim she wanted to get a look at you undressed and if she keeps it up next year and beyond they might claim she is going to have sex with any boy she wants. Some might even suggest she is being paid in some fashion for it. And even though you and I both know it is not true, there is nothing to stop someone from claiming she did. Boys lie about their conquests all the time, mostly because they don’t want to have appeared to have failed to score in front of their male friends./

/But she has not… would not…/ Harry stumbled over his words.

/I know she would not, but that wouldn’t stop someone from saying so/ Daniel agreed, /… especially if they do not like her, and she might not even have considered how her actions might be perceived by others. You saw yourself last year just how fast rumours can be spread when you were declared the Heir of Slytherin because of the basilisk. Ultimately, though, the reason for her actions won’t matter, if someone decides to let their imagination run away from them. It might even make the rounds faster given she is a friend of yours and anyone who is eyeing you as a potential marriage prospect will want to eliminate the competition. Not to mention that there might be some who really believe it is true and try and force themselves on her and then blame her when she fights them./

/Doing something like that is just… wrong./ Harry told him

/I agree./ Daniel told him, /but remember magical Britain seems to be stuck in the Victorian era, so it would be viewed as her fault because she kept coming into the boy’s dorms…. All they would have to say is she was asking for it, and they would be believed that because she is muggle-born and considered lower than dirt by a lot of the so called ‘Pure Bloods’. I think that is part of the reason why the girl’s dorms are warded to stop boys from being able to get in and take advantage of the girls./

/I wonder why the boy’s dorms are not similarly warded?/

/Maybe someone took the wards down, or maybe they expected the girl’s to be the responsible ones and not go into the boys dorms./ Daniel mentally shrugged. /There should be similar wards on both sets of dorms though, if only to make it harder for something like that to happen. It still might but it would have to happen elsewhere and be easier to catch./
Unaware that Hogwarts was listening in on their mental conversation, Harry agreed with him about the wards needing to be on both sets of dorms.

Pulling his thoughts away from the very unusual conversation he had just had with Daniel, Harry asked. “Hey Ron, did you leave the door open, last night when you went to bed?”

Ron shook his head. “No, I closed it when I came in.” he said as he turned to look at the door then he hissed, “get him out of here!” when he caught sight of the cat in Hermione’s arms.

Ron hurried over to his bed and pulled Scabbers out of the blankets and stuck him in the pocket of his pyjamas. “I do not want that cat anywhere near Scabbers.”

“Crookshanks will not hurt Scabbers.” Hermione told Ron as she put her cat down on Seamus’ bed.

“I am afraid I must disagree, Hermione.” Harry told her. “Crookshanks is a cat. Rats and other rodents are the favoured prey of cats. If you insist on keeping him in here with you, then he needs to stay in your arms and you had better keep a tight hold on him. Otherwise, please take him back to your dorm room.”

“Crookshanks will not hurt Scabbers.” Hermione insisted

“Your choice Hermione, either keep him in your arms or take him back to your dorm.” Harry told her then shrugged. “After all you are the one who came in here without knocking.”

“I just wanted to know what you were doing up here.” Hermione defended her actions as her eyes caught sight of the broom hanging in mid-air. “Where did you get that?”

“Harry got that Firebolt for Christmas.” Ron told Hermione as he continued to watch Crookshanks suspiciously.

Also, given that Hermione had ignored Harry instructions to keep hold of her cat, Ron continued to cradle Scabbers protectively in his pocket.

“I have heard those are very expensive brooms.” Hermione looked at Harry. “Who sent it to you?”

“I do not know.” Harry told her. “We were just discussing that, when you came in.”

“Harry, can I try it after lunch… please?” Ron begged his eyes fixed on the Firebolt as he moved a little closer to it and unintentionally moved closer to Seamus’ bed as well.

As Ron reached out to touch the broom Crookshanks leapt at his chest with a growl. Ron just barely managed to avoid being badly clawed by dodging out of the way. His wildly swinging arm hit the cat, knocking it to the ground.

He heard Hermione shriek, “Ron!” as if she were chastising him for defending himself from her cat.

“Hermione, you should have kept hold of Crookshanks like I asked you to.” Harry told her. “You can not blame Ron for accidentally hitting Crookshanks when your cat jumps at him, claws extended.”

“He was trying to protect Ron, by keeping him away from that broom.” Hermione protested as she picked Crookshanks up and checked him for injuries.

“And why would he be doing that?” Harry asked, his arms crossed over his chest while looking at Hermione with a look that demanded an answer.
Ron muttered softly. “He picked a strange way to do it, if that is what he was doing,” as he checked on Scabbers who was trembling in his pocket.

“He knew that broom was dangerous.” Hermione told them as if that should be self-evident,

“No it is not.” Harry disagreed.

“You do not know that.” Hermione countered. “You do not even know who sent it. It could have been sent by Black with some kind of curse on it.”

“There are no curses the broom.” Harry contradicted her calmly before asking. “Have you forgotten Hermione that Crookshanks is a predator? He wanted his prey… Scabbers.”

“You do not know if that broom is safe.” Hermione refused to be diverted. “You need to get that broom checked by one of the teachers. Black probably sent it to you and intended to kill you with it.”

“Hermione, why would Black send me a broom…“ not to mention how could he have done it given he is a wanted man?” Harry tried to stay calm. “It is not like he could walk into Quality Quidditch Supplies to order it.”

“Harry, do not be foolish…” Hermione began only to be interrupted by Harry.

“Hermione, would you please take Crookshanks back to your dorm and we will meet you in the common room once we have gotten dressed.” Harry requested then suggested to Ron. “And Ron you might want to transfigure something into a cage that Crookshanks can not get into, and put Scabbers in it, just in case Crookshanks does manage to get back up here.” Harry pinched the bridge of his nose trying toward off a headache. Hermione could sometimes out stubborn Snape.

###

With broomstick in hand, Harry and Ron joined Hermione in the common room. Harry noticed Hermione glaring at the broom and then heard her mutter, “Boys! They have no common sense.” Unaware that he could hear her.

Both boys said, “good morning”, to her as they sat down next to her but she just ignored them and continued to read her book, although Harry thought he saw her looking over at them a few times.

For most of the morning Harry and Ron spent time in the common room before lunch either playing chess, gob stones, or examining the broom.

As Harry and Ron got up intending to head down to the Great Hall they noticed Hermione had not moved and Ron decided to ask. “Hermione, are coming down to lunch or not?”

Hermione looked at them for a moment before closing her book and getting up to join them.

The trio went down to the Great Hall in silence but when they got there instead of the usual house tables, they found one large round table that already had some other students and the Heads of Houses and the Headmaster seated at it.

“Happy Christmas!” Dumbledore greeted them cheerfully. “Have a seat. I thought this would be a little cosier since there are so few of us here this Christmas.”

The three Gryffindors sat down on the side closest to the door and then heard, Dumbledore call out, “Crackers!”
Harry and Ron hid a smirk as they watched Snape who was wearing a sour expression pulled a silver coloured cracker with the Headmaster only to have it come apart with a bang and reveal a witches hat with a stuffed vulture on it. They were hard pressed not to laugh when they remembered the hat Boggart Snape had wound up wearing because of Neville’s *riddikulus* charm. This one was dead ringer for that one. Snape handed it to Dumbledore who happily put it on and gave Snape the gaudy wizard hat he had gotten.

About the only depressing part of the whole meal had been when Trelawney had joined them. She had delivered her usual batch of doom and gloom though this time it was directed more at Professor Lupin and not Harry.

After getting thoroughly stuffed, Ron and Harry got up intending to go up and change into warmer clothes so they could test Harry’s new broom. Though Harry had a feeling Ron might decide not to join him given how much he was yawning. They were almost to the door, when they realised Hermione was not with them.

Turning back to the table, Harry asked. “Are you coming, Hermione?”

Hermione shook her head. “I need to talk to Professor McGonagall about something.”

“Probably wants to talk to her about taking more classes next year.” Ron yawned as he pulled Harry toward the door.

“See you later then Hermione.” Harry told her.

###

Ron came downstairs with Harry dressed in his warmest clothes. He had decided he wanted to try the Firebolt, more than he wanted to take a nap.

They both arrived back on the common room, as Hermione came in through the portrait hole, followed by McGonagall.

Both Harry and Ron stared in surprise at McGonagall’s appearance. Professor McGonagall rarely if ever came into the Gryffindor common room and when she did it was usually to deliver bad news.

Given that Hermione was currently sitting on a sofa, acting like she was reading a book and he knew she was not because it was upside down, Harry had a feeling that the bad news was going to be for him.

He tightened his grip on the Firebolt. She was not going to get it from him easily.

“Miss. Granger told me that you were sent a Firebolt for Christmas.” McGonagall moved toward Harry. “It that it?”

“Yes,” Harry told her.

“May I see it?” McGonagall requested, holding out her hand.

“Why would you need to, ma’am?” Harry wanted to know. “You have never inspected my possessions or the possessions of any of your other Gryffindors before. If you had maybe last year would not have happened.”

McGonagall’s lips tightened into a thin line for a moment at the reminder of her failure to adequately protect those in her charge. “Who sent it to you?”
“As I am sure Miss Granger has told you, I do not know.” Harry told her.

“Well then, I am afraid I must take this from you for the time being.” McGonagall held out her hand for the broom, but Harry refused to give it to her.

“Why?” Harry demanded. “There is nothing wrong with it.”

“You do not know that.” McGonagall countered taking a step forward intending to take the broom from Potter, but the boy quickly moved back and continued to do so as she continued to advance. “It could be jinxed and you would not know it. While I am not an expert on brooms or the types of jinxes that can be placed on them, I have no doubt that Professors Flitwick and Hooch will be able to strip it down and make sure it is safe for you to use.”

“Strip it down!” Ron could not believe the sacrilege he was hearing from the Head of his House. “There is nothing wrong with it.”

“Neither of you can be sure of that until he flies it and that is not going to happen until the broom has been thoroughly checked.” McGonagall countered stiffly

Having finally managed to back Harry into a corner, McGonagall again held out her hand for the broom and Harry again refused to give it to her. Tired of his stubbornness, she wrenched the broom out of his hands and told him. “It should not take more than a few weeks to determine if it safe to use. If it is, it will be returned to you. If it is not, it will be destroyed. Also Mr. Potter, for disobeying me, when the new semester starts, you will be serving detention with Professor Lupin for one week. Ordinarily I would have you serve it with Professor Snape, but unfortunately he will be busy with Miss Granger.”

Professor McGonagall walked out of the common room broom in hand. Harry went after her a few moments later, wanting his broom back.

“Professor, I want my property back. There is nothing wrong with the broom.” Harry protested.

McGonagall turned to face him. “You do not know that, Mr. Potter.”

“Yes, I do, just like I know there is still an adult animagus in the third year boys dorm that you have done nothing about.” Harry countered.

“No there is not,” McGonagall countered. “Dumbledore has assured me there is no threat in your dorm.”

Harry shrugged. “Believe that if you want, Professor, but I do not and given what has happened around me and to me over the last two years at this school as well as what has happened to me so far this year I have even less confidence in the safety and security of this supposed safest place in magical Britain with every day that passes.”

McGonagall started to sputter a denial, because she was surprised once more by the disrespect he was showing her when Harry held up his hand and silenced her. “Just like all the other times when I tried to tell you something, you clearly do not want to listen. I have told you there is nothing wrong with that broom and again you show your unwillingness to listen. I cannot stop you from taking my broom, or down stripping it down,” and he deliberately said it the same way McGonagall had. “Just be aware that if the broom is safe, as I have claimed, but no longer works because of your actions, you and Miss Granger will be buying me a replacement. And I will hire a solicitor if I have to, to insure that happens.”
Harry turned and walked back into the Gryffindor common room before McGonagall could come up with anything to say to convince him that she was protecting him.

As Harry entered the common room, he heard Ron shouting, “Why did you have to go running to McGonagall?”

Hermione was standing up facing Ron and shouted back, “Because I thought the broom was dangerous and Professor McGonagall agreed with me. She also agreed with me that it was most likely Sirius Black who had sent the broom to Harry. I was protecting him you git!”

“Language, Granger.” Harry chastised her.

Ron and Hermione spun to face him. Hermione’s face if anything went redder because of Harry turning her often said comment about ‘language’ to both Harry and Ron back on her.

“Ron,” Harry spoke gently. “Why not head back upstairs. You look kind of tired. I will handle this.”

“Yes sure?” Ron asked.

“Yes, I can handle it.” Harry assured him and he knew he could with Daniel there to keep him calm.

Daniel had it right and he could see that now. Anger would get nowhere with Hermione Granger. She would be like that Senator Daniel had known, Kinsey. She would just dig in her heels even more, convinced she alone was right and that he was an immature child who needed to be led around and shown what he needed to do… by her.

Ron nodded and headed back up the stairs to their dorm.

“Are you going to yell at me too?” Hermione asked.

“There would be no point, Granger.” Harry moved in front of her so he could see her face. “Nothing I say is going to convince you that you were wrong to take the actions you did. I knew you were going to tell McGonagall about the broom because you have never believed I was capable of taking care of myself, even though I have been doing so ever since I was dumped on the Dursley’s doorstep. I also expected you to make it sound like the worst disaster imaginable, when you told her about it. My biggest problem with what you did, was how you did it. I had expected you to do it like a Gryffindor and not a Slytherin.”

While Harry’s comments had been calmly delivered, Hermione gasped and held her hand to her face as if he had slapped her. “How can you say that to me?”

“Easily,” Harry told her. “You did not tell McGonagall about the broom in front of me, instead you told both Ron and I you needed to speak to her about something. You did not act like a courageous lion willing to accept the results of your actions, instead you snuck around like a Slytherin, hoping to avoid the blame and cost of your actions.”

“I am no Slytherin,” Hermione spat, “and you will be glad I did speak to her when they find the curses Black put on that broom.”

“There are no curses on that broom.” Harry countered.

“You do not know that!” Hermione interrupted. “You are a third year like me. The more advanced curses are taught in sixth and seventh year. Not to mention that based on my research I found out Black was an Auror, which means he also learned some of the nastier curses they were allowed to use.”
“There are no curses on that broom,” Harry repeated, pulling something out from under his shirt and settling it on top of his shirt.

Hermione stared at the bronze circular amulet that Harry’s cousin had sent him as Harry went on. “Do you remember me receiving this a few weeks ago? My cousin gave it to me and he got it from a curse breaker. It is designed to detect all kinds of curses. I used it to check the broom as soon as I opened the package. It found no curses on the broom, Granger. The broom is safe.”

“Well, given he sent you that thing to protect you from Dementors, I would not be so sure that it would work on inanimate objects if I were you.” Hermione told him.

“Dementors are not living things.” Harry told her. “They are more like inferi only they are capable of independent thought and independent action.”

“Did your cousin tell you that?” Hermione wanted to know, given she had never found that information in any books when she was researching the Dementors unusual attraction to Harry.

“Yes,” Harry did not elaborate.

“Well that is just more proof that amulet is faulty, and that you should not put much trust in it, Harry.” Hermione told him. “I am surprised that you have not shown it to Professor McGonagall or Professor Flitwick to make sure it is what he said it was.”

“No Granger, my amulet is not faulty.” Harry told her. “And it is Potter to you.”

“What?” Hermione was surprised by the sudden change in topic.

“I am Harry to my friends.” He told her. “You are an acquaintance now, Granger. I will continue to speak to you, but you have shown that I cannot trust you. You think that like Dumbledore, you have the right to dictate how I live my life and that I should tell you everything that I think, feel, and am doing, but you do not return the same courtesies to me.”

“What are you talking about?” Hermione could not figure out what he was talking about. “Of course you know what I am doing. We are Gryffindors and we go to the same classes together. I do not keep any secrets from you or Ron.”

“You do not keep secrets from your friends, really.” Harry drew the last word out.

“Then maybe you would like to tell Ron and I, how you are able to make it to all your classes on time.” Harry put special emphasis on that last word. “I know you have not missed a single Ancient Runes class we have had together and Ron has not mentioned you missing any Divination classes, so you are making it to those classes as well and both of those classes occur at the same time. As far as I know you have not supplied anyone with polyjuice to pretend to be you to attend say… divination, so some how you are travelling in time. Would you care to tell me how you are doing it?”

Hermione was silent, biting her lower lip.

After a few minutes of silence, Harry nodded. “You have just proven my point. You are keeping your own secrets and will not share them. Normally I would not protest your right to keep your secrets, but you expect me to tell you everything and will not take no for an answer from me. Given the very obvious lack of trust you have shown to Ron and I, the fact that you seem to think you have the right to dictate how I should act and react, and your actions in sneaking around today, you have lost my trust Miss Granger. And my trust once lost is hard to get back.”
Hermione stared at him in stunned silence. *Did Harry not understand she was just trying to protect him?* She also was unable to tell him about the time turner because she had promised Professor McGonagall she would keep it secret. Professor McGonagall had told her it was too easy to abuse and that she was placing great trust in her giving her the time turner and that it had only been because Professor Dumbledore had given his permission that she was even being allowed to take all the classes she wanted to using the device.

“You should also know Miss Granger, that if my broom is proven to be jinx free, but is permanently damaged by what McGonagall has done to it, both you and she will each be paying half the cost to replace it.” Harry turned and walked up the stairs after delivering his parting shot.

#####

The Gryffindor common room was largely quiet for the remainder of the Christmas holiday. About the only interaction that the three Gryffindors, who had stayed over for the Christmas break, had over the remainder of the holidays was at meal times or in the common room. They would say hello and then Hermione would bury her nose in a book only coming out to say good-bye or good night when either she left before Ron and Harry or they left before her.

Harry knew from the map that Hermione was spending the majority of her time in the library and he spent his time either with Ron or when he looped back to redo the day with Daniel and Merlin in the Chamber, learning how to meld Daniel’s powers with the magic he held. They had started out easily and Merlin told them they were doing well. He had also told them if they kept going the way they were, that when they left Hogwarts this summer and went some place a little quieter, they could move on to the advanced stuff.

#####

On January 2nd, the rest of Gryffindor House returned to Gryffindor tower and the Common Room was filled with laughter and noisy conversations as friends caught up with each other.

The twins quickly sought out their brother to find out what had been going on while they were gone. They were surprised to learn that Harry had received a Firebolt for Christmas, only to have McGonagall confiscate it. The only reason Ron did not tell them who had brought the broom to McGonagall’s attention, was because Harry had asked him not to. Normally that request would not have made much of a difference to him, given how mad he was at Granger, but seeing how firmly Harry had cut Granger out of his life, Ron decided he wanted to avoid that fate if at all possible.

The twins immediately rushed off to find Harry and confirm what Ron had told them. They found him with Wood and they were discussing the Dementors.

“Harry, is it true you got a Firebolt for Christmas?” Fred interrupted their conversation.

“Yes,” Harry told them.

“A *Firebolt!*” Oliver sounded awed as he said those words. A Firebolt was the most desired broom for any Quidditch player out there. He had heard rumours that the British and Irish Quidditch teams were working on get a set for their teams before the Quidditch World Cup. Then he began babbling, “The Firebolt has unsurpassable balance and pinpoint precision. Aerodynamic perfection. A great broom for a Seeker. Who gave it to you? Where is it? Can I see it.”

Once the rapid fire stream of questions ended, Harry shook his head. “Sorry, but I do not have it right now. McGonagall confiscated it.”
“Confiscated it!” Wood couldn’t believe what he was hearing. “Why would Professor McGonagall confiscate it?”

“She thinks that someone jinxed it. Specifically she thinks it was Sirius Black who jinxed it. Though how a wanted man not only managed to get into Diagon Alley to buy a broom and managed to get his hands on a wand so he could jinx it then send it to me, is something I have yet to figure out. She said she was going to have it stripped down to verify it was safe, before she would return my property to me.” Harry told Oliver and the twins.

Oliver Wood was so horrified at the thought of the Firebolt being ruined by what Professor McGonagall intended to do it, that he missed the angry tone in Harry’s voice, but the twins heard it. For a brief moment they felt sorry for Professor McGonagall. Harry did not sound like he was in a forgiving mood and if she ruined that broom in her attempt to keep Potter safe there was no telling what he would try to do to her.

Unaware of what they were thinking, Harry went on. “I tried to tell her there was nothing wrong with the broom, but she chose not to believe me. Not that was much of a surprise, she has not believed much of what I have told her this year,” Harry’s face took on a thoughtful look, “or in any of my previous years here, come to think of it. Also, because I refused to give her the broom, she has given me a week’s detention to be served with Professor Lupin once classes resume on Monday.”

“Be grateful she did not assign you detention with Snape.” Fred told him. “I doubt that would have been pleasant for you.”

“Granger already has detention with him once the term begins, for what she did to Malfoy when he insulted her in the Great Hall and where Professor McGonagall once more proved just how fair and impartial she really was.” Harry reminded him. “I do not think Snape would want to have to deal with two Gryffindors, even if one of them was me.”

Fred nodded in agreement, remembering how surprised he was by what Hermione had done a few weeks ago.

“I will talk to Professor McGonagall tomorrow and see if I can get her to cancel the detention and get your broom back for you.” Oliver told Harry. “You will need to practice with it before our match against Slytherin in a few weeks.”

“I doubt you will have much luck there, Oliver,” Harry told him. “I think you would have better luck getting Snape to see me as a human being instead of something he scraped off the bottom of his shoe than you would of getting Professor McGonagall to change her mind.”

Oliver Wood mentally conceded that Harry was probably right but he had to try. The chance to have a Firebolt in the game against Slytherin was too big a chance to pass up. He was looking forward to rubbing that Firebolt in the faces of the Slytherin team. He remembered very well how smug they had looked when they all showed up with new Nimbus 2001’s that Malfoy’s father had used to buy his son’s way on to the team last year. He also admitted to himself that it would have been far more satisfying if all of the Gryffindor team members had Firebolts for the game, but he would take what he could get.

#####

Harry’s first evening of detention with Professor Lupin was finished and Harry was getting ready to leave, when Daniel suggested asking him to check out Scabbers.

“What makes you think he will not just go to McGonagall?/ Harry asked.
We have one advantage with him to prove we can sense an animagus. Daniel pointed out. We can tell him we know he is a werewolf.

True, Harry agreed. He had not been worried about being around the man because Daniel had assured him that he could keep him safe. Turning back to face the DADA teacher, he spoke hesitantly, “Professor Lupin, I need to ask if you could do me a favour?”

“What is it Harry?” Lupin asked.

“Could you come with me to Gryffindor tower and check something out?” Harry phrased his request carefully. “I think there is an adult animagus hiding in our dorm. And if I am right he has been hiding out with my friend’s family for about twelve years.”

“How can you be so sure it is an animagus?” Lupin asked concerned.

“Somehow I am able to feel animagi.” Harry chose his words carefully. “I do not know how I can do it, or why but, I knew when Professor McGonagall was in her cat for that she was an animagus and while you feel similar, it took me a little while to figure out you were a werewolf.”

Lupin paled when he heard Harry reveal his secret.

“Do not worry, Professor, I am not going to tell anyone about you. I also do not intend to blackmail you because of your secrets. I have secrets of my own.” Harry told him. “I also doubt that most of the class that Snape lectured about werewolves have figured it out yet, either.”

“Why ask me?” Lupin wanted to know. “Why have you not told Professor McGonagall about the animagus?”

“I have told her several times,” Harry responded. “She refuses do even investigate it. I am worried about my safety and my friends. Someone who has been hiding that long may be willing to do anything to insure their secret stays hidden, including killing someone.”

Remus was surprised by that piece of information. He never thought McGonagall would be so cavalier about the safety of her lions. He gestured toward the door. “Take me to this animagus.”

Harry led his DADA Professor into the Gryffindor common room and was getting ready to lead Lupin to the third year boy’s dorm when he saw Ron over near the windows with a cage they had been using to keep Scabbers safe from Crookshanks, and it had a served the purpose of keeping Ron safe from Scabbers after Daniel and he had done some strengthening magic on it. He saw reach in and pull Scabbers out of the cage.

“He is over there,” Harry pointed toward where Ron had Scabbers in his hand.

Remus looked in the direction Harry had pointed and saw the grey rat that Ron was feeding something to with an eye dropper.

He strode toward Ron as he growled, “Wormtail!”
Dumbledore meet… Murphy!

Chapter Summary

Sorry for the delay in getting this out but real life and the plunnie both refused to co-operate and let me get this written. I hope you enjoy it and just to let you know the plunnie is already plotting the next chapter which will involve Fudgie and Black.

I hope you all have a Merry Christmas, Happy Yule, or Happy Chanukah.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Dumbledore meet… Murphy!

"Come on Scabbers," Ron snapped as he tried once more to shove the eyedropper in the rat's mouth only to have the rat shift his head as far away as he could. "This stuff will help you get better, you idiot."

"Maybe you should try giving it to him with food." Hermione suggested.

Ron sighed and told her. "No, he has to be given his medicine before he eats anything. At least that is what the guy at the Magical Menagerie told me when I sent him a letter asking about that a couple of months ago, because I was having problems getting Scabbers to take his medicine."

As he returned his attention to his pet, Ron wished yet again that he had two pairs of hands. One pair to just hold Scabbers in place while one hand of the other pair could be used to keep the rat's head in place so he could administer the medicine the wizard at the Magical Menagerie said Scabbers needed.

"Merlin! That stuff tastes fouler than any potion Madame Pomfrey ever gave me." Peter Pettigrew aka Wormtail aka Scabbers squeaked even though the one responsible for his care could not understand his squeaks as he once again shifted his head to try and avoid the eye dropper.

This time he wound up with his head tilted in the direction of the portrait hole, which turned out to be a lucky break for him, given who was coming in. It was someone he had been trying to avoid for months because this man would recognize him in an instant... Moony! had just come in and he was with Harry Potter!. The minute the former Marauder caught sight of him, Peter knew the jig was up and he was going to have to get out of here. Fast!

Heaving a mental sigh at the loss of his safe haven for the last twelve years, Peter bit down hard on Ron Weasley's hand causing the boy to cry out in surprise and drop him.

Ignoring the brief flash of pain, Peter quickly got to his feet and scurried toward the hole in the stone wall of the common room that had been there for decades, if not centuries. He knew from past experience in carrying out pranks as a Marauder that it was the quickest way for him to get out of the common room and not be caught.
If a rat could smile, Peter would have been wearing a smug grin as he heard the frustration in his former friend and fellow Marauder's voice as it came loudly down the small tunnel, "Wormtail!"

He had gotten away before Moony could catch him. Today was definitely his lucky day.

Scurrying down the passageway, Peter headed for the section of the castle that would allow him to get out without being seen. Once outside he just needed to find a safe place to hide until he could get away.

+++++

Yelping in surprise, Ron grasped his bleeding hand as it throbbed in pain. He had instinctively dropped the source of the pain and applied pressure to the wound, his pet rat had inflicted. His eyes followed his pet as Scabbers ran for the hole in the wall, only to be surprised when he saw Professor Lupin running after him before slamming the palm of his hand against the wall as Scabbers got away.

The silence that had fallen in the Gryffindor common room, allowed everyone, who had witnessed the Professor's strange actions, to hear him angrily growl, "Wormtail!" as Scabbers disappeared into the hole in the wall.

Fred and George looked at their Defence teacher in surprise, then conducted a silent conversation consisting of facial twitches and raised eyebrows, before returning their attention to Professor Lupin.

Before they could approach him though, Ron called out in a pain filled voice as he continued to nurse his wounded hand. "Professor Lupin, what is going on? Why were you after Scabbers?"

Seeing the blood running down Ron's hand, Lupin pulled out his wand and headed over to the injured boy. Taking the red headed boy's hand in his, Lupin cast a spell that stopped the bleeding and healed the wound.

Glancing back at the hole his former friend had escaped through, Lupin asked Ron, "Mr. Weasley, how long have you had that rat as a pet?"

"About three years. He was Percy's before I got him. Why?" Ron wanted to know.

"And how long did your brother have him?" Lupin asked.

"I do not know." Ron shrugged, not understanding why there was so much interest in Scabbers. " I am not sure nine, maybe ten years. Why are you so interested in Scabbers?"

"I take it you know who Scabbers really is, Professor?" Harry commented.

He had not expected the rat to be someone known to Lupin. His main reason for telling the Professor about the rat besides the fact that McGonagall had ignored his warnings, was he had hoped the man could reveal that Scabbers was in fact an adult wizard and get him away from Ron. He did not want the hidden wizard to hurt Ron. Or for Black to hurt Ron because he was trying to get to the rat since he was fairly certain that Black was after the rat animagus. Not Harry as Dumbledore believed. And Daniel had agreed with him.

Professor Lupin sighed. There was no easy way to say this. "Because Scabbers is not a rat, he is an animagus and someone I thought had died over twelve years ago."

"You called him Wormtail." Fred interrupted before Harry or Ron could ask another question. "Did or do you know Prongs, Padfoot, and Moony too?"
"Yes," there was a sad smile on the Professor's face, but he did not elaborate. "Mr. Weasley, would you please ask your brother Percy to meet me in my office some time in the next couple of hours. I need to find out how Wormtail came to live with your family and how long ago. If he tells me what I think he is going to, there has been a terrible miscarriage of justice that will need to be corrected before it is too late."

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Minerva McGonagall was going over the results of the testing that, she, Professor Flitwick, and Madame Hooch had done on the Firebolt Harry Potter had received as a Christmas gift. She was relieved to see it had no hexes or jinxes of any kind on it.

Now, the problem was how to get it back into flying condition.

According to the information near the bottom of the page, that Professor Flitwick had provided, while they would be able to make the broom fly again it would not perform the way a Firebolt should. The Nimbus company had protected the charms and spells they used on their brooms so they could not be reproduced or copied without a lot of time and effort, not to mention the possibility of legal action if someone did.

What that meant was that in order to get Mr. Potter's broom working correctly, before the next Gryffindor Quidditch match, she was going to have to contact Nimbus for help. The only problem she could see with that was that she did not know how she was going to explain why the charms needed to be reapplied to the broom or how much the cost would be. She doubted very much the Nimbus company would do it for free, even though the broom was going to be used by a hero of the wizarding world... The-Boy-Who-Lived.

She had just started to work on a rough draft of the letter she was going to send to Nimbus when the door to her office was suddenly shoved open. She was expecting the person who had rudely opened her door to be Professor Snape, but was surprised to find Professor Lupin standing in the doorway looking upset.

"Remus! What is going on?" McGonagall demanded. "What is so important that you have to burst into my office without knocking first?"

The current Defence Professor stepped into her office and closed the door with a hard shove, before growling, "Minerva, how could you deliberately ignore a warning about a possible danger to the students of your house and possibly the whole school? Prior to today if someone had told me you were capable of doing so, I would have said they were insane, but now I have to wonder just how much you have deliberately ignored."

McGonagall rose to her feet and slammed her fist down on her desk. "How dare you…! I have never ignored any warning of danger to the children in my House, or the rest of the school."

"Then perhaps you could explain to me why you never bothered to verify whether or not Mr. Weasley’s pet was an animagus?" Remus countered.

McGonagall suddenly understood. As a werewolf Remus would be very protective of one he viewed as a member of his pack and it was clear Harry had tried to get him to believe that there was a danger in the boy’s dorm. "Ah, you have been speaking with Mr. Potter and listening to his tales. I spoke to Albus regarding what Mr. Potter reported shortly after Halloween and he assured me there is no animagus in Gryffindor tower."

"Did either of you bother to go to Gryffindor Tower to verify what Mr. Potter reported?" Remus
wanted to know.

"No," McGonagall did not understand why he was still on the attack. She had already told him that Dumbledore had assured her that there was no danger to anyone in Gryffindor Tower and that should be enough for him. "The Headmaster controls the wards to the school and assured me there was no danger to anyone in Gryffindor Tower, so that meant that there was no animagus there, for us to deal with."

"Well he was wrong," Remus leaned forward, intruding into her personal space. "And so were you. Unlike the Headmaster or you, I went to check out Mr. Potter’s claims. And even though he got away, there was an animagus there and I recognized him. It was Peter Pettigrew."

"Impossible!" McGonagall stated firmly. "Pettigrew is dead! Sirius Black killed him!"

"I know what Pettigrew’s animagus form looks like, just as I know what yours looks like." Remus countered just as firmly. "It was Peter and I would be willing to swear a magically binding oath on that fact."

"Ministry Law requires that a person register their animagus form and Pettigrew never registered." McGonagall persisted, ignoring the fact that Lupin had said he was willing to swear an oath on it. "I keep a close eye on the registry list, there is no rat animagus form listed there under his name."

Remus looked at Minerva surprised. "James and Lily never registered either and yet they both were animagi." He did not mention that Sirius Black also had an animagus form. "You do remember when we all attended Hogwarts do you not? They learned during the Dark Lord’s reign of terror. Why would anyone be so foolish to reveal a possible weapon or something that would help them get away if they needed to? Registering would have told the Dark Lord who needed to be taken out first."

"What were James and Lily’s forms?" McGonagall could not help being curious.

"James was a stag and Lily was a leopard, a snow leopard to be precise and was she ever vicious when threatened." There was a slight smile on Lupin’s face before his thoughts returned to Peter then his expression became grim again. "We are getting off topic though. Minerva. Peter Pettigrew is alive! He has been hiding as a rat with the Weasley’s ever since the Ministry claimed that Black killed him and the big question is why. If he had nothing to hide why did he run when he saw me in the Gryffindor Common room? I think he is hiding from Black because he betrayed the Potters."

"Black was the Potter’s secret keeper. Everyone knows that." McGonagall disagreed.

"We only know what James told us." Remus reminded her. "It could have been a deliberate misdirection on his part to keep Lily and Harry safe. After all it would be expected that he would choose his best friend as his secret keeper."

"It would have come out at Black’s trial!" McGonagall persisted.

"Well, maybe you should contact Madame Bones so that she can check the transcript of his trial and see if he was even asked about Pettigrew. You might also want to let her know that Peter Pettigrew has been seen alive near Hogwarts. And do not forget to tell her about his animagus form." Remus growled a wolfish growl as he said the last part.

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"Harry, can I ask you something?" Ron was wearing an uncertain expression on his face as he closed the door to the third year boy’s dorm room behind him to try and insure privacy for a while.
Having a feeling that this was about Scabbers, and knowing that Ron had been one of Harry's first friends, Daniel asked, /Do you want me to handle it?/

Harry, who also had the same feeling, declined the offer, /Ron is my friend. I should to do this, since I am the one who brought Lupin into it./ "Sure Ron, what do you want to know?"

"How long have you known about Scabbers being an animagus?" Ron wanted to know and Harry could hear the unasked part of the question 'and why did you not tell me?'

"I did not figure it out right away." Harry told him. "When I caught him after he got away from you at the Magical Menagerie, he felt odd..."

"What do you mean he felt odd?" Ron clearly did not understand.

Harry shrugged and told him, "For some reason ever since I got to Diagon Alley this past summer, I have been able to feel for lack of a better term the magic flowing around me and when I handle magical objects I can feel it as well."

"That is... cool." Ron told him. "I mean that means you can feel spells being cast at you and get out of the way."

"Yea," Harry agreed then went on. "Anyway, when I handled Scabbers, he felt odd. I put it down to the fact he was old and might be dying given that the wizard at the Magical Menagerie thought he was very old. It was only after I felt the magic around Professor McGonagall change when she switched from human to her cat form and back again and then we had that scare with Black that I realized Scabbers felt the same way and figured out he had to be an animagus."

"Why did you not tell me?" Ron wanted to know.

"At first because I was not sure what it was I was feeling," Harry told him honestly, "and then once I realised what he was, I was trying to protect you."

"Why?" Ron demanded. "I can take care of myself."

"In this case maybe, maybe not." Harry countered. "While you might have kept the fact you knew he was an animagus from showing in how you reacted around him, he would have been able to smell your fear and known he had been found out. Animals are very good at detecting scents of all kinds. Especially those that can indicate a possible threat to them or those they care about. Remember Scabbers, or Wormtail as Professor Lupin called him, is an adult wizard who has been hiding with your family as a rat for at least twelve years... possibly from Black. If he suspected that you had found out something about him, he might have hurt you. I could not take that chance."

Ron was just about to ask Harry if he had done anything besides tell Professor Lupin about Scabbers when he heard a sudden surprisingly loud shriek, followed by a thud.

He and Harry quickly headed out of the dorm room. As they reached the edge of the stairs they found it was flattened out like a slide all the way down to the common room. They also noticed that Hermione was lying on the floor of the common room near where the stairs to the boy’s dorms began, with a crowd of people beginning to gather around her.

A moment later the stairs returned to their normal appearance so Harry and Ron could go down them. Ron ran down the steps, asking, "What happened ‘Mione?"

"I have no idea," Hermione admitted. "I was headed up to your dorm to talk with you and Harry, when all of a sudden the stairs changed into that slide and sent me back down into the common
"That sounds like what happened a few times when Fred and I tried to go up to see Angelina and Katie, when they were in their dorm room." George piped up.

"I wonder when that was changed," Fred added. "The Katie and Angelina did not have any problems coming up to see us before Christmas."

Those comments resulted in both Fred and George getting their heads slapped, by all three of the Gryffindor chasers.

It also caused Daniel to remember his comments to Harry on Christmas Day about Hermione’s unexpected entrance in to the Boy’s dorms and comment, /Looks like Hogwarts decided to act on our suggestion to ward the entryways to both the boy’s and girl’s dorms, so no one could take advantage of the obvious weak spot./

Remembering some of that conversation, Harry could not help wondering, /I wonder if she made the changes to all the Houses or just Gryffindor?/

A moment later Harry felt something he could only describe as the satisfying feeling he had gotten when he made Draco publicly admit owing him a life debt and knew he was going to be able to stop Malfoy’s plans for Buckbeak and Hagrid. For Daniel, he felt like he had when he had realized he had been right that there had been aliens in Ancient Egypt, even though he could never tell anyone outside the SGC.

/I think that was a yes, that she did all of them./ Daniel commented.

Ron and Angelina had gotten Hermione to her feet as Harry stepped off the last step and back into the common room. "I hope you are alright, Granger. What were you coming up to talk to Ron and I about?"

The ones closest to the trio were surprised to hear Harry refer to his friend by her surname and sound so unconcerned over the fact she had fallen because she had tried to come up to see him. Before tonight he would have been there right beside Ron, checking her over and then helping her up. They could not help but wonder what had happened to divide the Golden Trio as threesome had been known, since their first year at Hogwarts.

Hermione ignored the neutral tone of Harry’s voice and the fact that he was still calling her by her surname. "I wanted to talk to you about Scabber’s and why you felt you had to involve Professor Lupin? I mean you should have told Professor McGonagall first and then she could have involved Professor Lupin if she felt she had to."

"I did tell McGonagall, Granger." Harry told her. "I informed her about my suspicions that Scabbers was an animagus a day or two after Black tried to break into Gryffindor Tower the first time. I told her I thought Black was after Scabbers since Ron had not brought him down to the feast, but she chose to do nothing, other than tell Dumbledore. And neither of them even bothered to check my claim out because if they had, they would have been able to find out who he was and why he had spent twelve years hiding from other wizards."

"I am sure they were just waiting for the right time to check your claim out." Hermione interrupted. "When no one else would have been put at risk."

"Well, surely that should have happened during the Christmas break when most of the students were gone, so no one would have been at risk. I do not recall either of them coming into the Common
room or asking to see Scabbers, do you, Ron?” Harry had a thoughtful look on his face.

Ron shook his head.

Harry went on, "I can not help but wonder what would have happened if Black had tried to break in again and someone had been injured in his attempt to get Scabbers? Granger, maybe you should ask Professor McGonagall when she or the Headmaster were going to do their duty and check out a possible threat to the school? I am kind of curious to hear what tale they will tell you to keep you happy. Will she tell you the same thing that she told me, that Dumbledore told her there was nothing dangerous in Gryffindor tower? Or will she admit she failed to do her job as Head of Gryffindor House properly, that being to insure the safety of the students of her house?"

Granger just glared at him. "I am fairly certain that Professor McGonagall and the Headmaster had everything taken care of, Harry. You should have been patient and allowed them to handle things. I am sure they would have taken care of him and no one would have been hurt. Harry, sometimes you have a habit of getting involved without all the facts and you put your life and others at risk."

"Granger, I have only one thing to say… Pot say hello to kettle." Harry turned on his heel and headed back up the stairs.

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Amelia Bones stared at the unopened letter her secretary had brought in for several minutes before reaching for it.

It was addressed to the Head of the Department of Magical Law Enforcement and marked Urgent. She was used to getting mail marked this way, but what had her surprised was she recognised the handwriting and it was from someone she had not heard from in years… Remus Lupin.

She could not help wondering what he might be contacting her about. She hoped it was not about Black. She was well aware that one of the main reasons Dumbledore had hired him as DADA teacher was because he knew Black best and could protect Potter from him.

Unfolding the letter, she read:

Madame Bones,

While I would like to think that Deputy Headmistress McGonagall had already contacted you about this matter, given the events that have happened so far, I doubt that she has. The issue I wish to bring to your attention is very urgent as it involves Sirius Black as well as a possible threat to Harry Potter.

The problem, which Mr Potter brought to my attention, involves a wizard who is an unregistered animagus. Mr Potter asked for my confidence so I can not give you much detail about how he found this out. Mr Potter also told me that he had asked Professor McGonagall to investigate the matter several times before coming to me. While I dismissed the idea that Minerva would deliberately place her students in danger, to ease Mr Potter’s mind I did go and check out his claim and I found out that there had indeed been an animagus hiding in Gryffindor tower. When I tried to capture the wizard, he escaped.

The most troubling part of this is that I recognised the animagus as someone I knew from when I was younger, Peter Pettigrew. During the war, James Potter, Lily Evans, and Peter Pettigrew all learned how to become animagi. The reason they did not register at the time was because of the possible leaks in the Ministry. They felt they needed to keep this secret so they had a way to escape if
ever attacked. The animagus I saw in the Gryffindor common looked exactly like Peter’s animagus form, a grey rat.

Given Peter had supposedly been killed by Black I looked into the back issues of the Prophet that were in the Hogwarts library to see what they reported that Black said about Peter’s death at his trial but I found nothing printed by the Prophet about his trial. After that I checked with the Ministry records office about a closed trial but they were unable to provide me with any information with regards to his trial either.

So I am writing to you to ask you for your help in checking into this matter. First, with regards to the records of Sirius Black’s trial and whether or not he even received a trial. And the second reason is ask you if there is a way to check and see if Pettigrew has in any way harmed the students or staff of Hogwarts. He managed to remain undetected for almost twelve years, which meant he had unrestricted access to everyone there due to the fact that in his animagus form he was passed from one family member to another in the family he has been hiding with. And lastly to see if he had any help in evading detection during the time he has spent at Hogwarts.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter,

Remus John Lupin

After folding the letter and putting it away, in the drawer she had secured so that only she could open it, Bones called, "Sutton!"

The office door was opened after a few moments by Bone’s secretary/guard dog, Elizabeth Sutton. Sutton had been a muggle born Auror when Bones was a trainee. She had helped Bones become a great Auror in a male dominated field. However when she was injured in the line of duty the Ministry had turned their back on her for first being a female in a man’s job and second being a Muggle born. When Bones has become the Head of the Aurors she hunted down Sutton and hired her. Who better to be the secretary to the Head of the DMLE than an older Auror. Not only could she still defend herself, she knew who to lean on and when. She also knew where all the skeletons where. Speaking in a rough voice, she asked, "You wanted to see me Madame Bones?"

"Yes, get hold of the Head of the Dept of Magical Records, tell them I want all the records pertaining to Sirius Black’s trial on my desk within the next two hours." Bones ordered.

"Yes, Ma’am." She nodded and closed the door before returning to her desk.

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McGonagall stared at the broom sitting on her desk pleased that it had finally gotten there. She had run out of excuses for Potter as to why she had not returned his broom yet. She finally had it though and even then though it was not the original broom, she had no doubt he would be pleased to have it. Now Potter would have time to train with his new broom before the Quidditch match with Ravenclaw this weekend.

When she had sent the original broom to the Nimbus Racing Broom company to try and get the charms they had on their brooms put back on it, she had been informed that they could not reapply the charms because of how she and Professor Flitwick had checked the broom over by stripping the charms and spells off. The owner of Nimbus told her that because of the leftover bits and pieces of the original charms embedded in the broom, it would prevent them from being able to reapply the charms correctly which meant the broom could never be remade into a Firebolt. All it would ever be from this point on would be a basic broom. She had been told that the person the broom belonged to would have to purchase a new broom.
Her claim that she had been trying to protect one of her students had made no difference to them. The owner of the Nimbus company had told her that if she had been that worried and wanted to avoid damaging the broom then she should have sent it to them to be checked. They could have checked it out quickly and easily for any signs of tampering. She had also been told that if they had found anything then they could have safely removed the hexes and reapplied the charms that made the broom work the way it was supposed to.

It had taken her telling the owner of Nimbus just who the broom belonged to before the owner changed his mind and even then he had wanted something for sending them a new broom. He had wanted the right to say in their advertising that Potter was using a Firebolt. She had consulted with Dumbledore since he was the boy’s Magical Guardian and had gotten his permission for them to do so.

Mentally flipping a galleon, McGonagall decided the best way to handle this was to have Potter come to her office after dinner this evening and she would give him the broom then.

Harry knocked on the door to Professor McGonagall's office and heard her say, "Come in."

"You wanted to see me Professor?" Harry questioned, his face an expressionless mask. Both he and Daniel were on guard just in case.

"Yes, Mr. Potter," she smiled at him, "I have something I need to return to you."

She picked up the broom off her desk and handed it to him, "I am returning your broom. We have done all the checks and found nothing wrong with it."

Harry took the broom from her and had to strongly resist the urge to comment that he had told her in December that there was nothing wrong it.

McGonagall went on unaware of what he was thinking, "You have a very good friend somewhere, Mr. Potter. I daresay that you will need to get some practice with it before Saturday’s match and please do try your best to win."

Harry examined the broom silently for several minutes before looking up at her and saying, "I am sorry, Professor, but this is not my Firebolt."

"Of course it is your broom!" McGonagall insisted. She was not pleased with his reaction. She had expected him to be so happy to have the Firebolt back that he would just take it and leave.

"No ma’am this is not the broom you took from me at Christmas." Harry disagreed then pointed to the Lightening bolt surrounded by flames. "The broom you took from me did not have this on the handle. So where is my broom, Professor? The one you took from me in December."

Harry put the broom that McGonagall had tried to pass off as his back on her desk, and looked her squarely in the eyes.

McGonagall found his stare a little disconcerting. Potter's face was an expressionless mask, but his eyes seemed to burn with emerald fire.

"Well, Professor, would you care to tell me what happened to my broom? You know the one you promised to return to me after you finished stripping it down." As the silence stretched he continued to stare at the Head of Gryffindor House, as he asked, "Cat got your tongue, Professor? Perhaps I
should make an educated guess, then?"

When his Head of House continued to remain silent, Harry took that as permission to continue. "I would bet that after you stripped it down and found out I was right about there being nothing wrong with it, you then realized that you could not put it back into its proper working condition. The reason why might have been because some of the charms on it were unknown to you and whoever you had working on it with you, or maybe because of the way you ripped the spells and charms off of it. I am willing to bet it was the second reason, given you were so sure you were right and could do anything. So you contacted Nimbus and they gave you that broom in exchange for being able to use me to make a profit off." 

With the glare that McGonagall was giving him, Harry had a feeling that if she had been in her cat form right now her fur would be standing up and she would be hissing at him.

"While you are correct, Mr. Potter, about the problems we were having restoring your broom; you are incorrect about me giving the Nimbus company permission to use your name. I did not. The owner spoke with your guardian and he was the one gave them permission to use your name. They paid for that right with this broom."

/Now might be a good time to let Jack out to play./ Daniel suggested.

Harry’s expression did not change, but inside he was smirking. During his and Daniel’s training with Merlin over the last couple of months, Harry had developed a habit of saying what he thought in the bluntest manner possible. After one particular comment, Daniel had named this habit of his after Jack O’Neill. Daniel also asked Merlin after one very funny comment if it were possible that Jack had hitched a ride with him when he had been pulled back in time and had also merged with Harry. It had had all three of them laughing for several minutes. Since then every time Harry made one of those blunt but accurate statements, Daniel would just say, Jack is back.

"I wonder how Nimbus knew where to find my cousin and why he did not tell me." Harry seemed to wonder out loud.

"Your cousin is not your magical guardian, Mr. Potter." McGonagall countered without telling him exactly who his magical guardian was. "Nor, is he your muggle guardian."

"Actually he is both," Harry told her, "as of January 1st."

Harry shrugged and turned to leave, without the broom.

"Take yer broom with you, Mr. Potter." McGonagall ordered.

"As I said earlier, Professor, that is not my broom, and I will not take something that is not mine. And right now there is no proof that it is." Harry refused to look at her as he left the room.

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After giving the broom to Wood certain that the Gryffindor Team Captain would be able to make Potter see reason, she headed to the Headmaster’s office. She needed to let him know that something may have happened, given that Potter claimed that the Dursleys were no longer his guardians and that someone neither, they, or Potter had ever met now was.

"Come in, Minerva," Dumbledore called in response to her knock.

McGonagall got straight to the point. "Headmaster, I was speaking with Mr. Potter and he mentioned something that I thought you needed to know. It seems that Mr. Potter thinks that the man claiming to
be his cousin, Daniel Jackson, is his magical guardian and that the Dursleys are no longer his muggle guardians."

"Hey, Harry," Oliver Wood’s voice pulled his seeker’s attention from the book he was reading, "Professor McGonagall asked me to make sure you had your broom back so you could practice with it before Saturday’s game."

Harry took one look at the broom with the golden lightening bolt in the handle and told Oliver, "That is not my broom." as he shook his head. "My broom didn't have the lightening bolt symbol on it, so that's someone else’s. In fact McGonagall admitted that they destroyed my broom as they searched for curses that did not exist on it. And once they figured out they could not fix it, they bribed Nimbus with use of my name, which my guardian never gave them permission to use, to get that broom." Harry pointed to the broom in Wood's hands. "I know for a fact, having spoken with him about it before he became my legal and magical guardian, that my cousin agrees with me that no one should be allowed to make a profit off my parents murders, just because I survived."

"Harry!" Hermione shrieked. "How dare you accuse Professor McGonagall of lying and trying to make a profit off your parent’s deaths?"

"Granger," Harry quickly countered, "I never said she was trying to make a profit off my parents deaths. I said she lied and gave Nimbus permission to do so claiming she had gotten that permission from my magical guardian and Daniel would never have given it, knowing how I feel about it. What she was trying to do is get out of paying for a replacement for the broom she destroyed. And that would not have happened if you had trusted me and not made her think I had been sent a cursed broom. And if you think you and she are going to get out of paying for a replacement broom for the one she destroyed because of your actions think again."

"Harry," Oliver interrupted. "You and your magical guardian can sort that out later, right now you need to start training with your new broom."

"That is not my broom, Oliver," Harry repeated. "You want to use go ahead. I will use yours until I get a replacement."

"While I would love to fly on a Firebolt, it is more of a Seeker’s broom than a Keeper’s broom." Oliver countered. "You are going to need to use it if we are to have a chance against Ravenclaw this Sunday."

"Harry," Ron put in, "we do not have a reserve Seeker. You are it. And there is no way you can get a new broom ordered and sent here quick enough so you can practice with it before the game on Sunday. We can not afford to lose this game, if we want to have a chance at the Cup. Why not just use that broom for this one game and then if you decide you still do not want to keep it then send it back to Nimbus."

Harry stared silently at Ron as he asked, /Is someone trying to control Ron? I mean that is not something I expected him to say. What do you think, Daniel?/

/While I would like to say that you should stick to your guns, Ron is right about one thing, your House does not have a player who can fill in for you and your housemates will not bother to try and understand why you are refusing. I have a feeling they will make your life hell, like they have before, if you do not use the broom at least for this game./ Daniel told him.

/Ron is also a Quidditch fanatic, who do anything to play a game or watch one, especially if it were
the Chudley Cannons he was playing with. Harry reminded his mental roommate as he studied his red-headed friend. "Okay, who are you and what have you done with Ron? The Ron I know is a Quidditch fanatic and would never have suggested that I use a Firebolt for only one game and then give it up."

Ron looked down at the floor for a moment, before saying, "I just wanted to suggest something that would satisfy everyone."

What Ron did not say was he wanted to avoid being told he was no longer a friend of Harry’s. He had seen how completely Harry had cut Hermione out of his life. Harry was civil to her when he had to be but most of the time as far as he was concerned it was as if she did not exist. And even though Ron thought Harry was being a fool for not wanting to keep the Firebolt, just because of how McGonagall had gotten it, he desperately wanted to avoid being on the receiving end of that treatment from his friend.

The twins came over and studied their brother and one of them commented. "He looks like our brother Ronnie."

"Sounds like him too," the other observed.

"But..." they both shook their heads, "he has never been this reasonable."

"Could someone have hit him with a charm?" one twin wondered.

"I do not think there is one to make someone polite and reasonable..."

"...Potion maybe?"

"Come on Ron," Ginny came over and pulled her brother out of his chair.

"Where are we going?" Ron protested as she tried to drag him out of the common room.

"To have Madame Pomfrey check you out, cause you are suddenly acting reasonable and that is not the Ron we all know and love." Ginny told him as the twins helped her get him out the door.

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The match had been underway for about an hour now, with Jordan every now and then seeming to become an advertising agent for Nimbus with regard to the Firebolt broom and talking about things like how his Firebolt’s performance was better than Chang’s Comet and the fact that it was the broom of choice for the national teams and every time he did they would hear McGonagall yell at him to get back to reporting on the game.

Harry was playing a game of follow the leader with him as the leader for the Ravenclaw Seeker Cho Chang. He had just come out of his third dive when he spotted the snitch for the third time at the Ravenclaw end of the field.

Increasing his speed with Chang who was below him doing the same, Harry set off in pursuit of the Snitch, determined to get it this time.

He was gaining on the Snitch, when he heard Chang scream, "Oh no!"

Looking around to see what was wrong he saw her pointing down and spotted three tall, black-hooded Dementors near the end of the stands on the Ravenclaw edge of the field. They were looking up at him.
Not stopping to think and not realizing he wasn’t feeling the normal effect from them, Harry reached into the neck of his robes and pulled out his wand. Pointing it in the direction of the Dementors he roared, "Expecto patronum!"

There was a large burst of silver white light from of the tip of his wand and it headed in the direction of the Dementors. Then since his thoughts were still very clear Harry returned his attention to his pursuit of the Snitch and a few moments later that hand that was holding his wand was grasping the struggling Snitch.

A few moments later Madame Hooch’s whistle was heard and Harry was nearly pulled off the Firebolt by the enthusiastic hugs of his team-mates.

Once they were on the ground they engulfed by their housemates who were cheering and shouting about their victory.

As Harry managed to escape a group of 5th years, who were thumping him on the back, he heard a voice ay, "That was quite some Patronus, Harry."

Turning around Harry saw Professor Lupin standing off to one side, looking both pleased and surprised.

"Professor, the Dementors, did not affect me this time." Harry told him. "I did not even know they were there till Chang pointed them out."

"Well, that was because they were not really Dementors." Lupin told him a sombre expression on his face. "Come and have a look."

Harry followed him to the edge of the field and saw several Slytherins lying on the ground struggling to remove the long black robes they were wearing. McGonagall was standing over them an expression of fury on her face as the pretend Dementors revealed themselves to be Malfoy, Crabbe, Goyle, and Marcus Flint the Slytherin team captain.

"I will say that you gave Malfoy and his companions quite a fright." There was a smug expression on Lupin’s face as they listened to McGonagall call the Slytherins cowards, give them detention and take fifty points from Slytherin.

As Ron and the others joined them and heard what McGonagall said it sealed their victory and George announced "Party in the Gryffindor common room."

There was a loud cheer as they headed back to Gryffindor tower.

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On the weekend following the Gryffindor win over Ravenclaw and Draco’s foolish actions in trying to pretend to be a Dementor, Snape was in Hogsmeade searching for Potter's cousin: Daniel Jackson. He knew what the man looked like because he had taken a peek into Granger’s mind during one of the assigned detentions she had gotten for attacking Draco, before the Christmas break, so he knew who to look for.

He knew Jackson would be in Hogsmeade this weekend, because Potter had let it slip when the Headmaster tried to convince him to stay at school where he would be safe from Black. Potter had refused by reminding the Headmaster that he had a valid permission slip signed by his Aunt that said he could go to Hogsmeade and he wanted to meet his cousin.

Snape had learned one other interesting thing at that meeting and that was Dumbledore definitely did
not want Potter meeting his cousin. He had figured this out when Lupin, who had also been there, along with McGonagall, had offered to act as escort, to insure the Potter got to and from Hogsmeade safely, only to have Dumbledore turn down the offer, saying that Potter had to stay at Hogwarts where he would be safe.

Then Potter had arrogantly claimed that the Headmaster just wanted to control who had contact with him but he would not be able to do it forever. Potter had had the gall to remind the Headmaster that once the school year was over he would not be able to do anything to stop him from meeting Jackson.

The Headmaster had then assigned him a detention to be served that Hogsmeade weekend, claiming Potter was being disrespectful to him. Dumbledore had intended for Potter's detention to be served with Snape, but the Potions Master had gotten out of it by pointing out that he had to pick up some potions supplies he had ordered that were supposed to be delivered to the Potions shop in Hogsmeade on Saturday, so it had been assigned to Lupin instead.

The fact, that the Headmaster refused to allow the Defence teacher to voluntarily act as both escort and protection detail to a student so they could meet with a relative in Hogsmeade, had been a surprise to both men. Snape just hoped that Lupin would not disobey Dumbledore’s instructions and bring the boy to Hogsmeade anyway during his detention. The last thing he needed was Potter seeing him meeting with his cousin, given that he was going to try and get help from Jackson to try and get Potter to allow him access to the basilisk carcass.

Snape wandered through the ground floor of The Bell, Book, and Candle shop and found no one resembling the man he had seen in Granger's mind. Heading up to second floor, Snape hoped he would have better luck here, since this was where the rarer books were kept. The Bell, Book, and Candle was considered the first place to look for some of the hard to find books, even among the teachers at Hogwarts, because unlike Flourish and Blotts they took books to sell on consignment, if a family no longer wanted them. Snape knew this because he had found a few rare potion journals up on the second floor.

Knowing Potter's cousin, Jackson, was a Rune Master, Snape decided to start looking for the man in the Ancient Runes section. He got lucky on the third aisle when he looked down it and found the man he was looking for. The blonde haired man was not dressed in desert robes this time. He was wearing what Snape recognized as muggle clothing and current muggle clothing at that, not the twenty or thirty years out of date clothing that British wizards and witches usually wore. Obviously Jackson wanted to make sure he stood out so his cousin would be able find him easily.

Daniel looked up in surprise from the manuscript that appeared to be written almost entirely in Alterrann, when he heard Snape's voice call his name, "Mr. Jackson?"

As Harry silently wondered Do you think Dumbledore sent him? Daniel answered the man's questioning of his identity with, "Yes, Mr..."

"Snape... Severus Snape."

"And why were you looking for me, Mr. Snape?" Daniel asked in a neutral tone of voice. "And more importantly how did you know what I looked like?"

"I did not know what you looked like." Snape lied blandly. "But from a meeting the Headmaster had with your cousin, Harry Potter, that I was present at a few days ago, I learned that you would be in Hogsmeade today. Also given you are the only one here in muggle clothing, and according to Mr. Potter you told him you would be easy to find, I figured you had to be Mr. Daniel Jackson."
When Snape did not continue, Daniel repeated his first question. "And why were you looking for me, Mr. Snape?"

"Professional reasons," Snape admitted.

"Professional reasons?" Daniel echoed back. "Professional as a professor of Hogwarts or as a Potion Master?"

"A bit of both." Snape was not surprised that the man knew he was a Potions Master. It was an easy enough fact to find out if you wanted to.

Daniel was silent for a moment as he watched Snape pick up a book on Norse Runes and examine it. "Did your Headmaster ask you to meet with me today? Perhaps keep me busy so I could not meet with Harry or to try to convince me to stay out of Harry's life."

"No," Snape answered as he closed the book he was holding and put it back on the shelf. "The Headmaster does not know that I am meeting with you."

"So why are you here?" Daniel asked. "And please do not just say professional reasons."

Snape looked directly at Daniel. "Potter has access to some very rare potion ingredients that I would like access to."

"You mean the Basilisk?" Daniel inquired. "I thought that had been sorted out when I helped him come up with a deal for you that would allow you access while making things easier for him an his fellow students, with regards to your classes. He told me he was going to meet with you before Christmas. Are you telling me that meeting did not happen?"

"He did come to see me, but I did not believe at the time that Potter had the access he claimed to have to such a creature." Snape admitted, somewhat surprised that Potter had evidently not told his cousin about how he had reacted to Potter's coming to speak with him during the Christmas break.

"So you automatically assumed he was lying," Daniel concluded. "And never let him make the offer we had come up with that would have benefited both you and the students you teach." There was a pause, "but once you saw the samples, I suggested he share with you to prove his claim, you realized that he did indeed have access to a Basilisk and a fairly old one."

"While you have yet to meet your cousin, you need to understand that every time I see him, I see his father." Snape countered as he accepted the criticism. Truthfully the man's current criticism was a lot milder than he thought it would be given that he was willing to bet that Potter had had told his cousin all about how Snape treated him. "His father was one of those who I trusted about as far as I would trust a hungry dragon not to eat me."

"And did you regard his mother the same way?" Daniel wanted to know.

Before Snape could answer him they both heard several books hit the floor with a loud thud followed by the sound of someone cursing.

Looking at the other man and seeing him go slightly pale, Daniel suggested, "We might want to take this conversation somewhere a little more private, given I am fairly certain quite a few personal topics are going to come up."

Snape nodded in agreement. "I would suggest the Hogs Head Inn which is near the edge of town away from the school. The owner will give us a private room with no questions asked... for a price."
Daniel nodded in agreement. "I will meet you there in about twenty minutes. I have a few books that I need to get."

Snape nodded and left without a backward glance to make arrangements with Aberforth for a private meeting room.

So he came to see you to try and get you to make me give him access to the basilisk. Harry commented as they headed toward the sales counter.

It seems likely. Daniel agreed. I had thought back in December he would be willing to work with you because of those rare ingredients, but the fact that he was unwilling to even let you make the offer shows a deep and abiding hatred of you or possibly your family as a whole.

So how are we going to handle this? Harry wanted to know.

Deliver a few home truths about him to him and see how he handles them. Daniel told him. If he can handle them without going postal as we Americans say, then we will see if we can learn why he hates you so much before we tell him about the deal we had worked up for him.

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Snape met Daniel as he walked into the Hogs Head Inn and escorted him to a room on the far side of the bar area.

The room Snape led him into had two comfortable chairs on either side of a low round table.

There was also a slightly overweight older man standing just inside the doorway who asked, "Can I get you gentlemen anything before I leave you to your business?"

When both men shook their heads Abe left, closing the door behind him and making sure to put up the privacy wards Snape had requested and paid for.

After several minutes of awkward silence, Snape spoke first. "I was surprised to learn that Lily's family had magical relatives. I mean from what I remember, she thought she was the first one in her family."

"Technically," Daniel told him, "she was. She was the first in her part of the family in over four hundred years. According to the family tree I have, she is descended from what you British Magicals call a Squib line. It happened around the time my branch of the family decided to go to America. However based on the family tree again, over time, the magic in her part of the family line began to grow stronger with each generation, until Lily was able to access and use it."

"I am surprised that her sister, Petunia, did not develop the gift of magic as well." Snape commented. "It is probably a good thing she did not, considering how much she hates anything that does not fit her definition of normal, which includes her nephew." Daniel changed the subject. "We did not come here to discuss Lily's past. We came here to discuss your attitude toward my cousin that led you to being an unreasonable jerk as we Americans would say, when all he wanted to do was negotiate a deal that would make it easier for the students who are not in Slytherin to actually learn potions, by getting you to actually teach, instead of acting like a bully. And you also would have gained something from the deal, in the form of parts from a 1,000 year old basilisk, to try and make really rare potions with."

"I do teach Potions!" Snape shot back through clenched teeth. "I am the youngest Potions Master in Britain. I can brew any potion you can name."
"Yes, I am sure you can brew potions with great ease," Daniel agreed, "but you can not teach others how to do so."

Daniel held up a hand silencing Snape before he had a chance to reply. "For you making Potions is instinctive and that makes you a prodigy. You know instantly when a potion is going right or wrong. I am a teacher of languages and runes among other things. I have the same instinctive skills. I too try to pass on my knowledge to others. However teaching is not always as easy as most people seem to think, which I am sure you have realised. I have had students who get what I am trying to teach them right off the bat. Others need some extra help to understand the material and then there are those who even if you beat it into their heads they will never understand it, because they do not want to know it."

"Yes," Snape growled in agreement

"The problem is the way you teach," Daniel went on, "at least from what Harry’s letters to me have told me about your classes. You teach as if every class is made up of the exceptional students who need no help in understanding what you are trying to teach them. This leads to you getting frustrated because in just about every class because the majority of the students are those who need extra help to get it done correctly. However instead of helping them, you criticize them for their lack of knowledge. This discourages them to the point where all they want is out of your class and away from you."

"I am a good teacher." Snape growled.

"No you are not." Daniel disagreed. "My cousin told me all about the first class he had with you. He also told me that prior to that first class he had been looking forward very eagerly to taking Potions. You destroyed that dream in your first class with him."

Snape shook his head in disagreement then countered Jackson's claim with, "If Potter had wanted to take potions, that badly, then why was he not better prepared for the first class. He was clearly unprepared and it showed."

Daniel smiled, "Why not tell me about that first class from your perspective? I already know it from Harry's side, so how about you give me yours."

Snape glared at him for several moments before complying with his request.

Once he was done, Daniel nodded, "And that further proves my point, you do not have the patience required to teach."

"I am a good teacher." Snape growled again.

"Oh really." Daniel drawled. "Ok then answer this for me, of the students that were in my cousin's first class with you how many had prior potions lessons with a tutor before coming to Hogwarts? Five? Ten?"

"About that many." Snape agreed. "Most purebloods receive training at home in how to make safe potions from their families or a tutor."

"Which means that the rest of the class was made up of students, who would have had no advance training in potions." Daniel went on. "My cousin was muggle raised so he also had no advanced knowledge regarding magical potions. And yet from what I have been able to find out, you asked him questions about a potion that is not taught at Hogwarts until at least a student's fourth or fifth year at Hogwarts, so why would you expect him to know about it?"
Snape did not bother to answer that question. Saying he wanted to humiliate the son of his most hated rival was not something he wanted to admit given he needed Jackson’s help. Besides he had a feeling the man seated across from him already knew why.

"Also, why would you ask a **new** student who was raised in the non-magical community where to find a bezoar?" Daniel continued. "The only ones in the non-magical community that might and I do stress **might** have known what it was and where to find it would be historians or archivists who had a reason to look it up, or someone who raises goats. Harry does not fit into any of those categories and neither do a majority of those who live in the non-magical community."

"Lily did." Snape growled. "She was a brilliant witch. A pity her son is not."

"Yes, she was, but I am willing to wager that you helped her gain the information she needed to do well in the magical community, since she was not raised there. The other thing I am sure helped her was the fact that she was **encouraged** by her parents to do her best. I am fairly certain that when she was in Diagon Alley, she was allowed to purchase other books to give her a head start." Daniel told him. "And I would not go wagering any money on Harry’s intelligence if I were you, after all it takes a great deal of intelligence and cunning to survive in the prison known as his relative’s home as long as he did. You know the one Albus Dumbledore placed him in… supposedly to **protect** him. Prior to contacting Harry, I checked into his life and discovered some interesting facts about his time in primary school, among other things. In his first year, Harry was near the top of his class, but that changed after his first report card was sent home. It is my belief that Vernon and Petunia were not happy that Harry did better than their son whom they consider so brilliant and they made their displeasure known to insure Harry did not do that again. According to the school records, after that first report card went out, Harry’s grades went from excellent to barely passing and they were **always** lower than Dudley’s who was making just barely acceptable scores."

Snape snorted. "Just because he did well in the beginning of his first year in primary school does not prove anything. Many children start off well and then slowly fail as they get into harder material. Besides if Potter was so intelligent he would have thrown aside his disguise as an idiot by now, given that I doubt that Petunia or her husband would care about how good he does at Hogwarts."

Jackson nodded his head slightly. "One might think so. Also, I may have forgotten to mention that Harry scored extremely high on National Curriculum test that were given to the students in their final year of Primary school and those results were not given to the parents. I think Harry did well on the tests to help himself out in the future, knowing that Petunia and Vernon would **never** see those scores. As for his time at Hogwarts, given the way Harry was raised by the Dursleys, the habits he learned to himself safe from them would be hard to break, without a good reason. From his descriptions of his classes though, neither you, **Potions Master Snape**, the majority of his other teachers, or classmates have given him a reason to want to do better in his classes or to change what he has learned to do just to survive."

Daniel went on without giving Snape a chance to agree or disagree with his assessment. "And I will not even go into the last question you asked my cousin about the difference between Monkshood and Wolfsbane. Instead I will get on to what I was told about the rest of the class and the potential for disaster you have been and still are creating, by not insuring that the students learn the proper skills for making potions. In your first few classes, you should have taught your students the basics of the potion making. By that I mean how to properly prepare their ingredients, basic safety procedures, etc. Instead, you simply told them that the directions were on the board, and they had one hour."

Daniel leaned forward his expression serious. "That is **not** teaching. That is a recipe for a potential disaster. **You** have admitted that most of your first years have no knowledge of potions or how to
make them. With students who have never dealt with chemical reactions a great deal of patience and care is required to pass on the knowledge and skills you want them to have. That means you have to start from the beginning and take the time to explain the procedures and show them how to safely do things. Doing that avoids accidents like that cauldron melting that you chose to blame my cousin for not preventing, because he did not have eyes in the back of his head. By taking the time to actually teach them the steps needed, you insure that you have students who want to learn what you have to teach, instead of students who reach the point where all they want is out of your class and away from you. Another thing you might want to do, is the books you suggested to Lily you might want to recommend to your first years as reference materials and maybe include them in the book lists."

"I have made the suggestion of adding those books a number of times," Snape commented dryly, "but my suggestions have been ignored by the Headmaster every year. It seems he is under the impression that the muggleborn students and half-bloods should know how to prepare ingredients and put them together safely because they all help their families prepare meals."

Snape then went on the offensive tired of the man telling him he did not know how to teach. "Tell me Rune Master Jackson do you expect your students to be prepared for your class before they arrive?"

"Of course," Daniel replied, "but if it is their first class with me, I take the time explaining the course objectives and what I expect them to be able to do by the end of the semester or school year, depending on the class they are taking with me. I also make sure to give them a list of any out of print books that I think will help them that they can find in the library. You might want to try giving your students a list of the books that will help them do well in Potions in your first class with them."

"And do you have office hours for those students who have questions about what you taught in class?"

"Yes," Daniel replied, but said nothing further.

"So do I," Snape stated, "but none of the students except the Slytherins and a few of the Ravenclaws take advantage of them."

"And you have just proven my point," Daniel told him. "The majority of the students want to have as little contact with you as possible because of how they are treated in your classes."

Snape was silent

After several minutes with no response, Daniel asked, "Now are you willing to actually modify your teaching methods so that you actually take the time to teach potions, instead of just saying the instructions are on the board and then stalking around the Potions lab like a vampire looking for prey? Also are you willing to treat all your students fairly when they are in class with you, including marking the assignments and potions fairly? And last but not least are you willing to do whatever is necessary to protect the potions your students are making to prevent tampering by anyone?"

"I can not." Snape told him reluctantly.

"Why?" Daniel wanted to know

Snape was silent for several minutes before again reluctantly admitting, "I am bound by a magical oath to the headmaster to act in a very specific manner toward Mr. Potter, for at least the next four years and that means all other students have to be treated the same way."

"So Headmaster Albus Dumbledore ordered you to treat my cousin like Dragon dung?" Daniel’s
voice was flat as he asked the question. Only Harry could tell he was angry at the headmaster and the fact that he was interfering with the students ability to learn a very complex subject, because he had to treat all classes like they are idiots.

"Yes," but Snape did not give him any details as to why he was ordered to do so.

"Then, I can not in good conscience ask my cousin to speak with you," Daniel told him. "Partly because it will have to wait until you can apologize to him and actually mean it. And the other reason is the deal Harry was going to offer you would require you to sign a magically binding contract and you can not do so."

Before Snape could work up a response, Jackson had gotten to his feet and walked out the door.

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As Dumbledore stalked back up to Hogwarts from the apparition point, the grim expression on his face warned everyone coming back from Hogsmeade to stay far away from him.

Dumbledore was furious at the unravelling of his plans and he knew exactly who was to blame…  
**Daniel Jackson.**

The only thing he could not figure out was how this American wizard had managed to disrupt years of planning so thoroughly in less than a year. This person claimed to be a previously unknown relative of Potter’s and he had not only managed to get the boy to distrust him to the point where he was openly refusing to obey him, but he also managed to gain custody of Potter. And if the rumours he was hearing were accurate from his contacts, this Jackson had also somehow managed to get the members of the ICW who trusted him to start questioning his integrity as well as how Magical Britain was handling the situation with Black.

What annoyed Dumbledore the most was the fact that he was now going to have to waste his very **valuable** time trying to fix all the problems that Jackson had managed to create for him and that was going to require information he was having trouble finding.

He needed to find out just who Jackson **really** was and who the man worked for in the American magical community. He had checked the few sources he had in the American magical government and none of them had ever heard of a wizard named Daniel Jackson as either the Rune Master or a negotiator as he had claimed to be in the letters he had sent to Potter. And when he had asked them to check and see if they could get any records on the non-magical masteries, Jackson had listed in the first letter he had sent to Harry, they had flatly refused. That meant he either had to be very high up in one of their security groups and operated on both sides: magical and non-magical. Or else the man was lying to gain control of the weapon he needed to destroy Voldemort once and for all. He needed to know who and what the man was if he was to have any hope of stopping Jackson, before he destroyed everything Dumbledore had worked so hard to achieve. And Dumbledore had to admit the man was very close to doing that.

His biggest problem right now was getting Potter to trust him again, so that he could regain the control he needed over the boy.

The Dursleys and their hatred of magic had been his primary means of controlling the boy and insuring he did what Dumbledore needed him to do, because Potter saw him as his saviour. However now that the Dursleys were gone from their home, he would not be able to force Potter to return to their care, if he were able to get the boy's custody away from Jackson. He knew that no one knew in their old neighbourhood knew of their whereabouts because he had just wasted the better part of his morning trying to locate them, after learning that Arabella Figg had been in a muggle hospital for the
past month or so after taking a bad fall.

The other major problem for Dumbledore was even if he managed to locate the Dursleys how would he be able to undo the change of custody so he could return the boy to their care. The citizens of Magical Britain much preferred that a magical child be in the custody of a magical relative if one was available. He had been fortunate that Black had been sent to Azkaban because even if he had not been Potter's godfather, he was Potter's closest living magical relative on the Potter side of the family tree. The only thing that Dumbledore could have used to prevent Black from gaining custody back then was the protection his mother's sacrifice had left on the boy that required he stay with blood kin to keep it active. Dumbledore knew he would not be able to use that excuse to prevent Jackson from keeping custody given he was also magical especially if he really was related to the boy's mother.

And an even bigger problem would be trying to re-establish the wards that helped him keep track of the boy when he was away from Hogwarts. He knew that if the Dursleys had voluntarily surrendered their custody of Harry then he would not be able to re-establish the blood wards because to magic it would be as if they had disowned him and he would not be able to restore the family blood bond.

He made a mental note to check with the Magical Bureau of Records and see if a change of custody had been recorded there with regard to Harry Potter and if there had indeed been a change, find out who was now listed as his magical guardian. He also needed to see if he was still Potter's magical guardian as far as Gringotts was concerned because sometimes changes to Ministry records did not reach them right away.

As he entered his office, Dumbledore continued making and discarding plans on how to deal with the current situation. He had almost immediately discarded the idea of having Jackson arrested, given that he did not know who the man really worked for. The last thing he needed was the American Ministry poking their noses into his business.

A few moments after settling into his chair, his scheming was interrupted by the arrival of a barn owl with a scroll tied to its leg.

Dumbledore glared at the owl for daring to interrupt his planning. What he was doing was important and he did not need any distractions.

The owl returned his glare before extending its leg. With a put upon sigh Dumbledore removed the scroll from the owl's leg. Once free of it's duty the owl immediately left, knowing that letters from this particular Ministry employee were not always well received.

Dumbledore debated placing the scroll in his inbox, knowing full well that it would buried by other mail shortly afterwards and continue working on how he was going to regain control of Potter, however his eyes kept returning to the scroll. Finally he growled and ripped it open to find it was from the Head of the DMLE, Amelia Bones.

Chief Warlock Dumbledore,

Some interesting information has reached my ears and I am hoping that you if not other members of the Wizengamot will have some information that can help clear this matter up.

The matter at hand concerns the lack of records regarding the trial of one Sirius Black, heir to the Black family. I had the Records office searched for the transcript of Black’s trial and no records could be found. I, then, had former Minister Bagnold’s appointment books checked on the off chance that there was an indication of her taking part in a secret trial. It was interesting to learn that at no time was former Minister Bagnold out of the public eye long enough for a trial like Black's that
should have taken some time to be held. And given that Black was the right hand of the Dark Lord, you would have expected the Minister to be deeply involved, even if only a few people knew about it.

In addition there is a question concerning the Kiss on Sight order that Minister Fudge has authorized with regards Black. Given there are no records of Black’s trial, ICW law requires that the majority of the court must agree the Order is necessary when using a Class I Dark creature for the execution of a prisoner or fugitive and that all members of the court be willing to accept the same fate if it turns out the person killed was in fact innocent. I find it interesting that you as Chief Warlock have not called upon the Wizengamot to meet to either rescind or approve Minister Fudge’s edict regarding the Kiss on Sight order for Black, given these facts. There is also the fact Black needs to be questioned before that happens if only to find out how he managed to escape from Azkaban. It is very important that we discover the means of his escape so that other prisoners do not follow him.

If these questions are not answered to my satisfaction by anyone who worked for or is currently working for the Ministry in any capacity, by the 1st of April then I will be calling for a hearing under my authority as the Head of the Department of Magical Law Enforcement and as the Regent for the Seat for the House of Bones within in the Wizengamot. You may be wondering why I am taking this unusual step, given everyone knows that Black is guilty but my reasons for doing so are just.

I am also sending a copy of this letter to all members of the Wizengamot, so that if they do by any chance have copies of the records from Black’s trial they can arrange to have them sent to me by April 1st. Or so they can bring them to the Hearing, if one needs to be called, so they can be examined. The person supplying the records will also be required to swear a magically binding oath that the records are indeed from Black’s trial 12 years ago.

I will send you notice for the date and time for the Wizengamot session, if it needs to be set up.

Sincerely,

Amelia Bones

Dumbledore tore the scroll into tiny pieces in his fury and it was good thing that he had had the forethought to place a silencing charm on his office or the students passing near the gargoyle guarding his office would have been terrified at hearing a loud, growling voice echoing down the stairwell, "Jackson, I will stop your interference if it is the last thing I do!"

Chapter End Notes

If you have trouble figuring out why the title is the way it is, check out the following links and you will understand. I personally think that Murphy, who I believe looks like a cross between Dobby the House Elf and Gollum from LOTR, has taken Daniel in as his unwitting minion given all the chaos he seems to cause, just by his very presence.


Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!