Double Back

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Summary

Thrown back in time from 2019 to 1991, a grown and disgruntled Harry Potter finally has the chance to change his life for the better, fixing things before everything went wrong and becoming the father figure for his younger self that he never had.

Changing time is difficult though, and the more changes he makes, the less predictable the world turns out to be. Though now maybe he actually has a chance at happiness, both for him and his younger self, and just maybe a chance at romance as well.
Chapter 1

TITLE: Double Back

DISCLAIMER: All things Harry Potter belong J K Rowling... basically, if you recognise it, it isn’t mine... Please don't sic the Aurors on me, I'm just here for the fun.

AN: I'm basically tossing away the epilogue here, it always felt forced and unrealistic to the world created in the last seven books, to have everything just automatically fall into a nice perfect little world for everyone after everything they'd been through... so yes, this is an EWE / AU style fic, most pairings will be completely ignored and outright destroyed throughout.

I've been tempted to write a "Don't fear the Reaper" style do-over fic for a while now, but always got caught up in the muddle of how an older Harry would interact with his friends at their younger ages, leaving him more a loner than he originally was... so after bouncing around a few ideas with friends, I decided to give the idea of an older Harry thrown back in time, but not into his younger body, a go and see where it leads...

The power to be strong, and the wisdom to be wise
All these things will come to you in time.
On this journey that you're making, there'll be answers that you'll seek
And it's you who'll climb the mountain, It's you who'll reach the peak.
- "Son of Man" by Phil Collins

Sunday 26th May, 2019
Nott Manor
Wiltshire
England

With a throaty groan and a wince, Harry woke up from uncomfortable slumber and immediately reached for his wand as his eyes jumped open and took in his surroundings.

He'd never been a morning person, not in his childhood at The Dursley's when he'd been forced to wake up every morning to make breakfast for the three of them, not through Hogwarts, and not afterwards through his time in the Auror Corps or the rest of his life.

He just wasn't cut out for mornings, but waking up wet and aching on an asphalt floor was certainly not making it any better, especially considering he had absolutely no idea whatsoever where he
was, or how he'd even got here.

It was a muggle street, that much was obvious from the pale golden street lamps that were lighting up the street, and it was raining, rather heavily as well, leaving him pretty much drenched to the bone.

Given how his thick jeans squelched as he stood up, he felt comfortable in assuming he'd been unconscious in the rain for quite a while now, and from the way his boots felt heavy with water, he'd be willing to bet it had been at least a few hours.

He was wet, cold, uncomfortable and utterly confused with what was going on. He had his wand in hand though, which clearly meant that however he'd got here, it wasn't done by anyone with malicious intent. If he'd been unconscious as long as he was assuming, then anyone could have killed him, obliviated him, put him under the imperius, or done whatever they'd wanted to him, but they hadn't.

A quick check of his jeans pockets found his wallet and keys, the invisibility cloak in his coat inside pocket and Auror tools and shrunken broom in his other inside pocket. The resurrection stone was still on it's silver clasp around his neck like a normal necklace, and he could mentally feel the connection to the cloak and Elder Wand in his hand. So whoever had knocked him out, hadn't wanted the Deathly Hallows either.

Which left him somewhat bemused, only adding to his confusion. He was unharmed, with all his possessions, but had been unconscious for however long and been removed from... His brain stuttered as he tried to focus on the last thing he actually remembered.

Automatically he stepped forwards, falling into his normal habit of pacing while thinking as he ruffled his messy hair, feeling the rain drip away from it as he ran his fingers over his head.

What did he remember? He'd been working, he definitely remembered going into The Ministry this morning and then... he was heading out on an assignment with his usual strike team of hit wizards, they'd had some information about... something...

"Damnit," He muttered to himself, spinning around in frustration and pacing back the way he'd came.

His team, that was right, they'd been performing a raid on one of the old manors, but where? And where were the rest of his team? Were they all unconscious like he'd been, or had something even worse happened to them? That seemed somewhat unlikely, he was generally accepted as being the 'lightning rod' of the Auror department, as he had been his entire life. If something bad was going to happen, then it was certain that it was going to happen to him rather than anyone else.

Pacing around he frowned as he racked his brain and tried to remember exactly what had happened and how on earth he'd ended up on the street somewhere without any of his team with him, he was still grumbling to himself when he felt a crunch under foot and the street was lit up for a brief second with a golden flash that caused him to flinch backwards slightly.

Gingerly he lifted up his foot, staring down with a raised eyebrow at the mess of golden metal, glass, and now wet and clumpy sand that was very quickly being washed away by the heavy rainfall around him.

"Oh this isn't good." He muttered to himself, recognising the somewhat crushed and malformed metal underfoot as a time turner.
"Time Turner!" He shouted aloud, putting his foot down again and making sure not to stand on the already crushed time turner. That was it, they'd been raiding Nott Manor and... it was fuzzy, but he definitely remembered leading his team through Nott Manor and finding... who... Nott definitely, both the Malfoy's, senior and junior were there, and a few others that were just fuzzy jumbles in his mind.

There'd been spellfire, the six of his team plus him against the remnant's of the Death Eaters in the Nott Manor, and he'd seen a time turner on the table along with some rune stones and enough arithmancy books that Hermione would have drooled at the sight.

Then... everything went fuzzy. Everyone had been shooting off spells, he'd ducked behind the table for cover as he blasted off spells over it, attempting to nail down Nott or either of the Malfoy's while the rest of his team found their own cover, and then... nothing.

He couldn't remember a damn thing after the battle had started.

Reaching down he gingerly picked up the crushed time turner, wincing as he could only imagine how Hermione would be yelling at him for destroying something like this, even if it had been by accident.

The Sands of Time that had been in the hourglass had been completely washed away now, the glass that made up the central column in the time turner was little more than shards that he could barely see on the ground.

Why would Nott or the Malfoy's have a time turner? That didn't make sense to him at all. They were heavily restricted by the Department of Mysteries, and even if the Malfoy's had managed to bribe their way into getting their hands on one, something he was certain was relatively easy for the Malfoy's, what on earth would they actually use one for?

Putting the broken time turner in his pocket for now he looked around the street one last time. He had far too many questions and nowhere near enough answers. He still had absolutely no idea where he was or what had happened to him, or who'd dumped him here in the middle of nowhere.

It wasn't an apparition accident, as he hadn't been splinched. None of his team were using portkeys, so that was out, and as far as he could see, there wasn't a house, let alone a fireplace anywhere near the country road he was on, which a floo accident out as well.

Lots and lots of questions, and no answers to be found.

Focusing on his soggy clothes for now he shook his head in bemusement at the situation, wiping the rain off of his face before he focused on heading home to change before twisting on the spot and disapparating away with an almost silent pop.

* Potter Manor  
  * Honley  
  * West Yorkshire  
  * England  

Appearing in his living room at Potter Manor, Harry had half shrugged off his dragon-skin trench-coat when he looked around and froze mid step, his coat hanging off of his arms around the elbows as he looked around suspiciously at the room he'd apparated into.

It was... off. Something was definitely off.
The room was thick with dust, like nobody had lived here for years now, and the furniture had been moved around from where he knew he had everything laid out. His usual coffee table by the brown leather couch was missing, and the leather couch was actually in the wrong place entirely, instead of being by the window where he normally had it, it was in front of the fireplace where...

He trailed off as that thought filtered into his brain and froze him to the spot.

The couch was exactly where it had been the first time he'd set foot in Potter Manor nearly two decades ago. In fact, everything was. The Manor was dusty and unkempt, having been abandoned for over a decade since his grandparents had died, and he'd been the first person to actually step foot in the place after finding out about it from the documents in his family vault.

"Oh no no no," He muttered to himself as he shrugged his trench-coat back on and looked around the living room to be certain, completely ignoring the way the rain was dripping off of his coat and mixing with the dust on the thick carpet underfoot.

It was, everything in the manor was exactly as it had been the first time he'd arrived here.

Darting out of the living room he ran to the kitchen, taking a look only confirmed his fears. It was exactly as he remembered it being, none of the changes he'd made over the last twenty years or so were there, leaving it looking abandoned and unloved, a far cry from the warm and comfortable room where he spent most of his time.

"Time turner," Harry whispered to himself with a grimace, leaning against the kitchen door frame as he fished out the mangled time turner from his pocket and stared down at it in horror.

It was obvious now that he'd been thrown back to... somewhere? Somewhen? When felt better to use for some strange reason. Somewhen before he'd come to the manor for the first time, but when?

Time turners couldn't do that. Not decades worth of travel, no way in hell. They were all limited, The Department of Mysteries made sure of it. Just like nobody using a time turner could actually affect the time they were in, it was one of the laws of magic.

But he was here, which made absolutely no sense. He knew his grandparents, Fleamont and Euphemia had died shortly after his parents had been married, he knew that for certain because he'd found photos of his parents wedding in his grandfather's study upstairs. Photos that he'd kept and moved to the living room when he'd moved into the manor itself.

Which meant he was here somewhere after his grandparents had died and before he'd found out about the place, and judging from the amount of dust around, it was quite a few years after.

So logically it was somewhere between seventy nine and ninety nine, probably on the later side judging by the dust buildup and the overgrown trees and shrubs he could see out of the kitchen window.

"Damnit," He muttered to himself, looking down at the wet footprints he'd left through the manor. He could clean those up easily though and disguise them with dust to hide his presence here, but that left another conundrum, how the hell was he supposed to get back to his own time?

Pocketing the mangled time turner for now, he frowned as he tried to get his barrings and figure out exactly what he had to do. He could use the manor as a secluded base for now, that was easy enough. The manor itself was unplottable and hidden behind even more charms than Grimmauld Place was. The fact everyone believed it had been destroyed in the first war just added to it's
security, as nobody actually knew about it or believed it was still around, making it the perfect place for him to hide out until he figured this situation out.

First things first he had to figure out when he actually was. Finding out the date was at the top spot on his list, then he could figure out how he was going to repair the time turner in his pocket, if it was even possible. He wasn't stupid, far from it, but he knew he was nowhere hear Hermione levels of smart when it came to things like this, and fixing a time turner's enchantments was definitely outside of his skill set.

"Date first, then figure out exactly how much of a mess you've got yourself into this time." He muttered to himself before twisting around and apparating away.

**Diagon Alley**  
**London**

Diagon Alley was, to no great surprise, exactly as he remembered it being. Not in his recent memories though, the shops that had sprung up after Voldemort's rise weren't there, neither was the Weasley twins joke shop.

No, Diagon Alley as it was reminded him of a more innocent time. The witches and wizards bustling through it were happily talking amongst themselves, he got a few looks but nothing like he was used to receiving, and nobody approached him or whispered around him like they always did when he ventured into the alley.

"OK, definitely somewhere before ninety seven." He muttered to himself, looking down the alley towards the shop that was to become Weasleys' Wizard Wheezes, but was currently looking like some sort of cafe business.

Looking around the alley in amusement he trudged his way down, smiling fondly at the memories the shops brought back to him of more innocent times when he'd first started out at Hogwarts.

"Look, it's the new Nimbus!"

Harry's eyes immediately swung around at the voice, catching sight of the children gathered outside Quality Quidditch Supplies and staring through the windows, their hands and faces pressed up against the glass and practically drooling over the broom on display inside.

Chuckling to himself he made his way over, curiosity on his mind as he wondered what they were all staring at. He didn't need to get that close though, as he was a few steps behind the children in front of the window when he recognised and cherry brown broomstick on display.

How could he not? He knew the curves of that broomstick like he knew his own hand. The gold bracers and kickstand were just as he remembered it, and his eyes traced over the familiar brand logo that was etched in gold at the top of the handle.

"The Nimbus Two Thousand." He breathed out reverently, not hearing how the children in front of him were rattling off what they'd heard about the broom's top speed or cornering abilities.

That gave him a rather narrow window to when he actually was, as he knew the Nimbus Two Thousand had been released in ninety one, and then had been succeeded by the Two Thousand and One in May of ninety two.

The fact there were children around staring at the broom told him they weren't in school, which put it in the summer holidays sometime.
So it was the summer holidays of nineteen ninety one.

Swallowing the curses on his lips he turned away from the broom and stalked away from the shop, ruffling his hair in frustration as he tried to figure out what to do now.

Nineteen Ninety One, or more specifically, the summer of Ninety One, the year he actually found out about magic and started Hogwarts for the first time. The year Voldemort possessed Quirrell and attempted to steal the Philosophers Stone from Dumbledore, and the year he faced Voldemort for the first time and defeated him.

"Bugger," He whispered to himself as he paced around the alley, walking blindly as he tried to get his thoughts in order.

That would be why nobody was looking at him or whispering, as far as everyone was concerned, Harry Potter, The-Boy-Who-Lived, was only eleven and hidden away by Dumbledore somewhere.

He knew the truth of course, but nobody else did. As far as everyone else was concerned, he was just a random wizard in Diagon Alley, nobody special, and certainly nobody to pay attention to.

Shaking his head at the thought for now he turned around and started heading towards the Leaky Cauldron. They'd have a copy of the Daily Prophet there, they always had a stack delivered every morning that rested on the bar for anyone to take.

Focusing on that thought he ignored the rest of the wizards and witches in the alley, finding out the exact date was the only thing in his mind right now, so he could hopefully get out of the alley and start focusing on figuring out how to get back to his own time.

It didn't take him long to make his way up and flick his wand over the alley way bricks, revealing the passage through to the rear entrance of the Leaky Cauldron, the dingy pub was exactly how he remembered it being and it was actually a comfort to step through into the familiar atmosphere of the pub.

He'd been drinking at The Leaky more than a few times over the years. A few years after the war it had been taken over by Hannah Abbot, who had married Neville a few years later, making it a comfortable place for them all to gather regularly and chat amongst themselves.

It was also one of the places the Auror squads visited regularly after hours, drinking and chatting, comparing stories and laughing between their groups about things that had happened during their shifts.

"Get you anything?" The barman asked, eyeing Harry as he approached the bar.

"Double fire whiskey," Harry nodded, automatically reaching into his pocket and pulling out a few sickles.

The barman nodded, moving away to fulfil the order and leaving Harry to grab one of the copies of the Daily Prophet from the bar.

"Twentieth of July?" Harry muttered to himself, eyeing the date with trepidation.

"You alright?" The barman asked as he came back, putting the tumbler of fire-whiskey on the bar and scooping up the sickles.

Harry snorted at that, shaking his head. "Few casts away from alright," He admitted as he grabbed the tumbler, knocking back the double shot of fire-whiskey with practised ease. "Mind if I keep
"Go ahead," The barman shrugged. "Another?"

"Keep them coming," Harry nodded, sitting down grumpily on the stool at the bar.

The end of July, only a week and a few days before his birthday. A week and a few days before his eleventh birthday. Was there even a phrase or curse that summed up this situation? Besides being completely and utterly fucked?

He was back in Ninety One, his younger self was currently at Privet Drive, probably locked in the cupboard under the stairs for something Dudley did or said, or just because Vernon felt like it, and he was here by some sort of magical accident with a broken time turner and absolutely no clue how to get back to his own time.

"Thanks," He muttered, accepting the second double shot of fire-whiskey from the bartender and knocking it back before dumping out a few more sickles onto the bar.

"Rough day?" The bartender asked, putting the bottle of fire-whiskey on the bar in front of Harry.

"You've got no idea," Harry admitted with a grimace, staring at the bottle of fire-whiskey and considering the temptation.

"Figured," The bartender nodded. "Auror right? Don't see many others with a dragon-skin coat around." He explained when he saw Harry's questioning look. "Not seen you in 'ere before, new to the squad?"

"Yeah," Harry grumbled automatically, thinking fast about what he could actually say and what he couldn't. He definitely didn't want to draw any attention to himself, and getting drunk and The Leakey, despite how tempting the thought was given the situation, would definitely draw the wrong sort of attention.

"Thanks," Harry nodded, holding up his hand and shaking his head in a negative towards the bottle.

"Suit yourself," The bartender shrugged, retrieving the bottle and replacing it on the back of the bar.

Standing up from the stool Harry quickly folded up the copy of the Daily Prophet and gripped it tightly before twisting and apparating away with a crack, not having hear the questioning "James?"

That rang through the bar as he vanished in a swirl of magic.

"Hmm?" The bartender asked, looking down towards the door of the pub to where the voice had come from. "Melia? One of yours then?" He asked, wiping up the bar automatically as Amelia Bones strode through the pub and came to stand face to face with him.

"Who was that?" Amelia demanded, glaring at Tom and twitching her hands towards her wand.

"Dunno," Tom shrugged as he finished wiping down the bar. "Sounded like he'd had a rough day though, necked two doubles of fire-whiskey like they were water." He explained as he hung the washcloth over his shoulder. "Reckoned he was one of yours? Looked like an Auror anyway."

"Hmm," Amelia grunted with a non-committal frown as she racked her memory while looked at the spot where the man had vanished from.

She recognised that messy hair, and she certainly recognised that Chinese Fireball coat that he'd
been wearing. After all, she'd been there with Lily when she'd commissioned the damn thing and had it made for James' present, celebrating him being accepted into the Auror corps.

But that wasn't possible. James Potter was dead. Voldemort killed him nearly a decade ago, it was history. But that was no ghost she'd seen in the bar, he'd been as real as Tom was.

"What else did he say?" Amelia demanded, looking back to Tom with a frown.

"Nothin' much," Tom shrugged, looking away from the head of the Department of Magical Law Enforcement. "Just came in, looked a bit pale, said he'd had a bad day. Had a few drinks then apparated off." He explained. "He skiving off work or something then?" He asked with a smirk.

"Something," Amelia commented, trying to figure out exactly what she'd seen. "Definitely something." She muttered to herself as she watched Tom wander off down the bar to see to another customer, leaving her alone to try and figure out what the hell was going on here.

Potter Manor
Honley
West Yorkshire
England

Appearing in the living room of Potter Manor, Harry grimaced as he looked down at the date on the paper again, a mixture of disbelief and horror making him hope that the ink would suddenly change and it would be two thousand nineteen again, but the date stayed exactly the same, leaving him with the rather uncomfortable knowledge that it truly was nineteen ninety one all over again.

He had nowhere near enough curse words in his vocabulary to sum up exactly what he was feeling right now. Somehow, that damned time turner in Nott's study, had thrown him back close to thirty bloody years, leaving him in a complete mess that he had no idea how to get out of.

Time turners didn't go forwards, they only went back, and only back a few hours at the best of times. They certainly didn't go back thirty years, and even if he could somehow repair the broken time turner in his pocket, that didn't help him get home at all.

"Great, just bloody great," Harry groaned to himself as he dragged his hand down his face in frustration.

For now, Potter Manor was the safest place for him to hold up. It was secret and completely off the grid, which meant he could happily stay here at least until ninety nine when the younger Harry would find out about the place.

Flicking his wand around the living room he comfortably banished all the dust and flicked out a few cleaning charms before opening the window to let some fresh air into the room.

This wasn't good, not good in the slightest.

Tugging off his jacket he tossed it on the side of the couch for the moment before dropping down unceremoniously on the leather and letting a brief smile cross his face at the familiar sound and smell of his favourite leather couch.

Unfolding the copy of the Daily Prophet he glanced over the headlines, happily ignoring the usual fluff that the paper was full of. The story seemed to be covering something about the Wizardry
Budget, and was so dry that even the Prophet's usual sensationalism couldn't hold his attention to read any further.

Ninety sodding One, what in Merlin's name was he going to do?

He sat there for a moment before flicking his wand towards the fireplace, silently igniting the fire as he tried to rack his brain and think about everything he could remember from the summer before he'd started Hogwarts.

Tugging off his still waterlogged boots he tossed them down in front of the fire to dry off before vanishing the water that pooled around them from where they'd fallen.

What did he remember? He remembered getting his Hogwarts letter, hundreds of the things really because Vernon kept stealing them, burning them, tearing them up or tossing them in the trash.

He remembered visiting the zoo with Dudley and Piers, that was on Dudley's eleventh birthday, so it would have been on the twenty third, a few days before the letters started flooding through.

What he had to do, almost certainly, was stay away from events and keep to himself so he wouldn't interfere with things. He had absolutely no doubt that The Unspeakables would come for him if they found out about his situation, it seemed like entirely the sort of thing they'd be interested in, and he had no intention of being locked away in some room under The Ministry answering their questions for the next thirty years.

No, he had to stay put for now. Stay out of trouble, and stay away from everything that was going on out in the world. That was the best course of action, and as an Auror, he was sworn to upload the law, even the stupid ones.

Not that there was any real law about time travel, especially since he was damned sure nobody had ever travelled back this far before. Which left him in a rather dubious and grey position as far as he was concerned.

Staying out of the way was definitely the best idea, he could work on the problem himself and figure out how to get back to his own time, then he'd set the manor back to it's old dusty state so his younger self wouldn't notice anything was wrong when he found out about it for the first time.

"This is going to give me a headache," He muttered to himself, ruffling his hair as he tried to keep his tenses straight in his head.

Leaning back on the couch he simply sat there and enjoyed the fire for the moment, revelling in it's warm as it dried through his shirt and jeans. It was strange, thinking about these early years of his life, thinking about these early years of his life, thinking about what everyone else must have been doing right now.

For all he knew, Hermione was still at her muggle primary school and didn't know a thing about the magical world yet. He'd never actually asked her when she'd found out about magic or received her letter from Hogwarts.

Everyone he knew wasn't quite themselves yet, everything that had happened in his life, Voldemort's return and rise to power, his defeat and the rebuilding that followed, it had all shaped him and everyone else into the people they were.

He snorted in amusement as he realised that Hermione would still be the bookish, rule abiding know-it-all she'd started out as. She'd changed so much over the years, through her six years at Hogwarts and their friendship, to being on the run together, then her short fling with Ron before Ron had turned into an utter wanker because of the fame that being part of the group had brought
to him.

He grimaced as he thought about Ron. He hadn't seen any of The Weasleys aside from George for years now, and George he only really saw around Diagon Alley.

If he had to be honest with himself, he knew that Ron had always been a complete wanker really. He was exactly the same through Hogwarts, jealous and bitter towards anyone who had things better than he did. He wasn't faithful to anyone but himself, and had proven that time after time when he'd voiced his jealousy and turned away from him and Hermione in his little temper tantrums.

Neville, Hermione, Hannah, Susan and Luna were the friends he saw the most of now and were the people he was closest too.

In the years after the war, Hermione had worked at The Ministry for quite a few years before getting disenchanted with it and leaving to find work in the muggle world, and to be honest, he couldn't blame her one bit.

As much as he liked to think everything they'd been through had been for the better, the sad truth was that nothing much had changed in the decades after Voldemort's defeat.

The Ministry and Wizengamot were still full of bribery and corruption, bigotry was still as much of a problem as ever, and The Ministry still only promoted pure blood wizards and witches, leaving muggleborns like Hermione floundering at the bottom as pure blood idiots were promoted over them for no reason whatsoever.

Susan and Neville had joined up with The Aurors like he had, though Neville left after a couple of years to focus on his Herbology mastery and return to Hogwarts as a professor, leaving him and Susan in the Auror Corps to work together.

Ron hadn't even lasted a month in the Aurors, he'd assumed it would just be another adventure and hadn't actually thought about all the hard work that went into being an Auror. Things like knowing the laws and regulations were completely beyond him, and he refused to even crack open any of the books on the subject, stating that he was one of the three that defeated Voldemort, and that alone should secure him a place in the Aurors as far as he was concerned.

He'd been drummed out of the corps after failing the first exam with a record braking negative score and had gone to work at The Weasley joke shop after that.

That was the world he remembered, the friends he knew and the people that had stood by him, but that world, those people, none of it existed here and wouldn't for at least seven or eight years, more in some cases.

"Bugger," He muttered to himself as he sunk down in the couch and tried to figure out what to do next.
"Alright, alright..." Harry grumbled, tossing in his bed and flicking his hand out towards the bedroom window with a burst of wandless magic to open it.

It had been over a week now since he'd discovered he'd been stranded in the past, and while he'd managed to work his way through a significant portion of the library in the manor, he was still no closer to figuring out how to get home.

He'd taken over his father's bedroom again, just as he had done before. It was the bedroom he found most comfortable in the house and gave him a strange feeling of closure to know it was the room his father had grown up in.

In his sleep addled state it took his brain a minute to realise exactly what he'd just done, and before the thoughts actually registered properly in his mind he recognised the owl that was flying into the room before dropping a letter off onto his bed and swooping back out of the window to fly away.

"Blood owls," He muttered to himself, shaking his head as he tried to wake up. Firstly, who the hell would be writing to him? Nobody here knew he was here or even knew who he was.

Lifting up the letter he squinted at it for a moment before hunting around for his glasses on the bedside table.

Glasses were another thing he'd gotten used to again, as he couldn't exactly make the trip into the Department of Magical Law Enforcement to get his usual prescription Auror grade contact lenses anymore.

"What the..." He muttered to himself as he placed his glasses on his face, reading the front of the envelope in shock, then horror as the words filtered into his brain.

The calligraphy on the front of the envelope was plain to read, and the emerald green ink was recognisable to any witch or wizard growing up around the country.

Mr H. Potter
The Cupboard under the Stairs
4 Privet Drive
Little Whinging
Surrey
"What the f..." Harry trailed off as he ran his fingers over the address on the front of the parchment envelope.

For one thing, Potter Manor wasn't anywhere near Little Whinging, it was in bloody Yorkshire for god's sake, a good two hundred miles from Surrey. For another thing, this was a bedroom, not the bloody cupboard under the stairs. Lastly, what in Merlin's name was an owl doing delivering the letter, as he knew for certain that his letters had come through the muggle post originally because Vernon had taken time to seal up the letter box and praised the lord when Sunday had come around, solely because there wasn't any post on Sundays.

"Fuck, fuck fuck fuck." Harry groused to himself as he glared at the letter in his hand.

Would his younger self still get a letter through the post this morning? He remembered that date well enough, it was the day Vernon had moved him out from the cupboard under the stairs and into Dudley's second bedroom upstairs.

If his younger self didn't get the letter, would he get any of the others? Would Hagrid even turn up, or would Hagrid end up finding his way here, just like the owl had done, and find him instead of his younger self?

Now everything was well and truly fucked as far as he could see.

"Why couldn't you just deliver the bloody letter like you were supposed to?" He shouted, yelling towards the open window in a hopeless attempt to berate the owl that had already flown away.

For a start, he had absolutely no clue how the Hogwarts letters ended up in the muggle mail system in the first place. He didn't remember his Hogwarts letter ever having a stamp on it, which meant that they were likely enchanted somehow to find their way into the system and be delivered to where they were supposed to go.

Grumbling to himself he tossed the duvet aside as he clambered out of bed and tugged on his jeans awkwardly as he tried to think over what to do next.

If the letter was in his hand, then his younger self couldn't have received one. Which meant things were changing in this time, which shouldn't be possible. Time turners couldn't help you change the past, the past was what it was.

He fell back onto the bed, sitting there in stunned realisation as the thought fluttered through his brain. The past, his past, had changed. He could change the past and fix everything. Could he?

The fact that the letter was in his hand certainly gave credence to the idea, if he could change the past, then there was no limit to the people he could save and the things he could change.

Scratching his stubble idly he frowned in thought, could he? Should he?

He needed to test things first before jumping in and changing anything drastically, and he needed to know exactly how things were changing already by him simply existing here.

The owl had found him, that much was an annoyance already, but had it been a double letter and had his younger self received one as well? If so, then maybe this had all happened the first time as well, and he couldn't really change anything, but if he hadn't... then everything was open to him.

Jumping up from the bed with more excitement this time he grabbed his black shirt from the floor and cast a quick cleaning charm over it before tugging it on and dashing out of the room.
He needed to know for certain what he was dealing with here, and that meant going back somewhere he hadn't been in nearly twenty years.

Grinning to himself he practically ran down the stone spiral staircase to the ground floor of the manor, pausing only to tug on his boots and pull on his trench-coat before he vanished with a loud crack that sounded like a thunder bolt in the quiet living room of Potter Manor.

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**Privet Drive**  
**Little Whinging**  
**Surrey**  
**England**

Arriving with a loud crack at Privet Drive, he looked around automatically to make sure there hadn't been any muggles around to see him apparate onto the street.

It was still early thankfully, and Harry comfortably walked down towards number four, idly looking around the various houses and remembering how he'd lived here for the first sixteen years of his life wishing that any of the neighbours would actually take him in and away from The Dursley's.

He smiled to himself as he spotted the postman already making his rounds, and jogged a bit to overtake him as he headed towards number four. He didn't even pause to think about it as he strode past Vernon's Ford that was parked on the drive outside the house, and his brain didn't even register was he was doing until he rapped his knuckles on the door loudly and stepped back on the doorstep.

His eyes shot open wide as he realised just what he'd done, and was set to quickly apparate away when the door was pulled open, leaving him standing there with a stunned expression on his face as he looked down at his childhood self.

"Hello?"

Harry simply blinked, unsure what to say or do in this situation, half expecting a lightning bolt to come from the sky any second to strike him down for meddling with time like this.

"Who is it boy?"

Harry groaned to himself as he heard the voice coming from within, remembering how bad things had been with Vernon back when he was that small.

"Are... are you my dad?"

Harry was broken out of his thoughts suddenly and crashed back to reality as the little voice spoke up again, leaving him looking down at his younger self, who was looking up at him with a shocked expression that he was damned sure he was mirroring back at his younger self.

"I said who is..."

Vernon trailed off as he came through to the front door from the living room, blanching white as he saw Harry standing there with his younger self stood in front of him. "You... but.... you... you're dead! The Freaks told..."

Harry automatically narrowed his eyes at that word, glaring across at Vernon and silencing him with the look of fury that crossed his face.
"Mornin', just two for you today."

Harry turned to the side absently as he heard another voice, spotting the postman coming up the drive with two letters in his hand that he handed to the younger Harry before moving off, completely ignoring the tension in the air as Harry continued to glare across the doorway at Vernon.

Two, just two. Harry absently flicked his eyes down towards the two letters in his younger self's hands. A postcard of some sort, and a bill. Nothing from Hogwarts, no parchment letter, and nothing to scare Vernon into changing his bedroom arrangements from the cupboard under the stairs to the upstairs bedroom.

He was changing history, just by being here, he'd changed things. He could change things, and he was going to start right now. "Hello Vernon." Harry grinned, showing his teeth as he looked over at the overweight man who was going even paler as he looked back.

The younger Harry was completely confused by this, and was staring up between Vernon and the strange man with a puzzled expression on his little face. He'd never seen the strange man before in his life, but he looked exactly like he did. The same messy black hair, green eyes and the scar close to the right temple of his forehead.

He took in everything he could about the strange man, staring at his long leather coat that just screamed 'cool' and his long leather boots, his heavily worn jeans and his black shirt that was hanging loosely over his jeans, unlike how he'd always had to tuck his shirt into his trousers whenever he'd been forced to wear one.

The strange man actually looked cool and dangerous, and Uncle Vernon seemed completely and utterly terrified by his presence here at the door.

"Out! Get out! And take that Freak son of yours with you!" Vernon bellowed, stepping forwards and pushing the younger Harry with all of his might, sending him stumbling forwards to bounce off of the front door before Harry managed to catch him and hold him steady.

"You alright?" Harry asked automatically, looking down at his younger self, completely shocked by the fact he could actually touch his younger self without anything bad or magical happening.

"Yeah," The younger Harry nodded, looking up at Harry with a shocked expression on his face.

"You Freaks think you can come in to decent people's houses and ruin a perfectly good morning with your freakish..."

Harry didn't even give Vernon the chance to finish his little rant as he stepped forwards, his right arm swinging up with literally decades of Quidditch games and Auror training behind it, connecting with Vernon's face in a vicious right cross that sent him crashing backwards, rendering him unconscious before his body had even crumpled to the floor.

"That... that was cathartic," Harry admitted to himself with a grin, looking down at his younger self who was staring up in awe at what he'd just witnessed. "Want to get out of here?" He asked with a wide smile, receiving an enthusiastic nod in response. "Hold on tight." He said, grinning as he reached down and clasped his hand around his younger self's shoulder before he apparated away with a crack, dragging his younger self away and destroyed the original time-line for good in the process.
Potter Manor

Harry immediately stepped away as he appeared in the Potter Manor living room, the sound of vomiting reaching his ears as he looked down to see his younger self being violently sick from the transition.

"Yeah, sorry, forgot how bad that was first time." He admitted with a bashful grin, looking down and recognising the look of fear and horror on his younger self's face as he expected to be hit for being sick like that. "Hey, don't worry, it's not a problem." He explained, brandishing his wand and vanishing the vomit from the floor with a quick silent vanishing charm.

At that, his younger self seemed even more afraid and was looking up at him with wide eyes, the fearful expression still on his face.

"I'm not going to hurt you," Harry said quickly, putting his wand away and holding up his hands in a sign of surrender.

"Are... are you my dad?" Younger Harry asked, his eyes wide with hope as he looked at Harry with the question burning in them.

"No," Harry admitted with a small grimace. "Sorry." He apologised softly, realising how much he'd wished for a real family when he was younger.

"But... you look just like me?" Younger Harry said, turning the thought into a question with a tilt of his head. "Are you my older brother then? A cousin like Dudley?"

Harry snorted in amusement at that, nodding in agreement. "There's a reason for that." He admitted. "You hungry?" He asked, walking off towards the kitchen and waiting for his younger self to follow him. "I remember Vernon never really gave us much to eat back then, even though I... we? Cooked it every morning."

"Us?" The younger Harry frowned, looking around the strange kitchen in awe before settling his eyes back on the strange man.

"Us," Harry confirmed with a nod as he moved over to the kitchen table and leaned against it, sitting comfortably there as he looked back at his younger self. "I'm you." He said bluntly.

"But... you... you can't be me, I'm me." The younger Harry stammered out.

"I'm you from the future," Harry explained with a shrug. "The older you." He clarified, trying to think about how much his ten year old self could comprehend. "Remember Dudley's seventh birthday, they were watching Bill and Ted while I... while you cooked his birthday cake in the kitchen?"

"Time travel?" The younger Harry whispered, his eyes going wide as he remembered the movie Dudley and Piers had been watching on video while throwing popcorn at each other.

"Exactly!" Harry grinned back. "Well, meet your future." He explained, holding out his arms as if to say 'tada'.

"Where are we?" The younger Harry asked, looking around the kitchen again and back into the living room where they'd appeared. "And how did we get here?"

"My... your... our, our grandparents place." Harry explained, stumbling over his words as he tried to get it straight in his head. "Getting here? That was apparating, you won't learn how to do that for
about five years." He explained with a grin.

"Learn that?" The younger Harry whispered in shock.

"Magic," Harry grinned back.

"No way!" The younger Harry shared the identical grin.

"Exactly!" Harry laughed back, fishing out the Hogwarts letter from his coat pocket and handing it over to his younger self. "That's for you." He explained with a grin, letting his younger self take it as he retrieved his wand again and flicked it towards the oven, lighting up the hobs on the top silently before moving over and placing a pan over them. "Hogwarts, it's a magic school." He explained as he heard the parchment tearing from behind as he pulled some bacon out of the cupboard and cancelled the stasis charm over it before dropping it into the frying pan.

"A magic school?" The younger Harry whispered in shock.

"I'm making a mess of this," Harry admitted with a grimace, turning away from the frying pan to look back at his younger self. "My... our parents, they could do magic too. A witch and wizard." He explained. "They didn't die in a car crash, and Vernon was full of shit when he told you they were drunks." He explained, idly pondering if swearing in front of his ten year old self was a good or bad thing to do.

"My... our? Our dad was a wizard?" The younger Harry asked, awe in his voice.

"Yeah, mum too. A witch I mean, not a wizard. And I'm sure my face looked exactly like that when I found out." Harry grinned back. "Hagrid told me though when he came with a letter after Vernon burnt all of mine." He explained with a shrug. "I never got that one." He said, nodding towards the letter in his younger self's hands. "Vernon threw it away before I could read it."

"Oh," The younger Harry whispered, his expression a mix of puzzlement and awe as he flicked his attention between the letter in his hands and his apparent older self. "How... how old are you?"

"Thirty eight," Harry shrugged, turning back to the frying pan quickly to make sure the bacon wasn't burning before returning his attention to his younger self. "It's two thousand and nineteen for me, or it was anyway."

"You... you came back to take me away from The Dursleys?" The younger Harry whispered, awe on his face as he looked up at his older self.

"It's... I..." Harry sighed as he ruffled his hair. "It's complicated." He admitted with a grimace. "Things are going to get a lot more complicated when you start school." He explained, nodding towards the letter in his younger self's hand.

"Why complicated?" The younger Harry asked.

"Because..." Harry started, wishing that he'd actually thought ahead or planned this out. "My... our... our parents were killed by an evil wizard." He explained, simplifying it down for his younger self to understand. "He's coming back, and will be at the school this year."

"Oh," The younger Harry whispered, colour fading from his face. "Is... is that why you came back, did he..."

"I beat him, my time around anyway." Harry explained with a grin down as he turned around and used his wand to levitate the bacon up and flip it over. "With some friends, but... but you won't
have to bother about that this time."

"I won't?" The younger Harry asked in shock.

"Nope," Harry grinned back to his younger self. "Because I'm going to do it for you." He explained with a wide smile.

The younger Harry simply blinked at that, not knowing what to say to that declaration. He'd never had anyone look out for him like that before, ever, and the knowledge that the strange cool man was apparently him from the future had shocked him more than anything had done in his entire life.

Apparently he was going to grow up to be tall, and strong, and cool! And a wizard! And wear a cool leather coat! As far as the younger Harry was concerned, the future looked absolutely amazing to him.

"Grab a seat at the table," Harry laughed, looking down at the stunned and grinning expression on his younger self's face as he slid over a loaf of bread and pulled out enough slices for them both before making up two bacon sandwiches, each filled with more than enough bacon to satisfy each of them.

He watched as his younger self sat at the kitchen table as he grabbed two plates, putting the sandwiches on each plate and carrying them over, sliding one in front of his younger self before sitting down lazily at the table himself and biting into his sandwich happily.

"I didn't even know time travel was possible, at least, not like this." Harry admitted, breaking the awkward silence as he ate while his younger self simply stared at the sandwich in shock. "I didn't come back on purpose, it was an accident that threw me back here."

"What happened?" The younger Harry asked, slowly taking a bite out of the sandwich and looking around as if he was expecting to be yelled at any second.

"I don't know," Harry admitted with a frown. "I was working and... everything went black, I woke up and it was ninety one all over again." He explained with a shrug.

"What... what do you do?" The younger Harry asked, practically bouncing with curiosity about what the future held for him.

"I'm an Auror," Harry explained, then clarified when he realised his ten year old self wouldn't know what that meant. "Like a cross between a magical policeman, detective and soldier. I hunt down bad wizards basically, protect innocent people, that sort of thing."

"Wow!" The younger Harry breathed out, looking at his older self in awe at this clarification that he was definitely going to grow up to be cool.

"It's pretty fun," Harry admitted with a smile. "I didn't even find out about my grandparents house... this place... until I was nineteen." He explained, looking to his younger self. "Nobody brought me here or told me anything about it." He said with a sigh. "But yeah, my job is cool and I've got some good friends, you'll meet them when you start school too."

"You... I... I'll have friends?" The younger Harry whispered, disbelief in his voice.

"Oh yeah," Harry laughed back. "One, Hermione. She loves reading, she'll stand by you no matter what." He explained with a smile as he thought back to Hermione. He definitely changing things this time, the younger Hermione wasn't going to suffer through years of bullying or being tortured at Malfoy Manor, and she certainly wasn't going to be nearly killed in The Ministry on a half baked
"Sirius," Harry trailed off in shock as he realised exactly what sort of a chance he was being given here.

"What?" The younger Harry asked, not having understood what his older self had said.

"Sirius... he's... he's our godfather." Harry explained with a frown. "He's in prison right now, but he escapes in a few years, or he did anyway." He said thoughtfully.

"Oh," The younger Harry blinked in confusion. He had a godfather?

"Anyway, who else..." Harry muttered to himself, putting aside thoughts about Sirius for the moment until he could actually figure out what to do about them properly. "Neville, he's pretty quiet. I didn't really become friends with him until I was older, but he's a good friend to have." He explained, smiling when he thought about how nervous and shy Neville had been in his first year at Hogwarts. "And..." He trailed off as he realised what he was thinking about. "And you're going to meet so many new people." He finished off, completely changing what he was going to say.

Ron, he was going to say Ron. Ron that had abandoned him so many times over the years. Ron that was so full of jealously and envy that it drove everyone away from him. Ron who was so lazy and sure of his pride that he belittled everyone around him who studied and wanted to improve themselves because he couldn't be bothered to do it for himself.

Looking back on those times it was painfully obvious how Ron had held him back during his years at Hogwarts, and how many times he'd made Hermione cry over the years with his stupid angry comments about her studying habits or her teeth or her hair.

"Friends," The younger Harry whispered, still in shock as the thought registered with him. "I'm going to have friends?"

"Yeah, great friends, I promise you." Harry grinned across to his younger self, silently promising to himself that he wasn't going to let Ron, Dumbledore, or any of the other idiots around the wizarding world ruin his life like they had done for him. "When you're finished, I'll show you the magic shops and... the bank." He trailed off with a grin. He didn't have to wait for Hagrid to give him the key this time, he had the key to his vault and his family vault on his keyring and had access to everything this time around. "We can get you some clothes as well, I remember how it felt wearing Dudley's old clothes. Like an elf wearing Hagrid's clothes." He explained with a snort of laughter that caused his younger self to laugh along, though the look on his face told him he didn't quite get the joke.

"Go on, eat up, we've got a busy day ahead." Harry grinned across to his younger self before sitting back and finishing his own sandwich off.

Oh yes, a busy day certainly. There was so much he needed to do, so much that he was going to change, and he needed to get started on it immediately.

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Gringotts
Diagon Alley
London
"And these... are goblins." Harry explained to his younger self in a whisper as he led him up the white marble stairs into the bank.

Showing his younger self around Diagon Alley had been the most fun he'd had in years, quite possibly the most fun he'd ever had. After explaining to himself about keeping his scar hidden, he'd transfigured a cap for his younger self to wear and brushed his own messy hair down to hide the scar.

They'd managed to pass anonymously through Diagon Alley as he'd shown his younger self around, laughing at the excitement and energy his ten year old self ran around with and the enthusiasm he showed about learning everything about the new world that was unfolding in front of his eyes.

"Never be rude to goblins, they might be grumpy, but that's just how they are. Be nice to them and they'll... well, they'll still be grumpy, but it'll save you a lot of hassle." Harry explained down to his younger self in a whisper with a shared grin as he led him over to the counter.

"Yes?" The desk goblin drawled out, looking down at both Harry's with a disinterested snarl.

"I'm here to speak with the Potter account manager." Harry said bluntly, looking up at the goblin and catching his eyes.

He'd never had the best of relationships with the goblins, not since the end of the war when they'd practically destroyed the bank flying the dragon out of it anyway, he'd only managed to repair some of the relationship by giving up all the goblin silver in the Black vaults, but even that wasn't enough to stop the goblins from levying heavy fines against him that took nearly half of the Black fortune Sirius had left to him.

"One side, you will be seen too shortly." The goblin nodded down.

"Come on," Harry whispered down to his younger self, stepping out of the way and to the side of the bank floor. He was happy it was a quiet day in the bank, though he'd been keeping his voice down anyway to prevent anyone from overhearing him.

It was only a few minutes before a goblin guard approached and gruffly ordered them to follow him before leading them through the various corridors of the bank and up to the second floor then through to one of the offices at the front of the building.

"You are Mr Potter?" The goblin inside the office stared over at them both, but focused on the younger Harry with a glare. "The elder Potter is deceased. Who are you?" He snarled out, looking up at the older Harry. "If you are lying or attempting to gain access to the Potter vaults, your heads will hang on the wall as trophies."

"Then I request a test of blood to prove lineage and access to my families vault." Harry said bluntly, staring across at the goblin and not flinching from his gaze.

"A test of blood?" The goblin asked, looking up at the older Harry as if he'd done something interesting. "The Potter vaults are keyed to blood, only those with a key can access the vaults."

"I request all current keys locked out, and a new vault secured only to our blood, so only those with Potter blood can enter them." Harry explained bluntly, looking across at the goblin and nodding in satisfaction when the goblin bared his teeth in a snarled smile.

"If your blood is that of the Potter line, it will be done. If not..." The goblin trailed off.
"If not then our heads will hang as trophies, our blood will wet your blades... yadda yadda yadda." Harry waved off the threat, doing his best to ignore how his younger self was looking up at him as if he was crazy.

The goblin nodded at that, bringing out a bowl and a wicked looking knife before placing them on the office desk in front of him and looking up to the older Harry before holding the knife out for him. "Your blood?"

Harry simply nodded, taking the knife and using it to slice open his fingertip slightly, letting a few drops drip down into the bowl before it glowed a bright red in response.

"You are of the Potter line." The goblin announced gruffly, seemingly annoyed that his threats weren't going to be carried out.

"It's alright, just cut your finger and let the blood drip into the bowl. I'll heal it when we get outside." Harry explained to his younger self, holding out the dagger for him to take.

The younger Harry looked up dubiously for a second before steeling himself and nodding, taking the dagger and pressing the point into his index finger before hissing slightly at the pain and holding his finger over the bowl to let a few drops fall into it.

"You are also of the Potter line." The goblin nodded as the bowl glowed red again. "You wish for your vaults to be moved to the high security floor?"

"I do," Harry said with a firm nod. "Access by blood only, no keys."

"As you say," The goblin nodded back. "I am Master Warwick, I have held the Potter accounts for six years now. I was... unaware there were more than a single Potter still alive."

"And that's the way I'd like to keep it." Harry said bluntly.

"Very well." Master Warwick snarled back. "The current Potter Vaults are vaults six hundred and eighty five, six hundred and eighty six, and six hundred and eighty seven has been set aside for a trust vault for Harry James Potter."

"Combine them all, Harry can access the full vault whenever he wants." Harry explained with a nod.

"Unusual, but acceptable." Master Warwick nodded. "Visitation to the high security vaults is done only by request, do you wish for an appointment to see the vaults?"

"Not needed, I've seen them before." Harry explained with a nod, remembering well how he'd been down to the high security vaults when they'd broken into the Lestrange vault. "The high security vaults can only be opened by blood or by a Gringotts goblin."

"It is as you say," Master Warwick smiled back, baring sharp teeth as he nodded along. "It is unusual to meet a wizard who pays attention to things."

"I know how these things work." Harry smiled. "I'd like to withdraw five hundred galleons, with a moleskin pouch as well, payment for the pouch can be taken separately from the vault."

"The pouch will be seven sickles, do you agree?" Master Warwick asked.

"Agreed," Harry nodded back.
"Wait here, I will see to your requests and return to you when I am done." Master Warwick nodded, moving around from his desk before moving out of the office, closing the door behind him and leaving the two Harry's alone with the goblin guard standing by the door and watching over them impassively.
Chapter 3

TITLE: Double Back

DISCLAIMER: All things Harry Potter belong J K Rowling... basically, if you recognise it, it isn’t mine... Please don't sic the Aurors on me, I'm just here for the fun.

Diagon Alley
London

Harry grinned to himself as he led his younger self out of the bank, everything had gone exactly the way he'd intended it to go, he'd secured his family vaults, gained access to everything for both him and his younger self, and prevented Dumbledore and The Weasley's from ever using the key they had to get into it.

He remembered several times through Hogwarts when The Weasley's had somehow had access to his vault, but back then he'd never asked why or how they'd got access, and he'd never had an adult around that could stop them, but now he could head it all off before it had even started.

"What... what was that about?" The younger Harry asked, still sucking his index finger and frowning at the pinprick of blood that was still welling up on it.

"Security," Harry explained, kneeling down so he could be the same height as his younger self. "Here." He said, bringing out his wand and tapping it to the index finger with a silently cast healing spell that knitted the skin back together perfectly. "Now you don't have to worry about keys or anything, if you ever need any money, you can go right in, or just ask me and I can go in for you." He explained with a shrug as he stood back up.

"Ok?" The younger Harry frowned up thoughtfully. "What now?"

"We can get your stuff for Hogwarts now if you want, or head home and talk about all those questions you've got?" Harry said with a grin as he looked down at his younger self. "I was your age once, I remember what it was like." He explained with a snort of laughter at Harry's bemused expression. "School doesn't start until the first of September, so we've got plenty of time."

"Should we get the things now then? So we don't have to worry about them later on?" The younger Harry asked hesitantly.

"Can do," Harry nodded down patiently, doing his best to show his younger self that it was alright to make decisions on his own, as he'd be making a lot more of them soon enough. "Robes, books, cauldron, the usual bits." He explained with a shrug. "Think we can sneak in a broom there as well." He explained with a smirk and a wink to his younger self as he started walking away from the bank.

"A broom?" The younger Harry whispered.

"Flying," Harry grinned down as he led his younger self down the alley towards Quality Quidditch Supplies. "You're going to be really good at it." He explained as they approached the store, leaving the younger Harry to step forwards and stare at the broom in the window in awe.

"Really?" The younger Harry whispered, not looking away from the shiny broom on display.
"Really really." Harry confirmed. "Come on, lets get the rest of your things first and we can see how things go from there."

"Alright," The younger Harry grinned as he pulled himself away from the Quidditch store. "Where first?"

"Wands." Harry said, blowing out a huff of air. "Right, I'll give you a warning before we head down. Getting your wand is... it's going to be weird."

"Weird?" The younger Harry asked, wrinkling his nose in puzzlement. "Weird how?"

"The wand you're going to get... it's going to have a link to... the evil wizard who killed our parents." Harry whispered, then nodded when his younger self looked at him in shock.

"But... can't... can't I chose another wand?" The younger Harry whispered back.

"It doesn't work like that," Harry shook his head. "That wand... it's a good wand, you can trust me on that, it saw me through a lot."

"But you don't have it anymore?" The younger Harry asked, catching on to the tone in his voice.

"No, not for a while." Harry admitted. "It stopped working for me when I was about eighteen." He explained, simplifying things down for his younger self. He didn't need to go into the details about the Deathly Hallows and everything that had happened after school, at least not yet.

"Oh, OK." The younger Harry shrugged. "So it's not a bad wand then?"

"No," Harry smiled across reassuringly. "The feather inside it... it came from the same bird that the feather inside the evil wizard's wand did."

"Oh," The younger Harry frowned thoughtfully as he considered that. "Alright then." He nodded up.

"Alright," Harry smiled down, putting his hand on his younger self's shoulder and squeezing it reassuringly. "Come on then, let's get you your wand." He said with a grin as he led his younger self down the alley towards Ollivander's wand shop.

Amelia Bones had to blink twice to make sure her eyes weren't deceiving her as she ushered her niece out of Madam Malkin's robe shop and into the alley outside. The man she'd been chasing for the last week was here, barely a few yards away from her and walking down Diagon Alley with who she was guessing was his son.

For the last week she'd been pulling up every little scrap of detail about James Potter that she could get her hands on, but nobody else had seen him, heard anything about him, or even heard whispers about him.

For all intents and purposes, James Potter had died on October thirty first nineteen eighty one with his wife, nearly a decade ago, which made his existence here a complete impossibility.

She'd done her best to find out exactly what had happened that night in eighty one, only to find that there'd barely even been an investigation, everything had been signed off and sealed by Minister Bagnold and Barty Crouch, and she couldn't access a damn thing. Even records of Harry Potter's
current whereabouts were sealed and locked away, this time by order of the Chief Warlock Albus bloody Dumbledore, leaving her with even more questions.

"Why don't we get your wand now?" She said abruptly as she watched the two Potters head into Ollivander's wand shop. "Save us a trip later?"

"Are you sure auntie?" Susan asked, looking up at her aunt with wide eyes. She'd wanted to get her wand for months now, but her aunt had been adamant about waiting until the last week before school as tradition dictated.

"We'll see," Amelia smiled down, ushering her niece forwards to walk down towards the wand store.

"Alright!" Susan grinned excitedly, moving quicker than her aunt so she could head down towards Ollivander's before she changed her mind.

Amelia bit back a laugh as she followed her niece towards the store, holding her parcel of robes in one arm and discreetly retrieving her wand with the other. James Potter had been an Auror, a good one, one of the best as far as she remembered. She'd only been in the squadrons back then when James had joined up, but she definitely knew his reputation, and if this was James, then she had a few questions for him, but if it wasn't, then she was sure going to get some answers.

She was barely a few steps behind Susan as her niece practically ran into Ollivander's, following behind with a small laugh as Susan practically barrelled into a young wizard who was trying out wands under the watchful gaze of Garrick.

"Amelia my dear, I didn't expect to see you so soon." Garrick smiled over, beaming across as Amelia came through the door.

"Just with Susan here, you know how excited they get." Amelia chuckled at the half-hearted comment as she let the door close behind her. "Busy already?"

"Oh you know how I like the challenge," Garrick laughed back at her.

Amelia nodded at that, paying close attention to the two other people in the store with her. The younger one was definitely recognisable, even with the cap covering up most of his head, but she could definitely make out the scar peaking out from beneath it, making it certain that the younger boy was Harry Potter.

The older one was what was puzzling her. He was definitely a Potter, there was no two ways around it. That messy hair was definitely the same as James', and that dragon-skin coat was certainly the one Lily had bought for him. Everything about him was screaming to her that this was James Potter, apparently back from the dead.

Harry winced to himself as he recognised the two people entering the store. Susan was easy enough to recognise, her blue eyes and red hair in a loose plait down her back were exactly as he remembered her being, only a hell of a lot younger than the last time he'd seen her.

Amelia Bones was someone else entirely though. He'd only met the witch once, and that was during his trial when Fudge had dragged him in front of the Wizengamot for using his patronus to protect himself and Dudley from dementors.
She was a bit shorter than he was, but not by much, with short and curly silver hair and stern steel
coloured eyes, and was currently looking at him like he was a suspect in an interrogation chamber.

"Amelia my dear, I didn't expect to see you so soon."

Harry smiled at the comment as Amelia looked away from him to talk to Ollivander, leaving him
time to glance at Harry and shake his head quickly, hoping that he got the message across to keep
quiet about things.

"Just with Susan here, you know how excited they get. Busy already?"

The younger Harry definitely caught on and nodded up to his older self, looking at the girl who had
come into the store and was looking around with an excited grin on her face.

"Oh you know how I like the challenge,"

Harry had to smirk at that, Garrick definitely liked the challenge. He remembered how long it had
taken him to find his wand the first time around, and things seemed to be progressing exactly the
same way.

"Well Mr Potter, do you need a rest, or shall we continue?" Garrick asked, looking down to young
Harry and ignoring the groan from behind him.

Harry was dragging his hand down his face in frustration at Garrick's comment, apparently the old
wizard didn't have a subtle bone in his body, or simply didn't care about outing Harry to the other
people in the shop.

"You're Harry Potter!" The girl said with an excited gasp, looking over to him in shock.

"Leave him alone Susan, he's just buying his wand exactly the same as you are." Amelia said with
a small smile, noticing the embarrassed blush on young Harry's face. "Amelia Bones, but, you
already knew that, didn't you James?" She asked with a sly smirk, looking over and holding her
hand out.

Harry blinked for a second in confusion before realising that Madame Bones was talking to him
and quickly moved to accept the hand, shaking it loosely. "Madame Bones." He said with a small
nod, while inwardly cursing up a storm that would have made his younger self stare at him in
shock.

"James? James Potter... but... you're... you're dead!" Susan whispered out, staring between Harry
and the man in question. The resemblance was definitely there, the hair, the eyes, the faces, but it
couldn't be.

"We should talk." Amelia said, fixing James with a glare.

"Probably," Harry admitted with a grimace, wondering how the hell he was going to get out of this
one as his younger self stepped aside to let Susan try out a few wands. "It's not what you think." He
admitted quietly towards Amelia.

"Oh? So you didn't fake your own death for the last ten years then?" Amelia asked with a wry
smile.

"What? No? Of course not?" Harry spluttered out quickly before realising what the denial had cost
him and wincing visibly as Amelia stared at him in shock. "Damnit." He muttered to himself, that
would have actually been the perfect explanation, that he was really James and that he'd faked his
own death to keep Harry out of danger.

"This sounds like a story I'd like to hear." Amelia said firmly, staring at Harry now and tapping her wand on her shoulder.

"Probably," Harry admitted with a grimace. "We should..."

"Oh, bravo! Yes, indeed, oh, very good. Well, well, well... how curious... how very curious..." Garrick interrupted, clapping loudly as the wand in the younger Harry's hand burst into life with a trail of golden sparks.

"Here we go," Harry muttered to himself, not really in the mood for the theatrics anymore. "Eleven Inches, holly and a phoenix feather core." He said bluntly.

"Yes, yes precisely Mr Potter." Garrick smiled up. "I had no idea you were so well versed in wandlore." He said with a wide smile. "Of course, that wand is very special you know."

"The phoenix that gave it's feather gave another." Harry said with a flat look towards Garrick. "I don't think we need to say who, do we?" He said firmly, fixing Garrick with a glare that made him step back for a moment.

"No, not at all." Garrick nodded quickly. "But it is curious, you have to admit."

Harry simply shrugged at that. "A wand holser and a care kit too."

"Nine galleons and seven sickles." Garrick said quietly as he fumbled around to get the wand holder and care kit from behind the counter.

"You-know-who?" Amelia whispered, having stepped closer to James so he was the only person that could hear her. Her thoughts were confirmed when he nodded back with a dark expression on his face. "Poor kid." She whispered, looking down at Harry with a wince at the knowledge she now had about his wand.

"Not if I have anything to do about it." Harry said bluntly as he paid for the wand, holser and care kit.

"Wait," Amelia said, putting her hand on James' shoulder as he moved to leave the store with Harry following. "We need to talk." She said firmly, her eyes flicking over to where Susan was continuing to try out different wands.

"You're the department head of the DMLE," Harry said with a shrug. "Are you going to arrest me?" He asked bluntly.

"No," Amelia shook her head. "But I'd like some answers. Like why you were in the Leaky Cauldron a week ago knocking back fire-whiskey like it was water."

"You were there?" Harry asked, blinking in surprise at that piece of knowledge. His situational awareness was pretty damn good, and he'd been certain that there hadn't been anyone in the pub that would have recognised him. "Fine, where?"

"Where are you living now?" Amelia countered.

Harry snorted at that, shaking his head. "I'm not exactly going to tell you that, am I?" He asked with a smirk.
"You don't trust me?" Amelia demanded, narrowing her eyes at the comment.

"The Ministry is full of corrupt idiots who just buy their way out of anything they can. There's pure-blood bigots at every corner, and Malfoy is leading Fudge around by the short and curlyies." Harry said bluntly, watching Amelia for any reaction. "Give me one reason why I should trust anyone that works in that cesspool?"

Amelia had to pause at that, the fact was, nothing James had said had been a lie. The Ministry was full of corrupt idiots, and it was definitely true that ninety percent, if not more, of The Ministry were pure-blood idiots and bigots, and yes, Lucius Malfoy did have Minister Fudge's ear and quite happily manipulated him around to get everything he wanted, that was well known to pretty much everyone who paid attention to that sort of thing.

Which left her in a rather dubious position. How could she convince James Potter she was to be trusted, when she worked in such a corrupt Ministry?

Seizing the opportunity that was presented to him, Harry grinned to himself for a moment before looking back to Madame Bones. "Sirius Black was thrown in Azkaban without a trial or even an investigation, he didn't betray my family, Peter Pettigrew did, but since Sirius never got a trial, you wouldn't know anything about that, would you?"

Amelia stepped back in shock at that, the vehemence in James' voice shocking her into silence as she stared up into his emerald eyes. She prided herself on her ability to read people, and everything she knew was screaming to her right now that James was telling the truth. "Why didn't you tell anyone?" She demanded.

"Who?" Harry countered. "The Ministry that locked him away without a trial?" He asked with a snort. "The Wizengamot who are just as corrupt and bigoted as The Ministry are? They're still full of Death Eaters anyway, so what would be the point?" He ticked off his finger with another derisive snort. "The Daily Prophet who only writes what Fudge, sorry, whatever Malfoy tells Fudge he wants them to write?" He asked, ticking off another finger.

Amelia winced at every statement, having to admit that it was all true.

"So tell me Madame Bones, why should I trust a Ministry that locks innocent people away in Azkaban without even giving them a trial first?" Harry asked, stuffing his hands into his pockets and discretely wrapping his hand around his wand as his younger self came to stand alongside him.

"I... I didn't know." Amelia said softly, but even the excuse sounded pathetic to her ears.

"Auntie?" Susan whispered from where she'd been stood, watching the argument in shock. "Is... is that true? Do you really throw people in Azkaban without a trial?"

"Susan, it's not..."

"It happened ten years ago, before your aunt was in charge of the DMLE." Harry said quickly, looking over at Susan's distraught face. "I know your auntie didn't have anything to do with it." He said, looking back at Madame Bones.

"Bones Manor, we can go there once Susan has her wand." Amelia said firmly, nodding in thanks to the way James had just defended her honour. "I owe you that much at least."

Harry frowned thoughtfully, looking into Madame Bones' steel coloured eyes before nodding sharply at the invitation.
"Your son is also welcome, it'd be good for Susan to have some more friends before she starts Hogwarts." Amelia said with a small smile towards her niece, the awkward tension in the air somewhat evaporating as she saw James relax slightly.

"Can we... dad?" The younger Harry asked, grinning up at his older self with a cheeky smirk on his face.

"Fine," Harry huffed down, recognising the smirk on his younger self's face. "But you're not getting your broom today then."

The younger Harry shrugged at that, this was already the best day in his entire life, he could happily wait another week or another month to get a broom.

"I... I've found my wand?" Susan interrupted, holding up the wand in her hand.

"I'm sorry Susan, I completely missed it." Amelia winced as she turned her attention back to her niece properly. "What is it?"

"Cherry wood with a dragon heartstring." Susan said proudly, showing off her wand to her auntie.

"Oh a very nice wand indeed." Amelia smiled in approval. "Come on then, we should make our way back home. You are alright side alonging?" She asked, looking to James curiously.

"Sure," Harry nodded, watching as Amelia paid for Susan's wand.

"I had you and Lily over for dinner once, that was years ago though. Can you remember where it is?" Amelia asked, looking at James curiously to confirm whether it was really him or not.

"We can always floo," Harry shrugged back. "Have you got a pensieve, we'll probably need one." He admitted with a grimace, wondering if he could actually trust Amelia with what he was thinking about doing.

Susan had always been straight with him, and she'd never abandoned him or believed the worst of him. Over the years he'd heard more than a few stories about the legendary Amelia Bones, both from Susan and from other Aurors in the corps. If he could trust her, then she'd be an amazing witch to have on his side to help him out.

"I'm afraid not," Amelia shook her head.

"I'll bring mine then," Harry nodded. "We'll head home first and then floo over?"

"Bones Manor." Amelia said with a firm nod. "I'll be expecting you." She said before standing aside and bustling Susan out of the door so they could apparate away back home so she could get ready.

"Can one thing... just one thing, go according to plan?" Harry groused aloud as he watched out the window for Amelia to apparate away with Susan before he shook his head and left the store with his younger self in tow.

"Who... who was that?" The younger Harry asked, looking up at his older self.

"Madame Amelia Bones," Harry explained with a thoughtful look. "She's the head of the magical police." He simplified with a shrug.

"Oh," The younger Harry nodded at that. "Was... was all that stuff you said about Sirius true?"
"Every word." Harry nodded back. "She might be our best bet at getting Sirius out actually." He admitted with a sigh. "I think... think, we can trust her."

"Think?" The younger Harry frowned up at his older self. "Don't you work for her? If she's the head of the police and you're a magical policeman?"

"She died," Harry whispered down to his younger self. "In about five years time." He whispered, looking at his younger self and seeing how he would accept this. "She was killed by the same person who killed my... our parents."

"Oh," The younger Harry winced at that. "Can... are you... are you going to save her?"

"I'm going to try," Harry admitted. "I think I should tell her, about... about the future. Susan's going to be a good friend, she deserves to have her aunt around longer than she did when it first happened."

The younger Harry shook his head at that with a bemused expression on his face. "That's really confusing, you know that?"

"Think how I feel?" Harry grinned down to his younger self. "I'll tell her, and hopefully we don't have to run out of the country if it goes badly." He joked with a small smirk.

"Can we do that anyway?" The younger Harry grinned up. "I've never been anywhere."

"I know," Harry nodded down. "France maybe, it's nice and hot there, and the magical school over there is gorgeous."

"They have a magic school too?" The younger Harry asked, shock on his face as he thought about this.

"Come on," Harry laughed down. "Lets get home so we can floo over to the Bones' house."

"OK," The younger Harry shrugged, accepting this as he felt his older self hold onto his shoulder. "But... what's a floo?" He asked hopefully, looking up at his older self at the question.

Harry simply laughed to himself as he apparated away with his younger self, having completely forgotten about his own misadventures with the floo system when he was younger.

"Auntie?" Susan asked, looking up at her aunt as they both settled into the entrance hall at Bones Manor. "What... what did he mean? About The Ministry? Is it... is it really corrupt there?"

Amelia had to sigh as she turned to face her niece, not willing to lie to her about something as important as this. "There are problems, I won't deny that. Yes, bribery does happen, but I'm doing my best to push it out of The Ministry as much as I can."

"So it's true then? People have been thrown into Azkaban without doing anything wrong?" Susan whispered in shock.

"I've... I'd heard rumours, but I've never been able to find any proof of it." Amelia admitted. "Our world isn't perfect darling, no matter how much we wish it was."

"I know... it's just..." Susan frowned thoughtfully. Of course she knew the world wasn't perfect, if it was then her parents wouldn't have been killed all those years ago. "How can you work for The
Ministry when they do that to innocent people?” She asked, looking up at her aunt with complete confusion on her face. “If you’re not stopping them, doesn’t that…”

“Doesn’t that make me just as bad as they are?” Amelia asked, completing her niece’s question. “I’ve never stood aside and let someone break the law like that Susan, you have my promise on that. What happened with Sirius Black happened a lot time ago, and I’m going to do my best to see him out of Azkaban as soon as I can manage it.”

“Alright,” Susan nodded, accepting this for now.

Amelia nodded back, but had to admit to herself that it did hurt to see that her niece’s faith in her was visibly shaken by what she’d learnt today. She’d always tried her best to keep the darker side of their world from tainting Susan, but now she’d learnt about the corruption and dark side of The Ministry there was no way of going back.

“Susan, I want you…” Amelia trailed off as the fireplace burst into life, flashing green as James Potter’s face appeared in the flames. “James.” She nodded, moving to the fireplace.

“Are we OK to come through?”

“Of course, whenever you are ready.” Amelia confirmed with a nod.

“Alright, might want to step aside, it’ll be Harry’s first time.”

Amelia blinked in surprise at this, Susan had known how to use the floo since she was six, if Harry was now ten or eleven, why hadn’t he been using the floo yet?

With that thought in her mind she remembered Susan’s first adventure with floo travel and moved aside, absently casting a cushioning charm over the floor by the fireplace and readying a shield charm just in case.

Her predictions definitely held true a few seconds later as a blast of green fire deposited Harry Potter in the fire place, who stumbled and fell out of the fire and practically skidded along the ground into the welcoming hall.

“Harry, welcome to Bones Manor.” Amelia said, chuckling to herself as she held her hand out to give Harry a hand standing up.

“Um, thank you.” Harry grinned, accepting the hand and letting her pull him up off the ground. “Sorry, uh, sorry about the mess?”

“Quite alright.” Amelia smiled, waving the thought off as she flicked her wand over Harry and cleaned off all the soot as she caught James stepping through the floo out of the corner of her eye. “James, nice to see you made it through.”

“Madame Bones,” Harry nodded as he stepped out of the fireplace.

“Amelia, please.” Amelia said with a small nod of acknowledgement at the manners being displayed. “This is Susan, my niece. I believe you knew Edgar and Jessica?”

“Susan,” Harry smiled across at the redhead that he actually knew far better than he knew Amelia.

“Why don’t you show Harry around the grounds, stay inside the ward lines though.” Amelia said with a smile over to her niece.
"Alright auntie." Susan grinned up. "Come on Harry," She laughed, beckoning for Harry to join her as she led him through to the doors and out of the main manor.

"So, you didn't fake your death?" Amelia asked bluntly, remembering James' denial back at Ollivander's. "Mind telling me exactly what happened then, because the entire world thinks you and Lily died back when You-Know-Who found you at Godric's Hollow."

Harry sighed but nodded, fishing the shrunken pensieve out of his pocket and holding it up for Amelia to see. "Got a table?" He asked with a shrug.

"Why do I have a feeling this is going to be a long story?" Amelia asked, narrowing her eyes as she flicked her wand towards one of the chairs in the room, transfiguring it into a chest high table that the pensieve could be seated on.

"Because it is," Harry grinned back as he put the pensieve down and then brought out the rest of his surprises. "Veritaserum, you'll probably want me to take that later." He admitted, holding up the bottle of the clear liquid. "And...

"A mendax ball," Amelia looked over at the small golden ball that he'd brought out last. "There aren't many of those outside of the senior Aurors."

"I kept mine," Harry explained with a shrug, causing the ball to glow green in response. "And you can see it works." He said with a laugh as Amelia raised her eyebrow at him. "Go on." He nodded, tossing it over to her.

"My name is Cornelius Fudge." Amelia said aloud, causing the mendax ball to glow red in response before flicking her wand to it and casting her usual diagnostic charms. "Seems to work." She admitted with a nod as she tossed the ball back, raising an eyebrow at the impressive reflexes shown when it was snatched out of the air. "So, if you didn't fake your own death. What happened that night, and why is Sirius Black in Azkaban if he had nothing to do with it?"

"That... that's a long story." Harry admitted with a grimace, causing the ball in his hand to glow green in response. "A complicated story." He added on as he put the mendax ball down by the pensieve to stop it judging everything he said. "I don't know where to start?"

"The beginning?" Amelia said dryly.

"The beginning," Harry groaned, but nodded in agreement, picking up the mendax ball again. "My name is Harry James Potter. I was born July thirty first nineteen eighty." He said bluntly, holding up the mendax ball so Amelia could see it was glowing green. "And I got thrown back in time somehow to just over a week ago, the same day you saw me in the Leaky Cauldron."

Amelia blinked, then blinked again, and swallowed audibly as she continued to watch the mendax ball glow green in confirmation of everything James... no, Harry apparently, was saying.

"Voldemort's still alive, and he's going to be at Hogwarts soon, and he gets his body back in about four years, my time obviously." Harry continued on, ignoring the way Amelia blanched at his declaration. "So, pensieve or veritaserum first?" He asked with a smirk as Amelia continued to stare at him with a dumbfounded expression on her face.
Amelia grimaced to herself as she swallowed back another mouthful of fire-whiskey, letting the burn trickle down her throat as she turned to stare at the thirty eight year old Harry Potter that seemed to be appraising her with his vibrant green eyes.

In the last hour and a half they’d been through the first three years of Harry's school life, and now had a much better understanding of Harry, Sirius Black, Remus Lupin, and a dozen other things that she now had a dire need of investigating.

You-Know-Who was really a half-blood, that alone was a kick in the teeth for all the Death Eaters out there, but the fact that he was still alive, and possessing Professor Quirrell at Hogwarts right now, was knowledge that chilled the blood in her veins.

"More?" Harry asked, holding out the bottle of fire-whiskey dubiously towards Amelia.

"Will I need it?" Amelia asked with a raised eyebrow.

"Oh definitely," Harry snorted in amusement. "Next up we've got the Goblet of Fire tournament, where Barty Crouch Junior got my name entered while he was polyjuiced as Mad-Eye Moody, he managed to work at Hogwarts all year without Dumbledore suspecting a thing, then got me into a graveyard at the end for a ritual to recreate Voldemort's body using the bones of his father." He explained bluntly. "So, more?"

"Definitely," Amelia nodded, sliding her glass over towards the bottle of fire-whiskey.

"Thought so," Harry smirked over, pouring out a generous helping both for himself and for Amelia.

"I always knew Albus could be heartless, but this..." Amelia grimaced as she thought back to the highlights of the last year that she’d witnessed in the pensieve. "Why didn't he do anything for Sirius if he knew he was innocent? He could have stood for Sirius and vouched for him just like he did for Severus after the last war."

"I've thought a lot about that," Harry admitted with a shrug. "Best I can figure, he wanted to keep Sirius away from me. If he's on the run as a wanted man, I had to go back to my relatives every year and wasn't learning anything from Sirius in the holidays between school."

"It does seem that way," Amelia nodded, it was a very logical conclusion that fit all the facts. "I've never thought highly of Albus Dumbledore, I've never hidden that fact."

"I always wondered why..." Harry frowned thoughtfully. "When Dumbledore got his Order of the Phoenix back together, he invited everyone that was still around that could face Voldemort, but he
never invited you. I always wondered why not?"

"Because I'd have told him where to shove it." Amelia said bluntly. "Albus bloody Dumbledore is the reason my brother... Susan's parents were killed in the last war. They died on some half-arsed mission he sent them on because they always believed Albus bloody Dumbledore practically pissed Felix Felicis. I always thought he had a spy in the Death Eaters and sent them to die to cover up his spy's actions when he could have prevented it, but now I know..."

"Snape." Harry nodded thoughtfully.

"Severus." Amelia confirmed with a nod.

Harry had told explained about Snape during the first year's memories, though knowing he was a spy didn't really change anything much about Snape's behaviour really. He was still a bully, a bigot, and a tormentor. He was just doing it on Dumbledore's orders now instead of off his own choice.

"Snape let people die last time around too, in the future, or whatever. Charity Burbage, and he let kids get tortured when the Death Eaters took over the school, just to keep up his spy act. Dumbledore doesn't really care about people, or anyone really." Harry explained bluntly as he swallowed a mouthful of whiskey. "He's only interested in his end goal, and if he has to sacrifice a school full of children to do it, then..." He trailed off with a shrug. "He'd do it without a second thought."

Amelia grimaced as she nodded in agreement with that. His memories of his first year of school had proved that much alone. Albus Dumbledore had known Voldemort was after the Philosophers Stone and had intentionally lured him to Hogwarts.

He'd intentionally lured a mass murderer into a school full of innocent children. That was the bottom line. There was no defence for that as far as she was concerned, that fact alone was making her seriously consider sending Susan to Beauxbatons instead of Hogwarts this year.

"First things first, how are you going to deal with... with Voldemort?" Amelia asked, forcing herself to say the fearful name. "You say he's possessing this Professor... Quirrell was it?"

"Well, I was thinking of just punching him in his face until he turns to dust." Harry grinned across at her, nearly making her choke on her whiskey as she tried to imagine the sight.

"You're serious?" Amelia snorted in amusement when she saw Harry's grin.

"Why not?" Harry shrugged. "Whatever magic that's protecting me from Voldemort turned Quirrell to dust when he tried to grab me. It'll work just as well in a punch."

"Probably," Amelia admitted with a nod. "Did you ever find out exactly what it was that protected you from his touch?"

"Hermione thought it was some sort of sacrificial protection, but we never really investigated it properly." Harry explained. "Dumbledore said something similar, but I'd trust his words about as far as I could throw Hagrid." He explained with a laugh.

"Good reasoning," Amelia nodded in agreement with both points. "And this blood bond reasoning Albus gave for you returning to your relatives? I've never heard of such a thing."

"Because it's a pile of shit," Harry explained bluntly. "Dumbledore claims he placed the charm on me, but I've seen Minerva's memory of that night, he didn't do a damn thing. He was lying out of
his arse, again. He just wanted to keep me at The Dursley's so I'd see him as some sort of saviour each year when I escaped back to Hogwarts."

Amelia nodded again, unable to find fault with anything Harry was saying. "Albus... Albus lies a lot, I've caught him in his own lies more than a few times over the years. It's one of the reasons he stays out of my way at The Ministry."

"He's not going to get away with anything this time around." Harry said with a firm nod, turning his words into a vow for himself. "I'll take him down myself if I need to."

"Could you?" Amelia asked, raising an eyebrow curiously. "Albus might be... well, a pathological liar, manipulator, and general menace, but he's not to be trifled with."

"Yes, he really is." Harry smirked in amusement. "Dumbledore isn't that powerful, trust me on that. He's barely equal to Voldemort, and that when he's boosting up his own power."

"Boosting up his power?" Amelia asked, looking at Harry curiously at the statement. "Albus is the one person Voldemort feared."

"Only because..." Harry paused, frowning thoughtfully. "He has a special wand, it's not really important though, but it boosts his power. Without it, he's a far second rate to Voldemort."

"I... I see." Amelia frowned thoughtfully, not having ever heard of a wand with that particular power before. "And you can counter it?"

"I'm Voldemort's equal without Dumbledore's fancy wand, with it?" Harry smirked in amusement as Amelia's eyes went wide. "Dumbledore isn't a threat, trust me on that. The wand works great for anyone else, but for my family, it's like an heirloom of power."

"The Potters?" Amelia asked in confusion.

"Peverell." Harry explained after a moment's pause, grinning when he saw the flicker of recognition in Amelia's eyes before they went wider than he'd ever seen.

"The Elder Wand." Amelia whispered reverently. "Albus had it all these years?"

"That's where his reputation about being so powerful comes from, he took it from Grindlewald." Harry nodded in confirmation. "All his reputation is built on stories and hear say after he got the wand, it's all because of that. Take it away or counter it, and he's a second rate wizard at best. He's got enough knowledge secreted away to make him valuable, but he's not a threat magically in any way."

"And... the..." Amelia stammered out.

"The cloak and the stone?" Harry asked in amusement before nodding. "I have them too."

"Are they really... were they... I mean..." Amelia tried to gather her thoughts as she looked at Harry in shock.

"Made by Death?" Harry asked with a smirk. "Honestly, I don't know." He admitted with a shrug. "I don't think so, and I've got all three of them. It doesn't make me this Master of Death or some god like wizard or anything." He explained with a snort of laughter. "I think they were made by the three brothers actually, they just made up the story about Death giving them them as gifts to boost their reputation." He said with a shrug. "That's my theory anyway."
"And you... you're the last descendant?" Amelia asked curiously.

"Aside from Voldemort." Harry nodded back then clarified when she looked at him in confusion. "His mother was from the Gaunt family, they trace back to the Peverell's as well. Cadmus I think, the one with the resurrection stone." He explained with a smirk. "Hell, being obsessed with cheating death must run in the family for him." He said with a grin.

"You have a strange sense of humour, you know that?" Amelia muttered, rubbing her forehead in frustration at everything she'd learnt this afternoon.

"I've been told," Harry admitted with a smirk. "So, what now?" He asked, gently tossing his empty glass between his hands as he focused on looking over at Amelia.

"What now indeed." Amelia nodded thoughtfully, draining her own glass with a grimace as the fiery liquid burnt down her throat. "Obviously stopping... Voldemort is the priority here." "I can take care of that," Harry nodded thoughtfully. "I know where his Horcruxes are. Malfoy still has the diary, so I can't get to that one." He explained, ticking off one finger. "The Locket is still at Grimmauld place, I'd need Sirius to get that one." He explained, ticking off another finger. "The tiara thing is at Hogwarts." He ticked off a third finger. "The ring is buried in Little Hangleton, I can get to that one easily enough. I saw enough of the memories of it to find it." He explained with a nod. "The cup is in the Lestrange Vault at Gringotts, I've got no idea how to get that one this time around." He admitted with a grimace.

"Gringotts?" Amelia frowned thoughtfully. "How did you destroy it last time?"

"Broke into Gringotts and rode a dragon out, pretty much destroying the bank in the process." Harry admitted with a grin.

Amelia practically choked when she realised he was serious, and shook her head at the thought. "You'll be showing me that memory sometime I hope?" She asked with a small smile. "The Lestrange's are in Azkaban, I doubt I'd be able to get the goblins to cooperate in handing over access to their vault."

Harry nodded at that, the cup was the only one that was really a puzzle. "He doesn't create another Horcrux until ninety four, so we've got three years grace to round the rest up."

"Assuming he doesn't change his plans when you face him at Hogwarts." Amelia countered with a frown.

"You think I shouldn't?" Harry asked, cocking his head to the side in confusion.

"You'd bloody better, or I'll be pulling Susan out of that school before her first week is out." Amelia glared back at him. "There's no way in hell I'm letting my niece stay in that building with You-Know-Who skulking around."

"Fair point," Harry mused thoughtfully.

"And countering Albus and Severus?" Amelia prompted him.

"Dumbledore... He'll be a problem." Harry admitted with a frown. "Taking my younger self out of his control, he'll... he'll throw his dummy out of the pram and start making things difficult. He has a pathological need to be in control and be the person manipulating everyone from behind the scenes."
"I'd assumed as much." Amelia nodded in agreement. "He'll likely try and drag you before the Wizengamot or attempt to drug you with veritaserum."

"Probably both," Harry grimaced. "That's when his grandfather act doesn't work and his 'I'm so disappointed in you' speech falls flat." He explained with a smirk. "Then he'll probably finish with his 'you're going dark' threatening speech before he resorts to anything else."

"Ah, you've been on the receiving end of those too I see," Amelia chuckled in amusement. "Keeping up the pretence that you're James Potter might be your best bet actually."

"Hmm?" Harry mused, looking at Amelia and wondering what she was thinking.

"It'll keep the spotlight away from the younger Harry, and give you autonomy to prevent Albus from taking control again." Amelia explained. "A few sightings here and there, a leaked story to The Prophet, then you turn up at Harry's sorting at Hogwarts and confront both Voldemort and Dumbledore at the same time."

"Possibly," Harry admitted thoughtfully. "My dad... he had brown eyes though, at least from what I've been told. I got my eyes from my mum."

"I'd assumed so," Amelia nodded. "I knew Lily far better than I knew James, and honestly couldn't have told you what colour his eyes were without referring to a photo."

"He only wore glasses for reading as well, Sirius told me that." Harry mused as he tried to think up anything else he could remember about his father.

"He was an Auror, a good one, one of the best." Amelia smiled over. "I was a year above him at Hogwarts, but I didn't really know him well back then."

"I've heard the stories," Harry nodded, knowing full well his father wasn't the saint a lot of people made him out to be. "What house were you in?"

"Hufflepuff," Amelia smiled proudly. "It's actually a weight off my mind to know that Susan will find herself sorted into my old house as well."

"She's a good friend," Harry smiled knowingly. "She'll be an amazing friend later on." He explained with a small laugh.

"Oh? You and Susan?" Amelia smirked over.

"Nothing like that," Harry laughed, waving the thought away. "We had a few dates, that was... god, a few years after Hogwarts. She joined the Aurors like I did. We worked together and had a few dates after long shifts, but it never went anywhere."

"Why not?" Amelia asked, curiosity getting the better of her.

"We're too similar," Harry admitted with a shrug. "Both of us had our share of ghosts, and we were still moving past the war and everything that happened." He explained with a sigh.

"Did... did she ever meet anyone?" Amelia asked hesitantly.

"She had a boyfriend I think, it wasn't something we really talked about much." Harry explained with an apologetic smile. "Sorry I can't tell you more."

"What about you? Did you ever find anyone?" Amelia asked curiously.
"A string of mistakes," Harry chuckled to himself. "Ginny Weasley, a fangirl who was only interested in my fame. That spluttered out early on when her mother tried to control my life just as much as Dumbledore had. I got out of that one before she started playing for the Harpies"

"I know the Weasleys, Arthur anyway. Works at The Ministry." Amelia nodded back.

"Arthur's a good guy. Molly's a controlling busybody who screams and shouts at anyone who dares disagree with her." Harry explained.

"I saw in your memories, your first train ride to Hogwarts?" Amelia frowned thoughtfully. "She was there, yelling about platform nine and three quarters while walking through the muggle side of the station?"

"Yeah, I'm pretty sure that was Dumbledore's plan to integrate me into the Weasleys." Harry nodded in agreement, seeing what Amelia was thinking. "Not exactly subtle, but I didn't know any better back then."

"I'll have some Aurors posted at the station this time around, even if she was following Albus' orders, I can't let a breach of secrecy like that go without coming down on her for it." Amelia frowned back. "I assume Mr Weasley doesn't grow out of his childish ways any time soon?"

"Ron?" Harry snorted, shaking his head at the thought. "He gets worse really. Fourth year he's one of the leaders who thinks I entered my name in the Goblet of Fire, kicks up a fuss about it and treats me like crap until I finish the first task, then when I'm popular again he's all buddy buddy and back in the spotlight." He explained with a frown before reaching for the fire-whiskey and pouring out another glass before offering it to Amelia.

"I'd better not," Amelia shook her head towards the bottle.

Shrugging at that Harry put the cork back in the bottle before continuing on his thoughts. "Seventh year, well, what should have been our seventh year anyway. He abandons us when we're hunting down the horcruxes, but that's never part of the story he tells when he's reliving the glory days to spread his fame around." He explained with a sigh. "He's a jealous and petty idiot with anger problems and a chip on his shoulder the size of Gryffindor tower. I'll tell the other me all about him and why he should stay away from him."

"I see," Amelia nodded thoughtfully. "A nice distraction by the way, moving away from your story about your dalliances."

Harry grinned, raising his glass in a mock toast towards Amelia. "You spotted that then?" He asked with a smirk. "Alright, Cho Chang. That was a mess, it sort of fizzled out before we even got anywhere. Not that we really had anything in common anyway besides both playing seeker." He explained with a shrug. "Those were the only two girls I ever kissed at Hogwarts."

"Really?" Amelia asked, raising an eyebrow in shock. "And afterwards?" She asked curiously.

"A few," Harry nodded. "Katie Bell, we had a thing for a few months while she was playing for Puddlemere."

"You seem to have a thing for Quidditch players," Amelia smirked in amusement at the pattern.

"I noticed, me and Katie might have been something, but I was too invested in the Aurors, and she was making her mark for Puddlemere, so it never got as serious as it could have been." Harry shrugged back. "A few dates with Susan, a smattering of dates here and there."
"And Hermione?" Amelia asked, raising an eyebrow. "I'm surprised nothing ever happened between the two of you."

"Honestly, so am I." Harry admitted with a sigh. "I wanted to, a few times." He admitted, ruffling his hair in frustration. "By the time I'd got up the nerve to do anything about it, she'd left the magical world and was living with the muggles again. I couldn't be the person to drag her back into all of this, not when she'd finally got out of it all."

"Ah," Amelia nodded, seeing the regret in Harry's eyes for what it was. She was the one for him, and he'd let her leave so she could be happy rather than make her chose between her life and a life with him. "Why did she leave? She seemed rather bright and full of life?"

"The bigotry," Harry explained with a shrug. "It started in Hogwarts, and got worse when Voldemort came back." He explained bluntly. "When we defeated him, Minister Shacklebolt explained that me and Ron would be getting awarded the Order of Merlin medals but..."

"She wouldn't." Amelia nodded. "There's never been a muggle-born awarded an Order of Merlin."

"Exactly," Harry frowned in frustration. "She started working at The Ministry after Hogwarts, passed all of her NEWT's with O's, and then suffered with getting passed over for promotion time after time for pure-blood idiots who simply got promoted just because of their families."

"I don't blame her for leaving," Amelia grimaced, it wasn't painting a very welcome picture of her world at all.

"I'm giving it four years this time." Harry said bluntly, tossing back the glass of fire-whiskey and draining it in a single gulp. "If by the end of fourth year Voldemort isn't dealt with and the pure blood bullshit stamped out, I'll take Harry, Hermione and anyone else that wants to go, and leave this country for good. Voldemort can have it, the idiots around deserve him." He explained bitterly.

"You don't mean that," Amelia frowned over.

"Maybe," Harry groused, rolling the glass between his hands in frustration. "What did we ever accomplish? Bugger all, that's what. Twenty years on, Voldemort's gone, but the pure blood bigots are still running the show. The Ministry's still corrupt, the Wizengamot is still full of bribery and back alley deals, and the world's just as fucked up as it was when I started Hogwarts. Nothings changed."

"You can't expect to change the world overnight." Amelia said with a comforting smile. "We can only do what we can."

"Overnight would be a miracle, twenty years, I'd say that's giving them enough of a chance." Harry explained with a shrug.

"Maybe," Amelia admitted with a sigh. "Well, let's work on what we can first. Disguising you as your father."

Harry nodded as he put his glass aside and thought about it for a second. "A glamour won't do, Dumbledore or Mad-Eye would see right through it. I'll have to do it like the muggles do."

"Muggles?" Amelia asked curiously.

"Contact lenses that change the eye colour, easy enough to get hold of." Harry explained with a dismissive wave. "Makeup to cover up the scar, I've done that enough times when I wanted some piece and quiet for a bit."
"Will that be enough?" Amelia asked with a thoughtful glance.

"Nobody will think I'm a future Harry, that's just crazy." Harry explained with a grin. "They'll check for glamours and polyjuice, then when those don't show up anything..."

"They'll jump to the simplest conclusion, that you're James Potter." Amelia nodded in agreement. "It should work. And I agree, nobody is going to think you're your future self, especially not if you're stood alongside him. Everyone knows time turners can't go back that far, and even if they could, you wouldn't be able to interact with yourself without going crazy."

"Who said I'm not crazy?" Harry asked with a small smirk, looking over at Amelia who burst into laughter at his comment, nodding her head to concede the point that he had to at least be a little bit crazy after everything he'd been through.

"They look cosy." Susan commented with a smile, looking through the window at where her auntie and Harry's dad were sharing a drink and chatting between themselves.

"Yeah," Harry nodded thoughtfully. "I wonder what they're talking about?"

"Grown up stuff," Susan shrugged. "Auntie talks a lot about Auror stuff and work at The Ministry, it's all pretty boring really."

"I'll bet," Harry smiled in agreement. "So what other classes will we have at Hogwarts?"

"I'm looking forward to charms the most," Susan grinned with a little excited bounce. "Transfiguration is supposed to be really tough, but my aunt's really good at it."

"And that... um... Defence stuff?" Harry prompted her.

"Defence Against the Dark Arts." Susan explained. "Yeah, I guess, but everyone's going to be expecting me to to brilliant at it because of who my aunt is."

"Probably me too," Harry admitted with a grimace.

"Oh god, I didn't mean..." Susan trailed off. "Sorry, I didn't mean anything by that."

"It's alright," Harry shrugged the comment off. "What about the rest?"

"Potions, the teacher is supposed to be a real creep." Susan explained in a whisper. "I've heard friends talking about him, and he hates everyone."

"Why's he even a teacher then?" Harry asked in confusion.

"Nobody knows," Susan shook her head. "But everyone's afraid of getting on his wrong side. So I'll just be hiding at the back in potions class and hoping he doesn't pick on me for anything."

"Hmm," Harry nodded at that, making a mental note to ask his older self about potions and what the teacher was really like.

"What house do you think you'll be in?" Susan asked curiously. "I'm hoping I get into Hufflepuff like my auntie and my mum was, but my dad was in Gryffindor, so..." She trailed off with a shrug.

"Gryffindor could be fun," Harry admitted with a grin, his older self having already told him that
he was in Gryffindor and made some great friends there.

"I bet you'll be trying out for Quidditch as well right?" Susan grinned in amusement.

"Definitely," Harry grinned back, remembering what his older self had told him about how he was going to be brilliant on a broomstick.

"We might be cheering against each other then," Susan explained with a mock glare. "Hufflepuff vs Gryffindor."

"Doesn't mean we can't be friends though, even if we are in different houses right?" Harry asked hopefully.

"Of course not," Susan smiled happily back. "Well, as long as you're not in Slytherin anyway."

"That's the snake house right?" Harry asked.

"Definitely," Susan nodded back. "I've never heard of a Slytherin ever being friends with anyone outside of their house before."

"Wow, sounds lonely." Harry mused thoughtfully.

"Maybe," Susan admitted with a shrug. "Maybe if they weren't bullying everyone else then people would be friendlier towards them."

Maybe," Harry parroted back with a grin.

"What about my auntie and your dad then?" Susan said with a laugh. "If they started dating, we could be brother and sister." She smiled eagerly at the thought.

"I don't... I don't know if... dad is looking to date anyone." Harry managed to get out without laughing.

"Why not?" Susan asked curiously. "He makes my aunt laugh, that's rare enough, and she seems to make him happy as well."

"I don't even know if he's dating anyone at the moment," Harry frowned thoughtfully, not really wanting to get into scary thoughts of what his older self was doing with girls.

"I think they'd be cute together," Susan explained with a shrug.

Harry simply frowned at that, looking back through the window and sparing his older self with a curious glance. How much had his life changed just in the single day he'd found out about magic? His older self had been living with it for practically forever, things like flying on broomsticks and travelling through fireplaces were normal for him, but something he was still finding really weird.

"You two doing alright?"

"Yes auntie," Susan waved back eagerly as she saw her aunt come to the window and look out of it towards them both.

"What have you been doing?"

"Nothing much," Susan shrugged. "Talking about starting Hogwarts mostly, I showed Harry down to the river and back then around the trees, we've just been talking really."
"Good, it's nearly dinner time, Harry and James will be staying for tea alright?"

"Great!" Susan grinned eagerly, happy that her aunt had someone to talk to now that wasn't going to be all work and Ministry stuff.

"Go on and get washed up then, show Harry where the bathroom is and make sure both of you wash your hands."

"Yes auntie," Susan nodded happily, grabbing onto Harry's hand and pulling him along behind her as she dashed off to the door to come inside and run upstairs to the bathroom.

"Kids," Amelia grinnned in amusement, looking back at the older Harry that was watching in amusement. "You never had the pleasure?"

"No," Harry admitted. "I looked after my godson for a bit, he lived with his grandparent after the war, I stayed around as much as I could." He explained thoughtfully, wondering if he'd ever get to see Teddy again this time around.

"Ah, you know the feeling then." Amelia smiled thoughtfully.

"Mixture of worry, horror and wishing they'd never learnt how to talk?" Harry grinned back. "Definitely."

Amelia laughed openly at that, firmly nodding in agreement with Harry's assessment. "Tippy?" She asked aloud, waiting for a brief second before the house elf popped into existence in the living room. "Four for dinner tonight." She said with a nod down towards the little creature.

"Yes Ma'am," Tippy nodded eagerly.

"In the dining room please, as soon as you're ready." Amelia nodded before the house elf vanished again with another pop. "I know she's not as crazy as that Dobby was from your memories, but she's been a godsend with Susan growing up here."

"I can imagine," Harry smiled in agreement. "You sure you're OK with having us both over for dinner? I was just going to cook something for me and... well, me I guess."

"I'll start calling you James in my head as well, it'll be less confusing that way." Amelia commented with a smirk.

"Yeah, probably." Harry admitted with a grimace, inwardly hoping that wherever his dad was in the afterlife, he didn't mind him taking over his name like this.

"Shall we?" Amelia asked, gesturing towards the dining room as she heard the thundering footsteps coming down the stars that indicated both the children had washed their hands and were ready for their meal.

"We shall," Harry grinned up, moving over to follow Amelia through to wherever she was leading him.

"You can cook too then?" Amelia asked, breaking the silence as she led Harry through to the dining hall. "That's unusual to find, most wizards don't bother to learn."

"I do alright," Harry nodded comfortably. "I'm no fancy chef or anything, but I can make most things without turning them into charcoal."
"I'll have to hold you to that and see what you're made of some time." Amelia smiled over as she slowed down a bit to walk alongside Harry into the dining hall.

"That sounds like a challenge?" Harry smirked back.

"Oh definitely," Amelia grinned back as Susan and the younger Harry joined them in the dining hall for their evening meal.
Chapter 5

TITLE: Double Back

DISCLAIMER: All things Harry Potter belong J K Rowling... basically, if you recognise it, it isn’t mine... Please don't sic the Aurors on me, I'm just here for the fun.

AN: Just to clarify a few things about the previous chapter.

1 - All of Harry's knowledge, memories and rants are from his viewpoint... they might not be the truth or have the whole story about events, so don't take them as 'gospel', Harry is biased and has his faults here... so where some things look like character bashing, they are only Harry's perspective of things, not the whole story.

2 - Dumbledore's power levels... sorry, but this bares out in the books. The Elder Wand is supposed to boost wizards up to perform feats of magic that they wouldn't be able to do on their own... but even with it, Dumbledore couldn't defeat Voldemort and could only equal him at best. Where as Harry managed to equal Voldy's power without it. Going by the evidence in the books, Dumbles is a third rate power relying on the Elder Wand to boost his reputation, with Voldy in second place, and Harry at the top.

3 - The missing twenty years... yes, I'm going to slowly fill in the missing 20 years of Harry's life in dialogue and explanations... but don't expect everything at once in a huge info dump... Harry's had 20 years of life that changed and coloured his views, not everything is rosy and perfect, and neither is Harry.

The 10 / 11 year old Harry here is a VERY different character to the 38 year old Harry, and they will have their differences, arguments and influence each other along the way, both for the better and the worst.

25 July, 1991

Potter Manor
Honley
West Yorkshire
England

Harry frowned as he woke up, blinking the sleep out of his eyes as he tried to gather his bearings together and figure out where he was. The fact that the light was coming through a window on the wrong side of the bedroom had thrown him off entirely for a moment, and it took him a few minutes to get his brain into gear and remember what had happened last night.

Getting back from having dinner with the Bones family, they'd finally had time to sit down and discuss things just between themselves, with his younger self being eager to start exploring the new house and living his life for himself for once.

He couldn't really blame him, he remembered back when he was his age and tasted freedom for the first time when he'd started Hogwarts, it was an exhilarating feeling and one that he couldn't deny his younger self from experiencing.

So he'd shown his younger self around the manor, pointing out the various bathrooms, study areas,
library, potions room, and bedrooms around the four floors of the house. Explaining little stories behind each of them as he went through, and smiling to himself as he saw the excited and wondrous expression on his younger self as he learnt about his family for the first time.

Then it had come to the discussion about bedrooms and what to do with them, when his younger self had asked about his dad's bedroom, Harry hadn't been able to deny him. He'd slept in that room for close to twenty years now, so maybe it was time to move on and claim the Manor properly for himself and not simply living here in the shadow of his parents again.

With that decision in mind, he'd given his father's bedroom to his younger self, while he'd decided to claim the main bedroom that would have been his grandparents room for himself.

After the younger Harry had gone to bed, he'd spent the time idly cleaning up the various rooms in the house while planning things and jotting down as many notes about his Hogwarts life as he could remember.

Destroying Voldemort's horcruxes were definitely top of his list, but getting to them was the problem at the moment. There was only one that was really accessible, another he would be able to get to when his younger self started Hogwarts, but the other two were going to be a problem, and that wasn't even including the piece of Voldemort's soul that was lodged in his younger self at the moment.

There were so many problems still to overcome, but he at least had a plan for now and would be able to work on things as time went on.

Clambering out of bed he grabbed his glasses from the bedside table before tugging his jeans on and frowning thoughtfully, he'd been wearing the same clothes and simply cleaning them with charms or transfiguring a few other items ever since he'd arrived back in this time, but eventually he would need other clothes, and his younger self definitely would, as he was still wearing Dudley's old hand-me-downs.

"More shopping," Harry groused to himself as he finished buttoning up his jeans, ruffling his messy hair as he ignored his shirt for now and headed out of the bedroom to wander downstairs in search of coffee.

Wandering down the spiral stairway he took a moment to peek down the first floor corridor to see what his younger self was up to, idly poking his head around the door and shrugging when he saw that he wasn't still in bed or anywhere in the bedroom.

Leaving the location of his younger self aside for the moment he continued on downstairs, ambling through the living room towards the kitchen with a frown, making a mental note to change the living room around back to how he liked it when he got chance.

It didn't take him long to set the stove top kettle to boil and make up a fresh mug of coffee, it was only instant Nescafe, but it was coffee, and for now it was the best he could do.

Enjoying a few sips of the coffee he frowned as he looked at his arm, noticing the way the hairs were standing on end a bit before he focused on feeling the cold air coming through the kitchen.

Following the breeze out he headed towards the front door, spotting his younger self sitting on the doorstep with a glass of water beside him and a book in hand.

"Morning," He grunted aloud, causing his younger self to startle and spin around to look at him. "What you got there?" He asked with idle curiosity as he leaned against the door frame, content to
enjoy his morning coffee in the fresh air.

"I borrowed it from the library upstairs, is... is that alright?" The younger Harry asked hopefully as he looked up at his older self.

He was still really coming to terms with that, and as he looked up at his older self, the differences between him and the older him were drastic and rather visible to see.

His older self seemed happy to just walk around in jeans, topless and not caring what anyone thought about him, but then his body was strong, muscled and fully grown, it wasn't skinny enough to show off his ribs or littered with bruises like his body often was.

He actually wondered when he would grow that sort of confidence, one day maybe he would be as comfortable in his body as his older self was, instead of preferring to hide away under baggy clothes and shying away from being touched.

"It's your library as much as mine," Harry shrugged. "Read whatever you want." He explained with a nod. "Actually, there's a few books in there that you probably shouldn't read, but that's only because they're pretty dangerous if you don't know what you're doing with them." He mused thoughtfully. "As long as you don't try any magic out of the books without checking with me, you can read whatever you want."

"Thanks," The younger Harry beamed up, the happiness at having books of his own showing plainly on his face.

"So, what caught your eye?" Harry asked, nodding down to the book. "Charms," he simplified, reading off the title and recognising the book as one he'd read before. "Good place to start I guess." He nodded with a small smile. "Professor Flitwick is the charms teacher, he was still there when I was an Auror." He explained with a laugh.

"I just thought I'd like to know a bit more," The younger Harry explained. "You're performing all this magic, and Susan was talking about all the things her aunt had shown her... I... I just don't want to be left out."

"You won't be," Harry shook his head quickly. "You're going to do fine at charms, damn good in transfiguration, but defence is where you're going to do your best."

"Defence?" The younger Harry asked, looking up at his older self.

"Defence Against the Dark Arts," Harry nodded in confirmation.

"Right, Susan told me about that one yesterday." The younger Harry frowned thoughtfully. "I'm going to be good at it?"

"I wouldn't have become an Auror if I was crap at it," Harry smirked back, enjoying a mouthful of coffee. "Disarming charms, protection charms, banishing, bombarda, dissilusionment, patronus. Those are all charms that you're going to learn and become really good at. They're the bread and butter of the Defence course really."

"Oh," The younger Harry nodded, absorbing this for the moment. "So I should keep reading charms first then?"

Harry nodded back, content to enjoy his coffee for the moment. "I'm going to organise with Amelia to put a Fidelius Charm around our houses, this one and hers." He explained with a shrug. "It's a complicated charm, but it'll hide the houses from being discovered by anyone we don't invite here."
"Big magic?" The younger Harry asked innocently.

"Complicated magic," Harry nodded back. "Took me ages to learn that one, it's probably the only charm I know that took me longer than the animagus to learn." He mused with a thoughtful laugh.

"Animagus?" The younger Harry asked, frowning at the strange word. "What's that?"

"It's a ritual that lets you turn into an animal, it takes months and it's a pain in the arse." Harry admitted with a grimace. "There's a potion you have to make for it, and hold a leaf in your mouth for an entire month." He explained at his younger self's interested look. "Dad and Sirius were great at it, they both did it and could change into animals whenever they wanted. Minerva... Professor McGonagall," He corrected himself with a frown, making a mental note not to stay in the habit of calling the professors by their given names in front of his younger self. "She can do it as well, she turns into a house cat."

"Wow!" The younger Harry grinned eagerly. "Can I learn that?"

"When you're a bit bigger," Harry laughed back. "It's pretty complicated, and if you mess it up you could be stuck as an animal forever."

"Oh," The younger Harry frowned, but nodded at that warning. "What am I... what do you change into?"

"A lion," Harry smiled widely at the shocked expression on his younger self's face. "Yeah, it was a surprise to me too." He grinned down. "But it feels right, it's not something you can really explain to anyone else, I guess that's why they don't teach it in school." He mused as he drained the last of his coffee from the mug.

"So... um... Miss Bones?" The younger Harry asked with a small smirk on his face, looking up at his older self. "Is she going to be around a lot?"

"Probably," Harry nodded down. "I didn't plan on letting her in on the secrets or anything, but she'd be a great help to us with everything we've got to do." He admitted thoughtfully.

"Susan said if you two started dating, we'd be brother and sister." The younger Harry explained, making a face at the thought.

"It's way to early for this conversation," Harry groused, rubbing his face with his spare hand. "What do you think about me pretending to be your dad then?"

The younger Harry shrugged at that, looking up at his older self and thinking about it for a moment. "I've never had a dad before."

"Me neither," Harry admitted, mirroring the shrug.

"It... it might be nice though?" The younger Harry asked, looking up at his older self.

"You're sure?" Harry mused thoughtfully. "Wouldn't it be a bit weird, having yourself as your own dad?" He asked, trying to get the thought straight in his head. "OK, I think I actually sprained my brain trying to understand what I just said there."

"Yeah," The younger Harry nodded in agreement, wrinkling his nose at the thought. "So... I just call you dad?"

"I guess that'd be easier than both of us being called Harry," Harry nodded thoughtfully.
"And Miss Bones is going to call you James?" The younger Harry asked.

"That's what we're going to tell everyone," Harry nodded back. "And I really hope dad doesn't mind, though knowing what I know about him, he's probably laughing his arse off somewhere at all of this."

"I hope so," The younger Harry smiled up, liking the thought of his dad actually being happy somewhere.

"Yeah," Harry smiled down, reaching down and ruffling his younger self's hair. "Come on, lets have some breakfast then we can go shopping. I need some clothes, and I know you do too."

"OK," The younger Harry nodded eagerly as he jumped up from where he'd been sitting on the doorstep. "Can I get a coat like yours?" He asked hopefully as he followed his older self through to the kitchen.

"That..." Harry trailed off, glancing into the living room where his dragon-skin trench-coat was thrown over the leather couch. "That was dads, mum bought it for him when he was an Auror, I found it in the family vault when I finished school."

"Oh," The younger Harry whispered, looking into the living room reverently at the coat in question.

"Yeah," Harry nodded, understanding his younger self's expression. "I don't think they do them in your size though, maybe when you're older." He smirked down to his younger self.

"Promise?" The younger Harry asked hopefully.

"Promise," Harry grinned back. "Come on, we should probably buy some food while we're out as well, I'm not exactly known for keeping the kitchen well stocked." He admitted with a grimace, thinking that his usual habit of just bacon or sausage sandwiches in the morning with a mug of coffee, then snacking through the day certainly wasn't going help his younger self grow out of the malnourished body he'd suffered with thanks to the Dursley's.

"More shopping?" The younger Harry asked in a small whine.

"Part of being an adult, unfortunately," Harry grimaced with a nod.

"Being an adult isn't as fun as it looks, is it?" The younger Harry asked as he looked around the kitchen and tried to see what he could do to help.

"Nope," Harry mused back, flicking his wand towards the oven hobs and lighting two of them up with a silent incantation. "Bacon sandwiches OK again?"

"Yes," The younger Harry nodded back happily, running to the cupboard where he knew the bacon was stored.

"Sit down," Harry groused with a laugh, shaking his head at how his younger self was trying to climb on the worktops to get to the cupboard overhead. "I'll cook, you can fill up the kettle with water if you want, just don't burn yourself."

"I won't." The younger Harry promised eagerly, happily grabbing the stove top kettle and carrying it over to the sink to fill it up with water.

Harry nodded over, grabbing the frying pan and readying it to start cooking up some bacon.
"Is... um... is Susan going to be my friend then?" The younger Harry asked curiously as he watched his older self start cooking.

"Yeah, she's a good friend." Harry nodded thoughtfully. "She's pretty quiet though and got on with Hermione more for the first few years, but I think that was only because Ron was so brash and loud that he pushed everyone else away from me back then."

"Ron?" The younger Harry asked, not having heard this name before.

"Ron," Harry grimaced, ruffling his hair in frustration as he tried to word this correctly. "Ron was someone I thought was a friend, and he might have been one really, but he was too much like Dudley to be a real friend."

"Really?" The younger Harry's face screwed up as he tried to imagine being friends with anyone that was like Dudley.

"He's a very jealous person who bullies anyone who can do things better than he can." Harry simplified with a nod. "But... he was the first person that was really friendly to me when I started school, so..." He trailed off with a shrug. "Like I said, I thought he was a friend, but he was only interested in being friends with someone famous until he became famous himself, then he let it go to his head."

"I hate people like that," The younger Harry frowned thoughtfully.

"You always will," Harry nodded back. "Stay away from Ron this time around and you won't have to put up with him trying to control who you talk to and who you can be friends with." He explained with a shrug. "The first time me and Hermione really became friends, it was because she'd run off after Ron made her cry."

"He sounds like a bully," The younger Harry frowned up at his older self.

"It took me a long time to see it like that, but yeah." Harry nodded back. "I haven't been friends with him for a long time now."

"So... so it's better if I'm friends with Susan instead then?" The younger Harry asked, watching as his older self flipped the bacon over with a quick flick of his wand.

"Definitely," Harry smiled back. "Susan, Neville, Hannah and Hermione. Those are the people that'll stick by you the most."

"Hannah?" The younger Harry asked curiously.

"One of Susan's friends, she becomes Neville's girlfriend later on." Harry explained with a shrug. "She's pretty cool, but gets pulled into things too easily."

"Alright," The younger Harry shrugged at that piece of information. "Susan was telling me more about the houses at the school as well."

"Oh?" Harry asked, raising his eyebrow at that.

"You said we... I'll be in Gryffindor?" The younger Harry asked.

"Yup," Harry nodded back. "Susan's in Hufflepuff, Neville and Hermione will be in Gryffindor with you." He explained with a shrug as he moved to get the bread out of the cupboard.
"What are the other houses?" The younger Harry asked curiously.

"Ravenclaw," Harry mused aloud. "Luna gets sorted there next year, they're supposed to be the smart house, but it's full of bullies really."

"Oh," The younger Harry frowned at that. "Susan said that Slytherin was where the bullies were."

"She's right," Harry nodded back, bringing over the two plates of bacon sandwiches and putting them on the table before returning to the stove to finish making his coffee. "Slytherin... there's a lot to talk about with what's going on in Slytherin, but there's two names I want you to remember. Draco Malfoy and Severus Snape."

"Who are they?" The younger Harry asked, refilling his own glass of water before sitting down at the table and gingerly sliding over one of the bacon sandwiches.

"Draco Malfoy... he's a bully. He thinks he's better than everyone else just because he's a pure blood wizard, he'll be a problem all the way through school and for quite a while after." Harry explained bluntly.

The younger Harry frowned thoughtfully at that as he took a bite of his bacon sandwich and took note of what his older self was saying.

"Severus Snape, he's the leader of the Slytherins really, like Professor McGonagall is for the Gryffindors." Harry explained after swallowing a mouthful of his coffee. "He's a spy, he's working for Dumbledore to spy on the evil wizards around, but he's a pretty nasty piece of work anyway and doesn't see anything wrong with hurting people or letting them get hurt even if he can stop it. He taught potions for me, but I'm going to make sure he's not there to cause the same problems for you."

"Potions," The younger Harry nodded, swallowing his bacon sandwich quickly. "Susan told me about that, she said everyone's afraid of the potions professor and that he hates everyone."

"She's right," Harry nodded back. "He's one of the worst bullies at the school, but Dumbledore keeps him around just to be his spy. Since I'll be getting rid of both of them, you shouldn't have any problems with either of them."

"Oh." The younger Harry nodded at that, trying to think about what his older self was planning. "You're... you're not going to kill them are you?"

"Probably not," Harry frowned thoughtfully. "I'm not going to lie to you though, some people are going to die, there's a war coming if I can't stop Voldemort again, and it'll get worse before it gets better."

"I... I don't know if I could kill anyone." The younger Harry whispered.

"You won't have to," Harry promised over. "I... when I was in school, I killed someone when I was only a year older than you are." He admitted with a sad sigh. "He was possessed by Voldemort, but it took me a while to come to terms with what happened."

"Did you mean to do it?" The younger Harry asked.

"It was a fight, he was trying to kill me so..." Harry trailed off with a small shrug. "Yes, I meant to do it, but I didn't understand what it meant back then."

"Will I have to do that?" The younger Harry asked with wide eyes.
"No," Harry shook his head firmly. "I'll deal with that, you focus on school and making friends, I'll deal with all the troubles so you don't have to."

"But I can help, really." The younger Harry said firmly, clearly wanting to be as helpful as he could be.

"I know you can," Harry laughed over the table. "I wouldn't have made it through school if I wasn't capable of doing all that." He explained, pointing towards his younger self with his sandwich. "The point is, I never had someone looking out for me who could do all of this, but you have me." He explained with a shrug.

"Oh," The younger Harry frowned, thinking about this for a moment. "Is that what a dad is supposed to do then?"

"I guess," Harry mused with a nod. "Yeah, I think so."

"So you'd really be my dad then, not just a pretend dad?" The younger Harry asked.

"If that's what that means, then... yeah, I'd be your dad, I think." Harry frowned thoughtfully, ruffling his hair as he tried to figure that out in his head.

"I'd like that," The younger Harry simply shrugged, grinning over the table at his older self.

"I never had a dad, I've never been a dad." Harry muttered, scratching his stubble and wondering how on earth he'd gotten himself into this situation.

"You're my dad now." The younger Harry said simply, happily enjoying his breakfast and completely oblivious to the extremely confused look his older self was giving him.

"To be a kid again," Harry whispered to himself, bemused at how innocent and naive his younger self was.

He hadn't been that innocent in a long time, it was something that his Hogwarts years and the war that followed had stolen from him, so it was really strange being faced with it again and realising how much things had changed over the years.

The younger Harry hadn't faced Voldemort, hadn't been betrayed by his friends time after time, and hadn't come to the realisation that the country as a whole didn't deserve to be saved anymore. He was still innocent and optimistic about the future in a way he hadn't been in over twenty years.

It was refreshing in some ways, but disheartening in others. Knowing that that innocence he saw in his younger self wouldn't last, and it would be stolen away by bigotry and corruption and bullying.

He happily just sat in silence as he enjoyed his bacon sandwich and coffee, watching as his younger self nibbled his way through his own bacon sandwich while reading the charms book he'd taken from the library.

Was it worth trying to save that innocence that was still there? Or would a more innocent Harry just get hurt more over the years when the truth finally came and slapped him around the face? Was it worth even trying? Or should he simply help his younger self see the darker side of the world earlier on so he could be ready to face it head on?

Or could he actually do this and change things for the better this time around?

He wasn't sure if he actually could, but he was sure as hell going to give it a damn good try.
"Amelia?" Harry called out, knocking on the front door of the Bones Manor, it was already hanging half open, indicating that Amelia or Susan were either around the house or the grounds outside somewhere.

Shopping had been surprisingly easy thankfully, after changing up a load of galleons into muggle money, he'd managed to get a load of clothes for both him and his younger self, and managed to keep himself from laughing when his younger self seemed intent on copying his own carefree and hard wearing style instead of choosing clothes that were his own style.

"Through here James, come on through."

Harry smiled as he heard the call, pushing the front door open more and stepping through with his younger self in tow. It was still weird getting used to hearing Amelia calling him James, but at least he'd gotten used to his younger self calling him 'dad' all day, even with the little smirk he gave him every time.

"Busy day?" Amelia asked, looking up from the couch to see the various bags of clothes he was carrying.

"Shopping," Harry groused as he dropped the bags on the floor. "We've got a few hours left, so I was going to head to Diagon and pick up the rest of his school books and bits."

"Ah," Amelia nodded thoughtfully. "I was planning on going myself, but have got caught up in paperwork instead." She admitted with a grimace at the piles of parchment around her.

"I remember that, don't miss it." Harry admitted with a grin.

"Well, I did manage to bring out some things for you." Amelia nodded, fishing around for a moment before grabbing the piece of parchment she'd been looking for and holding it out for him. "Fill that in and I'll file it tomorrow."

Harry raised an eyebrow as he took the piece of parchment, recognising it instantly as an animagus registration form, what was amusing was that most of it had already been filled out for James Potter. "You want me to register?" He asked with a smirk.

"The Ministry relies on paperwork," Amelia nodded thoughtfully. "If I file this away and make it look like it's been overlooked, then when it's found it'll be used as more proof that you are who you say you are." She explained. "It will also make you legal, which will keep you on the good side of the Aurors." She explained, nodding to the other parchments she was holding out that were clearly marked as Auror Employment forms. "I took the liberty of pulling up James' old records, there's nothing here that could be used against you, some of it is actually rather helpful."

"Oh?" Harry mused thoughtfully, taking the employment records with a curious expression on his face. "James was a rather gifted Auror before he went into hiding at Albus' prompting, Alastor Moody was his senior auror, all the dates and training certificates are in there, it's just a copy, all the real documents are still at The Ministry."

"Useful," Harry nodded, flicking through the various documents and making a mental note to read them more thoroughly when he got chance. "I made sure the unplottable charms and wards around the manor were secure last night, I'm ready to do the Fidelius whenever you are."
"It still surprises me that you are powerful enough to perform a Fidelius, there aren't many wizards who have the will necessary to cast that charm." Amelia mused aloud. "You'll place it over this manor too?"

"That's the plan," Harry nodded back. "Voldemort targeted this place when he came back to power last time, I'm just taking away that opportunity before he gets chance."

"And our secret keepers?" Amelia asked curiously.

"Each other." Harry shrugged. "Well, you and him." He mused, nodding to the younger Harry. "I can't cast the Fidelius and be the secret keeper at the same time, so he'll have to do it."

"Rather a shame I lack the power to cast it myself," Amelia frowned but nodded in agreement. "Are you alright with that?" She asked, looking to the younger Harry.

"Um, yes?" The younger Harry nodded quickly. "I mean, um... I read all the stuff about it that dad told me about, it all sounds pretty complicated, but I just need to know the secret and not tell anyone about it right?"

"Exactly," Amelia nodded with a smile. "It's a lot of responsibility though."

"I know," The younger Harry nodded. "But if you're responsible for keeping us safe, then we can do the same for you right?" He asked with a small smile. "And it'll keep Susan safe too as well."

"It will," Amelia nodded back.

"Once we've got the Fidelius up, I'm going to start teaching Harry some charms and hexes to keep him safe." Harry announced.

"You've got him casting magic already?" Amelia frowned over. "You do know that's against the law?"

"The law's a sack of shit on that one, you know it, I know it." James said firmly. "There's barely a pure blood family out there that doesn't have their kids casting as soon as they start showing off accidental magic. The law is only there to stop muggle-born's from having the same advantage just so pure blood families can get one over on them and be better at it when they start Hogwarts. It's a crock, and I'll tell anyone the same thing." He explained bluntly. "Same as the trace, it only affects muggle-borns, they can't trace pure blood kids because they're already living somewhere where there's magic being thrown around constantly. It's all biased against muggle-borns, just like every other law on the books."

Amelia mused over that with a frown. "I can't deny it, but it's still the law. But... but, given what you're telling me about the future..." She frowned thoughtfully, rubbing her temples and lifting the monocle out of her eye. "Would you be willing to teach Susan as well?"

"As long as she wants to," Harry shrugged. "I already caught the mini-me working his way through a charms book this morning before breakfast." He explained with a smirk down at his younger self. "So I figure teaching him some of the basics before he starts will be a good way to get ahead of the curve."

"A good plan," Amelia nodded back. "You seem to be dealing rather well with the knowledge that your older self has come back in time?" She asked, looking down to the younger Harry. "It's not every day something like this happens, not even in our world."

"I didn't even know I was a wizard until he told me, or about magic or any of this." The younger
Harry explained with a small shrug. "But it answers a whole load of questions I had, and it's kinda cool to know how things are going to go."

"Only how things went for him, we're going to change how things go from here on." Amelia corrected him. "I think I will join you for some shopping however, Susan still needs some of her books and we haven't looked for a familiar yet for her." She mused thoughtfully. "She's out in the back garden, would you mind?" She asked, smiling towards the younger Harry.

"Alright," The younger Harry shrugged before heading off back out the door to find Susan.

Once the younger Harry had left, Amelia turned her attention to Harry properly. "I've also started an investigation into the long term prisoners in Azkaban. It's ruffled a few feathers, but I leaked information about it to the Prophet already to drum up some support."

"Oh?" Harry asked, folding up the parchments Amelia had given to him and stuffing them into one of his shopping bags. "All of the prisoners of Azkaban?"

"It seemed more subtle than simply focusing on Sirius Black and drawing direct attention to what we were doing." Amelia clarified. "Also, if there are more innocent people in Azkaban, I want to know about it." She explained firmly. "I've had two junior Aurors start digging through trial transcripts already and comparing them to the names listed for Azkaban, I should have the information in a few days."

"As long as Fudge doesn't block you from pushing on with it," Harry frowned thoughtfully.

"Quite," Amelia nodded back. "It may take a couple of weeks, but I'm certain I can get Sirius in front of a Wizengamot hearing before things come to a head at Hogwarts."

"Getting Dumbledore out of Hogwarts is the first step," Harry frowned, scratching his head as he tried to plan things out. "If it's public enough that he hired Voldemort to teach at the school, that'll be enough to call a vote for his seat as the Chief Warlock as well."

"Perhaps bringing some reporters to Hogwarts with you then to witness the confrontation?" Amelia asked dubiously. "You're certain you can deal with... with Voldemort during the sorting ceremony?"

"Easily," Harry nodded back with certainty. "He's a ghost, a wraith possessing Quirrell, once I touch him, he'll start falling apart and be pushed out of the body. He'll run and hide when he realises he can't do anything in response."

"As long as the students are safe," Amelia frowned back.

"They'll be safer without him, Dumbledore or Snape hanging around." Harry explained with a shrug. "Once I confront Voldemort, Dumbledore will try and bluster his way out of it."

"That's where we'll need the media on our side." Amelia said with a smile. "If we get the reporters to witness Voldemort's return, then it'll force Fudge into accepting it and starting preparations early, and we can use the same momentum to force Albus out of the school."

"Maybe," Harry mused aloud, ruffling his hair as he thought about it. "I know just the person, she'll be able to watch the entire thing, and her poison quill will be working for us without her even knowing about it."

"Oh?" Amelia asked, raising a lone silver eyebrow in response.
"Rita Skeeter," Harry answered with a knowing smirk, causing Amelia to frown back at him. "Trust me, she's who we'll need to write the worst account of what's going on at that school. A few articles from her, and the entire country will be calling for Dumbledore's head."

"I can't deny you're right, but the idea of working with that... woman, is repugnant." Amelia frowned at the thought.

"Yeah, but I know all her secrets anyway, so if she steps off her leash..." Harry smirked with a shrug. "I have no problem crushing her like a bug this time around, I won't even loose any sleep over it."

Amelia simply nodded at that, watching as Susan and the younger Harry came in from outside before they all started to get ready for a trip back to Diagon Alley.
Chapter 6

TITLE: Double Back

DISCLAIMER: All things Harry Potter belong J K Rowling... basically, if you recognise it, it isn’t mine... Please don't sic the Aurors on me, I’m just here for the fun.

AN: From this chapter on, I will be referring to the adult Harry as James, this is to limit confusion and repeated distinctions between the two Harry's.

For those curious, here is the manor I'm using for Potters Manor in this fic.

https://secure.uniquebookingservices.com/uf/press/2526/975-large.jpg


Not as opulent or ridiculous as some make it, but realistic for the time period it would have been built in for a rich family and then expanded on and magically enhanced over a few generations.

31 July, 1991

Potter Manor
Honley
West Yorkshire
England

"James?"

"Come on through." James yelled from the kitchen, recognising Amelia's voice coming from the fireplace. "What's going on?" He asked, smiling as Amelia and Susan came through to the kitchen from the living room where the main fireplace was.

"Some things you should know about, and I thought it would be a nice surprise to bring Harry's birthday presents over in person." Amelia explained with a nod.

"He's out on his broom again," James explained with a knowing grin. "There's some spares by the front door, nothing fancy though, but it'll get you in the air if you want." He explained with a nod to Susan. "Just stay away from the silver birch one, that's my... it's a custom one of mine, it's more powerful than a Nimbus, so it's not really a good idea for anyone else to try it." He explained, quickly thinking up a story to explain away his birch Lightning Bolt broom from the future.

"Thanks James." Susan grinned happily, dashing to the door to grab one of the spare brooms before running outside to catch up with her friend.

"Where do they get all that energy from?" James groused, shaking his head in amusement.

"They steal it from us," Amelia answered with mock seriousness.
"Ah, that explains it." James grinned back. "So, what's going on?"

"Albus was prowling around The Ministry again today," Amelia explained. "I think Harry's disappearance has been noticed."

"Wouldn't surprise me," James shrugged with a disinterested look. "He had... Figg, something Figg, a squib anyway, spying on me from down the street." He explained with a shrug. "A few days or a week, she wouldn't have noticed, but I figured she'd have noticed something sooner or later."

"I had assumed he would have had someone watching," Amelia nodded thoughtfully. "You've replied to Harry's Hogwarts letter?"

"Yeah, all done and dusted." James nodded back as he started boiling some water. "Coffee?" He asked.

"Love one," Amelia nodded, moving around to put the presents she brought for Harry on the kitchen table. "Albus was trying to drum up some of his old supporters, I caught him chatting to Kingsley yesterday in the department corridors."

"Not a big surprise there, Shacklebolt was one of his Order of the Burnt Turkey as well, he was happy to take orders from Dumbledore last time even when it meant doing things against the Aurors." James explained bluntly. "Shacklebolt, Tonks, Mad-Eye, those were the three Aurors I remember."

"I don't believe I know this Tonks?" Amelia asked, raising an eyebrow as James finished making the coffee. "Alastor retired several years ago though, he's not suitable to return to the corps after so many years. The paranoia really got to him I'm afraid."

"Think she's still at Hogwarts actually, either that or she finished last year, or this year." James mused aloud. "Metamorphmagus, punk look, clumsier than a hippogriff on ice." He explained with a laugh. "She's pretty fun, but she was in Dumbledore's pocket through and through last time. Even stuck with his orders to keep me locked up at the Dursley's after Sirius died and stopped me from going to his will reading."

"Hmmm," Amelia nodded, making a mental note to keep an eye out for that particular Auror recruit. "I still can't believe you bought Harry a Nimbus two thousand." She muttered with a disapproving frown.

"He can handle it, I did." James explained with a shrug as he finished the coffee off and brought it over to the table. "Minerva got it for me when I made the Quidditch team first year remember? This way Harry's not indebted to anyone in the school when he makes the team, and I can simply have it sent up to him."

"Have you had any more thoughts about my suggestion?" Amelia asked, accepting the mug of black coffee with a nod of thanks.

"Teaching?" James frowned, scratching his head idly. "A bit, I'm not sure it's the best idea though." He admitted.

"Oh?" Amelia asked, raising her eyebrow as she enjoyed a sip of the coffee.

"Suck at Hogwarts I can't deal with the Horcruxes or be around to counter anything Voldemort does," He explained as he drummed his fingers on the table.

"But you'd be at the school to keep the children safe," Amelia countered.
"True, but that's no good if Voldemort takes control of The Ministry like he did last time." James explained. "It all depends on if Fudge pulls his head out of his arse when I bring Voldemort out for everyone to see."

"He's already been talking about the first day at Hogwarts," Amelia interrupted with a smirk. "A few comments here and there, and he's convinced that being there to witness Harry's sorting was his best idea ever, he's even invited with Wizarding Wireless to cover it as well so he can be seen applauding and congratulating him on his return to the magical world." She explained with a snort of amusement.

"Anything for publicity," James rolled his eyes in amusement, remembering how bad Fudge had been. "So I'll have an audience for Voldemort's grand unveiling then?" He asked with a smirk towards Amelia.

"Certainly," Amelia chuckled in response. "Cornelius, Albus, the Wizarding Wireless, the Daily Prophet if that reporter of yours shows up."

"She will," James nodded knowingly, Rita would be drooling over an exclusive like seeing Harry Potter's sorting.

"Then everyone around the country will know Voldemort is back by the next morning. Even Cornelius wouldn't be able to spin that around." Amelia smiled contentedly at how the plan was coming together.

"He'll probably try though, or just bury his head in the sand and cry until it goes away." James muttered with a shake of his head. "If he keeps that up again, we'll have to force a vote to get him out of power."

"By that point, you'll have been outed as James Potter to the world already." Amelia pointed out with a knowing smile.

"I'm not taking the job," James said firmly, holding up his hand to stop that idea in it's tracks. "No way, you can take it."

"I'll never get the votes," Amelia shook her head. "Too many of the old families have grudges to grind against me."

"That's their problem," James groused, shaking his head at the stupidity of politics. "Once Voldemort's outed, the dark families will flock back to him anyway, so it'll only be a matter of time before they're all unmasked."

"You remember them all clearly?" Amelia asked.

"Malfoy, Nott, Lestrange, Crouch, Yaxly, Dolohov, Rowle, the Carrows" James rattled off. "I'd have to pull up the pensieve again to remember all of them though."

"I've already got a trusted Auror watching Barty Crouch, you're certain he's got Junior under the Imperious at his house?" Amelia asked curiously.

"That's what he told me," James nodded, doing his best to drag up every memory he had of Barty Crouch Jr.

Amelia nodded at that. "I'll stage a raid during the week, it shouldn't be too hard to uncover what's going on there, and then get both of the Crouch's in front of the Wizengamot."
"Like that'll help," James snorted derisively, knowing full well that the Wizengamot was stocked with enough Death Eaters or sympathisers to make any trial little less than a sham.

"It'll help Sirius," Amelia said bluntly. "If I can get him under veritaserum, I can ask how many people he threw into Azkaban without trials, it might clear Sirius Black's name without having to stage his escape first."

"Hnh," James frowned, thinking about that for a second. "Alright, that might work." He admitted thoughtfully. "Keep the Daily Prophet around the trial though, that way it becomes public knowledge pretty much instantly and nobody can cover it up again."

"You don't have any faith in our government at all, do you?" Amelia asked, a little depressed at how disillusioned James was with how their world was.

"After everything I've been through?" James snorted, shaking his head. "You saw all the memories I've got, would you trust The Ministry after all of that?"

"But you still worked for them?" Amelia prompted him. She had to admit, he had a point. After seeing the memories of Harry's fifth, sixth and the rest of the war, she could definitely understand where his apathy and disgust towards The Ministry came from.

"It's a job," James shrugged with a disinterested look. "I'm not saying it's the worst job or anything, but it's... it's what I was expected to do, and once I got into it I just sort of carried on with it." 

"It's not what you actually want to do then?" Amelia asked, curious what sort of life Harry would chose if he had the freedom to do what he wanted. "What would you do if you had the choice then?"

"I..." James paused, frowning at the thought and ruffling his messy hair. "I don't know." He admitted after a moment's pause. "I've been living up to everyone's expectations for so long, that I don't even know what I want to do anymore."

"Maybe you should start," Amelia smiled over. "Nobody here has any expectations of you."

James snorted at that, shaking his head. "Tell me that once everyone starts thinking I'm my dad." He muttered in amusement. "I'll be expected to start back in the Aurors before the first copy of the Prophet has even been printed."

"You don't HAVE to do what people expect you know, I certainly didn't." Amelia explained, enjoying a mouthful of her coffee while he looked at her in confusion. "The last grown witch of the Bones line? Even taking care of Susan, everyone wanted me to marry into a good line and continue the Bones family."

"Does that matter to you?" James asked, leaning against the kitchen worktop as he thought about what Amelia was saying.

"Not in the way you think," Amelia shook her head. "Most pure blood witches don't go into work like I did, and certainly not through the DMLE. It also occurred to me that if I marry someone, then it would fall to Susan to continue the Bones family once I was married."

"Ah," James nodded, understanding that at least.

"Quite," Amelia nodded in confirmation. "So I decided to ignore the expectations people had of me, and focus on living my life by what I wanted, not living the life other people wanted for me." She explained, pausing to enjoy a mouthful of coffee. "I'm not saying marriage is off the cards, but
finding a wizard willing to put up with my work, with coming second to Susan, and willing to let me keep my name so Susan can be free to marry who she wants when the time comes?"

"I see your point," James mused aloud.

"And you, any thoughts on continuing the Potter name?" Amelia asked with a small smile over towards him.

"None," James admitted bluntly. "I'm not even thinking about anything like that until Voldemort's dealt with, once that mess is all over again I'll be able to breath easier."

"A sensible plan," Amelie said thoughtfully. "I did have something for you though, despite your regular rants about not celebrating your birthday." She explained with a small smile, lifting up a small package in silver wrapping paper and gently tossing it over to him.

"Amelia..." James groused, catching the wrapped present easily and eyeing it dubiously. He hadn't really celebrated his birthday in years now, and was more than happy to continue on the tradition. It was just another day for him. The only person that ever really cared for the last few years was Hermione, and she always sent either a card and a little present, but nobody else really bothered with it, and it was just the way he liked it.

"Go on, you'll like this." Amelia promised, putting her mug of coffee down on the table as she moved over to join him by the worktop, watching as he slowly unwrapped the present to reveal a box underneath that he gingerly opened. "I dug it out of the old records, nobody goes down there, so it won't be missed." She explained when she saw him looking at the present in shock.

"This... is this..." James whispered, running his hand over the silver and gold badge that was shaped like a pentagram around a shield, with a pair of stylised crossed wands across the front. The name 'J Potter' was engraved underneath, leaving no guesses needed as to who the owner had been. "My dad's shield." He said softly.

"I thought it'd be better with you than in a dusty box down in The Ministry's basement," Amelia smiled, nudging him with her shoulder gently. "Happy Birthday Harry." She whispered before quickly leaning in and kissing him on his cheek.

6th August

"We got him!"

James quite literally fell off the sofa in shock at the loud shout that came through the living room, startling him from where he'd been happily sprawled out on the couch and reading a random transfiguration book that he'd picked up from the upstairs library.

"Evening Amelia," He muttered dryly, staying on the floor and glaring up at where he could now see Amelia had stepped through the fireplace. "It's alright Harry, it's just Amelia." He snorted, nodding towards where his younger self had run down the stairs to find out what the yelling was all about.

"Barty! We got him!" Amelia confirmed, striding over and pulling James up off the floor with a yank on his arms. "Sentenced to life in Azkaban, Junior got thrown to the dementors." She said with a nod.
"Well, that's a turn up," James mused thoughtfully, tossing his book down on the couch for now as he tried to figure out what this meant. "Life in Azkaban?" He asked, looking to Amelia for confirmation.

"I got him under veritaserum for over an hour in front of the entire Wizengamot, he admitted to keeping his son under the Imperious, casting it pretty much ever week for years, just to keep him under control." Amelia explained. "Sneaking him out of Azkaban, bribing the guards to leave him alone so he could switch his dying wife into the cell, the whole story."

"Damn, yeah, that'd do it." James grunted, ruffling his hair thoughtfully. "What else?" He asked, spotting the excited smirk on Amelia's face.

"I got to ask how many people he'd tossed in Azkaban without trials." She confirmed before setting her jaw, the earlier smile gone like dust in the wind as she moved into her full business mode.

"How many?" James asked, already dreading the number.

"Forty two," Amelia grimaced as she announced the number.

"Fuck!"

"James!" Amelia berated him, slapping him around the shoulder when she saw the younger Harry staring at his adult self in shock.

"Sorry," James frowned, looking down to his younger self. "Adults swear, don't do it at school, you'll loose house points for it."

"But if I don't get caught?" Harry asked with a cheeky grin.

"There you go," James smirked down with a snort of laughter.

"Don't encourage him, yourself, whatever." Amelia frowned, slapping James' shoulder again. "You're a terrible influence on yourself, you know that?" She muttered, shaking her head in exasperation.

"Alright alright," James grumbled, rubbing his shoulder where Amelia kept hitting him. "Did you get names?"

"All of them, Sirius wasn't even the first he tossed away, he'd been doing it for years and covering it all up." Amelia explained. "The Wizengamot was in uproar, Barty will be staying in Azkaban even if he could escape, it's about the only place that's safe for him. At least a dozen members of the Wizengamot had family members that had been denied a trial, they were screaming about calling Barty out for an honour dual right in the chambers."

"Fudge?" James asked, raising an eyebrow curiously.

"Blustering around as usual, blaming everything on Barty and the previous administration, but he took a big hit with it and everyone's pushing for all the people thrown in Azkaban to get a full trial, if not released outright." Amelia explained. "I've got Aurors chasing down Bagnold now to find out what she knew about it all, but nobody's seen her in months."

"That won't work," James frowned thoughtfully. Dropping back onto the couch and lazing back as he started tapping his knuckles on his knee. "Sirius will need a trial to clear his name, even if he's released, nobody will believe he's innocent unless he gets a trial." He explained. "Dumbledore?"
"Albus was giving Barty his usual disappointed glare throughout the entire thing, he did look actually surprised when Sirius' name was read out though." Amelia admitted.

"Not surprised," James mused aloud. "He's an arse..." He trailed off when he saw the glare Amelia was giving him then shrugged before continuing. "But I don't think he'd be in on keeping innocent people in Azkaban, he's too big on giving people more chances than they deserve to do anything like that."

"For what it's worth, I agree with you." Amelia nodded, moving over to join him on the couch, her traditional Wizengamot purple robes clashing drastically with his casual blue muggle jeans and green t-shirt.

"Does that mean Sirius is going to be free?" Harry asked, speaking up for the first time.

"Hopefully kiddo," Amelia nodded over. "We'll have to get him a trial first, but once I get him in front of the Wizengamot and get him to take some veritaserum, it's only a matter of time."

"That's great!" Harry grinned excitedly, having been told stories about Sirius by his older self. "Will he be coming to live here too?"

"We'll see," James nodded over. "How's your studying coming?" He asked, idly curious how his younger self had been doing.

"Great!" Harry beamed over. "I'm working on the charms book today."

"Again?" James asked, raising an eyebrow. He didn't remember being this excited about charms when he was Harry's age. "Go on then, keep at it and you'll be Flitwick's best student this year."

Harry nodded eagerly at that, dashing back off up the stairs to return to his books.

"Charms?" Amelia asked, looking to James for clarification.

"Don't look at me, that's all him." James explained with a shrug. "I honestly can't remember ever being that excited about charms, but he's diving right into it."

"There's differences already between the two of you?" Amelia asked, raising an eyebrow in amusement at this little fact.

"Hnh," James snorted, nodding slowly as he thought about it. "At this point I was locked in my bedroom with my relatives pretending I didn't exist." He mused thoughtfully. "I remembering reading through A History of Magic and flicking through the others, not devouring books like he's been doing."

"Where as Harry has an entire library open to him for the first time, without anyone judging him or yelling at him for touching the books." Amelia pointed out. "It was obvious there were going to be changes between the two of you as you changed things from your personal history, I'm just surprised something like this has shown up so early."

"I guess," James frowned thoughtfully. He'd done his best to keep as many things for Harry as similarly as he could. He'd found Hedwig again and bought her for him, he had the same books, new robes, the same Nimbus broom.

"You're treating him like a son as well, and he's looking to you to be the father neither of you had." Amelia explained thoughtfully. "That's going to change things, even little things like how Harry sees different people in authority and compares them to you."
"This is a lot more complicated than I'd thought," James grimaced, ruffling his hair in annoyance. "Alright, so what are we going to do about Sirius?"

"Once he's freed?" Amelia asked. "He'll be remanded to St Mungo's for treatment, being in Azkaban for a decade won't have been kind to him, I saw in your memories he was practically feral when he escaped in your time."

"Yeah," James admitted with a nod. "He got better, slowly, but Dumbledore didn't help by keeping him locked up like he was a prisoner in the home he hated."

Amelia frowned at that, but as both of them knew how each other felt about Albus bloody Dumbledore, neither of them needed to say anything more. "Did you collect the horcrux?"

"The ring?" James nodded. "Destroyed it already." He explained with a shrug. "Took it down to the forest when Harry was asleep, a quick burst of fiendfyre and it was toast." He paused, frowning again when he realised what he'd said. "You know, it's almost anti-climactic doing it this way. We spent over a year hunting them down last time, and I just destroyed one because Harry had gone to bed early and I was bored." He explained with a shrug, happy that he at least had managed to secure the other Resurrection Stone from the scorched remains and had locked it away upstairs for now.

"You poor thing," Amelia muttered sarcastically, rolling her eyes at him. "And you know where the others are?"

"As soon as Sirius gets us into Grimmauld, I can torch the next one." James nodded firmly. "I'll get the tiara once I've dusted Voldemort, and that just leaves the cup." He explained, still mentally trying to figure out a way to deal with the horcrux that was currently lodged in his younger self's head.

"Excellent," Amelia smiled happily at that. "There is someone I'd like you to meet though, she's been a good friend of mine since Hogwarts, and I think she'd be someone that could help us."

"OK, I'll bite?" James asked, raising an eyebrow towards Amelia.

"Julia Greengrass." Amelia explained. "She's on the Hogwarts Governors board as well as the St Mungo's Governors, the Greengrasses have had family seats there and on the Wizengamot for generations."


"Daphne Greengrass, her oldest daughter? She'll be starting Hogwarts this year?" Amelia prompted him.

"Daphne?" James asked, rolling the name around in his head. "Nope, doesn't ring a bell."

"Astoria?" Amelia asked curiously.

"Astoria, now that does." James nodded, clicking his fingers and turning to Amelia.

"Her youngest," Amelia explained. "Three years younger than Daphne. Cyrus was a good man."

"Astoria..." James continued to mutter to himself as he racked his memory. "Astoria Malfoy!" He clicked his fingers as he remembered the name. "She married Draco Malfoy." He grinned, happy he'd worked through that little memory block.
"Oh that poor thing," Amelia muttered dryly, not wanting to wish that future on anyone.

"You said Cyrus WAS a good man?" James asked, emphasising the past tense.

"Indeed, he died, an honour duel seven years ago." Amelia nodded. "Corban Yaxley cut him down with a collection of dark curses that should have seen him in Azkaban, but because it was an officiated duel, there wasn't anything I could do for her."

"Yaxley I know," James muttered darkly, remembering well the dark bastard that took over the DMLE under Voldemort's reign of terror. "Alright, why'd you want me to meet with her? And what should we tell her?"

"She's a good person, she's kept her family together even with threats from the darker families trying to take control of the Greengrass fortune." Amelia explained. "She's got the ear of the Hogwarts governors and will be able to neutralise Lucius Malfoy's influence."

"Well, you've sold me there." James admitted with a nod. "Anyone that can help kick Dumbledore out or kick Malfoy in the nuts is a good person in my book." He explained with a grin. "Set it up and I'll meet her."

"Good," Amelia smiled thankfully at him. "I think however, we should keep the appearance of you being James Potter to her, if only for the fact that she does deal with the Hogwarts staff from time to time, and I'm unsure how her occlumency would hold up to Albus or Severus."

"Hnh," James grunted but nodded along. "The fewer people in the know, the better as far as I'm concerned." He admitted. "I've already got the mini-me asking why he can't tell Susan about me."

"And his occlumency?" Amelia asked with an amused glance.

"About as strong as a wet paper bag," James groused. "I can't talk though, I didn't learn until sixth year, and that was with Snape raping my mind every week until I figured out how to block him out."

"Keep at it," Amelia smiled reassuringly. "I'm sure he'll get it, you have to be a much better teacher than Severus was."

"Not hard, Hedwig would be a better teacher than Snape was." James snorted in amusement. "I'll meet your friend, when do you want to do it?"

"I'll set up dinner this week some time, is Harry alright on his own for one evening?" Amelia asked dubiously.

"Sure," James nodded. "Seriously, I was on my own at that age more often than not, he'll keep his nose stuck in that charms book anyway, I've lost count of the amount of times I've had to run drying charms over his room because he was practising aguamenti inside." He complained with a good natured grin.

"Aguamenti? That's a sixth year charm?" Amelia asked, the shock visible on her face.

"It's not that hard, I used to use it a lot with a glacius charm to secure chunks of ice around idiots that were running from me or trip them up with ice under foot." James explained with a shrug. "I knew I found it easy, so figured Harry would have an easy go with it too."

"You're going to drive Fillius absolutely crazy, you know that?" Amelia asked, smirking at him. "I assume you've taught him glacius as well?"
"Of course," James grinned back at her. "He was showing that one off to Susan earlier in the week when he fetched their drinks after the lesson." He explained with a snort of laughter.

"How did Susan do?" She asked, honestly curious as to how her little niece was handling things.

"Actually pretty good, she's handy enough with the disarming spell already, that's the first one I taught them both, she's got pretty good reflexes so it'll be a good way to keep her safe." James explained. "Was weird teaching it to her again though, I remember teaching Susan when she was part of the DA back in fifth year, I don't remember her getting it this fast last time though."

"There were more students from what I remember of your memories?" Amelia mused aloud. "Perhaps one to one teaching with just her and Harry allowed her to pick it up a bit quicker this time."

"Maybe," James nodded thoughtfully. "Not a big deal, I'm just happy they'll both be able to hold their own against any of the idiots in the school."

"You won't rethink your decision to take over the Defence class once Quirrell is gone?" Amelia asked.

"Definitely not," James shook his head. "Between dealing with the Horcruxes, the Death Eaters worming out of the woodwork after we reveal Voldemort, dealing with Fudge and having Sirius around again?" He trailed off with a snort of laughter. "Not only no, but hell no." He explained with a laugh.

"I see your point," Amelia chuckled to herself. "I can't say I ever spent much time with Sirius before his... well, imprisonment."

"Honestly, neither did I." James admitted with a frown. "I've got maybe a summer's worth of memories with him, and a splattering of letters. Dumbledore kept us from spending too much time together, and with him being on the run and recovering from Azkaban..." He trailed off, rubbing his face in frustration. "I don't know how much of what I knew of Sirius was really him, or what was his more crazy side that came out because of his stint in Azkaban."

"Once he's been treated, I'll make sure you both get some time to talk, Harry as well." Amelia nodded with a small smile.

"Oh that'll be fun," Harry smirked. "He's already half-way towards crazy thanks to Azkaban, and I walk in looking just like his dead best friend? That'll go down great I'm sure." He exclaimed with a snort of amusement at the idea, mentally picturing Sirius fainting like a little girl at the sight.

"Ah, I hadn't thought of that." Amelia admitted with a grimace at how badly that could actually go. "Perhaps it would be better if myself and Harry break things to him in a more gentle manner?"

"You think?" James muttered, shaking his head at the thought. "I'll figure out how to break things to Sirius once he's stable, no point in piling more on when he's still recovering from Azkaban."

"Alright," Amelia nodded in agreement with that. "Until the trials are over with then, there's little else to do until Harry and Susan start Hogwarts."

"Hnh," James grunted in agreement, more than happy to just laze on the couch and relax until things heated up again. "Speaking off, where is little red today anyway?"

"Sleepover with Hannah," Amelia explained with a smile. "I thought I'd be in the chambers much later than I was, so the Abbots took her for the night again."
"Ahh," James smiled, remembering Hannah and Susan's friendship well enough.

"Hannah?" Amelia asked, prompting James with one of her usual questions about what the future held.

"Married, took over The Leaky. She's happy, two kids and a third on the way." James explained with a smile as he thought back to his friends.

"Married?" Amelia whispered, turning to James with the hint of juicy gossip now. "Do tell?"

"Neville Longbottom," James laughed back at Amelia's expression. "They're good together actually, she runs the Leaky, he's a professor at Hogwarts, Herbology. He's like a prodigy or something." He explained with a shrug.

"Well..." Amelia chuckled to herself. "That... I never thought I'd see that." She admitted with a smile. "Houses?"

"Neville was in Gryffindor with me, Hannah was in Hufflepuff with Susan." James explained.

"A Hufflepuff and a Gryffindor, how scandalous!" Amelia mocked with a small laugh. "I assume you've noticed how often Susan and Harry have been talking and sending owls to each other?"

"Hard not to," James laughed. "And no, I'm not going to say anything to him." He explained, holding up his hands in surrender. "If something happens with him and Susan, that's down to them. I'm not getting involved in the mini-me's girlfriend choices."

"But you wouldn't be opposed to it?" Amelia asked curiously.

"Not at all," James admitted, stretching out on the couch. "It's his life, if Susan makes him happy, that's his thing, we've already established he's going to be a different Harry than I was." He explained as he stood up. "Anyway, if little red's staying out, you hanging around for dinner then?"

"If it's not an imposition?" Amelia asked.

"Not at all, I've got a gammon joint I've been planning to cook up, plenty for the three of us." James smiled down. "Get comfortable, I'll get it started."

"Kind of you," Amelia smiled up, watching as he headed through to the kitchen before she started to take off her purple Wizengamot robes to reveal her more casual leggings and blouse underneath. "Anything I can do to help?" She asked loudly, calling through to the kitchen as she stood up to hang her robes up on the coat hanger in the corner of the room.

"I'm good," James called back.

Amelia nodded at that, heading through to the kitchen so she could continue talking with him anyway instead of sitting in the living room on her own. "So, I'll finally get to taste this cooking of yours then."

"Yup," James chuckled, his back to her as he focused on a few charms to peel some potatoes before throwing them into boil. "There's drinks in the cupboard by the door, help yourself to anything in there."

Amelia smiled at that, moving to the cupboard to investigate what sort of drinks James kept in the house, and was pleasantly surprised by a selection of wines along with the usual bottle of fire-whiskey, butterbeers and a few muggle drinks. "Wine?"
"Don't look at me, it was here when I got here." James explained with a shrug. "It'll be my grandparents, so don't blame me if it's bad or anything, I never got the hang of drinking the stuff."

"Hmmm," Amelia nodded absently, running her fingers over the various bottles of wine before making a selection of a medium dry red that would go with a gammon joint well. "Glasses?"

"Somewhere," James admitted, turning around for the first time. "Um, sorry, try the cupboard by the sink, I think I saw some wine glasses in there." He said quickly, covering up his dry mouth when he caught sight of Amelia in her more casual clothes.

"Surely we can be adults here?" Amelia chuckled, ignoring James' flustered look as she headed to the cupboard he indicated to look for a wine glass.

"Sorry," James frowned, turning around again in time to see Amelia stretching up to retrieve a glass, giving him a very nice view of her backside in the process. "It's... um..."

"There's nothing wrong with looking," Amelia chuckled, not even turning around as she found the glass she was after. "I'll admit, it's been a while since a man looked at me like that."

"Sorry," James apologised again. "But... why? I don't mean to ask anything personal but..." He frowned, gesturing to her. "I never knew what you looked like under all those robes." He said, trailing off awkwardly.

"Not all of us like to show off like you do in those tight muggle t-shirts," Amelia laughed, stalking her way over to him and tapping his chest to emphasise her point. "Most pure-blood witches are taught to be more demure and keep covered up from a young age."

"I always wondered what the thing with robes was," James muttered, shaking his head in bemusement.

"And as I explained, there aren't many wizards willing to get involved with a witch in my position, and that's not even mentioning the wizards who couldn't deal with a strong and self assured witch. Most wizards prefer their witches to be more demure and unassuming, submissive to their wishes. I have never been, and will never be a meek and submissive witch." Amelia explained with a laugh.
"Judging by your memories, you have no problems with that I assume?"

"Uh, no?" James asked, more to himself than to Amelia.

"Good," Amelia grinned wolfishly, gripping on to the neck of his t-shirt with one hand and pulling him down into a searing kiss before pressing against him and pushing him to the wall so she could press the kiss as much as she wanted, savouring every moment of his earthy taste as she drew his bottom lip into her mouth and teased it gently with her teeth. "Hmmm, I was right, you are delicious." She whispered, breaking the kiss but staying pressed tightly against his body.

"Um... wow," James breathed out, not having expected that whatsoever.

"Wow indeed," Amelia smirked before pulling him down to meet her lips and into another forceful kiss as she felt his arms wrap around her and pull her even tighter against his body.

Neither of them broke for quite a while after that, both more than happy to loose each other in the kisses that became more and more passionate, it wasn't until an interruption made them pause, breaking the mood quite abruptly and causing them to jump away from each other like a bucket of ice water had been thrown over them.

"My eyes! My eyes!"
Neither of them saw the younger Harry, but the sound of his footsteps running away from the scene was more than enough to send them both laughing into hysterics for several minutes afterwards.
"Um... dad?"

"Hmnn?" James groaned aloud, recognising the voice of his mini-me calling from outside of the bedroom. "What?" He called out.

"I'm going out flying alright?"

"Yeah sure, whatever, stay within the wards, usual rules, you know, whatever." James groused, happy when he heard the footsteps outside thunder away and down the stairs. "I was never like that." He muttered to himself, rubbing his face as he tried to wake up.

"I'll bet you were," Amelia smirked as she rolled over so she was laying next to him, swinging her leg over and pressing his legs open before she started rubbing down firmly against his morning erection. "Morning," She whispered down to him, leaning down and capturing him in the first kiss of the day.

"Morning," James smiled up once she'd broken the kiss and settled in on top of him. "You sleep OK?" He asked hesitantly.

"Yes, and no I don't regret anything we did last night." Amelia grinned down, sensing what he was going to ask at some point anyway. "And I can certainly feel that you didn't." She said with a smirk, pressing her thigh down tightly between his legs and making him breath in deeply at the pressure and let out a groan of pleasure. "Hmmm? You like that?" She asked, looking down into his eyes as she pushed her thigh against his erection harder this time. "You were certainly enjoying everything we did last night." She said with a smirk as she leaned down and kissed him again. Tracing the various bites she'd left on his neck and shoulders and the red scratch marks down his sides from her nails.

"Definitely," James admitted honestly. He ached from everything they'd done, but it was such a good ache that he couldn't care how he looked if he was honest with himself. "What time is it?" He asked, doing his best to distract himself from the way Amelia kept rubbing his cock with her thigh.

"Hmm, not sure." Amelia frowned, rolling off of him for a second to collect her wand from the floor where she'd left it with her blouse, leggings and knickers. "A little before eight." She explained after casting a quick tempus charm. "Far too early to get up yet." She said, turning back to him now.

"What did you want to do today then?" Harry asked, looking over and admiring how beautiful Amelia looked with her pale silver hair tussled from the nights sleep.

"Well, I can think of a few things," Amelia smirked, flicking her wand towards James in a quick restraining charm that secured his wrists up onto the pillow over his head. "I think we can start with you first." She grinned at the word play, rolling back over to pull him into a kiss first before working down his neck and over his chest.
Restraining James down and enjoying the his body was an entirely sensual experience for Amelia, she'd been with a few wizards here and there that enjoyed letting her go on top now and again, but most of them out there were too full of themselves to let a witch control them during kissing or anything more sexual.

Here with James she could feel him accepting of everything she was doing, and as she kissed him and bit into his lip again, she felt him groan in pleasure and grind his hips up towards her while he arced his head up and tried to lean deeper into the kiss.

She definitely loved how responsive he was, at every touch she could feel him either press into her for more or wriggle under her teeth and nails, it was almost intoxicating to watch as she worked down to his stomach, leaving a trail of kisses down the soft hair before she sat back up and straddled him, pressing herself against his cock so he could feel that she was as excited this morning as he was.

"Have you got any ideas?" She asked, looking down at him and watching his eyes widen as she ground herself down on his erection. "Or breakfast first?"

"Breakfast?" James asked, frowning at the abrupt change in conversation.

"Hmmm," Amelia smirked down, adjusting her hips before sliding her way up his body so she was effectively sat on his chest with her knees either side of his head. "You can start here I think." She said with a smirk, pointing to an area half way up her thigh and waiting for him to lean his head forward and kiss it before she pointed to the same area on her other thigh. "Now, higher." She whispered, waiting for him to wriggle his head so he could start kissing further up her thighs from his position on the pillow. "Higher?" she asked when he stopped.

"I can't while you are sat there," James smiled up at her.

"Oh?" Amelia grinned down at him. "We can fix that." She said as she pushed herself forwards onto her knees properly and straddled over his face so he could start kissing his way up her inner thighs to where she definitely wanted to feel his kisses and tongue this morning.

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Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry
Highlands of Scotland
Scotland

Far further north, Albus Dumbledore was not having anywhere near as good of a morning as the time displaced Harry James Potter was. Though Harry Potter was certainly on his mind, as he had been for the last month.

The fact was the boy had vanished, completely and utterly without a trace. His relatives had told him some cock and bull story about his father coming back to life and retrieving him, attacking poor Vernon in the process.

Arabella Figg had been even less help, informing him that she had barely seen young Harry this entire holiday, and had only notified him when the Dursley's had missed their usual monthly arrangement for her to babysit while they took Dudley out.

If it wasn't for the Hogwarts letter that had been sent back by owl confirming Harry's acceptance to the school, he would have been pressed to believe a dark family had found Harry and had
kidnapped him for some nefarious purpose, something that he still wasn't ruling out.

The fact that young Harry had been away from his relatives for so long was worrying him more than anything, he had absolutely no idea where Harry could be, and had had little luck in convincing Kinsley or Alastor to help him in tracking down the child, as both had been apparently placed on specific duties by the DMLE in helping prepare for the upcoming slew of trials.

That was another thing that was weighing on his conscience. Sirius Black had been thrown in Azkaban without a trial. He had very little faith that Sirius was actually innocent, but should a trial not go his way, then he would be freed, free to continue his betrayal of the Potter's and finish what his master had started.

With Harry missing and away from the protection he'd provided, he would be rather easy pickings for a Death Eater of Sirius’ calibre, and that wasn't even counting any other Death Eaters that he managed to join up with once he had his freedom.

It couldn't be a coincidence that with Voldemort's return, this corruption in The Ministry had been uncovered and now his right hand man, Sirius Black, was on the cusp of escaping justice. He was certain that somehow Voldemort had arranged for this, perhaps as a distraction or to regain some of his followers to assist in his plans.

He'd already arranged to move the stone from Gringotts to the school, it was obvious that Voldemort was hunting for the stone, his various informants around Europe had given him enough clues to the way the dark forces were building up and poking into various magics on the continent.

Voldemort would come for the stone, that much was certain. He just had to hope that young Harry would be in the school as he'd planned, so he could manufacture a confrontation between the two, hopefully ending the prophecy once and for all so that Voldemort could finally be dealt with.

Nothing seemed to be going according to plan, and it was extremely frustrating to the aged wizard. He'd quite literally spent a decade planning young Harry's return to the magical world, and how he would sacrifice himself so that Voldemort could be defeated. Now all those plans were thrown into chaos, and he had absolutely no idea how to recover any of them until he could see what had happened to young Harry and who had taken him from his relatives.

No, this was not a good time to be Albus Dumbledore, not a good time at all.

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Potter Manor

"Um, so... should we... talk?" Harry asked hesitantly as he poked his head into the kitchen to where he could see his older self happily enjoying a mug of coffee.

"Not unless you want to be responsible for many years of therapy," James groused down to his younger self with a dry chuckle.

"Where's Miss Bones?" Harry asked, looking around and checking it was safe to enter and talk.

"She went to pick Susan up from the Abbot's." James explained with a shrug, enjoying a mouthful of coffee. "You're weirded out by what you saw?"

"You and Miss Bones?" Harry asked, nodding slightly. "Is that weird?"
"Not really," James shrugged, moving to the table and sitting down at it, gesturing for Harry to do the same. "Nothings going to change, me and Amelia are just...

"Kissing?" Harry frowned thoughtfully.

"Kissing," James confirmed, hoping that his younger self kept the conversation far away from anything else that had happened last night. "Are you weirded out because it's Amelia, or because it's me?" He asked, pondering how he'd feel if he saw his younger self and Susan kissing.

"Because it's you really," Harry wrinkled his nose as he tried to think about what he was trying to say. "You're me though, just, an older me?"

"Right," James nodded in confirmation.

"Isn't that weird?" Harry asked, cocking his head to the side as he tried to understand it.

"We talked about it last night, Amelia doesn't think it's that weird." James explained with a shrug. "I'm... honestly, it's not bothering me."

"You never mentioned if you'd had a girlfriend or anything." Harry said with a thoughtful frown. "I guess I never really thought about it before.

"You're still in the 'girls are icky' stage," James grinned over. "Give it a few years and you'll start to... well, no, you won't figure girls out, I never did." He explained with a self deprecating laugh. "But girls will become more interesting to you, you'll just have to figure out which ones are worth spending some time with."

"Did you?" Harry asked, looking to his older self with interest now.

"Yes, and no." James admitted with a deep sigh. "We haven't really talked about girls yet have we?" He asked with a small grimace. "Tell me I don't have to give you The Talk, because it's far too early for the amount of alcohol that that discussion would need."

"No!" Harry quickly shook his head, more than happy to avoid that talk as long as he could.

"Good," James breathed out a sigh of relief. "OK, girls... do you have questions or is this more of a general thing?" He asked, not sure which would be better really.

"Um, did you have a girlfriend in school?" Harry asked in a small voice.

"Two," James nodded in confirmation, holding up his hand before his younger self could ask any questions. "This is where you've got to make a choice. The girls I dated were... I wouldn't call them mistakes, not both of them anyway, but if I'd known then what I know now, I wouldn't have kissed them."

"Oh," Harry paused, frowning at that information. "So, should I know this stuff, so I don't make the same mistakes?" He asked, thinking through what his older self was telling him.

"That's up to you," James admitted with a small sigh. "I can tell you what went wrong if you want, then it's up to you if you want to try and do it better or make different choices."

Harry nodded at that, thinking it through for a second in silence as he watched his older self drinking his coffee quietly. "OK, I want to know." He said firmly, adjusting the kitchen chair so he was comfortable.

"Ginny and Cho?" Harry asked, wrinkling his nose as he thought deeply about the two names.

"They're both going to be Quidditch players, like I was." James explained. "Cho's going to be the Ravenclaw seeker, Ginny will be a chaser and replacement seeker for when you can't play."

"Oh." Harry frowned, nodding as he memorised this piece of information. "Alright, why did you say they were mistakes?"

Letting out a deep sigh, James put his coffee mug down and thought about what he was going to say. "OK, firstly, me and Cho, it never really went anywhere. It was a few kisses, and not very good kisses either. If you wanted to try and do a better job with her than I did, I'd say go for it."

"Alright," Harry smiled, accepting this piece of information. "What about Ginny?"

"Ginny," James breathed out, tussling his hair in frustration. "Ginny was probably my longest girlfriend, but she has more than her share of problems too."

"Like?" Harry asked.

"She was pretty much obsessed with me, or will be with you." James explained bluntly. "She's a fangirl who grew up reading stories and being told about you, so she's a bit manic because of it."

"She doesn't sound that great," Harry frowned, wrinkling his nose.

"She got over it, or at least, got to the point where she could talk to me without stammering every few seconds." James explained with a shrug. "But her mother is another problem, she's very controlling and domineering, she tried to push us into a wedding barely a few months after the end of school, and Ginny was just as excited and hyperactive about it, but neither of them asked me what I wanted or cared about what I wanted to do with my life."

"That's not good," Harry shook his head quickly.

"No," James confirmed with a sigh. "Look, I'm not going to tell you who you should and shouldn't like, I'm making a firm stance of staying out of your romantic life as far as possible, that's your choices, your life, that's nothing to do with me." He explained bluntly. "But those were my mistakes, and if I can stop you from making the same mistakes by telling you about them..." He trailed off, giving his younger self a small shrug.

"Alright," Harry smiled back. "Thanks." He said with a small nod. "So, um, we don't talk to each other about girls?"

"Not until you're at least old enough to drink, or I've found a good therapist, either one." James groused back with a smirk, causing Harry to break out in laughter at the face he pulled. "Give it a few years and kissing might be a thing, a few years later, then we'll talk about sex, over a bottle of firewhiskey and hopefully you won't have anyone pregnant by then. But either way, it's none of my business, so unless you want to bring anything up, I'm happy to stay out of it."

"I'm glad you came back, you make an awesome dad." Harry grinned as he stood up from the table.

"Thanks mini-me," James grinned over.

"Why do you call me that?" Harry frowned, not understanding the reference at all.
"It's from..." James started, then realised the movie wouldn't be released for about another ten years. "Never mind." He waved off the comment. "So, you're not going to be weird about me and Amelia?"

"Not as long as I don't have to watch you two kissing." Harry muttered, wrinkling up his face and sticking out his tongue in a 'yuck' expression.

"So grown up," James muttered, shaking his head. "Fine, no kissing when you're in the room, deal?"

"Deal!" Harry nodded, happy to accept that deal.

"Go on, I'm sure you've already picked out the next book from the library you want to make your way through." James laughed, draining down the last of his mug of coffee. "And don't owl Susan about me and Amelia, it'd be best if she talks to Susan first before she finds out from anyone else, alright?"

"Alright," Harry shrugged. "And yes, there's a great book on transfiguration that's got loads of notes written in it!" He explained eagerly. "I think it was one of dad's books."

"Probably," James mused with a nod, not remembering coming across that specific book. "Leave it in the study when you're done with it and I'll have a look."

"OK!" Harry beamed happily, racing out of the kitchen and upstairs to find the book in question.

"I definitely never had that much energy," James groused to himself, watching his younger self race around like he had all the energy in the world. "Amelia is going to laugh herself silly when I tell her about this." He muttered to himself before standing up and putting his mug in the sink and deciding to get on with his day.

14 August

London

England

"Well?" James stood up as soon as he saw Amelia crossing the road. It had been a long discussion, several long discussions really, about why it wouldn't be a good idea for him to be in the Wizengamot building during or after Sirius' trial, but now it was happening, just sitting here and waiting for news was like torture.

"Innocent, there was absolutely no proof, no indication he was guilty of anything." Amelia confirmed with a wide smile as James swept her up into a hug. "He even took veritaserum willingly, rolled up his sleeves to show he didn't have the dark mark, even offered to have his memories of that night shown in the court pensieve."

"That's great news!" James grinned, releasing Amelia from the hug and kissing her quickly.

"Where's Harry?" Amelia asked curiously, looking around and expecting to see him waiting as impatiently as James had been.

"At the manor," James explained with a nod. "I explained to him we didn't know how long it was going to take, and we could be waiting all day without hearing anything, so he decided to wait
behind, made me promise that I'd apparate back as soon as I heard anything though." He said with a smile. "What's happening now then?"

"He'll be transferred through to a secure ward at St Mungo's, only DMLE will be allowed in or out until he'd released. It's for his protection." Amelia explained.

"More like Fudge covering his arse so Sirius doesn't talk to the Prophet before he gets chance to get his side of the story out there." James groused. "I assume Dumbledore's already tried to find out about it?"

"You know him too well," Amelia nodded. "He cornered me on the way out of the chambers, insisting that he be allowed to speak with Sirius about important details that were of a private nature."

"Probably still worrying about where the mini-me is hiding out and wanting to convince Sirius to help him search for him." James snorted, shaking his head in amusement. "What did you say?"

"I asked him what could have been so important that he need to talk to him now, when hadn't spoken to an innocent man in ten years?" Amelia asked with a small smirk. "Not surprisingly, he didn't have an answer for that."

"Nosey old goat," James muttered, shaking his head in amusement at Amelia's question. "He never bothered to visit Sirius and find out if he was innocent, but now Sirius is in a position to help him, it's important that he gets to speak with him as soon as possible."

"It won't be happening." Amelia said firmly. "I've got trusted Aurors looking after the few innocent people that came out of the trials, most of them were guilty as hell, but we've got seven others, eight including Sirius, that were innocent when Barty threw them into Azkaban."

"If he wasn't already in Azkaban, he'd be in a hell of a lot of trouble right now." James mused aloud.

"More than that, three of them swore vendettas against Barty's entire blood line because of what he'd done." Amelia explained. "It's a good job Junior and his wife are dead, or I'd have to take her into protective custody just to keep her alive." She said with a frown. "If he ever gets out of Azkaban, he won't live long enough to enjoy his freedom."

"Hnh," James grunted, not really caring one way or the other about Barty Crouch after everything he'd done. "So what now, with Sirius I mean?"

"He gets better," Amelia nodded. "I'll admit, seeing him in the court room, he was actually a damn sight more lucid than a lot of the other prisoners were. Most of them could barely answer a straight question without calming draughts to help them."

"He spent most of his time in his dog form, dementors don't bother with animals." James explained with a shrug.

"That would explain it," Amelia mused thoughtfully. "I've got to get back to the department, we've got more paperwork than ever coming in because of these trials, and every-thing's got to be done by the numbers with the amount of people watching us now."

"Rather you than me," James smirked, ducking away when Amelia swiped towards his shoulder. "Susan over at the Abbott's again?"

"They offered to take her for the week while the trials were on." Amelia explained with a nod.
"Mind if I apparate over tonight?"

"Read my mind." James grinned, leaning in to steal a kiss.

"Might be late though, so if you don't want to stay up..." Amelia trailed off, not really knowing how late she was going to end up working with Minister Fudge and his simpering undersecretary poking around.

"Always for you," James smiled over. "I'll keep the bath hot so you can jump right in when you arrive."

"Tease," Amelia groaned, thinking how good it would feel to have a nice long relaxing soak after a day like today. "Fine, I'll try to come over for about nine, hopefully earlier though."

"Sounds good to me." James smiled. "I'll see you then." He grinned, leaning in for one last kiss before jogging out of view and down a back alley way so he could apparate away and back to the manor to share the good news with his younger self.

19 August

St Mungo's Hospital for Magical Maladies and Injuries
Greater London

Amelia nodded casually to the muggle clothed Auror outside the muggle department store shell that disguised the entranceway to St Mungo's, receiving a recognising nod back she continued on her way, stepping through the red brick wall that shimmered and parted for her as she stepped through.

Once in the main lobby area of St Mungo's she recognised more of her Auror teams automatically, some of them were obvious in their uniforms with their shields visible, but the other more subtle Aurors keeping watch were the ones that she'd hand picked for this assignment, to keep watch on the innocent patients, as well as keep watch on the rest of the Aurors to make sure nobody bribed their way into see any of the patients without the proper authorisation.

So far she'd had to reprimand two Aurors who had been happy to try and let Albus through into the hospital, with only the plain clothed Aurors stopping him and calling her in to deal with him personally.

As far as she was concerned now, Albus Dumbledore was a persona non grata in both St Mungo's, and the DMLE.

Heading to the elevator she flicked her wand to the controls, setting it to automatically take her down to the private floor where the patients were being treated for dementor exposure, abuse, malnutrition and a whole host of other problems.

"Any problems?" She asked as she stepped out of the elevator, happy to see the two plain clothed Aurors on guard were on the ball and already had their wands out as they approached her. Displaying her badge was a quick sign of identification, it wasn't foolproof, but since Auror badges couldn't be faked or duplicated, is was the best they had for now without resorting to twenty questions each time.

"None ma'am," One of the Aurors answered crisply. "No visitors, authorised or unauthorised."
Random checks for animagus, disillusionment, and ward tampering, nothing so far."

"That's good," Amelia nodded, happy that at least something was going right for a change. "As you
were, I'm here to talk with Mr Black." She explained with a nod.

"Room six," The other Auror nodded. "He's been quiet as a lamb actually, no trouble at all." He
paused when the other Auror snorted a laugh out.

"Something to add?" Amelia asked, cocking her eyebrow at the other Auror's reaction.

"Well, not really trouble." The other Auror explained. "He's been flirting with the nurses a lot,
joking around with them, that sort of thing. I swear I heard him threatening to start streaking
around the halls if they didn't give him something to do."

"Oh Merlin," Amelia grimaced, shaking her head at that piece of news. "Alright, I'll do my best to
convince the overgrown child to keep his clothes on."

"That'll keep the nurses happy," The Auror laughed back. "Room six, down on your left ma'am."

"Thank you." Amelia nodded before heading off towards the room he indicated, shaking her head
as she tried to clear the mental images being thrown up by what the Auror had told her.

Knocking on the door she paused for a polite moment before pushing it open and heading inside,
raising her eyebrow when she saw Sirius Black sitting cross legged on the bed, apparently simply
playing cards against himself.

He actually looked surprisingly well, having regular meals, nutrient potions, fresh air and a
comfortable bed to sleep in had done wonders for him, and he was even looking better than he had
done in the memories James had shown her of his future self.

"Well, you're looking better than the last time I saw you." Amelia admitted, coming into the room
properly and closing the door behind her, flicking a quick privacy charm towards the door. "I've
heard you're threatening to start streaking if we don't give you something to do?" She asked,
raising an eyebrow towards Sirius.

"Something, anything!" Sirius practically begged from the bed. "There's only so many times a
wizard can play poker against himself, and honestly, I'm pretty sure I'm losing to myself more and
more." He admitted with a frown.

"That's... disturbing," Amelia frowned, pondering if she should ask the healers to bring in a
specialised mind healer for the man.

"That's... disturbing," Amelia frowned, pondering if she should ask the healers to bring in a
specialised mind healer for the man.

"I'll say," Sirius nodded eagerly. "So, what brings you to my lovely abode this fine day?" He asked
eagerly.

"A few things really, but I wanted to see how you were doing first before we broached any other
subjects." Amelia admitted. "Any visitors come by yet?"

"Not a one," Sirius complained. "You wouldn't believe it, but I actually count down the hours until
the nurses come by, at least that gives me someone to talk to and catch me up on what's going on
outside."

"I can imagine," Amelia laughed, gesturing towards the spare chair in the room. "Do you mind?"

"Make yourself at home," Sirius shrugged, happy to stay sitting cross legged on the bed. "I assume
"It's you I've got to thank for getting me a trial at last?" He asked with a curious expression on his face. "You're the only visitor I've had, and the privacy charms on the door told me you wanted to speak without anyone listening in."

"You'd be correct," Amelia nodded patiently. "Amelia Bones, Department Head of the DMLE." She said, introducing herself formally.

"Damn sight better than Crouch was." Sirius barked out a laugh. "Heard he got himself thrown in Azkaban as well, serves the git right for what he did to me."

"Quite," Amelia nodded.

"Alright, so, what do you want?" Sirius asked bluntly. "I don't figure you got me a trial without expecting something in return, so, hit me with it."

"I didn't do it for you." Amelia countered, just as bluntly, reaching into her robes and bringing out a folded piece of parchment. "Your godson, Harry, sends his regards." She explained, holding out the parchment.

"Harry?" Sirius whispered, his eyes going wide as this news as he practically fell off the bed in a scramble to dash over to her and take the offered parchment from her hand. "Harry sent this?" He demanded, kneeling on the floor in front of Amelia's chair and holding the parchment reverently.

"He's starting Hogwarts in a few weeks," Amelia nodded with a smile on her face at how Sirius was hanging on to her every word. "He's become quite good friends with my niece, Susan."

"Hogwarts, already?" Sirius whispered, shaking his head in shock at that news that made the decade he'd spent in Azkaban feel even more real. "He... the last time I saw him, he was barely walking."

"He's flying now," Amelia smiled. "Even got his own broom, practising for seeker if you can believe it."

"I can," Sirius barked out a laugh. "James loved playing chaser, he was sure Harry was going to take after him."

"I'd say that's a good bet," Amelia nodded with a wide smile. "He knows who you are, who you are to him, and he knows you're innocent." Sirius practically puffed up at this news, his smile beaming and more colour coming to his face than he'd ever had before.

"I've got some parchment and a quill, you can write back to him if you want." Amelia explained.

"Where's he living? Who's he living with? Does he have more friends? Does he play Quidditch a lot? Has he got his wand yet? Does he..."

"Slow down," Amelia laughed, holding up her hand to cut Sirius off. "I can't tell you much, we're keeping his location a secret for now."

"Why?" Sirius frowned, shaking his head as he tried to think about why Harry would be in hiding still.

"What do you remember about that night, the last time you saw Harry?" Amelia asked. "I understand it's a painful memory, but I've got to ask."

"The night... the night Prongs died." Sirius choked out. "I got there, but I was too late, the house... it
was a disaster." He explained, swallowing audibly as he focused on the memory. "I got Harry, swaddled him up in some blankets and got him out of the house, but Hagrid was outside..."

"Why was Hagrid outside?" Amelia asked, interrupting the story.

"I..." Sirius paused, frowning in thought for a second. "I don't know?" He admitted. "Nobody knew about the attack yet, I'd already been on my way there to warn James and Lily about Peter, even I didn't know about it until I got there." He explained.

"Alright, what happened then?" Amelia asked.

"Hagrid told me to give Harry to him, that Dumbledore said he was going to check Harry over to make sure he was alright." Sirius explained. "I lent him my motorbike as well, then I went after chasing Pettigrew."

"I remember from what you told the court room," Amelia nodded. "Hagrid... I don't know where he took Harry, but it ended up with Albus Dumbledore leaving Harry on the doorstep of Lily's sister. Did you ever meet her?"

"Too right I did, miserable old cow." Sirius grumbled. "Harry's not living with her is he?"

"Not any more." Amelia said quickly, holding up her hand to stop Sirius' rant. "Albus Dumbledore arranged for Harry to be there even before you'd been arrested."

"That's not right," Sirius frowned. "I was supposed to be his guardian, I'm his Godfather."

"Exactly," Amelia nodded. "Yet Albus sent Hagrid to take Harry and deliver him to Lily's sister. Can you think of any reason why he'd do something like that?"

"No," Sirius answered quickly, frowning and clenching his fists. "He really did that?" Sirius demanded.

"Harry was placed there the night after James and Lily died, you weren't in Azkaban until a few days afterwards after you caught up to Peter Pettigrew." Amelia explained, laying out the dates accordingly. "Harry should have been left with you, Albus had no right to send Hagrid to take him from you that night."

"And he's going to bloody tell me why he did that!" Sirius swore angrily, furious that Dumbledore had done such a thing, and that he couldn't even be bothered to come and visit him in Azkaban to see his innocence for himself.

"He's been trying to get into St Mungo's to see you, I've been blocking him, for now, but once you're released..." Amelia trailed off.

"Oh I'll find him first, don't you worry about that." Sirius said darkly.

"He's trying to get in touch with you, we believe, so he can convince you to help him find Harry." Amelia explained.

"He doesn't know where Harry is either?" Sirius asked, shocked at this piece of news before letting out a bark of laughter. "Now that's a great prank." He exclaimed with a wide grin.

"That's how we want to keep it, nobody knows where he is, just me, Susan, and one other." Amelia explained. "I can't tell you who, not yet, but you can trust them, trust them as much as you trust Harry in fact."
Sirius contemplated this for a moment before nodding slowly, he was taking a lot on faith here, but Madame Bones had done more for him in the last few days than anyone had in the last decade. If anyone deserved his trust after everything that had happened, she did.

"I can write to him though?" Sirius asked.

"Read that first, I'll take your letter and pass it on to him." Amelia nodded over. "Every few days I'll come back to check on how your doing, I should have a new letter for your each time."

"I wish all owls looked like you," Sirius smirked before laughing out loud at her glare as he unfolded the parchment and engrossed himself in the letter, drowning in the words written by his godson and savouring every sentence.
21 August
Margate Beach
Margate

James looked around curiously as he apparated onto the beach, it was still early in the morning so as he stepped onto the sands he was happy to see the beach was nicely deserted.

"You made it,"

He grinned as he span around, recognising Amelia's voice instantly and smiling wider when he saw she was dressed down casually again in more muggle friendly jeans and a blouse that he was getting used to seeing her in.

"I did," He replied with a small laugh, walking over and enjoying the feeling of the sand crunching underneath his heavy boots.

The other witch that was standing alongside Amelia was someone he didn't recognise at all, but since he was here to meet Julia Greengrass at Amelia's request, he felt it was a safe bet that it was here.

She was taller than Amelia by quite a bit, taller than him even, and while her clothes would look a bit out of place on a muggle beach, the long emerald green skirt and white blouse complete with emerald jewellery, she wasn't drastically standing out like most witches or wizards did.

"James, meet Julia." Amelia nodded, introducing the two as he approached.

"So this is where you've been hiding," Julia smirked, looking James up and down slowly with an approving glint in her eye. "Rather rugged, but I can't deny that I see the appeal."

"Because you know I crave your approval," Amelia muttered dryly, shaking her head at her best friend.

"Well, you're certainly smiling a lot more these past few weeks, so I do have to assume that James here had something to do with it?" Julia grinned lavishly at her. "But I doubt you brought us both all the way out here for me to simply drool over your new boy toy."

"Well, showing him off does have a certain pleasure, but no." Amelia shook her head, smirking at how Julia laughed at her. "I'm afraid we're going to have to be rather blunt in this discussion, so you'll forgive me for not beating around the bush so to speak."

"But I thought you always did enjoy beating around the bush?" Julia smirked back, noting how James raised his eyebrow towards Amelia at the innuendo. "Fine, I'll behave." She commented when Amelia sent her a soft glare. "What is it you have to say that dragged me out of bed at this Merlin forsaken hour?"
"We have proof You-Know-Who is back." Amelia said bluntly, causing all the colour to drain from Julia's face in an instant.

James had to snort at that, looking at how Julia was simply staring at Amelia in horror, her eyes wide and clearly praying that this was just a joke. "If you wanted her catatonic, that's how to do it I guess?"

"And you did it any better? Hitting me with it like you were slapping me in the face with a wet fish." Amelia muttered, rolling her eyes at him.

"You're not joking?" Julia whispered.

"I'm afraid not," Amelia shook her head. "It's going to become public knowledge in a few weeks, if all goes according to plan that is."

"Well," Julia swallowed audibly, looking at both James and Amelia. "That ruined a perfectly good day." She muttered, almost wishing that she'd just stayed in bed.

"It gets worse," Amelia said with a small smile, reaching out and putting her hand on Julia's shoulder reassuringly.

"Oh how could it get worse than You-Know-Who returning?" Julia all but demanded.

"He's at Hogwarts, possessing one of the professors." Amelia explained.

"You really don't do subtle, do you?" James laughed as Julia simply gaped at her best friend. "Unfortunately, it's true."

"Are you trying to ruin my week?" Julia shouted, shaking off Amelia's hand and stepping away so she could pace angrily. "You-Know-Who is back, not only that, but he's right under my nose and in reach of a thousand children?" She demanded. "And you're telling me this now, not two weeks before the school year starts!"

"We're going to take care of it," Amelia promised, doing her best to calm her friend down. "Really, we've got a plan, admittedly it's not the best plan, but it's the best that we can work with."

"You've got a plan," Julia barked out an almost hysterical laugh. "To face You-Know-Who?" She demanded. "Who the hell are you to think you can stop him?"

"Sorry, I didn't introduce myself properly," James smiled, stepping forward and holding out his hand. "James Potter." He introduced himself bluntly.

"James... James Potter?" Julia whispered, staring at him in a mixture of shock and awe before flicking her attention to Amelia who simply nodded in confirmation. "You're dead?"

"The afterlife's been good to me," James grinned dryly.

"You... you and... Harry... you're going to deal with this?" Julia whispered, still coming to terms that she was apparently stood on a beach with someone that was supposed to be long dead, someone that was practically a legend to the pure blood families.

"I will," James nodded firmly. "Harry stays out of this."

"Tell me everything, every single thing!" Julia demanded, swivelling her attention back to Amelia now. "My little girl starts Hogwarts this year, but if she's not going to be safe..."
"Susan does as well don't you forget," Amelia reminded her with a mild glare. "You think I don't know the urge to take her and get out of this country as fast as I can?"

Julia nodded at this, slowly accepting that Amelia wouldn't put Susan at risk any more than she'd risk Daphne or Astoria.

"It's your plan," Amelia shrugged, looking over at James and drawing Julia's attention over to him.

"Alright, this is what I think we're going to do..." James started, taking a deep breath before outlining the basics of the plan to Julia, and hoping that Amelia was right in who she could trust.

29 August
St Mungo's Hospital for Magical Maladies and Injuries
Greater London

"You're back!"

Amelia snorted with laughter as she came through into Sirius' room at St Mungo's, shaking her head at how Sirius bounced off his bed eagerly for the news and letter she normally brought with her for her visits.

For the last week and a half now she'd made regular visits to Sirius, bringing letters from Harry and James with her and ferrying letters back to them. She had to admit, she'd actually grown to get to know Sirius quite well during the time, and while he still acted like an overgrown child sometimes, his more manic personality and irrepresible joking nature had been tempered somewhat by the treatments he'd been receiving.

"From Harry." Amelia smiled, holding up a muggle plastic bag and gently throwing it towards Sirius, who caught it easily and turned to eagerly tip out the contents onto his bed before staring at them in confusion.

"I know my name is Black, but he's hitting the nail on the head a bit too hard isn't he?" Sirius asked, looking down at the muggle clothes with a frown.

There was a pair of black jeans, along with a black t-shirt with 'Rolling Stones' emblazoned across the front along with some sort of logo of a woman's mouth poking her tongue out. A short black leather jacket finished the ensemble along with some comfortable shoes.

"Harry spent most of his life in the muggle world, and since I'm going to be taking you to see him today, I thought you'd like to dress appropriately." Amelia explained, raising her eyebrow at him.

"I'm getting out of here?" Sirius practically shouted with glee, grabbing his pale blue robes that the hospital had given him and starting to tear them off.

"Bathroom Black!" Amelia stopped him before he could get too far, turning around quickly just in case he ignored her shout.

"I mean it," Amelia sighed, thankful that she could turn around now without the threat of seeing far
more of Sirius than she would like to. "Since Harry leaves for Hogwarts in a few days, it's become necessary that we have this conversation soon."

"That sounds serious," Sirius frowned, coming out of the bathroom in the black jeans and tugging the t-shirt over his tattooed torso. "And surprisingly, I didn't mean that as a joke."

"I'm sure," Amelia muttered dryly, watching as Sirius fumbled with the shoes before managing to get them on. "We'll be meeting Harry and... his guardian, in the woodlands just outside of Kent." Amelia explained, going through the plan that she'd concocted with James.

"You're still not telling me who it is?" Sirius asked with a frown.

"I would, but you'd likely not believe me," Amelia explained. "It's one of those things you have to see to believe."

"And the out of the way meeting place?" Sirius asked.

"Because very likely it's going to be a volatile meeting, shouting isn't far out of the question as far as we can tell." Amelia admitted with a small grimace.

"Doesn't sound promising," Sirius muttered, pulling on the leather motorbike jacket and admiring how it fit comfortably. "Actually, I take it back, these clothes aren't that bad at all." He admitted with a small smile as he admired his reflection.

"Harry's... guardian picked them." Amelia explained. "Apparently he knows of your displeasure of pure-blood robes and trappings, he thought the muggle clothes might appeal to your sense of humour."

"He's right," Sirius admitted slowly. "He knows me then?"

"Well enough," Amelia nodded, willing to give Sirius that much. "He's also got a rather long and fantastical story to tell you."

"I always liked stories," Sirius admitted with a dry smirk. "And I'm just supposed to trust this blindly?" He asked, raising an eyebrow.

"No," Amelia shook her head. "He told me to tell you, a password of some sort? Apparently it would mean something to you?" She explained, pausing and wincing at how stupid it sounded. "I can't believe I'm saying this." She muttered to herself before continuing. "I solemnly swear that I'm up to no good." She said aloud.

The change in Sirius was instant, from his suspicious and dubious face he switched automatically to an open and almost eager expression, with curiosity sparkling in his eyes and a breath of new life in his stance.

"I assume that was right then?" Amelia asked, noting the change in Sirius' face.

"Oh yes," Sirius grinned openly. "Do I at least get to know a name of this mysterious guardian before we meet?"

"He said you'd ask for that," Amelia chuckled, shaking her head at how well James had known this would go. "He said 'you can call me Leo, Padfoot,' whatever that means."

"Leo," Sirius grinned, the clues piling up and giving him a sense of amusement again. Whoever it was knew of his animagus skill, and his name. They knew about The Marauders and their
password, and most importantly had enough of a sense of humour to use the Director of the DMLE as a messenger owl to tell him all of this. "Alright then, shall we?" He asked with a grin.

"If you're ready," Amelia nodded, bringing out a quill from her pocket and holding it out. "A portkey that will take us directly there, I'd rather not have you walking around outside where Albus could get to you." She explained.

"I'll be making my own way to deal with Dumbledore," Sirius frowned, having his own plans for the meddling old bastard.

"You might want to put those aside until after this meeting," Amelia said with a knowing smile. "Trust me, it'll be worth it."

"There's a lot of trust on my side here," Sirius frowned, but walked over to take hold of the quill.

"If I was going to hurt you, I could have just left you in Azkaban," Amelia pointed out bluntly as Sirius took hold of the quill. "Activate." She ordered aloud, activating the portkey and whisking them both away from the hospital in a whirlwind of colour and magic.

Standing in the forest, James was comfortably leaning up against a tree, dressed in his usual heavy jeans, boots, t-shirt and dragon-skin coat, while his younger self was pacing around the forest nervously, clearly trying to burn off some of that anxious energy.

"But what if he doesn't like me?"

"You'll be fine," James chuckled, shaking his head in amusement. He'd had a very different introduction to Sirius than his younger self was getting, he had also been a few years more mature. A lot of life had happened in those three short years, which had left him a very different person to the nervous young Harry that was meeting his godfather for the first time.

"But what..." Harry trailed off as an 'ohff' and a whumping sound echoed through the forest, cutting his sentence off.

"That'll be them," James chuckled to himself. "I guess Sirius is out of practice with portkeys." He grinned in amusement at the thought. "There's probably going to be some shouting OK? But he's not shouting at you, he'll be annoyed because of how I look alright?" He asked, trying to reassure his younger self.

"But you look like me?" Harry frowned, looking up to his older self with a puzzled expression.

"I also look almost identical to our dad," James pointed out. "Who died the same night the last time he saw you." He explained. "Honestly, I've got no idea how he's going to take that."

"So... um... should I go first?" Harry asked nervously.

"We'll go together," James smiled down, tapping his younger self on his shoulder. "We Harry's have to stick together right?"

"Right," Harry grinned up at him. Happy to let his older self take the lead over towards where the sounds had come from.

As they approached both of them could make out the voices in the clearing, with Amelia reminding
Sirius to stay calm and Sirius asking where they were and where Harry was.

"I'm here." The younger Harry smiled as he walked out of the forest into the clearing, waving gingerly towards Sirius.

Sirius' eyes however weren't on the younger Harry, but had gone wide at the sight behind him. "Who the hell are you?" He demanded, his eyes going from wide and shocked to narrow and dangerous in a split second. "And why the hell are you looking like that?"

"Because this is how I look Padfoot," James shot back.

"Prongs is dead!" Sirius spat out, wishing he had a wand so he could curse the hell out of whoever was pretending to be his best friend.

"Yes," James nodded sadly.

This seemed to stop Sirius cold, he hadn't expected the faux-James to agree with him, he'd expected denial, some cock and bull story, lies and deception. Not for him to actually agree with him. "Not Prongs?"

"Not Prongs," James nodded.

"Why'd you look like him then? You're even wearing his coat?" Sirius demanded.

"Take a closer look," James nodded, slowly walking forwards with his younger self alongside him, pointing to his eyes as he approached so Sirius could spot the different colour.

"You... you look like..." Sirius frowned, flicking his eyes between the young Harry and the faux-James. "Harry?" He whispered, as if seeing his godson for the first time.

"Hi," Harry smiled nervously.

"You got big," Sirius grinned wildly, happy to see that at least his godson was happy and healthy. "I haven't seen you since you were a baby." He smiled over, flicking his attention up to the faux-James. "Who are you then?" Sirius demanded.

"I've had a few names," James admitted honestly. "But it's a long story, and you'll probably want proof."

"Depends how stupid is sounds?" Sirius frowned thoughtfully.

"I'm Harry, from about thirty years in the future." James said bluntly. "How about that?"

Sirius simply blinked at that, staying silent for a moment before he blinked again and barked out a sharp laugh. "Definitely stupid enough." He exclaimed, rolling his eyes. "Come on then, who are you?"

"He's me," Harry smiled up, happy to have something to contribute.

"That's not possible Pronglet," Sirius said, shaking his head. "Time turners don't work like that." He said firmly. "Last chance, who are you?"

"I'm Harry Potter." James said firmly. "You're Sirius Orion Black, Padfoot to his friends. Dad was Prongs, Mooney was Remus, and Pettigrew was Wormtail. You grew up at Grimmauld place, but ran away during the summer at Hogwarts and went to live with The Potters. You were a member of Dumbledore's Order of the Phoenix, even though he's a manipulative old bastard who let you rot in
prison all these years."

"How'd you know all that?" Sirius demanded, narrowing his eyes again.

"I'm Harry," James said bluntly, rolling his eyes. "Because you told me, will tell me, whatever." He groaned, shaking his head. "Look, I didn't ask for this, I didn't try and come back here, I was happy living my life as an Auror, but here I am." He grunted, gesturing around.

Sirius frowned at that, stepping forwards and mid-step shifting down into his Padfoot persona, making young Harry jump back in surprise and look at him in awe.

He took a few more cautious steps towards the faux-James, sniffing him dubiously and pacing around him, sniffing and looking for any hint of a trick or a glamour.

"I think I preferred you last time around," James grunted to himself, ruffling his hair in frustration when he realised at least crazy, half starved and manic Sirius had listened to him at the Shrieking Shack.

Padfoot growled at that, his Grimm form baring his teeth up at the faux-James.

What he hadn't expected was for the faux-James to shift and ripple with golden fur, before Padfoot was very quickly faced with around five hundred pounds of lion, directly in his face.

Harry very quickly scampered back from the sight, moving to stand by Amelia as Sirius and James prowled around each other. "What are they doing?"

"Posturing, wizards." Amelia muttered, shaking her head at the sight.

Padfoot seemed to take a moment to screw up his courage before he growled again, baring his teeth at the lion.

Leo in response let out a roar that practically deafened Padfoot before shifting back into James, glaring down at the Grim who was now cowering with his head under his paws. "Are we going to talk now? Or do you want to finish with scratching and biting?"

Padfoot whimpered again before he shifted back, standing up slowly as Sirius again and stepping close to James. "Harry?" He whispered, looking closely into his eyes.

"Hi Sirius," James smiled fondly.

"How... how is this possible?" Sirius demanded, looking from him across to Harry's younger self. "You shouldn't be here."

"Damned if I know," James admitted. "But if I wasn't, you'd still be in Azkaban for the next two years before you escaped." He explained with a shrug.

"I escaped?" Sirius beamed widely, thinking how that must have been the most epic prank ever.

"To catch Pettigrew, he was at Hogwarts disguised as a rat." James explained.

"Pettigrew," Sirius snarled. "He's at Hogwarts?"

"He was," James admitted thoughtfully. "Whether he is or not this time..." He trailed off with a shrug. "He was living as a pet rat of one of my room mates, but since it's been in all the papers that you're free now?" He explained, shrugging as he had absolutely no idea how that was going to change things.
"I caught him?" Sirius asked hopefully.

"No, he got away." James shook his head.

"Damn," Sirius frowned with a dejected look. "You're really Harry, really from the future?"

I've got a pensieve full of memories if you want," James explained. "You're probably not going to like them though."

"Where's Mooney?" Sirius demanded, looking around.

"Honestly? No idea." James admitted with a frown.

"You haven't met Mooney?" Sirius frowned, looking from James over to the younger Harry. "But... he... I thought..." Sirius stumbled over the words, trying to get his thoughts straight in his head.

"When did you meet Mooney?" He asked, looking to the older Harry now.

"Third year, Dumbledore hired him to be the Defence professor, but I didn't find out he was one of dad's friends until about half way through the year." James explained.

"Why the hell not?" Sirius demanded.

"Because he didn't tell me," James shot back with a glare. "Don't start with me Sirius, I've got enough on my plate right now without your drama queen antics adding to it." He said firmly.

"No son of Prongs could ever grow up that serious," Sirius spat back. "What happened to you?"

"You died!" James yelled back. "Mum and dad died, you died, Remus died, everyone died!" He shouted, getting up in Sirius' face. "You want to know what my life's been like? There it is. Everyone died." He bit out. "I had Dumbledore controlling my life, raising me up to practically commit suicide to defeat Voldemort, it's a miracle that I even survived, so you'll forgive me if I'm not in the mood for your antics when I only had a few months to get to know you last time!"

"I... I died?" Sirius blanched, stumbling back from the rant in shock.

"Department of Mysteries, five years from now." James explained bluntly. "Bellatrix caught you off guard and you fell through The Veil."

"I'm... dead?" Sirius whispered.

"Deader than disco." James shot back. "So, now I've got this miracle chance to change everything and fix all that shit, are you going to stop being a drama queen for ten seconds and actually listen to me?"

"I'm... I'm sorry?" Sirius blinked. "Should I be apologising for something I haven't done yet?" He frowned at the thought. "I'd never leave you alone Pronglet, trust me on that."

"You did," James sighed, ruffling his hair. "It wasn't your fault though, with you on the run and hiding from The Aurors, Dumbledore kept you in hiding at Grimmauld Place."

"That dump? Why the hell would I step foot back in that house?" Sirius demanded.

"Because Dumbledore needed a headquarters for his little club, and if he kept you there then he could control when I got to see you and what you taught me." James explained bluntly.

"Dumbledore did that?" Sirius frowned, not liking anything he was hearing about Dumbledore
"Are you two done arguing yet?" Harry asked, looking up from where he'd simply been watching the two with Amelia. "Because I just finally got a family I like, and I don't like you arguing." He said firmly, crossing his arms with a serious expression on his face.

"You taught him that?" Sirius asked, looking at James with a cocked eyebrow.

"The mini-me came up with that all on his own," James chuckled, shaking his head. "He.. we.. we grew up at The Dursley's, my aunt, Lily's sister. It wasn't exactly the best place."

"I'd heard," Sirius said with a dark expression. "You got Harry out of there?"

"As soon as I found out I could change things here," James nodded back. "He's been living with me for just nearly two months now." He explained.

"Well? Are you done?" Harry asked, looking up at the two grown men.

"We're done," James nodded down to him. "I did tell you there was going to be shouting."

"You said he'd be shouting, not you." Harry frowned up as he walked over to the two. "Nice to meet you." He said with a small smile towards Sirius.

"Good to see you again too Pronglet." Sirius laughed, looking down at the younger Harry. "So, you're going by Leo now then?" He asked, looking over at the adult Harry. "Suppose that's less confusing than calling you both Harry."

"Actually," James frowned, ruffling his hair. "I'm pretending to be my dad, so Dumbledore can't use it as an excuse to take Harry back to the Dursleys."

"You're... you're pretending to be James?" Sirius demanded before cooling off and thinking about it for a second. "If you're who you say you are, then... then if anyone has the right to do that, it'd be you." He nodded, taking a deep breath. "But I won't be calling you James or Prongs any time soon. You're Leo, that's it as far as I'm concerned."

"You should have seen his face the first time I called him dad!" Harry grinned up at Sirius, the amusement showing on his face.

"You... you're calling your older self dad?" Sirius groaned aloud, looking between the two of them.

"And you wonder why I'm looking for a mind healer," James muttered dryly, looking over to Amelia with a roll of his eyes.

At that Sirius barked out a loud laugh, staring between the two Harry's in awe and amazement as James wandered over and snaked his arm around Amelia's shoulders. "Wait, you and... you two?"

"You've got a problem with that?" Amelia asked, raising one steely eyebrow dangerously.

"No, no, not at all." Sirius shook his head quickly, holding up his hands in surrender. "I'm just wondering if you've got a younger sister anywhere you can introduce me too."

"We've got enough to do without you chasing witches around," James grunted, rolling his eyes at Sirius' antics. "Voldemort's back." He said, cooling the mood considerably.

"How?" Sirius demanded.
"He made horcruxes, phylacteries, soul containers to cheat death." James explained with a frown.

"I know what a horcrux is," Sirius grunted, waving off the explanation. "Horcruxes, more than one?"

"Five," James nodded. "Five at the moment anyway. I've destroyed one already, and I know where the others are." He explained.

"You're hunting them down?" Sirius nodded approvingly. "Then that bastard can be killed off for good?"

"That's the plan," James nodded, ignoring the way Amelia swiped at Sirius' arm for swearing in front of Harry. "Ones at Grimmauld, Kreacher's got it. Regulus stole it from Voldemort, he was trying to defect back to the right side."

"Regulus... he... he was fighting Voldemort?" Sirius whispered in shock.

"He died trying to destroy it," James nodded, reaching up and putting his hand on Sirius shoulder. "When you're ready, we can go to Grimmauld Place and destroy that one too."

"When..." Sirius smiled thankfully, admitting that he at least needed a few days to let all of this sink in before he went back to the old Black family home. "You have a plan?"

"Always," James grinned over.

"You look just like your dad, you know that?" Sirius asked, smiling fondly over to him. "But..."

"I've got my mother's eyes," James finished off, rolling his eyes at the sentence he'd heard so many times.

"Alright," Sirius laughed, clapping his hands together. "What now then?"

"Now, we get to know each other." James smiled over, gesturing to his younger self and to Amelia. "The manor?" He asked, looking to Amelia.

"Sirius?" Amelia asked, looking to him before continuing. "The Potter's live at Potter Manor, located in the forests on the edge of the Peak District outside of Honley."

Sirius blinked for a second before that knowledge rushed into his brain and settled there, letting him regain all the memories of Potter Manor and living there with James, Flea and Euphemia. "You found it," He breathed out happily, content as all the memories flooded back to him. "I thought the dementors had stolen those memories."

"I found it," James smiled back. "Come on, lets get something to eat." He smiled, watching as Amelia held on to Harry to apparate him away before he grabbed onto Sirius and side-alonged him up to Potter Manor.
Chapter 9

TITLE: Double Back

DISCLAIMER: All things Harry Potter belong J K Rowling... basically, if you recognise it, it isn’t mine... Please don't sic the Aurors on me, I'm just here for the fun.

AN: Minor text taken from Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone by J. K. Rowling.

1st September
Kings Cross Station
London

"How was Sirius when you left?" Amelia asked as they walked through the muggle area of Kings Cross station, Harry and Susan in the lead with their trolleys, eager to get to the train and start their journey towards Hogwarts.

"Bitching about being left out, the usual really." James muttered, keeping his eye out around the station for The Weasleys or anyone else that he would recognise. "But he stayed at the Manor, I finally got it through to his thick head that if something goes wrong, he's the only person Harry will have left to turn to."

"What did he say to that?" Amelia asked with a raised eyebrow as she nodded towards the group of three Aurors that were patrolling the station this morning.

"Grumbled about being left out of the greatest prank in history, but sat on the couch and stuck his nose in a magazine." James explained with a shrug. "He's just pissy because I'll be confronting Dumbledore and he's stuck at the manor."

"Being stuck in Azkaban hasn't really helped him grow up much, it's going to take some time for him to come to terms with the fact he's not a Hogwarts kid anymore." Amelia explained patiently.

"That's the problem," James sighed, ruffling his hair in frustration as they passed through the stone wall separating the muggle area of the platform and walked through to Platform Nine and Three Quarters to where Harry and Susan were already waiting for them. "He's looking at me like I'm just another James, trying to relive his golden years, he can't accept that that's not going to happen."

"Give him some time, it's only been a few days, he's got a lot to come to terms with." Amelia pointed out patiently as they headed towards the train, making sure Susan and Harry were sticking together in the crowd and talking between themselves. "You've got your shield?" She asked in a quick whisper.

James nodded, tapping his belt where he'd clipped it on underneath his coat. "Updated the charms on it as well, and added a few of my own. And I've got the wand, and the rest." He explained, knowing that he had the resurrection stone around his neck and the invisibility cloak in his inside pocket.

"You're sure this is going to work?" She asked hesitantly, coming to a stop in front of the train carriages where Susan and Harry were waiting.

"As sure as I can be," James shrugged. "Alright, we'll be on the train with you, so you can leave
your trunks and things in the compartment with us, but I know you two want to look around the train and get to know some of your class mates, so you can find your own compartment if you want."

"Thanks!" Harry grinned up eagerly, happy to make new friends on his train ride towards the magical school.

"Come on then, I'll help you up." James grinned, grabbing Harry's luggage trunk from the trolley and leaving him to carry Hedwig's cage. "And remember, during the sorting and before, don't look anyone in the eyes, if anyone tries anything, come and find me straight away alright?"

"You're both coming to Hogwarts with us?" Susan asked, looking to her aunt now for an explanation.

"Just for the train journey, we won't be staying long." Amelia explained with a smile, wishing she could tell Susan more of their plans but not willing to risk someone using legilimency on her before they could see things through.

"Oh, alright." Susan shrugged. Lifting up the wicker basket her pale grey kitten was in so that her aunt could help her with her trunk.

It didn't take them long to find an empty carriage for them to populate, getting comfortable there after storing the kid's luggage on the overhead racks. One of the advantages of getting here early was that they practically had their pick of the train.

He'd spent extra time this morning making sure he looked almost identical to the photos he had of his father, finding them around the manor from his grandparents had been a godsend, so he'd managed to transfigure a pair of glasses to the exact same style that James had worn, styled his hair into the appropriately messy look that James favoured, and spent extra time covering up his scar properly with muggle makeup, which had led to endless amounts of comments and ribbing from Sirius.

All that work combined with the hazel coloured contact lenses that Amelia had got for him changed his look rather dramatically, and even Sirius had sucked in a deep breath when he'd seen him for the first time, and loudly decreed "Prongs rides again!" at the top of his voice.

"Go on, I know you two don't want to be stuck with us oldies for the entire trip," Amelia smiled over from where she'd sat down alongside James. "Go and look around, introduce yourself and have fun. You know where we'll be if you need us."

"Thanks auntie!" Susan grinned back, bouncing out of her seat eagerly to start hunting down Hannah and meeting everyone else.

"Go on," James chuckled, nodding towards Harry. "You remember everyone I told you about?"

"Uhhuh," Harry nodded back, having memorised all the names that his future self had told him about.

"Have fun then," James chuckled to himself as his younger self dashed off with Susan, both obviously looking for people their own age to start talking to.

"No sign of the Weasley's yet." Amelia commented, looking out the train window around the platform.

"It's only quarter to, still early for them." James explained with a shake of his head. "They won't be
here until the train is practically ready to leave, every year it's the same."

Amelia shook her head in disbelief at that, it wasn't hard to get to the train platform on time, and running late would run the risk of missing the train altogether and having to make other arrangements to get to Hogwarts, not something any first year student would want to go through.

"There's Julia," Amelia commented, nodding out the window to where she could see Julia Greengrass coming through the portal with Daphne and Astoria. "You still don't remember Daphne?"

"Not really," James shrugged. "It was twenty five years ago, and my school years weren't exactly quiet." He admitted. "She might have been in Ravenclaw or Hufflepuff or even Slytherin and I wouldn't have noticed her." He explained.

"Thankfully you're not that oblivious anymore." Amelia smirked over to him, nodding respectfully out the window when Julia noticed them. "You asked Harry to keep an eye on Susan and Daphne?"

"Yeah," James nodded. "He said he'll keep an eye on them both, but if we do everything right today, he shouldn't have any reason too."

"And how often does everything go according to plan?" Amelia asked dubiously as Julia escorted Daphne onto the train and joined them in their compartment to leave her trunk and owl with them before Daphne headed off to find Harry and Susan.

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**Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry**

At Hogwarts, Albus Dumbledore was impatiently awaiting news. He'd had his most trusted spy watching Platform Nine and Three Quarters this morning, hoping to receive word that young Harry Potter had made it onto the train, and more importantly, word about who had been with the young Mr Potter.

He'd informed Molly Weasley of course as well, she would be keeping her eye out for Harry in her usual manner and would happily help him get settled into his new life. Ronald was set to intercept Harry on the train and strike up a friendship with the lonely young boy, and once they were at Hogwarts, then he would be able to spend some time with Harry more discretely to find out what had been going on and work on returning Harry to his relatives.

So far though, nothing was going right. He'd been searching high and low for Sirius Black for the past few days after learning he'd been released from St Mungo's, but neither Kingsley nor Alastor had managed to hear even a whisper of Sirius appearing around Diagon Alley, Hogsmeade, or anywhere else.

It was almost as if Sirius had vanished off the face of the planet, and Albus was almost convinced that Sirius had fled the country to make a fresh start somewhere else. It was an impetuous and foolish move in his eyes, but was something he could very well see Sirius doing.

"Severus?" Albus looked up from his desk as his office door slammed open, the heavy wooden door actually slamming back into the stone work with a deafening bang as Severus skulked into the office, his face even paler than it normally was, and his expression was like he'd just seen a ghost. "Severus, what is it? Did you find Harry Potter?"

"Potter? Potter? Yes I found the brat of course, he's not the problem." Severus snarled out. "Potter
was there as well somehow!" He shouted.

"Potter?" Albus frowned, not understanding what Severus was ranting about.

"James bloody Potter!" Severus yelled out. "He was there, with that brat son of his, along with Amelia Bones, walking and chatting like they were old friends."

"Severus, that's not possible." Albus said with a calming voice. "Surely you must be..."

"I know James Potter when I see him!" Severus ranted. "That was James bloody Potter, I'd never forget that face." He snarled out.

"James and Lily are dead, we know this." Albus explained, effecting a tone of melancholy as he spoke to Severus. "I know you wish it wasn't so, but the fact remains..."

"If I was going to hallucinate a bloody Potter, it wouldn't be James or that brat of his." Severus bit out, making damn sure that Albus knew who he was talking about. "I'm telling you. That was James Potter."

"That's not possible." Albus said firmly.

"Their bodies were never found, their wands, nothing." Severus snapped towards Albus. "You had an empty grave filled in as a marker, to fuel that ridiculous legend you built up around the Potter brat."

"If James or Lily had survived that night, I would have known." Albus said with self assured confidence. "They would have contacted me. Their bodies were simply destroyed by the same magic that destroyed Voldemort."

"Because they were supposed to trust you after you had that oaf kidnap the brat away from Black?" Severus snarled, shaking his head. "It was James Potter, I'm telling you. He survived somehow, and it's all coming back to haunt you now."

"It was NOT James Potter!" Albus shouted, standing up from his desk and slamming his hands down. "The Potter's died, sacrificing themselves to ensure young Harry's survival. That is the end of it. Understood!" He yelled, making sure Severus was paying attention to every word. "You will proceed exactly as we had planned, ensure young Harry stays humble and belittled, this will enforce his view of coming to me when he believes I can help him."

"It won't work," Severus shook his head firmly.

"It must," Albus whispered, more to himself than anyone else. "Now, I already have Cornelius pester me to allow more visitors into the Great Hall this evening for the sorting, so forgive me if I do not have time to deal with this right now."

Severus didn't even bother to reply to that, he simply span on his heels and stalked out of the office without even pausing to close the door behind him.

"Impossible," Albus whispered to himself, there was absolutely no way The Potters had survived, no, they couldn't have, he was certain of it.

He would proceed as planned, and everything would work out for the greater good of all. That was what was important.
Hogwarts Express
Travelling North of Cambridge

Three hours in to the over eight hour long journey, and James and Amelia were both happily relaxing in their cabin with a book each, chatting amicably about their plans for the upcoming days.

Harry, Susan and Daphne had returned twice, once to inform them that Ron Weasley had tried to integrate himself with the group already, managing to insult both Susan and Daphne in the process, and a second time when they came asking for money to get some treats from the trolley cart.

"Yes?" Amelia called out, looking up from her book as she heard the carriage door slide open.

"My apologies, you're not students."

James did his best not to roll his eyes at the idiotic comment as he looked up, recognising the prefect in the carriage door on sight as a young fifth year Percy Weasley.

"Madame Bones, head of the DMLE, we're here escorting the train to make sure everything is on schedule." Amelia explained, holding up her golden shield and using the story she'd drummed up previously when talking to Cornelius and convincing him that it had been his idea to have an Auror escort on the train.

"I see," Percy nodded in an official manner. "I should have been informed however, I am a prefect."

"The DMLE doesn't run it's plans by Hogwarts prefects. The Minister authorised the arrangements himself." Amelia explained coldly, looking up at Percy with a stern look on her face. "Was there anything else?"

"No Madame Bones." Percy said quickly, adjusting his glasses before sliding the carriage door shut and walking away briskly.

"Was he always like that?" Amelia asked, looking towards James now for an explanation.

"He gets worse," James snorted, shaking his head. "He ended up working at The Ministry under Crouch, then up to being an assistant for Fudge." He explained with a shrug. "He's a pretentious little twat who only really cares about rules and regulations, give him a pile of paperwork to do and he's happier than a niffler in a pile of gold."

"Ambitious?" Amelia asked curiously.

"Dangerously," James nodded with a grunt. "No loyalty to anyone though, he turned on his family and friends, everyone. Not that he really had any friends in the first place anyway." He explained with a shrug. "Only really turned himself around when Voldemort attacked Hogwarts at the end, didn't even go to his own brother's wedding. I always wondered how he'd ended up in Gryffindor, he's definitely more of a Slytherin, same as the twins really, but at least they admitted to threatening to burn the sorting hat if it put them in Slytherin." He gave a snort of laughter at the memory of George explaining that to him over a bottle of firewhiskey one night.

"It doesn't sound like you had many good experiences with the Weasley family," Amelia commented, closing her book and looking at James properly now.

"Fifty fifty really." James admitted with a sigh. "Percy was a nightmare who sided with The
Ministry when they started their little campaign against me. Ginny was a little fangirl who never got over her obsessions. Molly is a controlling shrew who screams and shouts every chance she gets. Ask around, her howlers to the Weasley's at Hogwarts are pretty much legendary by now." He explained with a shrug.

"Ron, well, you know the story there." James paused thoughtfully. "I got on with the twins well enough, when they opened their joke shop they were always welcoming and happy to chat." He explained. "Bill was alright, but I didn't get to spend much time with him, same with Charlie really."

"And Arthur?" Amelia prompted him.

"I got on alright with him, I wouldn't say I saw him enough after Hogwarts to be friendly, but he was willing to take me in when I needed it and took me to the Quidditch World Cup, I owe him for those things, but he always just stood aside whenever Molly was having one of her rants and just let her scream and shout at whoever she wanted to without saying a thing." James explained with a sigh. "He might be a good man, but he lets Molly get away with murder and doesn't care how it affects the rest of the family."

"Hmn," Amelia nodded, digesting that information and thinking it through. "You're certain Harry is going to be in Gryffindor again?"

"Pretty much," James shrugged, happy for the change in conversation. "I haven't changed that much, two months of living at the manor with me can't have made that much of a difference to him."

"I'm not so sure," Amelia frowned thoughtfully. "Ever since Susan and Harry started chatting, they've both spent more time with their noses in books than I ever remember seeing Susan doing before."

"You think they'll be Ravenclaws?" James asked, raising an eyebrow and snorting at the though. "Can't see it." He said with a dry chuckle.

"I'm just saying, don't be surprised." Amelia laughed back. "Two months worth of changes, you don't know what sort of ripple effect those changes had on other things."

"Like?" James asked curiously, adjusting himself around so Amelia could lean against his shoulder more comfortably.

"Sirius for example. You told me he's been writing to that friend of his, Remus?" Amelia pointed out. "But you also said, you didn't meet Sirius and Remus until your third year."

"So?" James paused, looking at Amelia with a curious expression.

"So, Harry is living with you. Sirius is free, Remus is likely to meet Harry two years sooner than he did before." Amelia pointed out. "Barty is in Azkaban, Couch Junior's been fed to the dementors, which throws off your entire Tri-Wizard Tournament year, and those are only the things you've affected directly." She explained. "Those changes will affect other changes, and so on."

"Which is going to be impossible to predict," James grimaced, realising what she was pointing out.

"We can assume that Voldemort is still possessing this Professor Quirrell, he still needs to have access to the Philosopher's Stone correct?" Amelia asked.

"I don't think I've changed anything that could change that," James muttered dubiously, trying to
think through in his mind what had happened so far. "Dumbledore should have moved the stone to Hogwarts weeks ago anyway, just after my birthday I think, so things like Sirius being free and the major changes shouldn't have affected that."

"Lets hope so," Amelia breathed out, settling down against James for now as she tried to focus on the journey ahead.

"Yeah." James admitted to himself, leaning back in his chair and focusing on the battle to come.

Four compartments down, young Harry, Susan and Daphne were having the time of their lives away from their guardians and were more than happy to spent the journey chatting amongst themselves.

"Go on! I dare you!" Susan laughed, holding out a handful of Every-Flavour Beans.

Harry grimaced for a second before steeling himself and picking one of the beans at random before putting it into his mouth and chewing quickly, his face changing to surprise at first, then bemusement.

"What did you get?" Daphne demanded from her seat.

"Roast beef," Harry explained after swallowing the bean. "That was weird, not nasty or anything, but weird."

"I got a grass one once," Susan explained with a mock shudder. "My auntie swears she got a liver flavoured one."

"Eww!" Daphne hissed, shaking her head at that. "Your turn now." She laughed, pointing towards Susan.

"Fine," Susan nodded, picking one of the green beans and popping it into her mouth, chewing for a second before gagging and swallowing quickly. "Brussels sprouts!" She exclaimed, sticking her tongue out in disgust. "Your turn." She said, holding her hand out towards Daphne.

"Do I have to?" Daphne winced, trying to shuffle back from the handful of beans.

"Go on," Harry laughed back at the disgusted face Daphne was pulling.

"Fine, but I'm blaming you two if it's a bad one." Daphne said firmly, glaring at both of them as she slowly picked an orange coloured bean and dubiously nibbled at it. "Cheese." She said after a moment's contemplation, popping the rest of the bean into her mouth.

"That's not too bad," Susan admitted with a shrug. "It could have been worse, you could have got dirt, or..." She trailed off as the carriage door was pulled open, with three boys standing in the doorway looking at them.

"Is it true?" The blonde boy in the middle said with a sneer. "They're saying all down the train that Harry Potter's in this compartment. So it's you, is it?" He demanded, looking across at Harry.

"Yes," Harry shrugged, looking at the blond boy and the two with him that reminded him of Dudley on his bad days.

"Oh, this is Crabbe and this is Goyle," The blond boy introduced the two with him, indicating
either side of him as he spoke. "And my name’s Malfoy, Draco Malfoy." He explained. "Greengrass." He nodded, looking over to Daphne. "Well, you're making the right sort of friends at least, and who are you?" He asked, looking down to the other girl in the compartment.

"Susan Bones," Susan introduced herself quickly.

"Bones family, pure-blood, good." Draco nodded, looking back at Harry. "It's nice to see other people that know what sort of friends they should be making."

"We've been friends for a while," Susan looked up with a shrug.

"Well then, Greengrass, you'll be in Slytherin I assume, like the rest of your proper family." Draco nodded over. "You'll learn Potter, that Slytherin is where everyone important is going to be."

"I think I'll be in Gryffindor, like my parents." Harry said firmly. Remembering everything his older self had told him about Draco Malfoy. "Besides, how cunning is it to actually be sorted into a house where everyone thinks you're cunning anyway?" He asked with a small laugh. "Surely it's better to make friends everywhere?"

"Slytherin house isn't just about cunning Potter, you'd better remember that." Draco sneered. "Crabbe, Goyle, come." He ordered, turning around and stalking away from the carriage without even closing the doors behind him.

"Well, that happened." Harry laughed to himself, standing up and closing the carriage doors.

"You really think you'll be in Gryffindor?" Daphne asked in a quiet voice, looking over at Harry.

"Definitely," Harry nodded back. "Both my parents were, and my dad says I'm a sure thing for it." He explained with a grin, happy that his older self had imparted the knowledge of what was going to happen to him.

"I'll probably be in Slytherin, most of my family were," Daphne admitted with a dejected face. "But... that means we won't..."

"Hey, we'll still be friends," Harry shrugged.

"Of course we will," Susan spoke up, nodding eagerly. "It's not like you're turning into a Malfoy or anything." She explained with a laugh.

"But Slytherins are never friends with Gryffindors." Daphne explained, a puzzled expression on her face.

"Then we'll be the first," Harry grinned over. "I'm not letting a coloured robe tell me who I can and can't be friends with. That's just stupid. Besides, my dad said he had friends in Hufflepuff and Ravenclaw when he was in school, so it doesn't bother me at all."

"Hear hear!" Susan smiled in agreement. "Besides, I'm going to be a Hufflepuff like my mum and aunt, I know it." She smiled broadly. "So I'll be friends with both of you no matter what."

"Hufflepuff loyalty at it's best," Daphne smiled, thankful that both Susan and Harry weren't going to disown their friendship if she ended up in Slytherin.

"And proud!" Susan smiled again. "Besides, Harry's practically family now, we've got to stick together."
Daphne laughed at that, shaking her head in amusement at how Harry got a feint blush on his face. All three of them knew Harry's dad and Susan's aunt were kissing and dating, as far as they were concerned, it was only a matter of time before there was a marriage, then Harry and Susan would be brother and sister for real.

"Besides, we're only at Hogwarts for seven years, after that, who's going to care what house we were in back then?" Harry shrugged, leaning back on his chair to get comfortable.

"I suppose," Daphne had to nod in agreement with that, being only friends with people in Slytherin would limit her possible connections in the school by three quarters of the population, if everyone carried on like that after school, then it would be impossible for their society to function.

"It's just coloured robes and a tie, it doesn't mean anything." Harry shrugged.

"And quidditch," Susan pointed out.

"Quidditch is something else entirely," Harry grinned back. "I can't wait to play."

"You're going to try out?" Daphne asked with a surprised look on her face. "First years never make the house teams."

"He's really good though," Susan sighed. "But I kind of hope you don't, just so Hufflepuff has chance to win something." She explained with a small laugh.

"Really good?" Daphne asked curiously, looking to Susan now.

"Really really good." Susan confirmed. "He's got his own Nimbus broom and everything."

"Wow!" Daphne breathed out, looking at Harry in a new light now.

Harry just shrugged at that, happy to laze back in his chair and enjoy the journey while the girls chatted about various quidditch teams and which they supported over the others, leaving him to happily enjoy the friendships he was building and to look forward to what this new life was going to be like.

"We will be reaching Hogwarts in five minutes’ time. Please leave your luggage on the train, it will be taken to the school separately."

James looked up at the announcement, stretching slightly in the seat from where he'd been happily dozing the journey away. "We're there?" He asked as he arched his back, feeling it click from sitting in the same position for too long.

"Soon," Amelia nodded, standing up from where she'd been lazing against James and stretching herself. The train ride had been blessedly boring, with only a few interruptions here and there, most of the students seemed to look through the door window, see that they weren't students, and leave them alone.

"I swear that took longer than it ever used to." James groaned, standing up and trying to work the kinks out of his muscles.

"About eight hours, that sounds about right to me." Amelia commented, retrieving her pocket watch and checking the time. "It's nearly seven, so just under eight hours."
"Felt much longer," James admitted with a sigh as the carriage door was pulled open, letting Harry, Susan and Daphne enter. "Hey you three."

"We need our robes," Susan explained their presence.

"Of course," Amelia smiled, reaching for Susan's trunk and bringing out the top set of robes for her to take.

"I forgot about that," James admitted, reaching for Harry's trunk and lifting it down for him. "Need yours too Daphne?"

"Please Mr Potter." Daphne smiled over at him.

James nodded back, happily lifting her trunk down to she could retrieve her own robes from inside. "Had a good time then?" He asked, looking around to his younger self. "Meet everyone?"

"We had the pleasure of Draco Malfoy's company," Susan explained with a small glance to her auntie.

"Oh I can guess how that went," James chuckled to himself as Harry and the two girls slipped their robes over their clothes. "Anyone else?"

"Hannah came by for a bit," Susan explained.

"And we met Hermione, she was really bossy though." Harry explained, wrinkling his nose. "She came with Neville looking for a toad."

"She's probably just stressed, it's a first day towards school and unlike you three, she hasn't got any friends with her to help her out." James explained. Knowing the truth from being friends with Hermione for so long. "Give her a chance, all the muggle-borns are getting thrown in at the deep end, you should all help them out if you can."

"Alright," Harry nodded, seeing what his older self was saying. It was a bit weird when he found out about all this magic stuff, and he had his older self to show him through it all and help him out, he couldn't imagine how it would have been if he'd only had the Dursley's to talk about it with.

It was only moments later when the train slowly pulled into Hogsmeade station, and everyone piled off with excited chatter around the groups of first year students who were looking around in awe at their first glimpses of Hogsmeade Station.

"Firs'-years! Firs'-years over here!"

"Hagrid," James grimaced, shaking his head as he remembered. "I forgot Hagrid took the first year students across the lake, I hadn't..."

"Bloody nora, James, tha' can't be... James Potter?"

"Hi Hagrid," James winced, turning to the side to face Hagrid properly, facing his first test of living the James Potter lie.

"It bloody well is, James, fer cryin' out loud, what 'appened to you?" Hagrid demanded, pushing his way towards James and completely ignoring the crowd that was building up around them..

"It's... it's a long story Hagrid." James admitted with a sigh.

"An' this mus' be Harry!" Hagrid beamed down to where Harry was staring up at him in awe.
"Dad?" Harry whispered, never taking his eyes off of Hagrid.

"Hagrid's good people Harry," James laughed. "As long as you stay away from his cakes, you'll chip a tooth on those things."

"Minerva never lets me forget that one," Hagrid shouted, his laugh booming around the station. "Blimey James, never thought I'd see you again! Not aft'r... well, ain' somethin' to talk about now."

"Right," James nodded, happy that Hagrid's naive outlook and innocence was actually working well for him for once. He'd have to buy the man a bottle of whiskey or something as an apology for taking advantage of his nature like this.

"Madame Bones, DMLE." Amelia introduced herself. "We'll be travelling with the first year students towards the castle."

"Right ye are," Hagrid smiled, happy to have the company. "'C'mon, follow me! Any more firs’ years?" He called out, waving his lantern around to make sure all the first year students were gathering around him.

Nodding to Harry, Susan and Daphne, gesturing for them to go ahead, James and Amelia hung back from the crowd to follow on behind while the first year students eagerly followed Hagrid out of the station and down towards the lake. Technically it was so they could speak quietly between themselves, but if anyone asked, hanging back to make sure nobody got separated or left behind was a more than suitable excuse.

"That went well then?" Amelia whispered in a half question, half statement fashion.

"Kinda," James admitted with a grimace. "I feel kind of bad actually, Hagrid's like a kid at the best of times, he can't help it, he's just that sort of trusting guy. He doesn't have a suspicious bone in his body."

Amelia nodded at that, understanding why James would feel bad about taking advantage of someone like that.

It didn't take them long to make their way down to the boats and then across the lake, with the expected "oohhhh's" and "ahhhhh's" coming from the various boats when the students got their first view of Hogwarts castle.

"I remember that view, the first time I saw it." James admitted quietly, sitting in the boat alongside Amelia on their own. "It felt like home, a sanctuary away from everything else in my life." He admitted with a sigh. "I couldn't even tell you when it stopped being home, and when it turned into just another place." He whispered, looking over to Harry's boat and noticing the look of awe and wonder on his face.

"During the war? After?" Amelia asked.

"Somewhere between," James said with a sigh. "It stopped being a sanctuary when people like Snape and Umbridge and the Death Eaters took over. They took something from us all when they took the castle, and we never got it back."

"You'll be able to stop that from happening this time though, these children won't loose their school like you did." Amelia smiled comfortably towards him.

James nodded back, making a silent vow that he'd stop the same thing from happening to his
younger self no matter what the cost, he'd make sure his younger self kept the magic in Hogwarts that he'd lost somewhere along the way.

As the boats reached the other side of the lake they passed through to the underground harbour where they slowly docked against the stone carved platforms that held the boats steady.

James and Amelia watched quietly as Hagrid helped the students out of the boats, finding Neville's lost toad in the process, before he started to lead them up the castle steps towards the gigantic door of the great hall.

"Everyone here? You there, still got yer toad?" Hagrid boomed out, looking around the gathered first year students to make sure he hadn't lost anyone, looking back to James and Amelia last and then smiling when James nodded approvingly towards him.

"Right then," Hagrid nodded to himself, turning around and banging on the giant door three times, the noise echoing in the dark evening like thunder in the air.

The doors swung open practically immediately, and James couldn't help the smile that tugged at his lips as Minerva came to stand in the doorway in her customary emerald green robes.

"The firs’ years, Professor McGonagall," Hagrid said with a wide smile.

"Thank you, Hagrid. I will take them from here." Minerva nodded, looking around the gathered first years, her face dropping from it's usual stoic mask when she saw James and Amelia, the shock evident on her face for a brief second before she narrowed her eyes. "With me." She ordered, turning on her heels and marching forward into the castle with the first year students following her.

"I feel like I've already got detention, and I graduated seventeen years ago," Amelia whispered as they followed the group of first years through the entrance hall to the small chamber to one side.

"Welcome to Hogwarts." Professor McGonagall said firmly, making sure every one of the first year students was paying attention to her. "The start-of-term banquet will begin shortly, but before you take your seats in the Great Hall, you will be sorted into your houses."

"Final chance to change your bet. I'll put a sickle on them both in Ravenclaw." Amelia whispered from her position by the door to James.

"Gryffindor and Hufflepuff." James whispered back as Professor McGonagall continued to explain the various houses and how the school points system worked.

"Winner cooks dinner tonight?" Amelia countered.

"Deal." James whispered back.

"The Sorting Ceremony will take place in a few minutes in front of the rest of the school. I suggest you all smarten yourselves up as much as you can while you are waiting," Professor McGonagall finished, looking around the first year students as a few of them started fiddling with their robes and straightening up their clothes. "You two, follow me." She hissed out as she passed James and Amelia, storming out of the side chamber.

"Here we go," James sighed, following Minerva away from the first year students and down the corridor enough so they couldn't be heard.

They were barely ten feet away from the side chamber when Minerva stopped in the corridor suddenly, spinning around with her wand already in her hand and pointing dangerously at James.
"Who are you?"

"James Potter." Amelia said firmly.

"James Potter is dead." Minerva hissed out. "Who are you?" She demanded again.

"Let's just make this simpler, what do I have to do to prove to you I'm James Potter?" James asked, cocking an eyebrow as he made the challenge. It was a risk, and Minerva certainly knew a lot about his parents, but over the years she'd shared a lot of those stories with Harry, so he felt that taking this risk would be the quickest way to convince her.

"Your Patronus?" Minerva asked.

"Stag." James countered easily enough.

"Who was your best man?" Minerva asked, narrowing her eyes.

"Sirius Black, he's at my place currently if you'd like to know." James answered easily enough.

"The two other friends you made?" Minerva asked.

"Remus Lupin and... Pettigrew the betrayer." James said, narrowing his eyes. "I could also tell you where Potter Manor is under a Fidelius, that your animagus form is a cat. How Hagrid kidnapped Harry from Sirius under Albus' orders, or why you were there at Privet Drive with Dumbledore that same night." He rattled off with a firm voice, causing Minerva to stumble back slightly.

"James?" Minerva whispered, firing several quick negating charms and finites' towards him, then staring at him in surprise when nothing changed.

"We'll talk later, this is Harry's day." James said with a small smile.

"Susan's too," Amelia broke in with a small smile. "Good to see you again as well Minerva."

"Amelia," Minerva nodded briskly towards Amelia, regaining her composure somewhat after being faced with the ghost of her best student. "Very well, wait with the students, I will return momentarily." She indicated before marching away.

"That could have gone better," Amelia chuckled over as she watched Minerva stalk away and head into one of the offices.

"It could have gone worse," James admitted, leading the way back towards the chamber where the first year students were waiting, all currently talking amongst themselves and to the various ghosts that had appeared and were welcoming them to the school.

"Follow me students. The Sorting Ceremony is about to start." Minerva called out, pulling everyone's attention to the door where they filed out towards her, leaving James and Amelia stood on either side of the doorway to follow on behind her.

"Here we go," James whispered as he watched the main doors to the Great Hall open for Professor McGonagall to lead the new students through inside.

"Good luck." Amelia whispered back to him, giving his hand a brief squeeze before they separated an followed the students in at the rear.

James' eyes narrowed as soon as he walked into the great hall, seeing Severus Snape sat at the staff table was something he hadn't prepared himself for, but seeing him sat there along with Albus
Dumbledore and Professor Quirrell was enough to make him clench his jaw in anger as the memories of his first year at Hogwarts came flooding back.

That anger turned to steel when he saw Snape and Dumbledore's faces drop when they noticed him, both turning pale when they saw the anger on his face as he stalked into the great hall behind the first year students with the department head of the DMLE alongside him.

'Well, shall we?' James smirked to himself as he steeled himself for the opening gambits of what was quite literally the game of his life.
Chapter 10

TITLE: Double Back

DISCLAIMER: All things Harry Potter belong J K Rowling... basically, if you recognise it, it isn’t mine... Please don't sic the Aurors on me, I’m just here for the fun.

Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry
Highlands of Scotland
Scotland

If asked, James wouldn't have been able to tell you a single word of what the Sorting Hat sung in it's welcoming song.

His attention wasn't on the hat, on the various students, or even on Minerva anymore. It was on the three people at the staff table at the end of the hall, all three of them staring at him with ashen faces and horrified expressions.

He knew Minerva had seen it as well, she'd looked between him and Dumbledore a few times, then had set her jaw and given Dumbledore one her patented 'Explain yourself' glares that could have peeled the varnish from the staff table.

"When I call your name, you will put on the hat and sit on the stool to be sorted," Minerva announced, breaking the awkward silence that fell after the sorting hat finished singing. "Abbott, Hannah!"

"Hufflepuff!"

"Bones, Susan." Minerva called out as Hannah dashed off to the table with the rest of the students in yellow and black.

"Hufflepuff!"

Susan jumped off and ran after her friend, leaving Harry a happy smile as she joined the Hufflepuff table to sit down.

James was only vaguely concerned with the sorting however, he was making sure not to make eye contact with any of the three at the table, but staring at their noses and foreheads every time he switched his attention between the three.

From his position behind the first year students, he could make out the various whispers coming from around the hall, coming loudest from the area to the side of the staff table where Minister Fudge was sat with the various reporters from the Wizarding Wireless Network, all talking amongst themselves in hushed whispers as for the first time the sorting ceremony was broadcast live to radios all over the country.

James simply continued to stare down at the staff table as the various first year students whittled down. Hermione went to Gryffindor, Daphne went to Slytherin, Neville went to Gryffindor... and
so it went on.

"Potter, Harry."

James allowed his concentration to flicker as he finally looked away from the staff table to watch his younger self step forward and sit on the rickety old chair as Minerva proudly placed the sorting hat down over his messy hair.

As the silence continued, James shared a brief shared glance with Minerva as their eyes met, he could see she was proud of his younger self for some reason, but was equally demanding answers from him.

The silence stretched on and James flicked his eyes down to where his younger self seemed to be whispering under the hat, arguing with it about something. Had it taken this long last time? He could barely remember. He remembered arguing not to go into Slytherin, but it hadn't felt like it had taken this long before.

"Hufflepuff!"

James blinked at that announcement as Minerva took the hat off of his younger self, watching as the robes and tie glittered with magic for a moment before the yellows and blacks washed down like they were poured onto him from above.

Harry actually looked just as shocked as he was, but seemingly not surprised or angry, if anything, he actually looked happy with the yellow striped robes and what they represented to him.

'That's new' He thought to himself, cocking his head to the side in thought as he watched his younger self run off to sit down at the Hufflepuff table. Had things changed that much already? Had Harry changed that much? From a lion into a badger?

The Hufflepuff table erupted into applause as Harry came to sit down next to Susan, all three of the other tables looking across at Hufflepuff for the first time with a mixture of jealousy and questioning.

"We didn't get Potter?"

James resisted the urge to snort out a bout of laughter as he heard the despondent question from the Weasley Twins at the Gryffindor table.

Lisa Turpin was the next to be sorted, as James turned his attention back to the staff table where both Dumbledore and Snape had rather curious expressions on their faces, and seemed torn between paying attention to him, or paying attention to his younger self at the Hufflepuff table.

Ron went into Gryffindor just as before, and Blaise Zabini headed to the Slytherin tables, suddenly leaving only James and Amelia stood in the middle of the great hall, with Minerva looking between them and then back to the staff table.

"It would seem, that both of you are rather too old to be sorted I'm afraid." Albus announced, standing up slowly from his seat at the staff table, his comment drawing a few chuckles from around the room as James stepped forwards and narrowed his eye towards him. "And who might you be?" He asked, staring down and doing his best to catch the faux-James' eyes with his own.

"You know who I am." James said firmly. Setting his jaw as he stared up towards the staff table.

"I'm afraid you have me at a loss," Albus said quietly, moving around the staff table to come and
stand at the front of the raised area at the front of the hall. "Because, what is certain, is that you are not James Potter."

"Is that certain?" James asked, raising an eyebrow and allowing a ghost of a smirk to tug at his lips. "Maybe I should ask for my invisibility cloak back? Would that help?" He asked, taking a small amount of enjoyment out of the way Dumbledore blanched even further at that. "Or maybe I should ask how you got the key to Harry's trust vault? Though, that hardly matters anymore, as I've secured the Potter vaults with blood, so only me and him can access them now." He explained bluntly.

"You are NOT James Potter." Albus said firmly, stepping forwards until he was practically on the edge of the raised platform.

"This says I am," James bit out just as firmly, pulling the auror badge off of his belt and tossing it towards Dumbledore, smirking when he used a silent accio charm to summon it mid air before snatching it into his hands. "Perhaps instead I should talk about The Prophecy, and..." He had to raise his voice as Dumbledore started talking to try and shut him up, then ended up shouting over Dumbledore. "And how Snape overheard it and went running to Voldemort to tell him all about it."

Both Snape and Dumbledore were completely white now and were staring at him in shock, to Minister Fudge's credit, he hadn't interrupted once and was simply staring at the two as if trying to decide which of them would earn him the most voters.

"Albus?" Minerva whispered, turning her full attention back towards the staff table now.

"You can't be James Potter." Dumbledore bit out, almost pleading with it not to be true as he pulled out The Elder Wand and levied it towards the faux-James. "You are not James Potter!" He shouted, casting a wave of cascading white energy out towards his target.

"You keep saying that," James smirked as he deflected the magic upwards to the enchanted ceiling with ease, his own reflexes far beyond what a wizard of Albus Dumbledore's advanced age could perform.

"Albus, what are you doing?" Minerva hissed out, backing away so she wouldn't be between the two in a duel.

"What I must," Albus said aloud as he cast again, this time an aqua blue stream of magic shot from The Elder Wand, only for the faux-James to meet it head on with his wand and negate it entirely. "You are the one who took young Harry from his relatives?"

"You mean the muggles who kept him locked in a cupboard under the stairs and barely fed him?" James bit out, ignoring the whispers that broke around around the hall at that declaration. "Oh, and your squib spy, Mrs Figg? I should stop by and say hello to her again, it's been a few years since I last saw her." He explained with a small smirk. "She was the one telling you all about how Harry was treated right? Passing on the stories about how the Dursley's starved him, how his Aunt Marge had her dogs chasing him up trees while Petunia and Vernon watched and laughed?"

"Noo!" Albus shouted, sending three curses in quick succession towards the faux-James, all three of which he batted up into the enchanted ceiling with seemingly no effort at all.

"Really, in front of all your students, and The Minister, live on the Wizarding Wireless as well." James chuckled when he saw Albus flick his attention over to where the reporters were all watching with rapt attention. "Is there something you didn't want them to know?" He asked with a smirk, stepping forwards towards the staff platform dangerously. "Maybe the fact that there's a
Prophecy about Harry and Voldemort? Or about how you were keeping Harry in the dark all these years just so you could convince him to face Voldemort in an act of suicide for your plans of the greater good?"

"What is it you want?" Albus bit out, lowering his wand slightly as he realised how bad this was looking to everyone that was watching.

"Me? I'd like the last god knows how many years of my life back." James bit out. "I'd like to know why you stole Harry from his rightful guardian Sirius Black, then let him rot in prison. I'd like to know why you dropped Harry off on a muggle doorstep in the middle of a freezing cold November night, without a warming charm, a security charm, or even knocking on the door to announce your presence?" James hissed, reaching the front of the hall and glaring up towards Dumbledore.

"I'd like to know why you're so intent on manipulating Harry's life, that you think you have any god damned right to do any of the things you've done?"

"I..." Albus winced, flicking his wand down in various complicated detection charms that washed over the faux-James like water off of Gryffindor tower.

"Polyjuice detection, glamour detection, transfiguration detection," James ticked off as Albus continued to cast futilely towards him, his own wand at the ready to strike at any moment. "Any more?" He drawled out, narrowing his eyes towards Dumbledore.

"James?" Albus whispered, unable to deny that his detection charms hadn't revealed a single thing wrong about the faux-James in front of him.

"Well?" James demanded, climbing up onto the staff platform with a quick jump up, keeping his eyes on Dumbledore all the time. "The hall is waiting, the reporters are listening, the world wants to know." He demanded. "What explanation have you got."

"What I have done, I did for..."

"Ah," James interrupted, holding his hand up. "If you are about to say you kidnapped Harry and abandoned him on a muggle doorstep to freeze to death, for the greater good?" He bit out, stepping forwards so he was directly in Dumbledore's face. "I will curse you so far into next week that even a time turner won't help you get back." He hissed out finally.

"James, everything I have done was for the good of..."

James shook his head, turning away from Dumbledore before lashing out with his fast, connecting with Dumbledore's face and sending him crashing to the ground, to the sounds of gasps and shrieks coming from the students in the hall.

A silent accio charm wrenched the Elder Wand from his grasp and into the air, where James easily caught it.

"You don't know what you've done!" Albus hissed out, glaring up from the ground in disbelief at loosing the Elder Wand.

"I know exactly what I've done," James glared down. "It's a Peverell family wand, after all. A Potter family wand." He whispered with a smirk so only Dumbledore could hear him. "Now, who else do we have here." He grinned, turning around to look at the staff table, noting with no real surprise that Snape had already slithered away and vanished from the staff table during his confrontation with Albus. "Well, it looks like Snape had somewhere better to be." He said with a small smirk towards Snape's empty seat. "What a shame." He grinned sarcastically as he turned to
look around at the rest of the teachers.

"Mr... ahem, Mr Potter?"

James flicked his attention to the side, recognising Cornelius Fudge's self-important bluster immediately. "One moment Minister, this won't take long." He said aloud, walking down the staff table and meeting everyone's gaze, from the shocked faces of Aurora Sinestra through to Filius Flitwick and Septima Vector, until he reached Professor Quirrell and stopped in front of him, smirking across the table at him.

"James Potter." Professor Quirrell smiled at he stood up, all stutter and nervous disposition gone from his stance. "You know, I believed you were dead."

"The same way the world believed you were dead?" James asked, pausing for a beat before continuing. "Tom?"

Quirrell narrowed his eyes at that as he stalked around the table to come and stand at the far end of the raised platform. "So, you know then?"

"It was hardly difficult to work out," James drawled out. "The Philosopher's Stone I assume?" He asked, feigning ignorance for a moment.

"Of course," Quirrell smiled with a small bow. "I must admit, I am surprised." He announced in a soft tone. "We had thought you just an annoyance, an obstacle to be overcome. I listened to Severus when he belittled your skills and knowledge, he never spoke of you as having any real power. I had never looked upon you as a worthy adversary before."

"Things change." James said firmly, taking a few steps towards him.

"Yes, yes they do." Quirrell sighed, bringing out his own wand. "I am surprised however at the ease in which you dispatched your old mentor. I didn't think you had it in you."

"You never know until you've been tested." James said firmly, raising his wand.

"That night, he killed you, I know he did." Quirrell said, cocking his head to the side. "How did you survive?"

"The same way Harry survived." James smirked, telling the complete truth and seeing the puzzlement on Quirrell's face as he struggled with the conundrum.

"You're telling the truth," Quirrell frowned. "You survived that night."

James just smirked, holding out his arms to say 'here I am'.

"You could join us." Quirrell blustered. "The Potter family have a long and illustrious lineage, your pure blood would see you as a prince in our court. Your only failure was your mudblood whore, and even she could be forgiven given her power."

"The fact you're even offering that to me shows you know absolutely nothing about me." James said firmly, watching out of the corner of his eye as Amelia started casting protective shields around the front of the hall to prevent any students getting hurt, while Minerva noticed what she was doing and started to hustle students away from the front of the hall.

"Yes, I noticed your little helpers." Quirrell waved off the distraction with disinterest. "A teacher and an Auror? Neither are in any position to help you."
"I don't need their help." James declared with a set jaw. "After all, Voldemort, this won't be the first time we've fought."

At that name, the hall broke into panic, with all four tables scattering to the rear of the hall and running into the various corridors that led away. Even the teachers left at the front of the hall instinctively moved away from the staff table, leaving James and Quirrell facing each other, with Dumbledore still laying on the ground and watching in disbelief.

"You dare say that name?" Quirrell demanded.

"Sorry," James smirked over. "You prefer Tom Riddle then?" He grinned, spotting the exact moment when Quirrell raised his wand and falling into his own offensive stance, transfiguring a block of ice in the air in front of him automatically as Quirrell snapped off the killing curse, shattering the ice and sending it raining down all over the hall.

Stepping back James quickly went on the offensive, casting blasting curses and disarming charms, linked with transfigurations and elemental summoning to surround Quirrell with blasts of ice and freezing winds.

"Impressive," Quirrell sneered out, flicking away the various curses and charms with ease as he stepped out of the freezing ice and banished it away with a wave of his wand.

Turning his attention back to James he instantly had his wand up when James Potter was nowhere in sight, the various idiotic teachers were cowering away from him, while The Minister and various reporters had half fled to the edge of the hall and certainly looked like they'd soiled their robes during the short confrontation.

"Potter?" Quirrell hissed out, glaring around the hall in an attempt to find his quarry. He took note of everything, the various students that were hiding at the far end of the hall with McGonagall and Bones standing between him and them. The way Dumbledore had stayed on the floor and hadn't even spoken up or helped during the duel at all. The way the other Hogwarts teachers had protected each other and left Potter to duel with honour.

"Tom,"

Spinning around he had his wand up instantly, but didn't expect the fist that forcefully crashed into his face, staggering him back more than a few steps in the process as pain flooded through his face and started to radiate out to around his skull then down his neck.

"You never did pay attention," James smirked as he launched another punch, this one caving straight through Quirrell's face, collapsing it in on itself with black flakes of decayed skin and bone falling around his fist on the way to the floor.

James simply watched as Quirrell's body turned to ash, his clothes falling to the floor in seconds, collapsing his decaying body to dust under the weight of his robes, leaving only a sickly black spectre hanging where Quirrell's body had been.

"Now Voldemort, shall we talk without your puppet." James said aloud, shaking off his hand to dust off the remnants of Quirrell's decomposing face from his hand and wrist.

The wraith simply shrieked, diving around the room with furious anger as it swooped overhead of everyone before coming to hang in the middle of the great hall and seemingly glare down at him.

"I will not forget thissss.... Jamessss Potter!" The spectre hissed out.
"Get out of this school you demented half-blood!" James demanded, raising his wand towards the spectre and narrowing his eyes.

"You dare!" The spectre hissed down.

"Of course I dare, I'm a Potter." James grinned back. "What? Didn't want all your sycophants to know the truth, that their precious Dark Lord was really a half-blood that was simply using their bigotry rise up so he could punish people like his muggle father?"

"You cannot defeat me Potter!" The spectre shouted defiantly as it hung silently in the great hall with everyone watching. "I will return."

"I'll be here." James promised.

The spectre shrieked at that, swirling around the hall again until it dove to the main doors, passing through them like a ghost and vanishing into the night.

A few quick casts of detection charms later and James was certain the spectre had gone, he retrieved the Auror badge from where Dumbledore had dropped it before he happily jumped down from the staff table and made his way over to where Amelia had been guarding some first year students, standing in front of Harry and Susan in particular.

"That was fun." He smirked as he walked over, pocketing Dumbledore's Elder Wand for now but keeping his own in his hand in case anyone did anything stupid.

"Fun?" Amelia asked, raising an eyebrow towards him. "You very nearly took twenty years off my life with that stunt." She hissed out.

"James?"

Turning around he saw Minerva slowly making her way over, Minister Fudge a few steps behind her and looking around the hall with terrified eyes as if expecting the spectre to return at any moment.

"Minerva," James smiled back, giving her a wink and a small grin before he turned his attention back to Amelia and then to Harry. "Hey mini-me." He grinned, kneeling down so he could look over at the younger version of himself.

"Hey old man," Harry grinned back. "The evil wizard didn't look that tough to me." He said with a wide grin that looked like it was going to split his face in half. "Darth Vader was a scarier Dark Lord than he was."

"Don't you start too," Amelia groaned, looking down at Harry who had an identical grin on his face to match James.

"That... he..." Minister Fudge whispered as he approached with Minerva and the press. "He's back!" He hissed out.

"Voldemort, yes." James rolled his eyes, nodding slowly before standing back up. "Dumbledore actually hired him to teach the Defence Against the Dark Arts class, whether he knew Voldemort was possessing that body or not, well..." He trailed off with a shrug. "He still had all those traps made around the Philosophers Stone then?" He asked, looking to Minerva.

"How on earth do you..." Minerva trailed off, shaking her head. "Indeed James, I was rather proud of that chess set I'll have you know." She explained with a frustrated sigh.
"Traps, he was using the stone as bait to lure Voldemort to the school." James explained, turning to the staff table where Dumbledore was slowly climbing to his feet and clearly struggling to understand what had happened this evening.

"I'll have him out of this school before the end of the night!" Minister Fudge barked out.

"Probably a good idea," James nodded. "If not, the next time we cross wands, I'll end up killing the old fool." He said with a grimace, glaring back down the hall towards the staff table. "I noticed Snape ran as soon as he realised who I was."

"Hardly a surprise given your history." Minerva nodded with a small smirk. "I somehow doubt we will be seeing Severus return to these halls any time soon. You have created a rather large amount of work for me in a small amount of time, you are aware of this?" She asked, fixing James with a glare.

"Well, yes, of course." Minister Fudge blustered quickly. "I'll have The Governors ratify your lead to take over the school as soon as I return to The Ministry." He stated, nodding to himself before flicking his attention to James to make sure that was what he wanted. "You... you don't want the position for yourself I take it?"

"God no," James snorted, shaking his head at the very idea of becoming a headmaster.

"Merlin help us," Minerva muttered at the nightmarish mental images that that offer conjured up.

"Cornelius, there are things..." Dumbledore started as he clambered down from the staff table area, hurrying down the hall towards where James, Cornelius, Minerva and Amelia were stood talking.

"Oh do shut up Albus!" Minerva hissed out, silencing him quite effectively. "If you require my memories of the night Albus abandoned young Harry on that muggle doorstep, you shall have them Amelia." She said with a small bow towards Amelia. "I only hope you can forgive me for my actions that night James."

"I know what happened," James nodded, looking at Minerva with a forgiving smile. "I forgave you long ago, I know how you tried to tell him how bad the Dursley's were, but I never forgave him." He said with a hiss, turning his attention back to Dumbledore.

"James, surely..." Albus started.

"No." James bit out, cutting Albus off. "The next time I see you, we will be trading spells, and I won't be simply shielding that time." He explained, fixing Dumbledore with a glare.

"Indeed," Cornelius blustered, puffing himself up as he jostled to stand beside James Potter proudly. "Using the school as a trap for You-Know-Who? Luring a mass murder here with all these innocent children? Hiring You-Know-Who as a teacher? For crying out loud Albus, what sort of institution is this?" He demanded. "I'll be calling for an immediate meeting of the school governors, if your resignation isn't tendered immediately, you can expect to be fired first thing tomorrow morning."

"Cornelius, I'm sure that I don't..."

"Get out Dumbledore." James said firmly, standing strong and crossing his arms over his chest as Harry came and stood by the other side of Cornelius, both of them framed by Amelia and Minerva, all of who were now staring at Dumbledore with thinly veiled anger and disgust.

"James, everything I have done I did for..."
"Out!" James barked, cutting Dumbledore off sharply.

"My wand perhaps?" Albus asked hopefully.

"You mean my family's wand?" James countered, raising his eyebrow. "I know the truth, don't try to deny it." He said with a frown. "After all, that's why you were so interested in the cloak, wasn't it?"

Dumbledore didn't answer that, instead simply looking away from James' glare, only to find the same glare coming from Amelia and Minerva.

"I do believe it is time you left Albus." Minerva said firmly.

"Yes, I believe so." Albus admitted softly. "When you need me, I shall..."

"We won't." James said firmly. "You'd better hope Sirius doesn't catch up to you first either. He's got a rather long list of grudges against you now, and his stint in Azkaban hasn't helped his temper."

"I see," Albus nodded, accepting that he deserved that and likely so much more.

"Goodbye Albus, don't let the doors prevent you from leaving." Amelia said, stepping aside to allow a path through to the main doors of the great hall. As she stepped aside the students followed suit, all willing to stand by the woman who stood between them and You-Know-Who.

Albus simply walked forwards in silence, moving through the students who refused to look at him, until he reached the great doors and pushed them open before walking out into the cold night air.

"I... I should return to The Ministry, lots to do you know, especially with... well..." Cornelius blustered, his eyes flicking between James, Harry and the open doors.

"Raise the Auror budget, we'll need them with Voldemort back." James said with a firm nod.

"Yes, yes, obviously." Cornelius practically fell over himself in agreement. "Yes, of course, I'll have the papers sent down to you in the morning Amelia."

"Graciously appreciated Minister." Amelia nodded, successfully hiding the smirk that threatened to tug at her lips.

"Well, yes, must go, can't dilly dally around here all day." Cornelius muttered quickly. "Yes, best go. The floo entrance, it's still available I assume."

"I will show you through," Minerva smiled, nodding towards Cornelius before gesturing for him to follow her. "I assume the students are safe left in your care for this short period James?"

"Yeah yeah," James muttered, waving his hand towards her with a small smirk as he headed over to one of the tables and leaned against it, practically sitting on it as he got comfortable. "So... Hufflepuff?" He asked with a grin, looking to Harry's yellow and black trimmed robes.

"You're not disappointed?" Harry asked quietly.

"Nah," James smiled, shaking his head. "Amelia was sure you'd make Ravenclaw though." He explained.

"The hat said I was brave enough for Gryffindor, but my loyalty was my strongest trait." Harry said with a thoughtful smile as Susan came to stand alongside him. "It also said I could be great in
Slytherin, but wasn't sure the house would survive me."

"Hmn," James laughed at that, scratching his stubble idly as he thought about it. Loyalty was something he's always prised, and more than a few times in the past he'd been praised for his loyalty as well, maybe Hufflepuff wasn't as much of a stretch as he thought.

"Well, I certainly never expected to find a Potter in my den."

"Pomona," James chuckled, recognising the voice of Neville's old mentor coming up behind him. "I'll look after him, don't you worry about that." Pomona smiled over. "Her too." She said, nodding to Amelia and Susan. "I think they'll be fine," James grinned, watching as Harry and Susan snuck off to one side to check on Daphne and Hannah, a lot of the other students following with them and grouping around them to listen in.

"James, is that... it can't be though... is it?"

"Filius," James chuckled to himself. "Sorry about the duel in front of you, I didn't want to risk him getting away before I could deal with him."

"Yes, yes, quite." Filius nodded as he hobbled over. "Quite the selection of charms there, most impressive, most most impressive. Elemental conjuring as well? Rather ingenious."

"I try," James chuckled to himself as he spotted Minerva coming back into the great hall, this time thankfully without the reporters and Minister. "Must you create chaos and drama wherever you go?" Minerva hissed as she came over to join the discussion. "That entire thing was broadcast live across the entire Wizarding Wireless Network you know."

"Really?" James smirked up, looking at Minerva before flicking his eyes to Amelia. "Well, imagine that." He grinned, his eyes telling Minerva that he knew exactly that, and that he'd probably actually planned it that way.

"Chaos, drama and a good degree of luck I'd say." Filius chuckled. "If ever there was more proof of your identity, I'd say we have it there."

"Quite," Minerva frowned thoughtfully. "Given tonight's spectacle, you'll forgive me if I'm rather glad young Harry found himself a home with the Badgers. I'm not entirely sure I could survive another seven years of that drama."

James snorted at that, shaking his head in amusement at Minerva's exasperated expression. "Oh I wouldn't worry about that Minerva," Amelia chuckled. "After all, if you're taking Albus' position, then..."

"Then I'll need someone to take over transfiguration AND Gryffindor house." Minerva sighed, turning back to James and glaring at him again. "Two heads of houses, three subjects without professors, and the deputy position to fill as well?" She demanded. "And that's not even accounting for the courses Albus taught when it was needed, like his NEWT Alchemy course, which thankfully isn't running this year."

"You know, I think that might be a personal best," James smirked, ruffling his hair in amusement
at how things had turned out.

"Indubitably." Minerva sighed in frustration. "I will inform the school elves to deliver the feast to the separate common rooms, there seems little point in trying to corral them all back into the great hall after the events of tonight. If you both inform your prefects to start taking the students down to their houses. I will have to find someone to take care of Slytherin house."

Pomona and Filius both nodded at this, quickly moving off to gather up their Hufflepuffs and Ravenclaws from around the great hall and heard them together towards the older students and prefects, while Minerva headed off to find Septima and talk with her about the Slytherin population of the school.

"That actually went better than I expected." Amelia whispered to James once Minerva, Pomona and Filius had moved off.

"Fifty fifty," James shrugged with a small grin. "I'll admit, I'm actually disappointed Snape ran off before I had chance to confront him. I had quite a bit I wanted to say to him that I never got chance to before."

"The consummate Slytherin, he saw the odds were against him so he retreated to fight another day." Amelia sighed in agreement.

"Hmm," James smiled.

"Will you both be staying for the welcoming feast?" Pomona asked, waddling back over to James and Amelia as the Hufflepuff prefects took the new students out of the great hall to follow the rest of the Badgers downstairs. "I know it won't be quite the same as the great hall or the Gryffindor tower, but our den is quite the comfortable spot Mr Potter."

"Call me James," James grinned, holding his hand out to Pomona, feeling a bit strange introducing himself under a different name when he'd known the herbology professor for so long now. "I'd love to." He said with a wide smile.

"Of course Pomona," Amelia chuckled. "It will be rather nice to see the old common room again." She admitted as James stood up from where he'd been sitting against the Ravenclaw tables.

Pomona smiled to herself as she noticed the glances and small smiles between James and Amelia, content to keep those thoughts to herself for now as she led their pair out of the great hall and down towards the kitchens to find the secret barrels that led to the Hufflepuff common room so they could all eat and relax at last.
Chapter 11

TITLE: Double Back

DISCLAIMER: All things Harry Potter belong J K Rowling... basically, if you recognise it, it isn’t mine... Please don't sic the Aurors on me, I'm just here for the fun.

AN: Apologies for the wait, I got a hectic few weeks with work that took over my life and delayed this bunch of chapters.

Things are going 'easy' for Harry so far because he knows what's happening and has advanced knowledge of everything... this won't be a constant curb-stomp type story though, as things change because of Harry's time travelling, things will get more difficult to see coming and changes Harry can't anticipate will leave him floundering...

Though there's no one there to guide you
No one to take your hand
But with faith and understanding
You will journey from boy to man
- "Son of Man" by Phil Collins

2nd September, 1991

Potter Manor
Honley

"Junior, get your time travelling arse out of bed right now!"

James groaned as he rolled to the side, idly smiling as he felt Amelia snuggle back into his body and press her rather delicious curves into him. "I can kill him you know? It'll be justifiable, nobody would blame us?" He whispered, nuzzling into the back of Amelia's neck.

"Don't tempt me," Amelia muttered, enjoying the morning snuggle.

"Come on, you're all over the Daily Prophet, the Wireless hasn't stopped talking about you. Fudge's even been on the Wireless to announce about how he's fired Dumbledore and Old Tabby's taking over as Headmistress at Hogwarts, it's a huge thing!" There was a pause before Sirius continued on. "They're taking apart everything that was said piece by piece, even talking about how old Snakeface confirmed Snivellius was a Death Eater and Dumbledork still hired him for the job and protected him from being arrested."

"Silencing charms maybe? Or a gag? We could always get him neutered?" James muttered, very tempted to give into the urge to simply pull the duvet up over their heads and go back to sleep.

"You were the one that decided to adopt him, he's your problem child, not mine." Amelia groaned, wriggling back into James' body and enjoying the warmth coming from him and the feeling of his firm body pressing against her back.

"He's not mine, that... that's just disturbing." James muttered, frowning at that rather odd mental
"I can hear you two talking in there you know."

"Then go away!" James yelled out, rolling his eyes.

"Unless you two are naked, I'm coming in in ten seconds."

"Do that and you won't live to see another sunrise." Amelia warned him sharply. "Go and start the kettle, we'll be down in a minute."

"Yes, oh Mistress Leo."

"OK, kill him." James grunted, rolling over onto his back in frustration. "I'm adding silencing charms all over that door when I get chance."

"He'd probably see that as a challenge," Amelia muttered, rolling onto her other side so she could face him now. "Morning you." She grinned.

"Morning," James grinned back, leaning in to steal a morning kiss. "Mistress Leo, I mean, really?" He muttered, shaking his head.

"Well, I actually quite like the idea of you calling me Mistress," Amelia grinned, slowly dragging her nails down his chest and admiring the marks she'd left last night.

"Hmmm," James grinned, leaning in for a deeper kiss this time.

"I should go though, Cornelius will be panicking enough at The Ministry, and without Albus around for him to sneak off and beg for advice, he'll end up turning..."

"To Malfoy." James groaned, lifting his head up and letting it fall back to the pillow in a thump of frustration.

"Precisely," Amelia nodded. "I'll floo when I can, dinner tonight?"

"I'll convince Sirius to go out somewhere, maybe he can start humping a tree out in the garden somewhere or something." James sighed, sitting up in the bed and ruffling his hair.

Amelia snorted at that, rolling over so she could sit up in bed as well. "Without Harry and Susan around, we have more free time now." She explained with a small smile. "We should be the ones that go out for a meal."

"That... that sounds perfect." James grinned as he stood up and headed towards the bathroom.

"Hmmm," Amelia grinned, looking over and admiring the long and deep scratch marks she'd left running down the entire length of James' back, along with his very delicious arse on display as he walked. "I'll get changed after work and floo you from the manor?"

"Definitely," James called from the bathroom, the sound of running water muffling his voice slightly.

"Remember Minerva wanted to see you today as well." Amelia reminded him as she watched him come back into the bedroom, smiling at how the teeth marks around his neck, shoulders and chest were visible to her as he wandered over to the drawers to find his underwear and jeans.

"Don't remind me," James groused as he tugged on his underwear and watched as Amelia started
heading towards the bathroom, spending a rather decadent amount of time watching the sway of her hips and how it accentuated her backside.

"Stop staring or we'll never get downstairs," Amelia laughed as she moved into the bathroom and out of view. "And remind me to bring some more clothes here next time, it'll make mornings easier if I'm not casting cleaning charms over everything each morning."

"Spoilsport," James chuckled to himself, tugging on his jeans and wriggling into them to get comfortable. "I'll see you downstairs alright? Coffee? Breakfast?"

"Just coffee," Amelia shot back from the bathroom.

James simply nodded at that, standing up and stretching before heading out of the bedroom and downstairs, happy to just wear jeans today until he had to go out anywhere.

The truth was, the confrontation last night at Hogwarts had gone far, far better than anything he'd hoped for. Albus had had his secrets revealed on the national Wireless, Minister Fudge was accepting Voldemort was back and was bolstering the Auror forces, well, he said he was. He'd wait and see whether that actually happened or not.

Snape had vanished, and was unlikely to return to Hogwarts. Voldemort had been dealt with and was reduced to his spirit form, yet again, and Hogwarts was now under Minerva's control, which meant stupid events like the Tri-Wizard Tournament and idiotic things like dementor guards and Ministry Inquisitors, were very unlikely to occur in the future.

Last night hadn't simply been a success, it had been a resounding success beyond his wildest dreams.

"Finally!"

James rolled his eyes as he ambled through into the kitchen, thankful that the stove pot kettle was already simmering and ready for him to use for his morning coffee.

"Wow, looks like you had a wild night. Didn't know 'Melia liked it that rough?" Sirius joked with a joking leer, admiring the bite marks and scratches that were clearly in view this morning.

"Say that to her and she'll neuter you on the spot." James warned, fetching two mugs down and starting to make up the coffee for him and Amelia. "Where's the wireless, I thought you said you had it on?"

"Turned it off," Sirius shrugged. "Started playing Celestina Warbeck, it was either turn it off, toss it out of the window, or cut off my ears."

"Good choice," James grunted, pouring out the boiling water into the two mugs and enjoying the smell that wafted up into the kitchen from the coffee.

"What's the plan for today then?" Sirius badgered quickly, already having his morning drink made and ready. "Keep pushing the offensive? While you were out playing with Voldemort and Dumbledore yesterday, I went down to Diagon and secured up the Black vaults, and got my own wand." He explained, brandishing his shiny new ebony wand for everyone to see.

"Something like that," James muttered, enjoying a deep drink of the coffee. "Little Hangleton, you know it?" He asked. "Out towards Bristol?"

"Not off hand," Sirius shrugged, leaving his wand on the breakfast table when it didn't get any
reaction from him. "What's there?"

"Voldemort's father's bones." James explained bluntly, causing Sirius to suck in a deep breath. "He used them to get a new body last time, I'm not taking the chance this time."

"Probably a good idea," Sirius nodded thoughtfully. "That's some pretty dark stuff though Junior, ritual work like that can be tricky as hell. Blood sacrifice, it's not pretty stuff."

"I remember," James nodded as Amelia came into the kitchen. "We'll head up there, take care of the bones, then over to Grimmauld if you feel up to it?" He asked, looking to Sirius as he handed the mug of coffee over to Amelia.

"Yeah, can do." Sirius frowned, but agreed none-the-less. "Not saying I like it, but getting started on these horcruxes is definitely a good thing."

"Plotting for the day then?" Amelia asked, leaning against the worktop next to James as she took a sip of her coffee. "You know Cornelius will be asking for a meeting with you as well."

"Let him ask," James groused, shaking his head in disgust at the thought.

"If he can't get to you, then he'll try sending messages through Harry." Amelia pointed out. "Surely it's better to play on his good side now that he's doing what we want, instead of alienating him and pushing him into Malfoy's hands."

"Better the devil we know?" James muttered, ruffling his hair in annoyance.

"Hate to say it, but she's right." Sirius nodded over. "Politicians are all the same, if he can latch onto you and be seen in the spotlight, he'll do whatever you want to stay in your good graces." He explained with a toasting motion with his mug. "You're the toast of the town, The-Vanquisher-of-Voldemort, The-Defeater-of-Dumbledore, The-Man-Who..."

"Man who doesn't need, or want, any more of those stupid hyphenated names the idiots at the Daily Prophet dream up." James interrupted firmly.

"My point is, everyone is going to be looking at you like the next coming of Merlin, Fudge included." Sirius pointed out. "You use that to push through the changes you want now, and it can save you a hell of a lot of work later on."

"When you're making sense, I know the world has gone to hell." James frowned, glaring towards Sirius over his coffee mug as he enjoyed a large mouthful.

"He's right," Amelia nodded. "And you're right on that too." She smirked, agreeing with James' comment.

"Fine, whatever," James sighed to himself. "It's Monday, if Fudge asks, tell him I'll come by The Ministry in the week, Thursday or Friday, whenever." He grunted, not liking the idea of playing with politicians one bit.

"I'll drop a few hints, I'm sure he'll figure them out." Amelia smiled thoughtfully.

"You could drop a hippogriff on his head for all I care," James muttered.
"I doubt that'll have the same effect, but I'll keep that in mind." Amelia said, rolling her eyes as she finishing off her coffee and left her mug on the side board. "See you tonight."

"Alright," James smiled, leaning in for a kiss and ignoring the wolf whistle that came from Sirius' direction.

"Behave, or I'll bring a rolled up newspaper next time." Amelia smirked over as she broke the kiss. "Have fun digging up graveyards today."

"Digging up graves or playing with politicians, tough choice." James muttered.

"I think we got the better deal." Sirius said after a moment's thought.

"Definitely," James nodded back.

"Wizards," Amelia muttered as she made her way through to the living room and the floo, stepping in and vanishing in a burst of emerald fire.

"So..." Sirius drawled out, wriggling his eyebrows towards James.

"Don't start Sirius." James muttered, refilling his coffee mug with steaming water before stirring in two teaspoons of instant coffee.

"I'm just curious," Sirius grinned. "It's a bit weird, having two godsons, one who's older than me and is shacking up with the director of the DMLE."

"By like, five or six years or something." James muttered, ignoring the rest of Sirius' comment.

"Still," Sirius smirked back. "It's weird."

"Do we need to have the sex talk Sirius? Do you know where little witches and wizards come from?" James asked in a mock innocent voice as he looked over towards Sirius.

"Smart arse," Sirius laughed, flipping James a middle fingered salute. "Look, whatever is going on between you two, it's good for you, you seem happy, that's all."

"And?" James asked, raising an eyebrow.

"And... alright it's weirding me out." Sirius exclaimed with a mock shudder. "You're little Harry, not James, not whatever else everyone things you are. You're Harry."

"I'm thirty eight, thirty nine now if we count the last birthday, though with all the time travel stuff I don't even know if that counts or not." James muttered, trying to keep that straight in his head. "I haven't been 'little Harry' in a long time."

"You'll always be little Harry." Sirius explained. "Look, I know I wasn't there for you last time, but give me a chance alright, things are better now." He said with a small smile. "I can help."

"I know," James sighed. "I wouldn't be asking you to come to the graveyard with me if I didn't think you could help." He pointed out. "But I don't need a father figure anymore Sirius, I grew out of that a long time ago. Let's just work on friends, friends for now."

"Friends, I can work with that." Sirius smiled.

"Yeah, that'll work." James smiled back.
"I still can't believe the Pronglet is a Hufflepuff," Sirius muttered, scratching his head in confusion at that revelation. "You seriously weren't pulling a prank on me with that?"

"No joke," James nodded. "Threw me for a minute too I guess, but the more I thought about it, the more I kinda liked it."

"Explain," Sirius prompted, leaning back in his chair as he tried to contemplate this.

"Justice, dedication, fairness and loyalty?" James ticked off on his hand. "I know Hufflepuffs were always really a joke, but one of the best people I knew was a Hufflepuff when I was at Hogwarts, so yeah, I can see it." He admitted. "I always hated bullies, justice for everyone was basically what I fought for, that everyone should be treated equally, regardless of blood, money or whatever else. And you know how much loyalty means to people like us." He pointed out with a gesture towards Sirius, reminding him of Peter Pettigrew.

"Never really thought about the 'Puffs like that." Sirius mused aloud, rocking back on his chair at the kitchen table. "Aways seemed a bit full of hugs and lovey dovey stuff to me."

"The mini-me seemed to be happy with it," James shrugged. "Besides, if Hufflepuff are loyal to him, he'll end up with some great friends out of it instead of some of the idiots I stuck with through my years."

"Not mad the kid didn't get into Gryffindor like you then?" Sirius asked curiously.

"Jealous actually." James snorted with amusement at the thought. "A common room down by the kitchens, not sharing a doom-room with Ron 'snores like a congested dragon' Weasley? Not having to climb up all those stairs to Gryffindor tower every time you needed something from your dorm room?"

"Wow, yeah." Sirius blinked, thinking about that for a moment. "They've really got a common room down by the kitchens?"

"Uhuh," James nodded back.

"We got stiffer!" Sirius groaned, thinking about all the midnight snacks they could have gotten away with if they'd been in Hufflepuff back then. "Alright, one last question."

"If it's about Amelia or our sex life, I will curse you." James muttered, narrowing his eyes as he looked towards Sirius dubiously.

Sirius snorted at that but shook his head. "I was listening to the Wireless, I heard everything, and the reporter was actually pretty good about describing what was going on."

"So?" James asked, enjoying a mouthful of his coffee and trying to figure out where this was going.

"I get why you punched Voldemort, that protection stuff you told me about, he couldn't touch you, so when you touched him it turned him to dust." Sirius nodded. "But you punched Dumbledore? From what it sounded like, you didn't even cast a curse at him, you just punched him?"

"And?" James paused, wondering what the question was.

"What's the deal with punching? It's... it's not the done thing Junior." Sirius explained with a frown.

"Ah, actually, because of that." James pointed out, nodding to Sirius. "Pure blood's expect curses, duels and fighting with magic. They all think it's what makes them better than muggles."
"So you punch them because..." Sirius trailed off, cocking his head to the side thoughtfully.

"One, they never expect it. It catches them off guard, and pretty much every wizard I've ever punched has collapsed like a sack of shit. They've got no idea how to fight close up, they're just used to using their wands to show how superior they are." James explained patiently, holding up one finger to Sirius. "The only witch I ever actually saw doing anything like it was your crazy cousin with her knife, but even she didn't really use it for anything other than torturing people and threatening them, using it to scare people." He explained, repressing the angry urges that came up when he thought about how Bellatrix had tortured Hermione so many years ago now.

"Two, they hate it. It's 'muggle' and beneath them. So defeating them like a muggle is like rubbing salt in the wound. I've lost count of the amount of pure blood idiots that start ranting and raving about me taking them down like that when I should have duelled like a proper wizard." He pointed out, lifting up a second finger.

"So you fight like a muggle just to use their own prejudices against them?" Sirius asked, laughing loudly at the thought when James nodded back. "I was having doubts you were Prongs' son, but that just erased all of them." He exclaimed with a wide grin. "Punching Voldemort like a muggle has to be the best prank ever in the history of pranking!"

"I thought so," James smirked over. "Not to mention, punching Dumbledore was the most satisfying thing I've ever done, literally." He explained with a grin. "I've wanted to do that for bloody years after everything he put me through." He laughed.

"Your dad'd be proud Junior, of you and Pronglet." Sirius said with a smile and a nod. "Your mum too."

"Thanks Sirius." James nodded back, he didn't need to hear anyone's approval anymore, but it was nice to hear, especially from Sirius.

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**Hufflepuff First Years Dorm**

**Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry**

**Highlands of Scotland**

**Scotland**

Harry was woken up by unfamiliar noises around him before he regained enough consciousness to figure out exactly where he was and what the noises were.

The bed in the Hufflepuff Dorms had been almost heavenly to sleep on, the mattress was softer than a cloud, and the duvet was overstuffed to the point of decadence, leaving him feeling extremely cosy and warm as he struggled to an awake feeling.

"Mornin',"

"Morning," Harry muttered, rubbing his hair idly and pushing it out of his face.

"Didn't mean to wake you, I'm normally up early." Earnest admitted with a bashful look over to Harry.

"Don't worry about it," Harry said, shaking his head as he fumbled towards consciousness before attempting to climb out of bed and find his glasses.
"Roll to the side first, it's easier that way, my mum warned me about these beds" He explained with a laugh.

Harry considered the advice before trying it out, and quickly conceded that rolling on the overly soft mattress was certainly easier than trying to climb around on it. "Thanks." He said aloud as he managed to clamber out of the bed.

"No problem," Earnest grinned back. "Bathrooms are through there if you wanted to grab one of the tubs before the rest wake up."

Harry nodded in thanks for that, following Earnest's suggestion as he stumbled through to the bathroom indicated.

His dorm-mates were pretty cool as far as he was concerned, Ernest Macmillan was a a blond haired wizard that was a few inches shorter than Harry was. He was open and friendly, and seemed to be pretty relaxed about everything that had happened last night.

Justin Finch-Fletchley was a few inches taller than him and had dark brown hair, he was a muggle-born so got a lot of the muggle references that Harry had made last night, which had helped ease the tension and gave him someone that could understand his desire to figure out absolutely everything about this new magical world.

Wayne Hopkins was the fourth in their room and had been pretty quiet last night, mostly staying to himself and reading quietly on his bed, making it a rather peaceful dorm area where Harry could definitely see himself relaxing without being bothered by anyone.

Bathing didn't take long, and while his hair still refused to do anything and remained barely controlled chaos on-top of his head, he was soon still washed, dressed and ready for the day before either of the other two boys from his dorm had entered the bathroom.

Coming back out of the bathroom he could see that Justin and Wayne were awake and chatting, though neither had bothered to get out of bed yet. "So, what's the schedule for today then?" Harry asked curiously, getting dressed into his school uniform and looking over at where Earnest was already packing his bag.

"Professor Sprout will hand out class schedules at breakfast," Earnest explained. "I wouldn't worry though, my mum says the first two days are always pretty easy, it's mostly settling everyone in and getting them used to the castle."

"That's if we've even got classes anymore." Justin pointed out. "With Professor Dumbledore gone, and Professor Quirrell... well... dust?"

"Dust," Earnest confirmed. "We all saw it, kinda hard to miss that he was being possessed by You-Know-Who when Harry's dad punched the ghost right out of him."

"True," Wayne nodded in agreement. "Nobody knows where Professor Snape ran off too either."

"So that's two professors we're missing, and we haven't even started our first day yet?" Earnest asked. "Wow, your dad should come here more often, we wouldn't have any teachers by the end of the week and we can all go home again." He laughed, grinning over to Harry.

"He was pretty cool though," Justin pointed out. "I think he's the first wizard I've seen wearing jeans and a leather jacket."

"It's dragon-skin," Harry said with a wide grin at Justin's wide-eyed reaction. "I know right? But
yeah, he's cool. He doesn't bother with all of this robe stuff either, Amelia does though, but she has to for work I guess."

"Amelia? Madame Bones?" Earnest clarified, blinking a bit in surprise. "She... um... and your dad?"

"She's his girlfriend," Harry explained, pulling a pained expression. "She kept telling me to call her Amelia, I still kinda think of her as Miss Bones though."

"Wow, I don't envy you." Earnest muttered, wincing at that thought. "She's the Director of the Department of Magical Law Enforcement." He explained to Justin who was looking at him blankly.

"Basically the magical police commissioner." Wayne converted that into a muggle term Justin could understand.

"Oh, oh wow." Justin breathed out. "Yeah, definitely better you than me mate." He said with a laugh.

"Isn't a bit weird? I mean, your dad... having a girlfriend?" Earnest asked curiously.

"A bit," Harry admitted, scrunching up his nose as he thought about it. "Not in the way you'd think though." He said thoughtfully. It wasn't weird because of Amelia, it was weird because his 'dad' was an older time travelling version of himself. "My mum died when I was a baby, so..." He trailed off with a shrug. "I guess having Amelia as a sort of step-mum could be cool?"

"Until you get in trouble," Wayne pointed out.

"I'll just have to make sure I don't get caught." Harry grinned back at that, causing all three boys to break into laughter.

"So, that makes Susan..." Justin trailed off thoughtfully.

"Yeah, basically my sister." Harry nodded. "She's fun though, so I don't mind that."

"Anyway, I'm starting to get hungry," Earnest commented. "Where do we go for breakfast?"

"Probably that big hall," Harry said after a moment's thought. "I mean, we were supposed to eat there last night right? But dad sort of..."

"Got into a fight with You-Know-Who and ruined the meal?" Justin asked with a grin.

"Shouted his head off, then punched out the Headmaster before he could serve up the food?" Wayne added on.

"Alright alright," Harry laughed, holding up his hands in surrender. "Fine, blame him for last nights food then."

"Yeah, because I'm going to blame with someone who took down Dumbledore and You-Know-Who in the same duel without breaking a sweat," Earnest muttered, shaking his head at the thought. "I'm no Ravenclaw, but I'm not stupid." He said with a laugh. "Come on, maybe there's some of the older guys in the common room that can show us the way up?"

"Alright," Harry nodded over. "See you guys in a bit." He smiled to Justin and Wayne before heading down the corridors off of the dorm room and following the winding maze around that led
back to the main Hufflepuff common room.

Harry had fallen in love with the Hufflepuff common room as soon as he'd entered it, it was light and airy, open and wide, everything that his cupboard under the stairs hadn't been.

There were leather couches everywhere, and overstuffed beanbags scattered in various places for those who wanted to jostle down and make their own comfort instead of lazing on one of the couches. Various plants were dotted on shelves and pots around the room, giving it a natural and ‘down to earth’ feel that made relaxing anywhere around the common room really easy.

He had been surprised at first when the sorting hat had mentioned Hufflepuff to him, but after what felt like an age of talking with the hat about what different things meant to him and why he felt he belonged in Gryffindor, he had finally admitted that he'd only been sure about Gryffindor because his older self had been placed there, and that the hat actually had made a lot of sense when it talked about his sense of fairness and loyalty.

Hufflepuff felt strangely right, the dorm room was amazingly comfortable, and the common room was already feeling like a home away from home with it's earthy and natural colours.

"Morning Harry,"

"Hey Susan," Harry grinned over as he spotted Susan on one of the couches chatting with Hannah. "How's your dorm?"

"Only three of us," Susan smiled as Harry and Earnest came over. "Me, Hannah, and Sarah." She explained with a shrug. "We've got tons of room, it's great."

"Yeah, there's only four of us as well." Harry nodded to Earnest. "We're thinking about hunting for breakfast?"

"Definitely," Susan nodded emphatically. "Lead on?" She asked, looking to Hannah who smiled in agreement as they both stood up from the couch, happy to follow Harry through to the great hall.

The Ministry of Magic  
Department of Magical Law Enforcement  
London

In The Ministry, Amelia Bones was certainly not having the best day. Manic didn't even come close to describing how everyone around The Ministry was acting, it was bordering on panic in some cases, and had left her office swamped with messages demanding her presence in meetings with practically every department in the building.

Molly Weasley had been arrested yesterday morning for breaching the Statute of Secrecy at Kings Cross Station. According to the report, she'd been yelling about 'muggles' and 'platform nine and three quarters' in full view of hundreds of muggles, and while it hadn't been a serious breach, it had been enough that she'd been slapped with a hundred galleon fine for her actions.

Thankfully she was certain that the muggles in the area had, more than likely rightfully so, assumed that Molly Weasley was simply crazy, so had written off anything she'd been shouting about as if she was just some homeless lunatic that had gotten into the station.

"What?" She barked out as she heard a knock on her office door, not even looking up from the pile
of parchments on her desk.

"No need to be like that, I come baring gifts."

Amelia grimaced as she looked up, wincing towards Julia in a silent apology. "It's not a good time." She explained as Julia came in, closing the office door behind her.

"Sounds it," Julia nodded, placing the plate of sandwiches down on an empty area of Amelia's desk. "Figured you could use something to help you through the day."

"It's appreciated," Amelia nodded, leaning back in her chair and groaning. "What brings you down here to the eye of the storm then?"

"Cornelius called us all in, calling for the Governors to hold a vote establish Minerva as Headmistress and remove Albus from the position officially." Julia explained.

"And?" Amelia asked, raising an eyebrow.

"It wasn't unanimous, but we got it through." Julia nodded with a small smile. "Lucius was trying to push his own agenda through and get one of his puppets appointed, but he seemed rather off colour about what happened last night and didn't push too hard."

"That's surprising," Amelia frowned thoughtfully, drumming her fingers on her desk. "With Voldemort out in the open, I'd have thought Lucius would have gone running back to his old master as soon as he could."

"When did you start saying that name?" Julia asked, shuddering at the casual mention of You-Know-Who's name.

"It's a made up name, it's silly to keep calling him all those other names when we all know who we're talking about." Amelia waved the thought away.

"Tom Riddle," Julia nodded, we all heard it on the Wireless. "It was even in The Prophet this morning, somehow they had pictures of the entire thing. I reckon by the end of the week they'll have his entire life story printed for everyone to read about. Skeeter didn't even have to sensationalise a single thing."

"She couldn't, not without contradicting what everyone heard on the Wireless." Amelia shrugged. Inwardly amused that James’ plan to get Rita Skeeter there had worked, it was obvious she'd been in the great hall using her animagus ability to stay hidden and out of the way.

"You don't believe Lucius' imperius claims either then?" Julia asked with an amused smirk.

"I wouldn't believe Lucius Malfoy if he tried to tell me Slytherins wore green." Amelia said dryly. "No, he's planning something. I wouldn't be surprised in Voldemort was holed up at Malfoy Manor right now."

"It's a good bet," Julia nodded, knowing full well about Lucius' darker tendencies. "Cornelius seemed rather impressed with your little boytoy though, I have to admit, he's got the public eating out of the palm of his hand after that display last night."

"Oh?" Amelia asked, cocking an eyebrow up. "He's hardly a boytoy."

"Mantoy then," Julia smirked back. "The Prophet is calling them The Prophecised Potters, it doesn't help that Dumbledore all but confirmed the existence of a prophecy, but nobody knows
"Albus and Severus do," Amelia muttered, shaking her head at the thought. "I haven't even had chance to look at The Prophet this morning actually. I've got a copy around here... somewhere..." She grimaced, looking around her parchment filled office in vein.

"Your boy's got the front page, pages two and three all to himself." Julia chuckled. "A lot about Harry Potter as well, his sorting into Hufflepuff, and a load of fluff about how everyone wishes him the best of luck at Hogwarts."

"The usual sycophantic twaddle with The Prophet trying to stay on James' good side then?" Amelia snorted, shaking her head in amusement.

"That's pretty much it," Julia confirmed. "I do have to apologise to you though, Cornelius was asking questions about James, and I may have let it slip about your relationship with him."

Amelia groaned at that, letting her head fall back to the back rest on her chair as she looked up at the ceiling. "And?" She grimaced.

"He found it interesting, I'll bet it influences his decisions now." Julia admitted. "Lucius heard it as well, so you'll have to keep a closer eye on his behaviour."

"I already had my eye on him," Amelia admitted. "I'll have to warn James as well, he won't like that it's become public knowledge already."

"Sorry," Julia sighed. "You'll probably have questions coming to you as well, about the Bones and Potter families and what you're going to be doing with them."

"Like am I going to marry and become a Potter?" Amelia anticipated with a groan. "And leave Susan to try and carry on the Bones legacy on her own? No chance in hell." She explained firmly.

"I expected as much," Julia admitted with a smile. "Unlike you, I'll be happy to let the Greengrass name die off. If only to spite those idiots who think the Sacred Twenty Eight makes them practically royalty."

"And Daphne and Astoria?" Amelia asked, raising an eyebrow at that piece of information.

"Daphne knows, she understands that she'll always be a Greengrass, even when she gets married." Julia explained. "But she also understands that our family doesn't have the best history, Cyrus' father fighting alongside Grindlewald left a big stain on the Greengrass name, he was content with letting the name die out with Daphne and Astoria when we didn't have a son."

"Hnh," Amelia grunted, acknowledging that point for what it was.

"Cyrus was trying to regain the family honour before letting it die out, I'll proudly continue that plan." Julia explained with a small but proud smile. "I'll stand with you and James when it comes down to it."

"A Potter, Bones, Greengrass alliance?" Amelia mused aloud, rolling the thought around in her head. "I'll float the idea to James and see what he thinks of it. It can hardly be a formal alliance though." She explained with a snort of laughter.

"Not unless you're willing to share your new toy," Julia smirked over with a wink to show she was mostly kidding. "Besides, I'm sure more of the light families will be circling around James now, especially after the beating Albus' reputation got last night."
"That did make me smile," Amelia grinned wolishly at that, seeing Albus Dumbledore taken down a peg or two and then utterly removed from Hogwarts in a single stroke had been masterful as far as she was concerned, and she'd definitely rewarded James for that rather handsomely last night.

Julia's joke about making a formal alliance didn't really fall flat with her though, the idea was stuck in her brain and fermenting there rather strangely. A formal alliance between the Potter, Bones and Greengrass families would definitely be something that would shake up a lot of their world, and would head off a lot of awkward questions that she and James would have to answer later on.

If Julia was willing to take the Potter name and continue the Potter family legacy, leaving the Greengrass name to die out after Daphne and Astoria married, then that left her to continue the Bones family name and kept Susan's options open to marry for love when she grew up, instead of being forced to choose between love and a continuance arrangement.

It wouldn't be a hardship really, she'd had witches as lovers before, much to the disgust of the pure blood bigots around who were only interested in seeing her continue her family name regardless of her own wishes, and Julia was certainly attractive enough to consider the option, though formally it would make Harry, Susan, Daphne and Astoria siblings.

"Sorry, what were you saying?" Amelia shook her head, clearing those thoughts as she focused back on what Julia was talking about.

"Just how Nott was trying to arrange a contract with Daphne for his eldest, nothing to worry about." Julia waved off the thought. "Like I'd ever sign a contract tying Daphne to that Death Eater spawn."

"Hmn," Amelia nodded thoughtfully, not mentioning that in James' future she knew that Astoria ended up married to Draco Malfoy somehow. Which led to the rather uncomfortable thought of what had happened to Julia? Had she survived Voldemort's rising in James' future? Or had she died in the fighting like she had, another victim of Voldemort's Death Eaters?

"I'll let you get back to it, do say hello to that boytoy of yours when you see him, and thank him for his actions last night." Julia smirked as she stood up with a wink. "Though I'm sure you already thanked him rather thoroughly last night." She added with a lavish grin.

"I will neither confirm nor deny that fact," Amelia smirked back with a wink, causing Julia to break out in a loud laugh. "Say hi to Astoria for me."

"Will do," Julia smiled as the left the office, leaving Amelia to her piles of paperwork and her thoughts.
LITTLE HANGLETON GRAVEYARD

"That was actually pretty anti-climactic." Sirius mock complained as he stood over the empty grave, watching as James reduced the bones inside to dust with a few well placed blasting curses.

"Speak for yourself," James muttered, idly vanishing the remnants of the bones, completely erasing all of Voldemort's father from existence. "The last time I was here, Voldemort had me tied to that thing," He explained, nodding to the towering marble headstone and the statue of the Angel of Death looming over it. "While Pettigrew stole my blood for his new body."

"That must have sucked," Sirius muttered, waving his wand towards the empty grave and causing the earth and grass to flood over it and ripple until it was perfectly flat again with no evidence of it ever having been disturbed.

"You have NO idea," James grimaced, shaking his head and looking over to the side of the graveyard towards the vague direction of where he knew Cedric had died that night.

"It's still weird you know, you having all these future memories that haven't happened yet." Sirius muttered as he followed James away from the Riddle grave. "You still don't know how you even got back here?"

"No clue," James admitted, leaning against a grave stone casually as he looked around the graveyard. "Best I can figure, Nott or Malfoy must have been trying to build some sort of new time turner or something. I remember we got a report to go and raid Nott Manor, but aside from that..." He trailed off with a shrug.

"Think they were trying to do what you did?" Sirius asked thoughtfully. "Come back and change things?"

"Maybe?" James frowned, not liking that thought at all. If the Malfoy's had come back, with all the same future knowledge he had, they could have really caused a hell of a lot of problems for the world, and probably would have led to Voldemort winning the war without any resistance at all. "Who knows, best I can figure out, as soon as I started changing things, that future that I came from got wiped out anyway." He explained his thoughts with a shrug.

"I just wish you knew how you'd done it," Sirius sighed, leaning against the headstone next to James. "If we could do it again, I could go back and..."

"I know," James nodded, giving Sirius a small smile. Going back in time and saving James and Lily would have been Sirius' only wish, and he knew Sirius wouldn't hesitate to give up his life if it meant James and Lily could survive.
"It isn't fair you know?" Sirius muttered, looking around the graveyard. "Prongs should be here, him and Lils didn't deserve this."

"We never get the life we deserve," James sighed, ruffling his hair. "You didn't deserve to spend a decade in Azkaban, I sure as hell didn't deserve to grow up locked in a cupboard with relatives that hated me." He explained. "We've just got to do the best with what we've got."

"We'll do it better this time though, right?" Sirius asked hopefully.

"Has to be," James snorted, shaking his head. As far as he could see, the world was already better than it had been last time.

Sirius was free a whole two years early and was legally innocent this time. Dumbledore's meddling had been brought into the light, so he wouldn't be trying to test and guide Harry towards committing suicide. His younger self had his place at the Potter Manor, and didn't have to live with The Dursley's anymore, and Fudge had admitted Voldemort was actually back and was making preparations early, a big change from the way he stuck his head in the sand and caused all those problems last time.

"We done here then?" Sirius asked, taking one last glance back at the Riddle grave and giving a mock shudder towards it. "Because hanging around in graveyards isn't really my idea of a fun time."

"Hah hah," James muttered dryly, pushing himself off the headstone. "Yeah, we're done here. There's no way snakeface can use anything here to get his body back now, so unless he finds another way, he'll be stuck possessing people."

"Then lets get out of here, no offence, but this place gives me the creeps." Sirius explained, making a disgusted face at what they were doing.

"You alright to do Grimmauld today then? Get the locket from Kreacher and deal with that?" James asked, raising an eyebrow towards Sirius.

"Maybe," Sirius sighed, clearly thinking about it. "I haven't been there, not since they kicked me out. I swore I'd never go back."

"Alright," James nodded. "We can give it another few days if you want? We can't do anything about another of the horcruxes anyway yet, I haven't even figured out how I'm going to get to the cup." He admitted with a grimace.

"Thanks," Sirius nodded, breathing out a sigh of relief at being given a reprieve from returning to Grimmauld Place so soon. "I think I'll just... take a day you know?"

"Yeah," James nodded over with a small smile. "Go to Diagon, have a wander around, spend some time with actual people for a change." He prompted with a grin. "Maybe it'll stop you from making jokes about me and Amelia if you can find your someone's leg to hump for yourself."

"Hah hah," Sirius muttered dryly but brightened at the thought. "Yeah, maybe." He grinned back. "What about you?"

"Got to see Minerva up at Hogwarts, I'll deal with the horcrux there when I get the chance." James shrugged. "Check on the mini-me and the others, then take Amelia out for a meal tonight."

"Ohhh?" Sirius leered with a wink. "Getting serious with the witch are you?" He asked, nudging James' shoulder with his own. "Kidding aside, you deserve it kid."
"More like just taking her out so we don't have to suffer through another night of your bad jokes."
James smirked back with a wink.

"Owch, that hurts Junior, really, right here." Sirius groaned, placing his hand over his heart and staggering theatrically. "You wound me."

"I'll aim better next time." James grinned.

"Seriously though, you and 'Melia, it's a good thing. It's weird, but it's good." Sirius nodded with a smile. "You never really talked about having anyone in the future?"

"Not really," James shook his head with a sigh. "There was someone, could have I been someone I guess." He admitted. "I liked her, but never told her how I felt. Too busy wallowing and stuck with the feelings that nobody really wanted me, or I didn't deserve anyone like that. By the time I'd figured out that she liked me as well, it was too late." He explained with a frown. "It was my fault I guess, I wasn't exactly smart when it came to witches at Hogwarts, not even after." He said with a shrug. "I could probably blame it on Uncle Vernon, Dumbles or a hell of a lot of things, but when it comes down to it, it's my fault that I didn't see how great she was until it was too late."

"Married someone else?" Sirius asked, his earlier joking disposition completely gone now.

"Walked away from the magical world altogether, went to live without magic." James explained with a grimace.

"Muggleborn then," Sirius nodded knowingly. "Can't say I'm surprised, a lot of them end up that way, leaving our world and going back."

"Only because the pure blood idiots drive them away." James pointed out. "It's no surprise the magical world is stagnant and stuck hundreds of years out of date, when all the new people are being forced to walk away from it."

"Can't say I disagree with that, I probably told you about how I grew up right?" Sirius asked, then continued when he got a nod in response. "I had pure blood superiority shoved down my throat since I was old enough to talk, so believe me, I know how fed up people can get with it being thrown around so much." He explained. "Lils hated it, she was going to go on and apprentice under Flitwick before the war kicked off. She'd have probably become a teacher as well, she'd have been great at it."

"I didn't know that," James admitted, surprised at finding out more about his parents. "You... you never spoke much about mum last time around? Everyone was always comparing me to dad, I got tons of stories about him, but never anything about mum."

"I guess it must have just been easier to talk to you about Prongs," Sirius explained with a small shrug. "You look the spit of him, I keep having to remind myself you're not really him." He explained, holding up his hands when James started to talk. "I know why you're doing it, I get it, hell, I'd have even suggested it myself to keep the Pronglet safe." He said. "But it's weird, looking at you and seeing Prongs, but you're nothing alike, not really."

"I never knew him, so..." James trailed off with a sad sigh. "All I had were a few stories from you and Remus, some photos and then letters I found in the family vault."

"Speaking of Remus," Sirius nodded, sidetracking the conversation. "Any idea where that wolf is?"

"Nope," James shrugged with a disinterested roll of his eyes. "I never found out last time either, he just showed up in third year as the defence teacher when Dumbledore called him in, but he never
told me why he hadn't shown up before, sent a letter, or anything."

Sirius nodded at that, a dark expression on his face as he contemplated Remus' actions. He'd been thrown in Azkaban, that was the only reason he hadn't been there for Harry growing up, what was Remus excuse?

"Tried owling him again?" James asked curiously.

"Sent another this morning," Sirius nodded. "The owl took the letter, but no idea if he's even getting them since he never writes back."

James shrugged again at that, not massively bothered either way. It'd be nice to have Remus around, if only so Teddy would be born again. But he wasn't going to go out of his way to hunt for him when he hadn't done the same for him growing up.

"What was that?" Sirius asked, frowning as he considered the expression that he'd seen for just an instant. "Is there a problem with Mooney? Did he do something?"

"No, no, it's just..." James sighed, ruffling his hair in frustration. "Sirius, I only knew you for... what, two and a bit years? And that was mostly letters and a few weeks when Dumbledore actually let me stay at Grimmauld place, and even then we barely got past talking about anything aside from Voldemort and all that crap." He explained with a shrug.

Sirius frowned, not having thought that through properly.

"And Mooney," James sighed. "I knew him for about four years, less than that really, he was my teacher for one year, he didn't even tell me he was a friend of my dad's until I figured bits out and pushed him for it, and then I barely saw him again aside from summers when he was at Grimmauld, and that was only when I was allowed to be there too." He explained with a frown. "You're expecting me to know you, Mooney and everyone just because I'm from the future, well guess what? I don't really know you, I don't know Mooney, I don't know Tonks or anyone else like that." He explained with a touch of anger seeping into his voice as he paced around the graveyard.

"You all died, two decades ago!" James bit out. "I know Teddy better than I know his dad, hell, I was there when he graduated, when he started dating Victoire and asked her to marry him, and I helped him through the times Skeeter started making fuss about him being allowed at Hogwarts because he's the son of a werewolf."

"Teddy? He... Mooney..."

"Not the point Sirius," James waved that angry thought away. "You and Mooney were my dads friends, I get that." He explained. "But you both died, and I never got to know either of you. I never got to hear stories about my mum and dad, because you both listened to Dumbledore when he said it was better for me to stay isolated, better for me to be alone, better for me not to have you both around." He practically shouted the last.

"Junior, I wouldn't..."

"Mooney did," James pointed out angrily. "You did, you died because I was stupid enough to believe Voldemort had you. And what did Mooney do? Was he there to talk to me? Tell me how things would work out? Help me deal with it? No, he just left me alone, back in prison at The Dursley's just how Dumbledore ordered, no letters from him, no letters from my friends, nothing."

"Maybe he..."
"Dumbledore, he followed Dumbledore. He trusted Dumbledore, he believed everything Albus bloody Dumbledore said." James shouted. "That's why he was never there for me, because he was simply following Albus bloody Dumbledore's orders and didn't give a shit about how I was coping with everything!"

"You can't blame him for that, we all thought..."

"You were all wrong!" James snapped, glaring across at Sirius. "Maybe he hasn't done a lot of those things yet, but he sure as hell kept away from me growing up and left me to the Dursley's when he could have been there and helped me. What's his excuse there? Dumbledore told me too? Where's that famous Marauder loyalty there?"

"That's not fair Junior." Sirius said firmly.

"Would you have stayed away if Dumbledore hadn't kidnapped me from you and you ended up in prison?" James demanded. "Go on? Would you have listened to Dumbledore and followed his orders like a good little sheep?"

As Sirius looked away, James could see what the answer was.

"I didn't think so." James frowned, shaking his head. "That's the difference between you and Remus. You ended up in prison and couldn't be there for me. Mooney? That's just what Mooney does, abandons people. He abandoned me to The Dursley's when you were in prison, he abandoned me when you died, leaving me alone and blaming myself for everything. He abandoned his wife when she found out she was pregnant. That's what he does, I shouldn't even be surprised by it anymore. Voldemort has his idiots that follow him blindly without question, Dumbledore has his. They're just as bad as each other as far as I'm concerned."

"I'll ask him," Sirius said, still looking away from the anger he could see practically radiating out in the graveyard.

"You do that, because for me, he abandoned me nearly forty years ago. He's barely more than a ghost, a father to my godson that died before he spoke his first word." James explained bitterly as he stalked away through the graveyard. "Do what you want, I've got to see Minerva." He said angrily, twisting on the spot and vanishing with a crack, leaving Sirius alone in the graveyard to contemplate his angry words.

Department of Magical Law Enforcement
Ministry of Magic
London

"Yes?" Amelia grimaced, looking up as she heard the knock on her door interrupting her work yet again.

Today had been nothing but interruptions, with everyone from Cornelius Fudge pushing into her office to talk, down to reporters from the Daily Prophet trying to get to talk to her.

It was annoying and fraying her last nerve currently, as she had so much to do and was constantly being stopped from getting on with the work she needed to push on with.

It didn't help that she had annoyingly conflicting thoughts about a few things running around in her
head now. Like she knew from James' memories that Kingsley Shacklebolt and Alastor Moody were deep in Dumbledore's pocket, and had been part of his little club the last time around. But the fact was, both of them were great Aurors, and with Voldemort back, she needed all the talent in the corps that she could get.

"Madame Bones?"

Amelia flicked her eyes up at the unexpected voice, looking up to see Augusta Longbottom stood in her doorway hesitantly.

"Augusta? Is everything alright?" She asked, not used to seeing the old witch hesitant in anything she did. "Come in."

"Thank you," Augusta gave a small smile, coming into the office and gently closing the door behind her. "I'll get right to it. Is it true?"

"Voldemort?" Amelia asked, raising an eyebrow. "Yes, I'm afraid so."

"I didn't want to believe the news when I read the Prophet this morning." Augusta admitted. "And it's true that James Potter was there to stop him?"

"True," Amelia admitted with a nod.

"And the rumours about you and James Potter, I assume are also indeed fact?" Augusta asked firmly.

"I haven't heard the rumours personally, but we are close if that is what you are asking." Amelia confirmed, cocking her head to the side. "What's this about Augusta?"

"And where has James been all these years?" Augusta demanded.

"In hiding I assume," Amelia frowned, sticking to the story she'd concocted with James to explain his apparent 'death'.

"And his lack of communication with Neville?" Augusta frowned over. "Perhaps it would be good of you to remind him of his obligations. Young Neville could do with a wizard's influence in his life to help straighten him out."

"I..." Amelia frowned back. "I don't follow?" She asked.

"He might have had to go into hiding to protect his son, I can accept that." Augusta grunted. "But leaving Neville without his godfather or anyone else after Frank's death, he could have at the very least written."

Amelia blinked at this, the surprise clear on her face as she tried to accept what she was being told.

"I expect James to fulfil his obligations towards Neville. Do pass that along." Augusta said firmly. "He's not anywhere near the wizard his father was, but maybe if James had taken him under his wing like he should have, he wouldn't be floundering along."

"I'll... I'll pass on the message." Amelia nodded, unsure of what Augusta was actually talking about.

"See that you do." Augusta nodded before turning around, marching out of the office with a lot more attitude than she'd walked in with, leaving Amelia staring up from her desk in shock over
what had happened.

James Potter had been Neville's godfather? That... that threw a lot of complications in the works.

While James wasn't really James Potter, assuming his father's identity meant living up to his obligations as well. Which meant James really would have to step into the role of Neville's godfather if he wanted to keep up the charade of being James Potter.

"Great," Amelia muttered to herself, making a mental note to bring that up with James tonight when she got chance.

Neville had been a friend of James' in the future, she remembered that much from what he'd told her and the memories he'd shown her, but she had absolutely no idea if he knew about his father being Neville's godfather, or if that fact had slipped his mind entirely.

Putting that thought aside for now she went back to focusing on her work, there was more than enough to do today without adding even more to the pile.

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**Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry**

**Highlands of Scotland**

James had to chuckle to himself as he walked onto the grounds of the school, keeping his hand comfortably in his jeans pockets as he walked, with his dragon-skin trench-coat billowing out behind him in the wind.

Stalking around the grounds had helped him bleed off some of the anger he'd built up in his argument with Sirius. He wasn't blaming Sirius, not really, and he wasn't angry at Mooney either. He was just frustrated, everyone in his life had always followed Dumbledore's orders without question, and being back here, back in this time, it was throwing it all back in his face and drudging up old grievances that he hadn't been old enough to understand the first time around.

He knew he cut a rather imposing figure as he walked across the grounds towards the castle itself, and judging by the excited whispers and hushed gossipping from the students around him, it was doing the job perfectly here too.

Originally he'd started walking faster just to ignore the whispers and glances that were shot his way after Voldemort's defeat, but that was twenty years ago now. In that time, he'd grown accustomed to hearing the whispers and talking, and was more than happy to just ignore them completely.

He'd cultivated quite the 'I don't give a shit' attitude to most things over the years by now, an attitude that he figured even Mad-Eye would have been impressed by. After dealing with politicians constantly trying to use him for their own ends, The Wizengamot's corruption trying to keep him from changing anything, and the various pure blood idiots around The Ministry than always sniped and made derogatory comments towards him, he'd always felt more than justified in his change in attitude.

If anything, after nearly fifteen years as an Auror, he now could very clearly understand how Mad-Eye Moody had acquired his distrustful lifestyle and grumpy disposition, he was even starting to follow some of those practises himself.

Walking into the castle in sunlight was like a flashback to the happier times of his life before the
war. After the Battle of Hogwarts, the castle changed. Not just because of the damage that had been caused during the fighting, but something fundamental in the feel of the castle had changed as well.

Before those years, Hogwarts had always felt safe, secure, a home for those who needed it and a sanctuary for those that deserved it. During the battle, maybe even before it, Hogwarts had lost that sense of security and safety.

Maybe it had happened even as early as his sixth or fifth year when Malfoy had let the Death Eaters into the castle, or maybe even before that when The Ministry had practically invaded and Dumbledore had let Umbridge torture him for a year.

All he knew was that the feel of the castle had changed after everything was done, even Hermione had commented on it when she'd gone back to study for her NEWT's and finish her seventh year properly. Hogwarts was never the same, so it was actually strange to walk into the halls of the school and feel the welcoming hum of the magic around him, to hear the excited chatter of students running around the school, and to feel like the castle was actually still a safe and secure place for people to be.

Walking through the corridors he grinned as various students started staring it him and whispering amongst themselves as he made his way up to the main staircase and around to the Gargoyle Corridor on the second floor of the castle.

"Tell Professor McGonagall I'm here to see her." James announced, coming to stand in front of the gargoyle guardian at the base of the stairs.

He wasn't surprised when the gargoyle didn't respond to him, he knew the message would be relayed to the small gargoyle on the headmaster's desk that acted as a 'go between' for the two statues.

A few seconds later he smiled as the gargoyle moved aside, giving him access to the spiral staircase that led up to the Headmaster's tower.

He knocked on the door lazily as he reached the top of the stairs, after all, after getting Dumbledore removed from the school last night, he could at least be polite to Professor McGonagall on her first day of being a headmistress.

"Get in here Potter!"

James grinned to himself as he heard Minerva's Scottish burr shout through the door, the phrase pulling back memories of his time at Hogwarts and reminding him of happier days. Pushing it open before walking through to see Professor McGonagall pacing around her desk angrily.

To his surprise, the office was practically empty. The books and little nicknack's that Dumbledore had always had in the office were all gone, the pensieve cabinet had vanished, leaving the entire office feeling even more spacious and airy than it ever had been under Dumbledore's control.

"You, are not worth this much of a headache James!" Minerva groused, halting mid step and turning to glare at him.

"Oh?" James grinned over, noticing the large collection of howlers on the headmaster's desk before grimacing in response. "What are all those for?" He asked, nodding towards the howlers.

"Half of them demanding we send the students home right now, the other half demanding to know how You-Know-Who had been hired as a professor in the first place." Minerva explained.
James winced at that, not having thought about how everyone would react to having those pieces of news land on their laps the same day they'd sent their children off to Hogwarts.

"Precisely." Minerva bit out. "Severus at least had the good sense to send in his resignation, and for now, Septima has stepped up and taken the place of the Slytherin head of house."

James shrugged at that, not honestly caring one way or the other about what Snape did as long as he stayed away from him and his younger self.

"I have had to cancel most classes for today just so I could focus on the faculty we have lost, do you have any idea of how much work you have caused for me?" Minerva demanded, fixing James with a glare before snatching some parchment from her desk and storming over to him, slapping it against his chest. "Your contract."

"My... wait, no, not only no, but NO!" James said firmly, backing away from the parchments Minerva was holding towards him as if they were cursed.

"James, you WILL take this." Minerva bit out. "If you don't, then it's very likely I shall have to close the school until the winter term solely so that I can have the time to correctly interview enough people to fill the necessary roles." She explained bluntly.

"Minerva, I'm... I can't..." James frowned, shaking his head at the thought. "I'm not a teacher."

"I've lost my Defence and Potions professors in a single night. I can keep up between the position of headmistress and teaching transfiguration for now with Filius' help, but it is not a long term solution." Minerva explained. "You owe me this James, especially after everything you've done."

James narrowed his eyes, frowning at being backed into a corner like this before he grudgingly accepted the parchments.

"A lot of the parents will only allow their children to stay here if you are going to be here to protect the school." Minerva explained. "They are frightened after last night's occurrences, and need reassurances that we are protecting their children."

"There's a lot of people who won't like it either." James pointed out, gesturing to her with the parchment in his hand. "The dark families, Malfoy on the board, hell, most of Slytherin will revolt on principal." Though admittedly, when he thought about it, doing something like this to piss off the dark families was actually more of a reason to do it in his book.

"A small contingent," Minerva grudgingly admitted. "I informed the Board of Governors of my wishes to hire you when I informed them of my intentions to promote Filius to the deputy position."

"I bet Malfoy had something to say about that too," James smirked, shaking his head at the thought.

"Somewhat," Minerva admitted. "Though Madame Greengrass kept him in line somehow, he was rather subdued after she pointed out that you'd taken down both You-Know-Who and Albus without taking a single curse yourself, and if he wished to complain maybe he should do it to you in person." She explained with a small smirk on her lips.

"Oh I wish I'd been there to see that." James grinned, happily imagining the scene. He'd definitely have to buy something special for Julia to thank her for that.

"Mr Malfoy is chairman in name only, the rest of the governors know his predilections all too
well." Minerva admitted. "I believe your actions in essentially removing Albus from the school have placed him in a dubious position, where you have succeeded in something he has failed to accomplish many times."

"I had my reasons for what I did." James said firmly, not wanting to get into a long debate with Minerva about his grievances with Dumbledore, especially since a lot of the things he'd done, technically he hadn't done yet.

"I am aware," Minerva nodded slowly. "I have also connected Mr Flamel he will be on his way to retrieve his property already. Mr Flamel seemed rather anxious at hearing that Albus had planned to use it to entice You-Know-Who to the school. He informed me he would be removing it and taking it abroad again."

"He didn't know then?" James asked, raising an eyebrow at this information. He'd always assumed that Nicholas Flamel had known about Dumbledore's plan all along.

"Apparently not." Minerva frowned thoughtfully. "He didn't explain his thoughts, and I have no wish to press the matter with him. He indicated his wishes to personally confront Albus on this matter, so I quite happily gave him my blessing to seek out Albus himself."

"Huh," James mused, wondering how he'd missed that before. Though to be honest, when he'd been eleven, he hadn't given the Philosopher's Stone much thought at all, aside from wanting to keep Voldemort away from it. Afterwards, Dumbledore hadn't mentioned it, or Nicholas Flamel, ever again.

"With regards to the school, I will of course be holding classes off from starting officially for today. To give the students time to adjust to these changes, as well as finding a suitable replacement for Severus and myself in the position in Gryffindor house." Minerva explained.

"I'm not staying in the castle though, I've got things to do." James explained firmly.

"James, surely..." Minerva trailed off when James shook his head.

"I'm dealing with Voldemort, I've got Sirius recovering at the manor, and a hundred different things I've got to take care of." James explained bluntly. "That's my priority, Voldemort and Harry. That's it, end of discussion." He said firmly.

"I am sure there must be some arrangement we can come to." Minerva said with a small nod. "Perhaps a room in the castle for you to use when you wish, but I will not stop you from leaving the grounds when you need to. A floo in your rooms to transport you to the manor perhaps? You will need an office here, regardless, a place where the students can come to you when they need, and for you to mark their work."

James grudgingly accepted that that was a mostly reasonable compromise, that way he could stay in the castle to deal with the horcrux in the room of requirement, and the basilisk in the Chamber of Secrets, and destroy the vanishing cabinet while he was at it, and keep an eye on the various idiots in Slytherin that he knew would grow up to be Death Eaters in the future.

"Fine, but I'm still sure this is a mistake." He admitted with a loud sigh.

"Very possibly," Minerva admitted with a wry smile. "But it is one I shall have to forebear if I want to keep the school open." She explained bluntly. "I have also penned a letter to Horace, given this morning's papers and the coverage last night on the wireless, I doubt I shall have to take much time in convincing him to return to take the place of out potions master."
"Andromeda Tonks," James pointed out thoughtfully. "She's a potions master... mistress, whatever." He mused with a shrug. "I bet she'd take the job if you offered."

"You have a problem with Horace?" Minerva asked, narrowing her eyes slightly as she contemplated the idea.

"With how he collects people and trades favours? Absolutely." James said with a shrug. "He's a bottom feeder, he taught Voldemort for years but never came out to fight him. Hell, Voldemort was one of his favourite students." He pointed out with a grimace. "He has a history of hiding away where it's safe instead of stepping up to fight, I wouldn't trust him to defend the students if Voldemort came back, would you?"

Minerva frowned at that, simply staring across at James for a moment before nodding curtly in agreement with his assessment. It was true that Horace hadn't fought in the last war, he hadn't joined Albus' Order or done anything to help, he'd simply hidden away at the school and let the war pass him by.

Andromeda Tonks was certainly a name to consider, and if she did accept, she would come to the school without bringing the bartering of favours or the favouritism that Horace and Severus kept alive in their potions classes and groups.

"I will contact Andromeda and see what she says." Minerva nodded after another moment's thought. "Her daughter finished Hogwarts this summer, I can imagine she's quite thankful that Nymphadora didn't have to see last nights display."

"Probably," James snorted in agreement.

"Regardless, I am certain young Harry will be happy to have you here, as will the other students, and it will assuage many of the fears confronting people this morning." Minerva explained, gesturing back to the pile of letters on her desk.

"Yeah, yeah," James groused with a small smile on his face. "When this goes tits up, you know I'm going to blame you right?"

"Tits..." Minerva echoed, trailing off and glaring at James for his language. "I assure you, it will not." She said firmly. "I am certain you are more than capable of identifying the curse Albus believed was placed on the position?"

"Oh, that." James waved away that concern, he knew exactly what the cursed artifact was in the Defence Classroom, he'd spoken with Minerva about it several times in his past anyway and had always wondered why nobody had examined that giant flying dragon skeleton more closely or learnt anything about it before.

The dragon skeleton was where the curse was entrenched, and also layered with several charms to prevent people from paying too much attention to it or asking too many things about it. Which was the entire reason why most muggle born students didn't look twice at it, which everyone should have noticed as being something strange, given that they were children and literally being confronted with a dragon skeleton in their first few days learning about magic, and then didn't have any questions about it at all.

"Yes, that." Minerva frowned, rolling her eyes at James' antics. "Very well, I will leave you to your day. I will have the curriculum and necessary paperwork drawn up and owled to you, I will make the formal announcement at breakfast tomorrow morning, so please join us for the announcement."
"Fine," James grumbled as he folded up the employment parchments and tucked them away in his inside pocket. "You're going to have to do something about Muggle Studies and History too." He explained bluntly.

"Why?" Minerva asked, cocking an eyebrow at James in a confused manner.

"Muggle Studies is so behind the times it's laughable, I mean that in the best possible way. It's maybe a hundred years out of date, and most of the pure bloods taking the class don't even bother learning anything from it, it's considered a joke course." James explained with a thoughtful shrug. "Of course, it doesn't help that the professors here are all lying to muggle-borns every chance they get, so it's not really any wonder why nearly all of them go back to the muggle world as soon as they can."

"James, I assure you, I have never..."

"Electricity doesn't work around magic." James said bluntly, cutting Minerva off. "Biggest pile of bullshit I've ever heard." He explained, holding up his finger. "Electricity works fine around London, if magic interfered with electricity there'd be giant dark spots around the city where muggles would be investigating the problem until they fixed it. Hell, The Ministry is housed right underneath a muggle building, they don't have a problem there at all. I've been to the MACUSA offices in New York, they actually share a building with muggles, no problem there either." He explained, fixing Minerva with a look. "Every magical school in America has working lights, electricity running through the buildings, lessons on how to use technology so witches and wizards don't stand out with their ignorance and threaten the Statute of Secrecy."

"I don't care who started it, why they do it, or what. It stops. Electricity and magic work fine around each other, it's only pure blood bigots that don't like it, and that's only so they can force muggle-borns to do things their way instead of doing things how they're used to doing them and bringing new ideas into the world."

"James, you have to understand..."

"I understand that you go out to muggle-born homes, and lie to their parents faces. They're trusting you with their children, and you lie to them. You stand there in their homes, and lie to them without even blinking. Honestly, I truly find it disgusting." James said firmly, his face showing exactly how disappointed he was in Minerva, exactly the same as the first time he'd had this conversation with her. "If I spoke to the muggle-born first years now, and their parents, what other lies would I find out about? I know Harry's already made friends with a muggle-born witch, should I ask her? Go and visit her parents and find out the truth?" He asked, waiting until Minerva looked away from him before shaking his head.

"So much for the 'light side' not taking advantage of muggles," He snorted in disgust. "Stop the lies, I don't care if it was Dumbledore's orders or from The Ministry themselves, it stops. I'll be talking to the muggle-borns every chance I get, and the second I hear one hint of a professor lying to them, covering up pure blood bullying or bigotry, I'll take them all out of this school and back to their homes myself, and tell their parents the real truth about the magical world."

"James... that... that could destroy our..."

"I really don't care." James bit out. "I've seen enough brilliant muggle-borns forced out of their magic by pure blood ignorance, bullying and stupidity, I won't be a part of it. If you can't do that, then I'll tear up this contract right now, and me and Harry will be out of this school before lunch time."
He waited for several seconds in silence before he heard Minerva's sigh before she looked up at him and slowly nodded.

"You're putting me in a very difficult position here James." Minerva said softly. "The emphasis on leaving muggleborn technology..."

"Lie, it's a lie, call it what it is." James said firmly.

"It has been a tradition of Hogwarts for many years, long before I was a student here." Minerva explained. "It's a tradition Albus and many other Headmasters have heartily agreed with."

"Well I know for a fact that American schools don't have that problem, so I have to wonder what the muggle-born students would say if I told them that they'd been lied to all their schooling, and that American schools would welcome them with open arms? Hell, America's biggest school was half founded by a muggle, what would they say about that? Going to schools where they didn't have to be worried about pure blood bigotry and bullying, schools that didn't force them to leave everything they knew behind and practically abandon their families?" James asked with a cocked eyebrow. "I'd say you'd lose pretty much every muggle-born student you have within a week, probably ninety percent of the half-blood kids as well by the end of the term." He explained, leaving Minerva just looking at him with a pained expression on her face.

"My point is, I'm not putting up with it, any of it. I've lost too many good friends leaving their magic behind because of this bullshit. Good luck with your letters." James said with a shrug, not bothering to wait for an answer before moving to leave the office and leave Minerva alone with her piles of parchments and howlers to deal with. "Oh, by the way. You do know that Dumbledore stashed Hagrid's Cerberus on the third floor corridor right?"

"Hagrid's... a Cerberus?" Minerva whispered in shock, staring over at where James had paused in the office doorway.

"Yeah, three heads, about fifteen feet tall." James said off hand. "That was his first test around his little traps, a big three headed guard dog." He explained with a laugh. "Hagrid can probably help you with it."

"I'm sure he will." Minerva whispered to herself, wondering if Albus had gone completely crazy somewhere along the line and she just hadn't realised. "A Cerberus? Really Albus?" She muttered to herself in disbelief as James walked out of the office, leaving her to consider his words along with what other dangerous creatures or artifacts Albus had squirrelled away in the school without her knowledge.
Chapter 13

TITLE: Double Back

DISCLAIMER: All things Harry Potter belong J K Rowling... basically, if you recognise it, it isn’t mine... Please don't sic the Aurors on me, I’m just here for the fun.

Department of Magical Law Enforcement
Ministry of Magic
London

"Amelia?"

Amelia groaned to herself at yet another interruption as she looked up from her desk, fighting the urge to send a curse or hex towards the door when she spotted Cornelius Fudge standing in the doorway for the second time today, looking towards her expectantly.

"Minister, what can I do for you?" Amelia asked, plastering her best pleasant smile across her face as she inwardly considered slamming her head down onto her desk.

"Ahem, well, I am just coming down to inform you I have authorised the DMLE budget to be returned back to it's war footing, you are authorised to double auror recruitment as soon as you see fit." Cornelius explained as he came into the office.

"That'll be a great help," Amelia nodded thankfully, making a mental note to head over to the auror academy when she got chance to take a look at the new recruits.

"I've received several visitors already calling for Albus Dumbledore's removal from the Wizengamot post, I assume you and James will be calling for the same?" Cornelius prompted.

Resisting the urge to roll her eyes at the fact that he was trying to refer to James like he was an old friend, Amelia simply nodded along. "Both his position as Chief Warlock and his position at the ICW." She explained firmly. "That man has caused enough problems for our world, he needs to be removed from all positions of authority as quickly as possible."

"Yes, yes, of course." Cornelius blustered quickly. "I'm just letting you know that I'll be calling for a vote in tomorrow's session, I'm certain it will pass without complaint."

"More than likely," Amelia nodded in agreement. Everything that had come out last night had utterly damaged Albus Dumbledore's reputation beyond repair. Only his most sycophantic supporters would be trying to defend his actions, and even if they all collected together they couldn't hope to have enough numbers to vote against the swell of witches and wizards that were outraged by his actions.

"Will... erm... will James be coming by any time soon?" Cornelius asked hopefully.

"Probably," Amelia admitted, seeing how Cornelius' eyes lit up at the news. "He's got a lot on at the moment hunting down Voldemort, but I'm sure I can convince him to drop by now and again. He's been spending a lot of time with Sirius as well, helping him adjust to life outside of Azkaban again, you know how it is."
"Wonderful, wonderful." Cornelius smiled widely at that news. "I had heard Minerva was going to offer him the Defence post at Hogwarts, simply a wonderful idea I thought. It would do the country well to know a man like James is defending their children in these perilous times."

"I'm sure," Amelia chuckled, wondering what James would actually say when being faced with that offer from Minerva.

"Does... does James have any further thoughts on how we are going to deal with Lord Thingie?" Cornelius asked nervously.

"Our first issue is bringing the Auror force back up to fighting strength," Amelia said. She's planned everything out with James several times and gone over multiple plans with him, so she had quite a plethora of ideas to draw from, from both their ideas and his future memories. "I'm also going to be instituting honour oaths from our Aurors, to prevent them from being subjugated by outside interferences and bribes. After what happened in the last war, nobody wants... You-Know-Who to get a foothold in The Ministry this time."

"No, no, obviously not." Cornelius said quickly, nodding in agreement with Amelia's suggestion.

"I'll be performing regular sweeps of The Ministry, checking over the portkey offices, the floo regulation department, everywhere really and making sure the people here are loyal to the law, not to You-Know-Who." Amelia explained. "I'd like to take oaths from the other department heads as well, magical contracts as well if I could get away with it."

"Yes, yes, excellent plan." Cornelius nodded firmly. "Magical contracts to seal their loyalty to The Ministry as long as they work here. I can have something written up immediately."

"Probably better to get a proper legal team on it," Amelia commented, visibly surprised that Cornelius was willing to go along with the idea. "Something to make sure our people are loyal to The Ministry and to the law, not to any names in particular. That'll help stop anyone from playing both sides or spying on The Ministry. I've already penned in a meeting to speak with The Unspeakables about a detection charm to identify someone being possessed. Since we know now that You-Know-Who is capable of it, it's something we'll have to watch out for."

"Quite, yes, I'll have it authorised immediately." Cornelius said with a flustered smile. "Do let me know when James is coming through, I would love to hear his thoughts on the upcoming measures."

"I'm sure he'll be very happy with what you're doing so far," Amelia smiled up, giving Cornelius her best prideful expression as she watched him head out of her office before she dropped the expression and rolled her eyes.

She hadn't actually expected Cornelius to fold like that so quickly, though thinking about it, now Cornelius knew Sirius and James were talking, with both the Black and Potter fortunes together, and her own influence, she could very well see how it looked compared to simply having Lucius Malfoy whispering in his ear.

She allowed herself a small smile as she realised that the Black and Potter fortunes combined dwarfed the Malfoy fortune, and James' publicity was higher than ever after last night. Throwing that in with how the public saw Sirius after his wrongful imprisonment, and how the old pure blood families had rallied around him, and it made the two of them together a rather attractive option for politicians like Cornelius.

Yes, having Cornelius pay attention to James and Sirius would definitely be far more preferable to
having Lucius Malfoy whispering in his ear, and she was certain James would be laughing his arse off when she told him about how Cornelius had practically given her everything she’d wanted without even being prodded in the right direction.

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**Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry**  
**Highlands of Scotland**

James had to grin to himself as he happily walked out of the Room of Requirement with his mission complete. He had the Ravenclaw Diadem secured in a moleskin bag ready to be destroyed tonight, he'd retrieved the invisibility cloak that Dumbledore had kept from his office, and would secure it away when he got back to the manor.

He'd also managed to destroy the vanishing cabinet in the room as well, taking care of that with a few well placed blasted curses that rendered the cabinet down to barely more than kindling and firewood.

Now he had two complete sets of the Deathly Hallows to work with, which gave him a definite edge just in case anything did happen to the wand or cloak that he kept with him.

Minerva convincing him to teach Defence Against the Dark Arts was a bit out of the blue, but as he thought about it, he actually didn't mind the idea too much at all. He didn't particularly want to go back to being an Auror, in his own time it had been annoying enough, and downright disheartening at times to see guilty wizards and witches being let free because of bribes and family connections on the Wizengamot, so he had no real interest in looking to reestablish himself to work in that cesspit of corruption.

Teaching at Hogwarts would definitely allow him to keep an eye on things, and he could always make a copy of the communication mirrors Sirius and his father had used, and use them to keep in touch with Amelia and Sirius and plan things out.

In fact, teaching at Hogwarts might actually be the better idea. If he was away from the manor more, maybe it would give Sirius the push he needed to get off of his arse and move on with his life instead of hanging onto the past and refusing to let go.

It would certainly make keeping an eye on the younger version of himself easier, and he could watch out for Susan and Daphne at the same time, while dealing with any problems that cropped up because of his changes.

Musing it over he tucked the moleskin bag containing the horcrux into his outer pocket, knowing from past experience that the thick outside pockets of the dragon-skin coat were enough to contain most cursed items, at least for short periods of time, so they should be able to handle a bagged up horcrux for a few hours anyway.

Walking away from the seventh floor corridor he waited just long enough to see the doorway into the room shimmer and vanish into the brick wall, leaving behind no evidence that it had ever been there in the first place. That was one secret he was going to keep to himself for now, as the room provided a secure room that he could exploit later on to keep the students safe if things did go tits up again.
He smiled to himself as he walked past the various students on his way down to the Serpentine Corridor on the third floor, smiling over at their awed looks and hushed whispers as they darted out of his way on the stairs and let him pass.

It was very reminiscent of how the world had treated him in the weeks after the battle at Hogwarts that had resulted in Voldemort's final defeat. Of course, back then he was still worn and disillusioned with everything so he'd happily just blanked everyone and preferred to stay alone until Hermione had finally dragged him out of his self imposed exile and back into the world.

Walking into the Defence Against the Dark Arts classroom he was actually happy that Voldemort, Quirrell, whatever, had been using a temporary classroom on the ground floor instead, as it meant that the actual Defence classroom hadn't been saturated with the pungent smell of garlic.

Thinking about it now, he was certain that Voldemort had moved the class to the temporary classroom himself, not to keep out of Dumbledore's way on the forbidden corridor, as either of them could easily have blocked off the corridor to prevent students from finding the Cerberus guarded room, but simply so that Voldemort didn't have to worry about the curse that he'd put on the room so many years ago.

Sending a blasting curse towards the various chains holding the dragon skeleton up was easy enough before he slowly levitated the skeleton down to the ground. A shrinking charm reduced it down to a hand held size on the floor of the classroom so he could approach it, smirking down as he felt the curse inside the skeleton battling against his charms.

"Easy enough." He commented off hand, bringing his boot down on the skeleton and shattering it under foot before vanishing the remains with his wand once he was sure the curse had been broken with the destruction of the skeleton.

Voldemort had a thing for latching curses onto important or historical artefact's, and he likely knew that no respectable teacher would ever defile the precious dragon skeleton that was rumoured to have guarded Hogwarts during it's founding years.

He, of course, had absolutely no worries at all about destroying the skeleton if it meant keeping the school safe. He hadn't worried about the precious artifacts Voldemort had used in his horcruxes the first time around, and he certainly wasn't about to start now.

With that done he idly cast a few detection charms around the room, making sure he hadn't missed anything in his usual blunt way of dealing with things. He was certain that Voldemort hadn't planned anything else while he was here possessing Quirrell the first time around, aside from cursing his broom of course, which wasn't going to happen this time.

When his detection charms came up negative, he shrugged to himself and happily leaned against a desk as he looked around the room and mused on it for a moment. Teaching actually wasn't going to be too bad in his eyes now that he thought about it. He'd certainly enjoyed helping other students out in his Hogwarts years with the formation of Dumbledore's Army, and he'd helped Teddy out with some tutoring more than a few times over the years.

"Professor Potter," He smirked to himself as he tried the title out, confessing that he actually liked the sound of it quite a lot strangely enough, it certainly sounded better to him than Auror Potter ever had.

Maybe Minerva had actually known what she was doing after all.
Albus Dumbledore groaned to himself as he settled back in his chair, with Severus Snape sitting across from him at his table in the old cottage.

After leaving Hogwarts, he'd had to return to his old family cottage which had definitely seen better days, and had been left deserted for many years now since he'd been living at the school since attaining the position of headmaster.

"It was James bloody Potter." Severus said bluntly, bringing out a bottle of whiskey and placing it on the table in front of them both. "I'm certain of it."

Albus merely frowned in response at that, but couldn't deny Severus accusation. The man had known things that only James Potter could have known. The cloak, his wand, the Potter Vault key that he'd taken from Potter's Cottage, and how he'd taken young Harry from Sirius after that terrible night.

No, he had to admit, it must have been James Potter. There was nobody else that could have known those things, and even all the detection charms he'd cast had told him exactly the same thing, it was no disguise, it was James Potter that had confronted him in the Great Hall.

"And Voldemort has returned, as I suspected." Albus said with a sigh, remembering very clearly how James had oh so easily dispatched Voldemort. Even he hadn't realised that Voldemort had been possessing poor Quirinus, a fact that had been thrown in his face when the deception had come out with The Minister and the media watching in horror.

"Potter will be with Black, you know it." Severus growled, opening the bottle of whiskey and swallowing a mouthful. "That's why we couldn't find him or the brat. They'll be hidden behind a Fidelius somewhere."

"Almost assuredly," Albus nodded, agreeing with the point. Sirius would have been with James, it certainly made sense and explained what had happened to young Harry as well.

What didn't make sense was everything else. If James had survived that night, why had he left Harry with the Dursley's for so long before rescuing him? Why had he left Sirius in Azkaban for so long? Why hide away instead of letting everyone know he had survived and Voldemort had failed?

Surely the most important question though was how James Potter had defeated Quirrell so easily in their duel. He'd quite literally had a front row seat to it and had seen Quirrell's face turn to ash as it came in contact with James' fists. That was what was puzzling him, how James Potter was somehow protected against Voldemort's touch when he was certain that that protection should only be around young Harry.

The only answer he could think of was that Lily's sacrificial protection was covering them both, making the question of James' identity completely irrelevant as that sort of magic could only have latched on to someone that shared blood with young Harry, which meant that James' identity was all but confirmed to anyone who knew the truth about what had protected Harry that fateful night.

He had far too many questions, and the only person that could answer them was James Potter, and his threat about duelling him properly the next time they saw each other was certainly forefront in his mind.
He'd left the invisibility cloak in his old office as an olive branch really, while the urge was to take it with him out of spite, the knowledge that James now controlled the Elder Wand and would very likely come after him if he had taken it was enough to stay his hand.

James had known about the Elder Wand. He'd known he was descended from the Peverell brothers, and now he had both the wand and the cloak, making him far more powerful than Albus could ever hope to be. Confronting James now would be suicide, as despite his prestigious reputation, he was never the great wizard he always let people believe he was.

James Potter on the other hand had duelled and forced Voldemort away several times in the past, defying him on multiple occasions, and that was before he'd taken the Elder Wand for his own. He was a trained Auror, and ruthless in duels, an attitude he saw very well when he'd tried to prevent the truth from coming out in the great hall at Hogwarts.

That wasn't even mentioning the fact that during their rather one sided duel, James had managed to defend himself utterly perfectly, swatting away spells and shielding himself like a master, even though he'd been using the Elder Wand to attack him.

That was a very worrying notion that he hadn't been able to get out of his head, and meant that James was actually far more powerful than he had originally believed, and now with the Elder Wand in his possession, his power would be far beyond anything he could hope to equal.

James could be a rather spiteful man at times, Lily had tempered his rage over the years to where he was quickly becoming a good man, but there had still been times when James had let his spite control him. Now though, where in school those spiteful urges had been turned to vicious bullying and 'pranking' other students, and without Lily around to temper his fury, he could very easily see James turning those urges into something entirely more magically violent in turn to protect his son.

"Your plan?" Severus drawled out, staring across the table at Albus and cocking his eyebrow up when Albus remained silent. "You don't have one?" He demanded in disbelief.

"Alas, no." Albus admitted with a sigh. "James has rather effectively removed me from Hogwarts, my influence and reputation is not what it was. I have heard word that I will be removed from the Wizengamot tomorrow, and likely my position as Supreme Mugwump will be stripped as well."

"More than likely," Severus grunted in agreement. As much as he hated to admit it, the way Potter had manipulated events had been rather masterful. With The Minister watching, and live coverage from the Wireless network, nobody could deny that Voldemort had returned or that he'd effectively dealt with him, and likewise everyone heard his accusations against Albus and the rather ineffectual excuses Albus had given for his actions.

Even the Daily Prophet had apparently been in attendance and had written a decidedly cutting article about Albus, dashing his reputation down even further and reducing his loyal followers to a smattering of friends. With further articles going over every word Voldemort had said, horrifyingly confirming his time as a Death Eater as well, leaving him with no place left to turn other than the other Death Eaters or Albus.

He was also entirely certain that Potter's friendship with the Bones woman was the cause of the Weasley matriarch's arrest and problems. That was something that had actually made him smile until he'd pieced together that Potter had to be behind it somehow. He must have known that Albus would try and integrate the brat in with the Weasleys, and had Bones station Aurors around the platform to watch for her.

In a single day, Potter had negated the Weasley's entirely, driven Albus and himself from
Hogwarts, publicly revealed Voldemort's survival to the world, and ensured that they all looked upon him like some sort of saviour for everything he'd done.

If it hadn't been Potter, he would have actually been impressed by the cunning and ruthless way things had been planned.

"Alastor? Kingsley? Approaching the Bones woman would be the best way. She will be able to put us in touch with Potter." Severus admitted grudgingly.

"Alastor refused to come," Albus frowned. "He was rather annoyed that I allowed Voldemort to sneak into the school without noticing, something I cannot blame him for sadly. He has argued with me about my views on forgiveness several times in the past, particularly my insistence on keeping you in the school. I fear with Voldemort's public admittance that you were under his banner, Alastor was rather scathing in his remarks about you and my choice to protect and employ you at Hogwarts, this latest incident may have damaged our friendship beyond repair."

Severus frowned at that, but conceded the point. Mad-Eye was a vicious and paranoid old bastard who certainly wouldn't have been fooled by a possession. Having Voldemort unmasked in front of Albus and hundreds of people simply made Albus look like a blind old fool who'd put children at risk, so he could well understand why Alastor was annoyed with him for it. "I never understood why you didn't have Mad-Eye at the castle anyway to keep an eye on the stone," Severus muttered, shaking his head at the thought.

"Kingsley has a working relationship with Amelia, I am certain he will be able to speak to her on our behalf and arrange a meeting with James." Albus explained patiently, diverting the conversation away from that discussion.

The fact was, he hadn't wanted Alastor at the school because his old friend was certainly smart enough to realise that the traps he had had built around the stone were ineffective at best, and little more than distractions for a wizard of Voldemort's calibre. But then, they weren't supposed to keep Voldemort out, they were supposed to be as a test for young Harry, something Alastor would have spotted and reasoned out almost immediately.

"A meeting I certainly will not be attending." Severus indicated bluntly. "Potter made his feelings towards me clear ten years ago when he threatened my life after you revealed how Voldemort knew about the prophecy to Lily. I am not suicidal enough to tempt fate a second time by walking into the dragon's mouth." He explained with a sneer. "If you wish to give him the pleasure of cursing you into oblivion for your actions, feel free, but I will not be a part of it."

Albus simply sighed at that, admitting to himself that yes, James Potter had more than enough reasons to curse the both of them for what they had both done, and he was a man that didn't have much forgiveness in him originally. After everything that they had done to ensure Harry was kept subdued and pliable, it was entirely likely that James had enough righteous anger in him to kill the both of them without losing a wink of sleep over it.

The worst part was, with how the public were treating him now and after the public announcement of the prophecy, it was entirely likely that James could execute the both of them in full view of Diagon Alley, and the public would just cheer him on.

Which left him with very little in the way of choices. His reputation was in tatters, his influence was practically gone, and his popularity had wained to levels even Argus Filch would be hard pressed to match. His positions were being stripped from him, and several of his manipulations and plans had been brought to light in the worst possible way.
He couldn't approach the Potters without very likely being cursed senseless, and now the entire world knew Voldemort was alive and that Harry Potter was the one prophesied to vanquish him, an act James had helped along by quite publicly beating him out of Quirinus' body.

All of which left him entirely sidelined and practically ostracised from the public view, feeling useless and rather dejected at how badly everything had gone wrong.

The fact was, every single one of his plans had relied on Harry Potter being alone, isolated, ignorant of his place in the world, ignorant of wizarding society, and reliant on him to guide him towards his destiny to face Voldemort and sacrifice himself for the good of the wizarding world.

Harry Potter, as he'd so woefully found out, was none of these things. He had his father, and he had undoubtedly been raised with knowledge of the wizarding world and what it meant to be a Potter, and there was absolutely no chance of him getting any where near Harry without an angry James coming after him with righteous fury.

Today was most certainly one of the top ten worst days of Albus Dumbledore's life, and he had a terrible feeling that things were only going to get worse.

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Potter Manor
Honley

"James?"

"Kitchen!" James called back, recognising the sound of Amelia's voice instantly as he heard the floo flare up. "Bad day?" He asked, spotting the weary look on Amelia's face as she came into the kitchen.

"Hectic," Amelia admitted, smiling as she watched James pour her out a glass of wine. "Thank you." She smiled, accepting the glass. "Yours?"

"Destroyed the diadem and the horcrux stuck in it, got rid of the curse in the Defence classroom, you know, destroying Voldemort's plans, being a pain in the arse to him, the usual," James shrugged. "Minerva wants me to take over the Defence position."

"I had heard," Amelia nodded thoughtfully. "You're going to take it?"

"I wasn't," James sighed, sitting down at the kitchen table. "But Minerva is convinced they'll end up closing the school if I don't. She had a pile of howlers on her desk higher than I've ever seen, I had no idea that would happen."

"People are angry, and afraid." Amelia explained as she sat down beside him at the table. "Angry at everything Albus had done, angry he put their children in danger, and afraid that Voldemort is going to attack the school and their children." She pointed out.

"Minerva said pretty much the same thing," James frowned thoughtfully. "She said she'll activate the floo in the Defence quarters so I can come and go from the school whenever I want."

"Handy," Amelia nodded. "It would give you a position at the school to keep an eye on things as well. Not to mention that it's entirely likely Voldemort will turn his eye to the school again when he realises his horcruxes are being destroyed."
"Point," James conceded with a nod. "You think I should take it then?"

"I'd be foolish not to," Amelia countered. "With you there keeping an eye on things, Susan will be a lot safer than if you were out chasing down horcruxes with Sirius."

"There aren't any more," James sighed, ruffling his hair as he thought things through. "The Slytherin necklace thing is at Grimmauld, Sirius can get to that any time he wants. The Diary is somewhere at Malfoy Manor at the moment, I think, I never really knew how long Malfoy had that before second year, so there's nothing I can really do about that one, and the cup is in the Gringotts vaults."

"I'm working on getting a meeting with the Gringotts director, hopefully we'll be able to do something about that one once I have a better relationship with the goblins." Amelia explained.

"Good luck there," James snorted, shaking his head as he tried to picture how that would go.

"Cornelius came by," Amelia said with a small shrug. "He's aware of our relationship now."

"Oh?" James raised an eyebrow at that. "Is that a good thing or a bad thing?" He asked curiously.

"Neither, both?" Amelia frowned thoughtfully. "He appears to be taking Voldemort's return seriously, he doubled my budget and authorised magical oaths for the Aurors, along with enforced contracts for all The Ministry department heads."

"That... that's surprising?" James admitted, his face showing the amount of shock he felt at that announcement.

"I won't deny that it's probably your influence," Amelia admitted with a small smile. "Lucius left The Ministry after their meeting and hasn't been seen all day, and Cornelius came by my office just to talk several times."

"He's looking at you to support him in this mess then?" James nodded thoughtfully. "Malfoy probably saw where Fudge was looking already and decided to cut his losses."

"That's likely," Amelia confirmed James' thoughts. "With Albus and Lucius being away from him, he needs someone else popular to attach himself to so he can continue thinking he's with the in crowd. He knows about our relationship, and probably thinks he can attach himself to me before anyone else finds out about it."

"And?" James asked, raising an eyebrow.

"And I'm thinking of using it to push through some of the reforms that could help us in our endeavours." Amelia admitted with a sly smile. "Pushing through for more security over The Ministry to prevent Voldemort from taking control, and neutralising some of the laws around muggle-borns and slowly working on making it so the laws are equal to all."

"Good luck with that," James grinned over. "No, seriously, good luck with it. If I can help with that, just let me know."

"Another thing that was brought to my attention, young Neville Longbottom?" Amelia asked, looking to James now to see his reaction.

"Neville?" James frowned. "What's happened with him?"

"Nothing that I'm aware of, though I did have a visit from Augusta demanding to know why
Neville's godfather hadn't been in touch with him." Amelia pointed out with a subtle smirk as she watched his reaction.

"Godfa..." James trailed off, recognising what Amelia was saying. "My dad was Neville's godfather?" He asked in shock.

"Apparently so," Amelia nodded back. "You didn't know?"

"No, no... he never said." James whispered, not having expected that at all.

"He might have found it hard to bring up, especially since your father couldn't be there for you." Amelia pointed out with a reassuring smile.

"Maybe," James whispered. "She wants me to get in touch with Neville then?" He asked, honestly wondering why Neville had never mentioned anything like that.

"You're going to have to," Amelia explained with a nod. "If you're taking on James' identity, then his responsibilities come along with it."

"That..." James sighed, ruffling his hair. "I didn't know... Neville's godfather." He admitted with a sigh. "Of course I'll do it, Neville was a good friend, I owe him a hell of a lot more than just this." He explained with a firm nod to himself.

"I assumed you would," Amelia smiled over. "I did have a rather interesting conversation with Julia as well." She added with a small smirk. "She mentioned the thought of making a Bones, Greengrass and Potter alliance a formal thing."

James simply blinked at that, looking at Amelia for an explanation. "I lived with muggles for my childhood, and Hogwarts doesn't exactly have a pure blood traditions class." He pointed out. "I'm guessing the 'formal' part of that sentence means something, so, English please?"

"You're aware that if I married, I couldn't take the husband's name? Very much like other witches who want to carry on their family's name but are the last of their line?" Amelia explained.

"Yeah, you mentioned something about a line continuance thing that you didn't want Susan to be stuck with." James nodded in agreement.

"Julia surprisingly doesn't have that problem," Amelia pointed out. "She intends to let the Greengrass family name die off with her. Once Daphne and Astoria are married, the Greengrass name will effectively become extinct."

"OK?" James asked. "Sorry, what's this got to do with me and this formal alliance thing?"

"I'm getting to that," Amelia grumbled, swiping James' shoulder for his impatience. "Julia mentioned a formal alliance, now formal alliances are normally made between families when they get married, a bride and groom coming together to bring the family into an alliance."

"Alright?" James frowned thoughtfully, not getting what Amelia was saying.

"Julia mentioned a formal alliance with us." Amelia pointed out bluntly. "Both of us." She explained, watching for that moment when James' eyes widened and he finally caught on to what she was saying.

"She wants to date us? Marry us? Both of us?" James asked in shock.
"It was an idea she mentioned in a conversation," Amelia admitted. "If we got married, I wouldn't be able to take the Potter name. So any children we had would be Bones children to continue on the line."

"Aren't we taking this a bit fast?" James asked quickly. "We've only... you know, just over a month?"

"Which is why we are just talking about things now," Amelia pointed out. "I won't deny the idea is an attractive one, it would not only make our alliance public and give us a reputation on the Wizengamot, but it would also keep Susan, Daphne and Astoria safe as they would quite literally be under your protection as part of your family. A betrothal contract after this period of time is quite normal for the magical world, especially in situations like ours. I understand you didn't grow up with these traditions, but it would be quite normal for a couple to discuss something like this after their first month together."

"I didn't even know it was legal to marry two people," James muttered, ruffling his hair as he tried to work out exactly how this conversation had got to this point. "I've never even heard of it before."

"It's rare, but it does happen from time to time." Amelia smiled as she explained. "Line Continuance options come up now and again, where a witch needs to continue her family line but wants to be married. It's the sort of thing Susan would be pushed into if I married anyone and took their name." She said with a nod. "It's happened a few times since the last war, mostly between witches who already know each other and can retain their friendships while being married to the same wizard. I'm sure you can imagine how much of a nightmare it could be if they couldn't?"

"So you'd do this to keep Susan from having to do it?" James asked curiously.

"I won't deny that that is part of it," Amelia admitted. "But also the idea of you, Julia and myself together is quite an attractive thought itself." She explained with a small smirk. "Come now, you are aware I've had witches as lovers in the past?" She pointed out, laughing at James' stunned expression.

"Knew about them, yeah, you mentioned them, but knowing is one thing, being offered... that's something else." James admitted, rubbing his forehead as he tried desperately not to think about Amelia and Julia doing rather delicious things together.

"As I said, it's just something we are discussing right now," Amelia explained with a laugh at the stunned expression on James' face. "It would take some of the pressure off of me from the traditional families, align our three families together formally, and help protect Susan, Julia, Daphne and Astoria."

"It's really something you want to consider?" James asked, surprised at how serious Amelia was being about this entire thing.

"I wouldn't have brought it up otherwise." Amelia said, leaning in to steal a kiss from James. "Do you think it's something you could consider? Marrying two witches?"

"I don't even know Julia that well." James pointed out. "We've had one conversation, that's it."

"Something that we can rectify, inviting her for a meal together this week?" Amelia suggested.

"You're serious?" James muttered, rubbing his head. "I never even thought I'd get married, now... a three way marriage?" He whispered in shock. "Would it really help you and Julia?"

"More than you would know," Amelia admitted with a nod. "I'm sure Sirius can explain the
particulars of the tradition to you if you really want."

"And put up with his jokes about threesomes and sex advice?" James groused, shaking his head. "No thanks." He muttered in reply to Amelia's laugh.

"Where is the dog anyway?" Amelia asked, recognising that she'd been able to have an entirely serious conversation with James without any of Sirius' inane jokes or sarcastic comments.

"No idea," James muttered, shaking his head. "We went to destroy the bones in the graveyard, after that I headed up to Hogwarts. He wasn't here when I got back, so he could be anywhere."

"We have the manor to ourselves then?" Amelia asked, her smirk coming back in full force now.

"For now," James pointed out. "I'll have to head to Hogwarts in the morning, Minerva wants to announce my position there at breakfast."

"I'm in the Wizengamot tomorrow morning too," Amelia nodded thoughtfully. "But I have been having some rather naughty thoughts about that big bath of yours and what we could do in there."

"Oh?" James grinned, raising his eyebrow as Amelia leaned forwards and shuffled off of her chair and over onto his lap, straddling him as she leaned down for a long and sensual kiss.

"Oh yes," Amelia grinned down. "And now the kids have gone, and yes, I'm including Sirius in that," She pointed out with a laugh. "I have you all to myself tonight."

"Sounds fun," James grinned up, happily starting to kiss up Amelia's neck and lick along her collar bone.

"Hmmm," Amelia moaned, enjoying the attention for now. "Bath mister, I have some rather dirty ideas that we will need the space for." She grinned, leaning back from his kisses before forwards again to capture his lips in a kiss, biting down on his bottom lip until he groaned in pleasure.

"Yes mistress," James grinned up at her as she stood up from his lap, grabbing hold of his t-shirt to lead him out of the kitchen and upstairs to the main bathroom to enjoy the rest of the night together.
3rd September

Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry
Highlands of Scotland

James couldn't help the grin on his face as he floo'ed through to Hogwarts that morning, after a searing kiss from Amelia to send him on his way.

Last night had been rather spectacular if he did say so himself, they'd both enjoyed having the manor all to themselves, and had quite thoroughly enjoyed the space in the main bathroom, practising sexual positions that he'd never even attempted before, though a lot of the time had ended up returning to a female dominant sixty-nine position so he could pleasure Amelia while enjoying her teeth sinking into his erection.

It had been an absolutely fantastic night, and morning too, which had left him in a great mood to start the day as he made his way to the school.

"Ah, James, I had expected you to be late." Minerva looked up from her desk with a wry smile.

"I said I'd be here," James shrugged as he made his way over to the headmistress' desk and unceremoniously flomped down into the spare chair in front of it. "No more howlers?" He asked with a smirk, eyeing the clean desk.

"Thankfully not," Minerva frowned over at him. "I did take your suggestion however and spoke with Andromeda yesterday, she was happy to accept the position and is already downstairs waiting for us."

"That was quick," James frowned thoughtfully, ruffling his messy hair and wondering why Andromeda had accepted the position so quickly.

"She apparently had an argument with her daughter yesterday morning," Minerva explained. "Young Nymphadora is apparently set on joining the Aurors from what I've been told, something Andromeda is rather set against after hearing that You-Know-Who has returned."

"Ah," James nodded, making a mental note of that to let Amelia know.

"Septima has fully taken over the responsibilities of Slytherin house," Minerva explained thoughtfully. "I had hoped you would do the same with Gryffindor house, but your instance on having time to deal with... You-Know-Who... while understandable and something that does you credit, rather makes that a difficult situation." She mused aloud. "Aurora has agreed to take the position for now, but I suspect it will not be a permanent position for her."

James simply nodded at that, accepting what he was being told. He was happy to take the teaching
position for now, but certainly wouldn't be taking on any other responsibilities when his first priority was to deal with Voldemort.

"The students should be making their way to breakfast already, shall we?" Minerva asked, standing up from her desk and gesturing for James to do the same. "I admit, I failed to ask last night due to... well, how awkward it sounds." She said softly as she stood in the quiet of the office. "May I ask, Lily?" She asked hopefully.

James simply shook his head at that, not trusting his voice to say anything about his dead mother. He could impersonate his father, but talking about his mother when he didn't know anything about her would be the most awkward thing in the world for him.

"I see," Minerva nodded. "It was a miracle you and Harry survived that night, I only wish Lily could have done so as well." She said softly. "Albus was certain it was her sacrifice that allowed Harry to survive, I might assume the same for you then." She mused, resting her hand on James' shoulder reassuringly. "I'm sure she's proud of you James, and watching over you, you and Harry."

James just nodded, feeling exceedingly cruel in pretending to be James Potter right now and lying to Minerva like this.

Without saying another word Minerva walked to the door, leading them both down from the headmistresses office and into the school itself and then through the corridors towards the great hall.

It was an awkward and subdued silence that hung in their air as they walked, neither of them wanting to say anything more about Lily and what had happened that night, but both of them feeling too awkward to change the subject to anything else.

By the time they'd made their way to the great hall, it was full of students talking loudly amongst themselves and chatting away happily, though a wave of silence rushed through the hall as the students spotted him walking in alongside Minerva and the entire hall quickly fell silent in anticipation.

The first thing James noticed was that Dumbledore's god awful golden throne had been removed from the teachers table, leaving Minerva with the same seat as everyone else at the table, and judging from the way the rest of the professors were seated, it was a change they all approved of.

"Good morning students." Minerva announced as she approached the middle of the teachers platform. "I have a few announcements to make this morning, but you may all be assured, classes will begin today on schedule."

There was a few groans at that that echoed through the halls, but a few approving comments as well, mostly from the Ravenclaw tables and the upper years.

"Professor Vector has proudly taken the position of Head of Slytherin House, replacing Severus Snape who resigned two days ago." Minerva said firmly, raising her voice over the celebratory cheers that came from three quarters of the student population. "Professor Andromeda Tonks has graciously joined us in the position of Potions Mistress, and will be teaching all seven years of Potions." She explained, gesturing to the side where Andromeda stood up to applause from the students, with quite loud applause coming from the Gryffindor, Hufflepuff and Ravenclaw tables in response to that. "And Professor Sinestra will be taking over my responsibilities as Head of Gryffindor." She explained to some more applause from the Gryffindor table.

"Our final staff changes this year will not come as a surprise to many of you," Minerva announced
with a dry laugh. "Filius Flitwick will be taking over as Deputy Headmaster, while retaining his position as Head of Ravenclaw. His new office is on the Fourth floor, so you will be able to find him there instead of in his previous office in the West Tower." With that she paused, waiting for the applause and cheering from the Ravenclaw table to die down before she continued. "It also gives my great pride to announce that James Potter has accepted the position teaching the Defence Against the Dark Arts class." She explained to school wide applause as James stood up with a wide grin.

The Gryffindor and Hufflepuff tables were easily the loudest, clapping and yelling their approval loudly enough for it to echo around the great hall.

"Yes, yes, we are all happy to have such a prestigious member of our community joining the faculty," Professor McGonagall shouted, waiting for the cheering to go down before she continued when everyone was starting to sit down again. "Professor Potter will be teaching all seven years of Defence Against the Dark Arts, and as I'm sure you are all aware from the interruptions during the sorting ceremony, has a rather unique and valorous background in the subject, so I hope you will all give him the same respect and acknowledgement he deserves in his classroom and learn all you can from him." She said firmly, making sure everyone got the message.

"Now, onto further business. Firstly, bullying is not acceptable here by anyone. For those who do not know my zero tolerance stance on the matter, the first infraction will be a warning, along with a notice mailed to your parents informing them of the occurrence. The second infraction will see you suspended for a week and sent home from Hogwarts for the duration. The third, will end in your expulsion. Is that clear?" She asked, looking around the hall to make sure all the students, new and old, understood the rules.

"Anyone caught bullying another student or causing harm with unfriendly curses or hexes, regardless of house affiliation, will be subject to an investigation and if needed, the Aurors will be called to deal with the student, depending on the severity of the case in question. This is a school, not a battlefield, is that understood?" Minerva said sternly. "Punishments may have been lax in the past, but rest assured, under my tenure, that will no longer be the case."

There was quite a bit of murmuring a chatter after that announcement, and James watched as quite a few of the Slytherin tables frowned and whispered amongst themselves unhappily.

"Classes will begin at nine am," Minerva announced before looking around the students. "You all have your time tables already, so I expect to hear that you have all started your school year with enthusiasm, if a day late." She explained with a small smile. "With that said, I will allow you to continue on with your breakfast."

After that she sat down, favouring James with a smile as she gestured for him and Andromeda to take their seats alongside her.

"Andromeda Tonks," Andromeda introduced herself, smiling across to James. "I've been told I have you to thank for Minerva talking me into this?"

"Possibly," James admitted with a wry chuckle. "Just a headsup though, in Gryffindor, Neville Longbottom might have problems in your class."

"Oh?" Andromeda frowned as Minerva gasped, catching on to what James was saying.

"His parents... they were tortured by Bellatrix." James pointed out in a whisper so only Andromeda could hear him. "And since you look..."
"Almost identical to my sister," Andromeda nodded, understanding what James was saying. "Thank you for the warning."

"I'll have a chat with him," James nodded reassuringly. "Just don't be surprised if he's a bit quiet or off until he comes to terms with it." He said softly.

"No, not at all." Andromeda smiled softly. "Are you going to be alright bringing it up with him?"

"He's my godson," James explained with a small shrug. "I should be the one to do it. It's my fault you're here anyway."

"Entirely," Andromeda admitted with a laugh. "I was listening to the wireless that covered your confrontation with You-Know-Who, I'll admit, I was rather happy that you took the position here to keep the students safe."

"I got conned into it," James groused mockingly with a wink towards Minerva.

"You most certainly did not," Minerva shot back with a wry smile on her lips. "I rather like to think of it as it simply being an aggressive interview for employment."

"Bullied into it," James confessed with a smirk that saw both Andromeda and Filius laugh in response. "I should steal Neville away before classes anyway." He explained, looking down to the Gryffindor tables to where Neville was nervously eating and glancing up at the teachers table every now and again. "He's going to need a talk before he walks into class and sees you there."

"Of course," Minerva nodded, giving her consent to the talk as James stood up from the teachers table.

Walking down from the teachers platform he could feel every eye on him as he approached the Gryffindor tables, smiling to himself as he recognised all the young faces that were looking up at him in awed silence. "Neville?" He asked quietly, coming to stand behind Neville. "Want to take a walk?" He asked quietly.

"S... sure Professor Potter." Neville stammered out, standing up from the Gryffindor tables nervously.

"Don't worry, you're not in trouble." James chuckled, looking down at how small Neville looked standing next to him. "Come on, we'll head outside for a bit before your classes start." He explained, gesturing to lead Neville outside of the great hall and onto the grounds outside.

He gave his younger self a grin as he walked through the hall, which was returned happily, along with a friendly wave from Susan as they passed the Hufflepuff tables and walked down to the main doors and out onto the stairs leading down to the courtyard outside of the great hall.

"You know I'm your godfather then?" James asked after a moment of silence as they stood in the quiet of the courtyard.

"Ye... yes Professor." Neville stammered out. "I... I mean my gran told me about you and everything, but... she always told me you'd died, not that... sorry, I don't mean..."

"Relax," James chuckled, leaning down against one of the smaller walls and comfortably sitting on it. "I'm sorry I wasn't there for you growing up." He said quietly.

"It's... it's alright." Neville said quickly.
"No, it's not." James corrected him with a sigh, inwardly wishing that Neville had been confidant enough to talk to him about this last time around. "It's not alright what happened to your parents either." He said softly. "You were terrified when you saw Andromeda sat at the teachers table, I know that look."

"She... she just looks..."

"I know," James nodded reassuringly. "Andromeda isn't Bellatrix though, she married a muggle-born and has her own life, she got kicked out of her family for it just like Sirius. She's nothing like Bellatrix, trust me on that."

"It's... It's just hard, seeing her." Neville explained in a quiet voice. "I'm not... I'm not brave, I'm not a great wizard like you and Harry."

"You're braver than you know," James smiled, tapping Neville on the shoulder with a smile. "And I'll be here, any time you want to talk, or you can talk to Harry any time either."

"I... I can?" Neville asked, looking up at James with wide eyes.

"Sure," James smiled over. "If you're having problems with anything, you can come and find me any time you want." He said with a nod. "I was a Gryffindor as well you know." He explained with a laugh.

"Everyone knows that now," Neville smiled nervously. "Everyone was in the common room telling stories about you after... after you defeated You-Know-Who."

"Oh? Were they?" James laughed, shaking his head at the thought of the Gryffindor population gossipping about him, yet again. It seemed to be a constant in his life no matter what the year was.

"I... I thought I was going to be in Hufflepuff, and Harry would be a Gryffindor for sure." Neville confessed.

"Harry's proud to be a Hufflepuff, just like you should be proud to be a Gryffindor." James explained patiently. "Neither is better than the other, all four houses are the same."

"Ron says that all Slytherins are evil." Neville explained.

"Ron Weasley right?" James sighed, getting comfortable on the wall. "Slytherins can be evil, the same as Gryffindors can be evil, or Ravenclaws, or even Hufflepuffs."

"An evil Hufflepuff?" Neville asked, the disbelief showing on his face.

"OK, maybe an evil Hufflepuff is a bit of a stretch," James laughed, ruffling his hair as he tried to picture that. "Peter Pettigrew was a Gryffindor." He pointed out.

"He's the one that betrayed you to You-Know-Who," Neville said softly. "My gran told me all about it after Sirius Black's trial." He explained.

"See?" James commented with a smile. "Gryffindors aren't always the good guys, just like Slytherins aren't always the bad guys." He said with a small nod. "You make your own decisions about people, don't let the tie and robes they wear fool you."

"I won't." Neville promised firmly.

"I know it's hard, but give Andromeda a chance, trust me, she'll be a better Potions teacher than
Snape ever would have been." James confessed with a grin.

"Everyone in the common room was cheering when we heard Professor Snape wasn't coming back." Neville announced with a small smile. "You're a legend in Gryffindor just because of that."

"I'll bet," James laughed, knowing all too well how badly Snape had been treating the Gryffindors for years before he arrived at the school. "Think you can give Andromeda a chance then?"

"I'll... I'll try." Neville promised.

"See, there's that Gryffindor bravery." James smiled over. "And if you make friends with Harry, you can all come over over the Christmas break and spend some time together."

"Really?" Neville whispered, looking at James in shock.

"Sure, I've got a feeling you two are going to be good friends anyway, and Susan will be there too, so there'll be plenty of people around." James explained.

"I'd... I'd like that Professor." Neville smiled up.

"Call me James when we're not in class," James grinned over as if he was sharing a secret. "And let me know if you're struggling with anything, I'll give you the same help I'd give Harry, Susan or Daphne, you're part of the family." He said as he stood up from the wall, giving Neville's shoulder a reassuring squeeze.

"I don't think I can do that," Neville laughed nervously, trying to imagine calling a professor by their first time.

"You'll get used to it," James laughed over. "Actually, could you do me a favour in Gryffindor?" He asked quickly. "Have you met Hermione Granger yet?"

"Yeah, I was on the train with her, she helped me find Trevor!" Neville grinned over.

"Great, I just was going to ask if you could make friends with her, help her settle in." James explained. "You know how tough it is starting a new school, she's got it even harder, she didn't know anything about magic this time last year."

"I'll help her!" Neville nodded his head eagerly.

"Great," James grinned back. "Bring her over when you meet Harry and Susan, I'm sure she'd love to make some new friends as well."

"I can do that," Neville said with a wide smile.

"Think you're ready to go back in then?" James asked, motioning to the doorway leading back into the great hall.

"They're all... they're all going to want to know why you brought me out here." Neville said nervously, looking up at James expectantly.

"Tell them I was teaching you how to be a lion," James laughed, gesturing for Neville to join him walking up the steps and back into the great hall.

"How to be a lion?" Neville asked himself, walking back into the great hall as he pondered what Professor Potter had meant by that. He’d talked about being brave and facing his fears with Andromeda, was that what he meant by becoming a lion? Becoming a true Gryffindor by facing
someone that terrified him?

"James Potter!"

Neville was broken out of his thoughts by Professor McGonagall's shout echoing across the hall from the staff table, and shifting his attention back to look at what Professor Potter had done, only to find that Professor Potter wasn't walking alongside him anymore, but instead of the professor, a very large lion was walking proudly into the great hall alongside him.

He couldn't help the smile that spread across his face as he realised the lion must be Professor Potter and everyone around the great hall started whispering and talking amongst themselves at once, all looking down to the lion who was baring it's teeth in a ferocious grin up towards Professor McGonagall.

The Ministry of Magic  
London  
England

Amelia smiled widely to herself as she walked out of the Wizengamot chambers, more than happy with how this mornings session had gone.

There'd been a near unanimous vote to remove Albus from both his positions as Chief Warlock and his appointment to the International Confederation, stripping him of his Supreme Mugwump title in the process.

Quite literally, for the first time in memory, both the light side and the dark side of the Wizengamot had voted together on the same subject, both sides denouncing Albus Dumbledore entirely. It wasn't really a surprise to anyone who had been paying attention, the dark factions had wanted Dumbledore gone for years now, and voting against him with the light factions let them achieve this goal while also denouncing Dumbledore's actions that James had accused him of.

The light and neutral factions had all simply been appalled at Dumbledore's actions, and any member of the Wizengamot, regardless of faction, that had family at Hogwarts currently, had been happy to vote him out in revenge for putting their children at risk with his traps and lures to entice Voldemort to the school.

The only surprise that came was that Albus hadn't even turned up to the meeting, though he likely knew what was coming and she could assume that he simply didn't want to be there to face the accusations in person.

Amos Diggory had been surprisingly voted in as Chief Warlock, something she hadn't expected but wasn't exactly opposed to. While Amos was known for being a bit of a braggart, he was a fair and proud wizard who would do the position proud, so she was more than happy to see him appointed to the position.

"Amelia?"

Amelia smiled as she turned around, hearing Julia's voice calling from down the hallway. "Quite the morning?" She chuckled as Julia came down to walk alongside her, both of them dressed in their official Wizengamot purple robes.
"I hadn't thought Amos would have got the votes," Julia admitted as they walked through to the main chambers where the elevators up to the main floors of The Ministry were held.

"It was close, but he's got enough friends in The Ministry to make it happen." Amelia nodded thoughtfully. "He's close with the Weasley family isn't he?"

"Lives near by," Julia nodded in agreement. "We all know how close Albus was with the Weasley's, so he might have put Amos up to it."

"Hmmm, possibly." Amelia frowned, not having considered that angle of Amos' appointment. "I'll keep an eye on him just in case."

"I assumed you would," Julia chuckled to herself as they both got in the elevator, Amelia flicking her wand towards the controls to set it going up to the DMLE level. "I heard your boytoy took the job at Hogwarts?"

"He started this morning," Amelia laughed, having given up correcting Julia on her nickname for James. While technically she knew that James was older than her by three or four years, while he had taken on the identity of James Potter, he was supposed to be younger than her by a few years instead.

"I'll bet I'll be receiving a letter from Daphne later tonight then," Julia laughed across. "How are Susan and Harry settling in to Hufflepuff?"

"Pretty well, Susan owled me last night full of talk about how the rest of the Hufflepuffs are dealing with the changes at the school, her and Hannah are in a dorm with one other girl, they seem pretty happy with how things are." Amelia smiled as the elevator came to a stop, letting them out into the Department of Magical Law Enforcement. "I'm sure they'll be grumbling about starting their classes today after an extra break of things."

"Probably," Julia laughed. "Daphne was the same, happy to enjoy the extra day like a holiday with her friends and use the day to find her way around the castle." She explained, following Amelia through the department towards her office. "I heard rumours you're going to start making magical oaths of service mandatory for the Aurors?" She asked, taking the usual seat in Amelia's office.

"It's true," Amelia nodded as she headed around her desk to take her own seat. "We don't want any of the Aurors turning out to be Death Eaters in disguise, it could undermine our entire force."

"True," Julia nodded in agreement. "I'm just saying, it seems a bit extreme, it might drop recruitment a bit when it gets out."

"I'd rather keep ten Aurors I can trust, than have twenty I couldn't." Amelia admitted bluntly. "Keeping the Aurors secure against Voldemort's infiltration is the first step in making The Ministry secure." She said with a firm nod. "We're going to make sure any Death Eater that joins Voldemort has nowhere to hide."

"Good on you," Julia smiled widely. "You going to back at Bones Manor now that your boytoy is up at Hogwarts then? Or are you going to be sneaking into the castle now and again?" She asked with a laugh.

"Hardly," Amelia laughed back. "Though the idea is appealing." She added with a smirk. "Actually, Thursday night. Would you like to have dinner with me and James?"

"A proposition already?" Julia asked with a grin. "Trying to shock James senseless? Both of us, a reward for taking out You-Know-Who?" She asked with a lavish smirk and a wink.
"Maybe," Amelia laughed back.

"Thursday, hmmm," Julia nodded thoughtfully, chuckling at the joking idea. "I have nothing on. I'd be happy to join you."

"Great," Amelia smiled. "I'm sure James will be happy to take back anything you want to send up to Daphne while you're there. He's got an arrangement now up there and can floo in and out whenever he wants."

"Oh, bribery as well?" Julia laughed. "And enticing bribery at that, you must want something."

"Not entirely," Amelia laughed, waving that comment away. "I'll admit, I did speak to James about making our alliance."

"Oh?" Julia asked, raising an eyebrow at that. "He's wanting to sit down and discuss it then? A contract between the families perhaps?"

"Something like that," Amelia admitted with a nod, teasing it out to see Julia's reaction. "Though I did mention the idea of making it a formal alliance to him." She smirked, over, seeing the shock register on Julia's face.

"You didn't!" Julia laughed. "I was joking about that!" She exclaimed.

"I wasn't," Amelia commented, halting Julia's laugh like a silencing charm had been cast on her.

"You're serious?" Julia asked with wide eyes. "Me, you and James?" She asked in a whisper.

"Something to talk about?" Amelia asked, curious what Julia really thought about the idea. "I won't lie, the thought of people knowing Susan was formally under James' protection would help me sleep a lot better."

"That's something," Julia admitted, having both the Bones and Potter family weight behind her own would definitely make things a lot easier. She certainly wouldn't be dealing with the likes of the Nott or Malfoy families trying to barter marriage contracts for Daphne or Astoria with that sort of power behind her. "It'd definitely make the girls safer." She said with a thoughtful nod.

"It'd make Susan, Daphne and Astoria sisters, and Harry their brother." Amelia pointed out.

"It'd rewrite the neutral and light blocs in the Wizengamot," Julia mused aloud. "We'd have the seats to vote The Potter's in at the next election as well."

"The only reason the Potter's aren't members already is because the traditionalists that want to keep their muggle friendly thoughts out of the Wizengamot. Same reason they're not officially included in the Sacred Twenty Eight." Amelia explained. "It'd be a kick in the teeth for them to get James appointed, and we'd practically double our votes when everyone started flocking to his side."

"You're right," Julia nodded thoughtfully. "I never knew you had such high political aspirations?" She asked, looking towards Amelia now.

"James has his own thoughts on what he wants to do, most of which align with my own views."

"Rewriting the laws to prevent pure-blood families from taking advantage where muggle-borns can't is one of his major platforms."

"That'll ruffle quite a few feathers." Julia muttered. "He's going to make a lot of enemies with that sort of talk."
"He's already punched Voldemort and Albus Dumbledore, in the same night." Amelia pointed out with a laugh. "Do you think he cares about making any more enemies?"

"Probably not," Julia snorted out a laugh at that, shaking her head in bemusement. "Alright, I'll come to dinner." She said with a grin. "A formal alliance, really?"

"Really," Amelia nodded over. "You take the Potter name, any children you two have continue the Potter line. I continue the Bones line."

"You know, I was joking about you sharing your boytoy. Now you want me and him? Getting a bit greedy aren't you?" Julia smirked over. "I'd have to talk with Daphne and Astoria first, see what they think about the idea."

"Of course," Amelia nodded in agreement. "Susan and Harry already know about me and James, I don't think it would surprise Susan too much, but it'll be a shock for Harry."

"That he just acquired two step-mums out of nowhere? Yeah, I'd say that'd be a shock for the kid," Julia laughed at that thought.

"Possibly another as well," Amelia commented thoughtfully. "Neville Longbottom, James' godson. I'm sure you know the story behind his parents."

"Poor kid," Julia nodded, having heard about Frank and Alice Longbottom before. "James is taking him under his wing then?"

"Paw," Amelia smirked, thinking of James' animagus form. "He's quite the Gryffindor, but yes, chances are Neville's going to be as much of the family as the rest of them are."

"Three girls and two boys," Julia shook her head in amusement. "Quite the family already. Are you trying to beat the Weasley's record or something?" She asked with a laugh.

"Hardly," Amelia chuckled along. "I wouldn't say no to a son or two to continue the Bones line though, take the pressure off of Susan."

"I'm sure you and James have already been practising enough," Julia smirked over. "You're serious about this aren't you? Sharing him like that?"

"As long as he's alright sharing you with me as well," Amelia laughed with a wink.

"Ahh, so that's how you talked him into this," Julia grinned back. "What wizard is going to say no to having two witches in his bed together." She exclaimed with a grin. "I'll admit, I wouldn't say no to joining you two like that."

"I didn't think you would," Amelia smirked over. "I already left some delicious marks on him last night to remember me by." She explained with a wicked smirk of her own.

"No!" Julia grinned wildly. "He lets you mark him?" She whispered, her eyes going wide at that juicy piece of information.

"And go on top, and tie him up," Amelia grinned back. "And he loves to be bit." He added with a wink. "You'll have to practice your restraining charms and share some of your secrets."

"Oh you are definitely sharing," Julia grinned. "Seriously, do you know how rare it is to find a wizard that isn't so full of themselves they can barely talk about anything else?" She asked with a smirk. "The last date I was on, Merlin, talk about a fish."
"A fish?" Amelia frowned, cocking her head to the side in confusion.

"Flops around on top for two minutes before gasping and dying," Julia explained with a dismissive grin, causing Amelia to snort in laughter. "I haven't been with a man that lets me have my fun since Cyrus was killed."

"He cooks too," Amelia pointed out. "No house elves, he does it all himself. I think he's got so used to living alone that he just uses cleaning charms and cooks automatically now without even thinking about it. I swear that man spends more time in the kitchen than I ever have, I don't actually think he's even got a house elf come to think about it."

"I'll move in tonight," Julia laughed over, causing Amelia to break out in laughter herself. "Thursday night?"

"Thursday," Amelia confirmed. "I'll double check with him tonight, but Thursday should be fine."

"I'll look forward to it," Julia grinned. "Best lingerie on then." She added with a laugh, causing Amelia to chuckle along with her as she considered what James' face would be like when faced with the two of them together.

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Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry
Highlands of Scotland

To James' great amusement, it didn't take long at all for students to start filing into his class. He'd had chance to organise a few book shelves, get the text book out that he was using, and move things around, but before long students started arriving in groups of fours and fives, and before long they were all seated and chatting amongst themselves eagerly.

"Alright, I think we're all here, so we can begin." He smiled eagerly as he walked to his desk at the front of the classroom and leaned against it as a casual seat.

Looking around the class he could see it was a very familiar mixture of Gryffindor and Slytherin students, which meant their time tables were exactly how he remembered his first year being.

"This is Defence Against the Dark Arts, and thanks to Professor McGonagall's introduction, you all know who I am already, so I don't need to bother with an introduction." He announced with a smile as more than a few of the Slytherin students started whispering amongst themselves.

"We're going to cover dark creatures like ghosts, gargoyles and gnomes. Along with various dark spells in this class, how to recognise them, how to avoid them, and how to defend against them." James announced, making sure he had everyone's attention. "Now, who can tell me the difference between a hex and a jinx?" He asked, starting simply as he looked at the various hands that shot up, smirking to himself when he recognised Hermione's hand as one of them. "Yes?" He asked, pointing to a familiar looking dark haired Slytherin girl that was sat next to Daphne. "Can I have your name as well? I'd like to start leaning names as soon as possible, I can't award house points
without names.” He explained with a chuckle.

"Tracey Davis," The girl announced with a smile. "Jinxes aren't as dangerous as Hexes are, they're classed as irritating or amusing magic."

"Correct," James grinned happily. "There are three types of dark charms, in ascending order. Jinxes are more of an irritant than anything else, but can be useful as a distraction. Curses are the most dangerous. Hexes fall somewhere in the middle, with some of them like the horn-growing hex being only vaguely strange, while others like Stickfast Hex can prove valuable in your arsenal should you need them."

James smiled to himself, comfortable that the entire class were paying attention now. "Jinxes can easily be blocked or simply removed with a counter jinx or anti-jinx for the more powerful ones, but they are very easy to recognise, identify and understand." He paused, making sure everyone understood that before continuing on. "Now, that isn't to say jinxes are to be ignored or dismissed, jinxes like the tree animating jinx might sound amusing in the classroom, and it's pretty hilarious to watch cast on a bonsai, but if you're being chased into a forest and it's cast against you, then you suddenly have trees fighting against you as well as your assailant, making things much harder for yourselves I hope you'll agree. I'll bet you can all imagine how bad that would be if someone cast it down in the Forbidden Forest?"

He noticed a few heads nodding in agreement at that, all writing things down on parchment.

"OK, who can give me some examples of jinxes, the stranger the better." He grinned out at the class as hands shot into the air. "Names as well please, I want to start learning who you all are." He laughed before looking over the Gryffindor seats and seeing Hermione's hand stuck in the air firmly before flicking his wand to her.

"Hermione Granger," Hermione introduced himself before announcing his Jinx. "Ducklifors."

"Great example, turns objects into ducks." James laughed, spotting a few students looking at him like he was crazy. "It's a real transfiguration jinx, it's actually linked to the more advanced Draconifors spell to turn objects into small dragons, you'll learn that one in third year, but it can be a great distraction to turn someone's cloak into a duck then run while they're trying to figure out what happened." He explained, spotting the wide eyes from various students there. "And yes, small dragons, and no, I'm not joking around." He laughed, flicking his wand towards one of the books on his desk, silently transfiguring it into a small red dragon with a flash of light for everyone to see. "Now, who's got another one for me?" He asked as the small dragon flew off into the air and started circling around the classroom.

He decided to alternate this time, and look for a Slytherin student while I watched the rest of the class watching the small transfigured dragon in awe. "Yes?" He asked, flicking his wand towards a male Slytherin in the front row.

"Blaise Zabini," The Slytherin said proudly. "The Locomotor Wibbly."

"Another good example," James nodded happily. "The Jelly-Legs jinx, fantastic for casting when you need to make a quick get away, immobilises your target until they can counter it. Makes them easy pickings for a stunner while they're trying to stay upright."

After that he picked another, and another. Soon moving on from jinxes to various dark creatures and naming them along with bringing up pictures for everyone to look at, and so the class went on...
Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry

Highlands of Scotland

James grinned to himself as he watched the third year class of Hufflepuff's and Ravenclaws file out of the Defence classroom, that had been his last class for today, and he was actually glad of it.

Having Cedric Diggory in the class was something he hadn't anticipated at all, it had taken him a moment to gather his bearings and remind himself that he was aiming to stop the Tri-Wizard mess from ever happening this time around, so Cedric wouldn't be killed and would have an entire life ahead of himself this time.

Teaching was a lot harder work than he'd actually anticipated, but was tremendous amounts of fun as well. He'd spent half the third year class teaching them shields, and the rest of it teaching them about the patronus charm, which had absolutely astounded the students when he'd cast it and let Prongs out to gallop around the room.

"Having fun I see?"

James snapped his head up at the voice, looking towards the doorway where Andromeda was stood watching him. "I am actually." He admitted with a grin, flicking his wand towards the desks and straightening them all up. "How did your day go?"

"Dreadful," Andromeda admitted with a sigh. "All those years, I'd assumed Nymphadora was exaggerating the situation when she spoke about Severus' teaching methods or his attitude. After seeing some of the fourth and fifth years brewing, I have absolutely no idea how they are going to pass their OWLs, let alone their NEWTs." She exclaimed.

"He was a bully and an idiot," James commented with a shrug.

"The NEWT classes are almost seventy percent Slytherin. I found out he was giving them private tutelage outside of the classroom to make up for his appalling methods in the classroom that drove the other students away." Andromeda explained.

"I should be surprised," James sighed, shaking his head. "But I'm not." He admitted. "He was a foul git, and I'm happy he's gone."

"Leaving me to clean up the mess he left of the potions curriculum," Andromeda complained. "I've already had three students drop out of the NEWT classes, and I haven't even taught them yet. It seems they expected just to get a passing grade because they were in Slytherin."

"Like I said, a bully and an idiot." James reiterated his point as he collected his dragon skin trench-coat from the coat stand behind his desk. "I heard To... Nymphadora is looking to join the
"Aurors?"

"Sadly," Andromeda admitted, watching as James shrugged on his coat. "You don't wear robes then?" She asked curiously.

"Never liked them," James admitted with a shrug. "Limits my movement too much, gets caught on everything, and they're just a pain to wear." He said with a grin.

"You remind me of Ted, he refuses to wear them too. They're traditional," Andromeda explained firmly.

"They're traditionally a pain to wear," James countered with a smirk. "I've got nothing against other people wearing them, but I'm not layering myself down with robes when I've got a perfectly good coat." He said simply. "Anyway, what's wrong with the Aurors?"

"Do use that brain of yours," Andromeda sighed, leading the way out of the defence classroom and waiting for James to shut the door and lock it with a flick of his wand. "With You-Know-Who out there, being an Auror is more dangerous than ever. You remember the last war of course?"

"Like I could forget it," James admitted, thinking back to how bad things had been when Voldemort had returned in his time at Hogwarts.

"Then you know how much I would worry about Nymphadora," Andromeda explained.

"Telling her she can't be an Auror is just going to make her want to be one even more." James pointed out. "Teenage rebellion, remember that?" He asked with a nod to her, happily walking alongside Andromeda through the Hogwarts corridors towards the main stairway.

"Of course," Andromeda sighed, rubbing her temples in frustration. "Nymphadora... she always had a strong rebellious streak. Our argument yesterday..."

"Probably pushed her right out the front door and into the Auror recruitment line," James filled in with a knowing nod.

"Precisely," Andromeda winced. "Would you... I've heard rumours about you and Amelia?"

"You want me to ask her to keep an eye on her for you?" James asked, raising an eyebrow at the fact that apparently the knowledge of his and Amelia's relationship had made the rounds quite effectively already.

"If you would be so kind?" Andromeda nodded thoughtfully.

"Sure," James nodded, he was already going to be keeping an eye on Tonks anyway, just in case Dumbledore got up to the same tricks again, so it was no skin off of his nose to let Andromeda know he'd be watching anyway.

"Thank you," Andromeda smiled graciously at that. "I haven't had the pleasure of your son in the classroom yet, Friday is my first set with the first year Hufflepuff Ravenclaw class."

"Good luck," James laughed over. "Gryffindor and Slytherin?"

"I had them this afternoon," Andromeda sighed. "I'm well aware of the problems between the two houses, but it's got out of control surely?"

"They're all being idiots as far as I can see," James admitted as he led the way through to the great
hall. "I'm hoping they'll actually grow up and get over it one day."

"A day that sadly seems very far away." Andromeda sighed. "Are you joining us for the evening meal?"

"Not tonight," James shook his head, stretching to work the kinks out of his muscles from being active all day. "I need to get back to the manor to check on Sirius and make sure he hasn't destroyed the place yet."

"Do send my best wishes to him," Andromeda smiled thoughtfully. "I am his cousin in case you had forgotten."

"I hadn't," James nodded, not having known his dad had known Andromeda at all really. "I'll pass that along, you should write to him sometime, I know he doesn't get along with much of his family."

"You have a stunning skill for understatement." Andromeda chuckled dryly at that, favouring James with a small smile. "Perhaps I will, thank you for looking after him."

"Anytime," James smiled over. "Good luck with the potions." He added with a grin as he headed off to find the Defence office where he could floo out from, leaving Andromeda in the great hall to contemplate how to repair the years of damage Severus Snape had caused to the students of Hogwarts.

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**Malfoy Manor**  
**Wiltshire**

Deep within Malfoy Manor, Lucius Malfoy was sat at his desk in his private study, contemplating possible actions as he stared out of the window, idly watching the sunset over the Ebnesbourne Forest that surrounded their lands.

A single glass of aged blood wine sat on his desk, along with a distressing letter from Draco, and an empty leather backed diary that positively glowed with the darkest magics he'd ever seen.

Draco's letter, detailing the changes that had occurred at Hogwarts, hadn't been that much of a surprise to him, it simply confirmed the facts and rumours that had already reached his ears. James Potter was the new Defence teacher, and as Minerva McGonagall had taken over the school, she had apparently instituted firmer rules against bullying and harassment. Apparently firm enough to leave Draco with the correct interpretation that his usual behaviour would see him expelled from the school in a very short amount of time.

As usual, Draco's letter was begging for him to fix this so he could go back to how things were, but the damned annoying thing was, these were changes he couldn't fix.

Revealing his hand at Hogwarts would make him a target for James Potter and the rest of his alliance, which included the ever annoying Amelia Bones, who, if rumours were to be believed, was romantically involved with James Potter already.

Even making a play through his seat on the Hogwarts Governing Board would see him exposed, thanks to the friendship between the Greengrass and Bones witches, which would see any moves he made whispered back to James Potter in no time at all.
If there was one thing Malfoy's were good at, it was choosing the right side to back. His family had a long and illustrious history of siding with the victorious throughout history, making their mark, and their wealth, along the way.

He'd sided with The Dark Lord all those years ago because of his power, ambition, and breadth of knowledge about the dark arts, but admittedly, mostly because of his power. The Dark Lord had never been challenged openly until he'd faced the Potters, and they had utterly destroyed him until his recent resurgence, and even then, James Potter had driven him from the castle barely moments after duelling Albus Dumbledore himself.

Even at his height of power, Albus Dumbledore had never managed to do more than stall the Dark Lord's advance, and on the very few occasions they'd duelled, he'd been certain that given time, the Dark Lord would have been victorious if Dumbledore hadn't had help or fled the duel himself.

Lucius was no squib or second rate wizard, he had more than enough duelling experience and an unmatched knowledge of curses and duelling practice, but even he had to admit to himself that he would struggle to duel Albus Dumbledore and defeat him, let alone face Dumbledore and then The Dark Lord, and come out victorious on both occasions. That, was a worrying notion, and as a display of power was singularly effective in it's message.

The witches and wizards who considered themselves 'light families' had never really had an effective leader in their community before. Albus Dumbledore was the closest thing they really had, and while powerful, he was rather ineffective as a leader, as his forgiveness and soft hearted ways were known to everyone, something the dark families relied on knowing that they could do whatever they wanted with very little in the way of reprisals coming their way.

The light families flocking around James Potter was an entirely new phenomenon, much like Potter himself from everything he'd been able to find out. He was capable, powerful, and had the will to stand and fight two of the most powerful wizards he'd ever known, and judging from what everyone had said about him after the fact, rumours were that he had little patience for forgiveness or second chances, and had told Albus Dumbledore that to his face.

Then there was this mention of a Prophecy surrounding the Potter boy, he'd heard hints of it before in the months before The Dark Lord had attacked The Potters, but to have it confirmed openly had set him on edge, especially with how Potter had so easily dispatched The Dark Lord. It was entirely likely that the elder Potter had trained his son already, it was what he would have done in the same situation, which meant it was entirely likely that the young Harry Potter would grow up to be just as formidable in the coming years.

Choosing the winning side typically came down to it simply being a matter of power and will. Who had the most power, and who had the will to use that power and see things done.

The problem was, he could now see that James Potter had more than enough power to face The Dark Lord and come out victorious, and he most assuredly had the will to drive Albus Dumbledore out of Hogwarts in a single night, a move that Lucius had to admit he was rather envious of.

There was also the rather disgusting fact that The Dark Lord had in fact been the son of a muggle. A fact first apparently confirmed when Potter had confronted him at Hogwarts, calling him by his real name apparently as well, which The Dark Lord hadn't denied in their ensuing battle.

That alone was making waves through the community, with the Daily Prophet digging up everything they could on Tom Marvolo Riddle and writing daily exposés on The Dark Lord's real history.
At this very moment, he had The Dark Lord's personal journal on his desk, embossed in gold with the rather dubious name of T. M. Riddle, was confirmation enough of all everything that was being said as far as he was concerned.

The thought that he had tied himself to the son of a muggle wasn't sitting with Lucius Malfoy well one bit. The fact that The Dark... no, Tom Riddle, had used him and the other pure blood families for his own agenda while lying about his own pedigree was something that rankled deep within him. Nobody used a Malfoy and gets away with it.

All of these facts had led him to his current conundrum. Tom Riddle being victorious was no longer a certainty, and given how easily James Potter had dealt with him two nights ago, it was looking more and more like the Potters would come out victorious without breaking a sweat.

James Potter's resurgence had cast doubt on everything he knew about that night from a decade ago. Since the Senior Potter had survived, it meant that it had been him that had destroyed Tom Riddle all those years ago and brought an end to the war.

That realisation brought both positive and negative thoughts with it. The fact that it had been James Potter, a pure blood wizard of quite the pedigree, to defeat Tom Riddle instead of a half-blood child, was something that actually pleased him. He knew more than a few wizards around the magical world would have come to the same conclusion and were happy with that realisation.

After all, it was well known that Albus Dumbledore was the source of the rumours and stories around 'The-Boy-Who-Lived', and had obviously been trying to build up the boy's reputation for some unknown reason. It was clear that there had been nobody else in the house that night aside from Riddle and The Potters, and it had been pitifully easy to trace back the stories and interviews in books back to the issues of The Prophet, and spot the various hints and tips that came from Albus Dumbledore along with a few that came from the Hogwarts grounds keeper as well.

The undeniable fact was, James Potter had taken Hogwarts and driven Albus Dumbledore from the castle in a single act, it was painfully clear that Cornelius Fudge had been driven to Amelia Bones, where he was seeing her for advice more and more now, where he would have come to him in the past, and if the rumours of Potter and Bones being involved together were true, then it was entirely likely that the Bones witch would push for the Potter seat on the Wizengamot to be recognised at last, and given Potter's current popularity, their alliance would sweep the Wizengamot seats without opposition.

Standing against the Potters seemed to be a very certain way of losing everything and ending their family line rather fatally, and Malfoy's didn't lose.

He'd already penned back a parchment to Draco informing him that he expected him to stay within the new rules of the school and to moderate his behaviour to fit in with the new leading factions of the school. Without Severus there to save Draco from his own brash actions and statements, he highly doubted that Draco would last a month if he didn't learn to keep his opinions to himself outside of the private Slytherin common room.

He'd also made sure that Draco knew, in no uncertain terms, that he was not to antagonise the young Potter or any of his associates, though given that he'd heard from several sources now that Harry Potter had been sorted into Hufflepuff, he doubted Draco would ever deign to give him any attention, positive or negative, unless something made him stand out.

It was a rather decisive letter, quite literally changing the course of his family from where they'd sided on the dark before, to siding with the Potters and the light faction this time, but to secure his family's future and be recognised for choosing the right path, he was almost certain that he was
making the right choice.

With Tom Riddle back, he had no doubt that he would return for the journal at some point. The thing was steeped in dark magics, and he was certain that whatever it was, Tom Riddle would want it back. Just having it in his manor would be a threat to his family, like a Sword of Damocles hanging over them waiting to fall.

Steeling himself he enjoyed a savoury mouthful of the blood wine before he folded the parchment up and sealed it with a wax stamp, flicking his wand towards the window and opening it for his eagle owl to fly in and onto his perch as he was trained to do.

"For Draco." Lucius said firmly, blowing on the wax stamp to cool it gently before giving to the owl and letting it fly off out of the window.

He was set on his path now, and he was certain it wouldn't be an easy one, but it was one he would take to ensure the future of his family. Now all he had to do was to decide what to do with the vile book Tom Riddle had left in his keeping, and how to get it to Potter or his alliance so they could take care of it.

Taking a deep breath he folded the book up in a thick wrap of parchment, idly glaring down at the name inscribed in gold lettering across the front of the book where he could read T. M. Riddle, before he covered it up with a disgusted sneer and made his way down to the main parlour of the manor to find his wife.

He would need her family connections for this, and he could only hope that his wife's cousin would be open to her approach and would put them in touch with Potter, because this was going to be even more dangerous if they burned bridges on both sides before the war had even started.

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**Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry**  
**Highlands of Scotland**

"That was wicked!" Harry grinned aloud as he came through into the Hufflepuff common room alongside Susan.

After a double charms lesson last thing in the day, he was still hyped up after everything he'd been taught today and had utterly and completely fallen in love with Hogwarts.

"Harry right?"

Harry turned as he looked around the common room, wondering who it was that was calling out to him.

"Cedric," Cedric introduced himself, standing up and coming over with his hand open to shake Harry's. "I had your dad last thing for Defence." He explained with a smile.

"Oh right," Harry nodded, shaking the hand that was offered and doing his best to ignore the dreamy eyed stare that Susan was giving to Cedric.

"He was pretty awesome, shields and patronus on our first day, that's pretty hard core casting," Cedric explained with a wide smile. "He really knows his stuff, I've never seen anyone that can cast a patronus silently like that."
"He's cool," Harry nodded with a grin.

"He's an animagus too right? A lion?" Cedric asked curiously.

"Uhuh," Harry nodded in confirmation. "My godfather is too, he's a big black dog. They both said they'll teach me when I get a bit older."

"That's really advanced transfiguration, you'll have to show us all when you get through with it." Cedric grinned over. "I just thought I'd come and say hi, see how you're settling in."

"I'm fine," Harry smiled back, he was actually having a lot of fun so far and every lesson had been something new and exciting to learn.

"Great, let me know if you need anything alright? I know how it is, settling in to a new place, but we're all pretty friendly here, so if anyone ever needs any help, we're all here together alright?" Cedric explained.

"Sure," Harry smiled with a nod. "Thanks."

"Anytime, that goes for you too Sue, and all the other first years too." Cedric said, giving Susan one of his smiles as well. "We're planning out study groups to start next week, so let me know if you want to sit in on any of them alright?"

"Alright," Harry quickly agreed, more than happy to have more friends he could chat with and study alongside.

"Have fun," Cedric smiled as he headed back to his group by the couches and returned to his quidditch planning for the upcoming week's tryout.

"I can't believe he was talking to you like that!" Susan breathed out, staring at Harry in awe. "Cedric's the Hufflepuff seeker on the quidditch team, he's a sure fit for captain next year or the year after."

"Oh!" Harry grinned, looking over at Cedric in a new light now with that information. "I wanted to play seeker, but if he's already got the position..." He trailed off with a frown. "Maybe I should try out for chaser or something else?"

"He's really good," Susan nodded firmly. "You should try out anyway though, maybe Cedric will swap out being seeker so you can get some games in for when he finishes school?"

"Maybe," Harry nodded thoughtfully, pondering what to do about the whole quidditch situation. He'd been excited to play ever since his older self had told him about the game and how good he was going to be at it, but since he hadn't even played a match yet, he had absolutely no idea if it was something he wanted to do or not.

"Can you help me with that levitation charm?" Susan asked hopefully. "You were the only one in our class to get it right."

"Sure," Harry grinned, nodding to a table and chairs in the corner of the common room where they could practice before he led the way over. "Are you having trouble with the spell or the wand part?" He asked, dropping into one of the chairs and waiting for Susan to sit down next to him.

"Um, both?" Susan asked with a small grin.

"Alright," Harry grinned, bringing out his wand and sliding over a quill to practice with. "The wand
Potter Manor
Honley

"Sirius?" James called out as he came through the floo, happy to drop his bag and coat on the leather couch for now as he looked around the manor for any signs of life.

"In the kitchen."

James shrugged at that, wandering through to find Sirius sat at the kitchen table wearing the same Pink Floyd t-shirt he'd bought him nearly a week ago now. "You alright?" He asked, noticing Sirius slightly pale expression.

"In the pot on the oven," Sirius said, sounding far more serious than James had ever heard before.

Looking around he spotted the large saucepan on the hob with a lid on it, though strangely the hob wasn't lit, leaving the pan just sat there. "Alright?" James asked, heading over curiously and lifting the lid of the pot to peer inside before quickly slamming it back down when he recognised Salazar Slytherin's locket inside. "You got the damn thing on your own?" He demanded, spinning around to face Sirius. "How long did you have it on you for?"

"A few hours," Sirius admitted with a groan. "I thought dementors were bad, that thing... that's pure evil." He said with a grunt towards the pot in question.

"It's a piece of Voldemort's soul, it's not exactly kittens and marshmallows." James commented with a smirk. "Worst part is, chocolate doesn't help with this thing either."

"I noticed," Sirius grumbled. "I just wanted to be helpful, I thought I could handle it."

"Well, consider it handled." James grinned over. "We can take it out back and torch it tonight if you want?"

"Merlin yes!" Sirius practically foamed at the mouth at the thought. "I can't stand even having that thing in the manor, I thought shoving it in a pot would help but..."

"It just gets creepier the longer it's around," James nodded. "I know how it is, these things get inside you, twist you up." He said with a reassuring smile. "Come on, lets get rid of it." He grinned, heading back over to the pot and grabbing it with both hands, more than happy to sacrifice the entire pot to fiendfyre so he wouldn't have to touch the locket at all himself.

"I wanted... I wanted to destroy it for you." Sirius explained as he followed James out of the kitchen and onto the grounds of the manor. "But..."

"Sirius, it's fine, really." James nodded reassuringly. "Seriously, you got the thing, that's a huge thing for me." He said with a proud smile.

"I didn't think I could cast fiendfyre, not and control it," Sirius admitted with a sigh as he followed James down through the grasslands around the manor. "Not without burning down everything around me anyway."

"I've got this," James grinned as they approached a carefully dug out hole.
"Is... is that..." Sirius trailed off, looking down the hole at the molten scrap metal left over at the bottom.

"Ravenclaw's Tiara, Diadem? Whatever they're calling it?" James asked, then nodded when Sirius looked at him. "Or whatever's left of it." He explained with a shrug. "And it's about to be joined with all this." He grinned as he dropped the entire pot down the hole, listening for it to hit the bottom and collide with the twisted and scorched metal chunks that were already down there.

"Not a great way to end your first day teaching, huh?" Sirius asked with a guilty expression.

"Are you kidding?" James grinned over. "Ending the day by torching a piece of Voldemort's soul? I wish every day could end like this!" He said with a wide grin, flicking his wand out and aiming it down the hole before twisting his wand in the erratic movements needed to cast fiendfyre and incanting aloud, sending a twisting torrent of fire down the hole that blazed out of his wand with a backwash of heat that made both him and Sirius stumble back.

"I've got this, I've got this!" James muttered, gritting his teeth as he fought with his will against the fire's will, bending it under his control as he forced the fiendfyre to loop around on itself, burning in a ball of incandescent rage at the bottom of the pit until it tore through the pan and into Slytherin's locket itself and released the evil within.

The screech of rage that tore out of the hole was unholy as the fiendfyre ripped into the soul fragment housed within the locket, releasing the piece of Voldemort's soul before enveloping it entirely and burning away at it with unimaginable heat.

James simply stood there with his jaw set, holding his wand down and controlling the fiendfyre with a pure force of will as he directed it to incinerate Slytherin's locket down until it was nothing more than a molten pile of slag.

It was several minutes later that Sirius put his hand on James shoulder, gently pulling his attention away from the barely contained inferno before them, and nodded slowly with a smile on his face. "I think you got it." He said with a small smirk, causing James to snort out a breath of laughter.

"Yeah," James admitted, twisting his wand counter clockwise and flicking it up, banishing the fiendfyre back to wherever it came from and leaving the hole in the ground smoking and scorched even more than it had been already.

"You know, actually, I think that counted as overkill." Sirius admitted as he took a step closer to look down into the hole, satisfied that he couldn't feel the demented presence of the evil inside the locket any longer.

"It was a chunk of Voldemort's soul, there's no such thing as overkill, only 'has it been wiped from the face of the Earth yet?'" James commented with a grin.

"I can get on board with that," Sirius nodded thoughtfully, quickly coming to agree with that though entirely as he stared down into the smoking hole with a satisfied grin on his face. "How was school then?" He asked with a smirk, looking up at James again.

"Andromeda was asking after you," James mused aloud, watching Sirius for a reaction.

"Romi?" Sirius blinked, surprised at that. "What's she doing at Hogwarts?" He asked, trying to figure out what was going on.

"I got her the job there, they needed a potions mistress, so I suggested to Minerva that she might like the job." James explained with a shrug. "She took it." He added with a simple grin.
"Romi's teaching at Hogwarts?" Sirius asked, blinking at that strange pronouncement. "She took Snivellius' position?" He asked with a grin.

"Yup," James grinned back, popping the 'p' as he spoke.

"I hadn't... I hadn't even thought about her after... how is she?" Sirius asked, stumbling over his words.

"Dealing with an eighteen year old daughter who wants to join the Aurors and fight Voldemort," James shrugged. "You know, the usual." He explained with a grin.

"The usual for you," Sirius muttered, rolling his eyes. "Merlin, Dora, I... she was barely learning to fly when you were born." He admitted, lost in his memories of that more innocent time before he'd lost a decade of his life to Azkaban.

"Apparently Andromeda and Tonks had an argument about her joining the Aurors now that everyone knows Voldemort's back." James pointed out, gesturing for them both to head back towards the manor. "I bet you can guess how that turned out."

"Probably about the same as my parents telling me I should demand a resorting and get into Slytherin like a proper pure blood Black would." Sirius snorted in amusement, following James back towards the manor. "What happened to her? You know, in your time?"

"Died, in the battle of Hogwarts." James said sombrily.

"Who did it?" Sirius demanded, stepping forward to stand in front of James so he couldn't walk past him. "Who killed her?"

"Bellatrix." James said simply, watching the truth wash over Sirius.

"I'll kill the bitch!" Sirius snarled out.

"She's in Azkaban," James pointed out. "And I've got no plans of letting Voldemort break all of his lunatics out this time around, so she can stay in there and rot." He said bluntly.

"And if she breaks out?" Sirius demanded.

"Then we put her down like a dog, wait, no, not..." James sighed, ruffling his hair. "You know what I mean." He grinned across to Sirius.

"Yeah," Sirius nodded back. "She's not getting anywhere near little Dora." He vowed aloud. "She's one of the only few family members I've got that I can stand." He explained with a grimace as he thought about the rest of the Black family.

"Get in touch with Andromeda, meet up with them both, go drinking, whatever." James shrugged. "Maybe she'll be your wingman and set you up with some dates."

"Hey, yeah, yeah!" Sirius grinned at the thought. "I'll owl Romi tonight!" He said with an excited little bounce in his step. "What about you and Amelia? Things still going great there?" He asked, backing away so they could continue on into the manor properly.

"Yeah, great, I think." James frowned, ruffling his hair. "Actually, and serious talk time OK? I need some of this pure blood bollocks explained to me here, so no jokes alright?"

"Alright Junior," Sirius frowned, noticing the confused look that was staring at him. "What's
happened?"

"What's the deal with all this line continuance stuff and all that crap?" James asked, leading Sirius into the kitchen so he could grab a butterbeer.

Sirius whistled as he frowned thoughtfully. "Amelia talked to you about that stuff then?" He asked, following James through and accepting a butterbeer himself before casting a quick cooling charm over it and flipping off the lid. "For her?"

"For her and Susan," James nodded thoughtfully, following Sirius idea of a cooling charm on his butterbeer. "She said that if we got married, she wouldn't be able to take the Potter name because of what it'd do to Susan."

"She's right," Sirius nodded, swallowing a mouthful of his butterbeer. "I know you didn't grow up with all the family traditions and all this stuff, but it's important to a lot of families out there, and sounds like it's important to Amelia if she's bringing it up with you now. It's probably been on her mind since you two got together, so she'll want to know if you're on board with it before you two take the next step."

"Alright, fill me in." James nodded, leaning against the counter and enjoying a deep draught from the bottle he was holding.

"What exactly did Amelia say she was thinking about?" Sirius prompted curiously. "There's a lot of these crappy traditions, literally I had it shoved down my throat for years, so narrowing it down might help."

"No jokes?" James warned, pointing the neck of the butterbeer towards Sirius until he held up his hands in surrender. "She was talking about a three way marriage."

"It happens," Sirius nodded. "I'm assuming she's got someone in mind since she's the one bringing this up with you and not the other way around." He explained with a shrug when James looked at him. "Normally it's the wizard trying to get two witches on the go at the same time, normally ends up getting hexed silly for it, so since she's the one that brought it up, I figure she's already thought this all through."

"Julia Greengrass." James explained with a sigh. "She was explaining that Julia wants the Greengrass name to die out because of something her father-in-law did, it was her husbands plan as well. Something about Grindelwald and family honour, I didn't really get the gist of much of it."

"Greengrass is a sacred twenty eight, that's going to piss off a hell of a lot of people." Sirius pointed out.

"I really couldn't give less of a shit," James grunted dismissively, enjoying another long pull of his butterbeer. "She said Julia would take the Potter name, and she'd still be a Bones?"

"That's how it'd work," Sirius nodded in agreement. "So when you had kids with them, Julia would give birth to Potters, and Amelia would give birth to Bones'... Boneses? Bones, I was right the first time." He said, correcting himself. "It's all about family lines, making sure the family name continues on to the next generation."

"Isn't it weird though? A three person marriage?" James asked curiously.

"Not really," Sirius shrugged. "I've seen a few of them, as long as the three are all alright with it, who am I to judge?" He asked. "Just like turning out to be a wizards wizard or whatever else anyone wants to be into. It's their thing, why should I care?" He explained. "Got to remember, a lot
of families are still getting over the last time Voldemort started his war. Securing the blood lines would be a major thing, especially for the old families like the Bones and Potter lines that are nearly extinct now because of him."

"Wizards wiz.... ah," James nodded, grasping onto what that phrase meant pretty quickly. "So it's normal then?"

"Normal enough," Sirius nodded. "It'd probably improve your popularity with the traditional families as well, they all go in for that sort of stuff you know." He explained, holding up his hand when he saw he was about to be interrupted. "I know you couldn't care less about what they think, but it's something you're going to have to keep in mind Junior, if not for you, then for Amelia."

"Fine," James groused, thinking about what Sirius had said.

"The Greengrasses and Bones families are pretty old, not as old as the Potter's, but they're both Sacred Twenty Eight, the pure blood families will go nuts for you doing your part to ensure the lines are continued, even if Greengrass becomes a Potter." Sirius pointed out. "It's been a while since I read anything about the old families, but I'm pretty sure the Greengrasses emigrated here from Europe somewhere in the early eighteen hundreds, northern I think but don't quote me on that. I only remember the name because it stood out to me, they bought their way onto the Sacred Twenty Eight because they were related to some royal family in Europe. Pretty much everyone knows it was a Nott that wrote the list anyway, so he just took bribes from any of his friends to put them on the list and give them something else to brag about."

"I just wanted to know if it was a normal thing or not," James explained with a shrug. "I didn't grow up with this stuff and never really paid attention to it, so..." He trailed off.

"If Amelia and Julia are in to it, I'd say go for it." Sirius explained, enjoying a mouthful of the cold butterbeer. "Just promise you'll have some kids of your own so I can be a proper godfather around this time?" He asked with a hopeful grin.

James snorted with laughter at that, shaking his head at the thought. "Not until we've taken care of Voldemort." He said firmly. "No way am I even thinking about a family while snakeface is out there."

"That's fair," Sirius nodded at that. "You never thought of a family before? You know, before you ended up back here?"

"Not really," James admitted. "Maybe, maybe once, but it never happened."

"That muggle-born girl right?" Sirius asked, nodding when James nodded back at him. "Maybe Harry will get it right with her this time around." He said with a smile. "I know it's not the same, but if Amelia makes you happy, Julia too for that matter." He added with a smirk.

"Yeah, I know." James smiled back. "I'm not hung up on her, I let her go a long time ago." He admitted with a sad smile. "Just one of those things you think about, you know? What could have been? What if?"

"Yeah," Sirius nodded back as he drank from his cool bottle. "I had someone like that, before... before." He said solemnly. "Gideon Prewett." He explained at the curious glance. "He was in Gryffindor two years above us, friends with Remus, barely gave me the time of day through Hogwarts. When he came out, his parents pretty much disowned him as well, so we had that in common to start with."
"Wait, he?" James blinked, visibly surprised by this revelation. "You're gay?" He asked in shock.

"I... I didn't tell you in the future?" Sirius blanched. He'd assumed with all of the future knowledge at his disposal, that something like this would have come up at least once in their talks.

"No," James snorted, shaking his head at that. "No, sorry, that... that just surprised me." He explained with a laugh. "It doesn't matter though, not to me anyway, it just... huh, it just wasn't something you ever mentioned before."

"Guess I must have been waiting to find the right time to talk to you about it, but then..." Sirius grimaced, remembering he'd apparently died only a short time after finding Harry in his future, frowning to himself at how he'd put his foot in it so bluntly there. "One of the reasons mummy dearest blasted me off the family tree. I kept ignoring her stupid matchmaking plans to get me paired off with a pure blood witch and keep the family going." He explained.

"Getting sorted into Gryffindor was one thing, but telling them I was gay and didn't want to settle down with a witch and raise the next generation of Black idiots to be brainwashed into their pure blood nonsense?" He explained with a snort before turning to look up again at those curious green eyes. "They tried to curse it out of me enough times, ordering me to just use love potions and do what the family expected, enough that I finally got angry enough to start cursing back, that's when your dad's parents took me in." He explained with a fond smile.

"With how everyone looks at gay wizards, you'd think we had the plague or something. Your dad helped me keep up the womanising wizard reputation, kept everyone from figuring it out." He explained with a sad smile as he thought back to all the adventures he'd had with James. "You know your mum used to think me and James were a couple until he convinced her he was serious about asking her out. You really don't care?"

"Not in the least," James shrugged. "Like you said, whatever makes you happy. I knew your parents were bigoted arseholes anyway, so hearing they kicked you out because you were gay? Not exactly the biggest surprise." He explained, draining a mouthful of his butterbeer. "What happened?" he asked. "With, Gideon was it?" He asked curiously.

"He was killed, a few months before Prongs and Lily." Sirius explained with a pained expression on his face. "Dolohov and his gang of bastards, they wiped out practically his entire family." He said softly. "His twin brother, his parents, every last one of them."

"He was your someone special?" James asked.

"We were together, had been since just before Prongs wedding." Sirius nodded, wiping some tears from his eyes. "Things... things were going good, but with the war and everything..."

"Shit," James breathed out, thinking how tough that must have been.

"Yeah, he was my one." Sirius admitted. "The Death Eaters took that from me." He said softly.

"But we have to move on," James nodded. "Survive, live and move past it. It's what they'd want us to do." He said, knowing full well it's what Hermione would want him to do if she knew the situation he was in right now.

Sirius snorted at that, laughing as the tears continued to fall down his face. "He'd curse me silly for staying hung up on him this long after... after his funeral."

"Mine would too," James laughed back, firmly remembering all the times Hermione had slapped his shoulder or punched him for doing something stupid.
"You keep hold of Amelia, she's a good one for you." Sirius smiled up, wiping the tears from his face. "Julia too if you think you can handle the two of them." He added on with a snort of laughter.

"I think we need more alcohol than this for this sort of night," James commented, finishing off his butterbeer and heading to the cupboard for the bottle of firewhiskey he knew was inside. "Might as well do it properly." He announced, holding up the bottle for Sirius to see.

"You read my mind," Sirius grinned at that, grabbing two tumblers from the shelf of glasses.

"Go out with Tonks, have a few drinks, get her to introduce you to some wizards." James ordered, pouring out healthy measures of firewhiskey into each of the glasses. "You can't just keep hanging on to the past Sirius. I learnt that the hard way, and trust me, coming from me, that's saying something."

"I never imagined I'd be having this sort of conversation with you," Sirius admitted, sitting down at the kitchen table and snatching up one of the drinks. "You're not even supposed to be old enough to drink this shit for another six years."

"Get over it," James groused, lifting up his own glass of firewhiskey. "To moving on." He toasted aloud, waiting for Sirius to do the same.

"Moving on." Sirius intoned, clashing his glass against James's before downing the shot and wincing at the hard burning liquid that slipped down his throat.

Swallowing his own firewhiskey James smiled over, pouring out another shot as he sat down at the table with his godfather and settled in for their first adult drink together while talking about the witches and wizards they'd loved.
4th September

Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry
Highlands of Scotland

James groaned to himself as he stumbled through the corridors of Hogwarts towards his defence classroom, working their way through an entire bottle of firewhiskey last night had seemed like a good idea at the time, and had oddly really brought him closer to Sirius with their drunken discussions, but he was definitely regretting it this morning with a hangover that even a recovery potion hadn't completely banished from his brain and a mouth that still felt like carpet after a scouring charm and two mugs of coffee.

His head was already thumping as he approached the defence classroom, and the shouted arguments he could hear from inside weren't improving his disposition one bit.

As he approached the doorway he stopped and listened for a moment, growling as he heard the usual pure blood rhetoric bullshit coming from a few students who were shouting at other students and being shouted back at equally as loud.

Making the easy decision he shifted down into his lion form, stalking into the doorway as Leo and letting out a roar that silenced the room more effectively than a canon-blast charm would have done, before he slowly padded into the room and shifted back into his normal body.

"Right then, I assume I have everyone's attention now?" He demanded, stalking through the classroom to the front while the various third year students scattered around to find their seats.

Turning around he grimaced, recognising the third year Gryffindor Slytherin class as his eyes locked onto the Weasley twins sat on the Gryffindor side of the classroom.

"I was going to start shields and the patronus charm today, but it appears you all have something you'd rather talk about." He said firmly, taking off his trench-coat and tossing it over the his chair so he could lean on his desk comfortably in just his faded jeans and t-shirt.

"Pure blood supremacy, so, that's today's topic then?" He asked, looking around the classroom as more than a few of the students fidgeted at their argument being overhead by him. "Lets make this simple. No detentions, no points taken. If you believe in the pure blood rhetoric, go to that side of the classroom." He said, indicating to the Slytherin side. "If you believe it's a lie, go to that side of the classroom." He said, indicating the Gryffindor side. "If you're neutral or simply don't give a toss, stay in the middle."

He waited for a few moments, simply sitting on his desk in silence as the students stared at him before he nodded. "I'm serious, go on, pick your side. There'll be no detention or points taken."
He said simply. "If you're proud enough to shout at each other over it, you shouldn't have any problem just standing up and letting everyone see what side you're on."

To no surprise, the Weasley Twins were the first to stand up along with Lee, quickly moving to the far wall of the Gryffindor side with quite a few other Gryffindors. Most of the Slytherins shuffled over to their wall, leaving a smattering of Slytherins and Gryffindors stuck in the middle of the classroom being glared at from both sides.

"Right, you're right." James said, flicking his wand towards the Gryffindor wall. "And you're right." He said, much to everyone's confusion as he pointed to the Slytherin wall.

"We can't both be right!" One of the third year Slytherins argued.

"Why not?" James asked, fixing the Slytherin with a pointed look. "Look, do any of you lot even know where the pure blood supremacy movement came from?" He asked, looking around the class, then sighing when nobody raised their hands. "It was around long before Voldemort, he just picked it up and used it to get people to fight for him, but it's been around for centuries. So you're all arguing and picking a side when you don't even know what the fight is about?" He asked with a raised eyebrow.

"What's it about then?" The Weasley twins asked in tandem.

"Magic," James said simply, moving around to lean against his desk comfortably. "Magic is in your blood, we all know that, it's a basic fact of life. It's why blood rituals are so powerful, and why a wizard and a witch will have a magical child rather than a muggle child." He explained simply. "Magic is in the blood, but also, there are specific magical abilities that are passed down in the blood too." He explained, looking back to the class who were paying rapt attention to him now.

"Sit down, stand, get comfortable, whatever you want." James laughed, seeing how they were all still stood in formation against their chosen walls in the classroom.

"What do you mean, magical abilities?" One of the Gryffindor girls asked curiously as she moved back to her desk.

"There's quite a few magical attributes that are passed down along blood lines, father or mother to child." James explained, flicking his wand in the air and writing out 'Parseltongue' in flaming letters for them all to see. "Parseltongue for example, being able to talk to snakes, is passed down through the blood line, it's a magical language, you can't learn it if it's not in your blood." He explained, pointing up to the flaming writing that was just hanging in the air. "Salazar Slytherin was a famous Parseltongue, and if you believe the stories, so was Merlin, another Slytherin." He explained bluntly, seeing the shock register on the Gryffindor students faces.

"Merlin was a Slytherin?" The Weasley twins whispered in shock while the Slytherin side sat up a bit more proudly at that information.

"It's in the history books if you pay attention, though with Binns teaching, I doubt you ever would. You two would probably pay more attention to his chocolate frog card, I'm pretty sure it's on there too." James commented offhand. "Everyone still consider Binns' class as an afternoon nap time?" He asked with a grin, causing the class to laugh along with him in confirmation.

"Alright, here's another one. Metamorphmagus, quite a famous one." He explained, flicking his wand to the air again and causing 'Metamorphmagus' to appear in fiery writing underneath Parseltongue. "This is a trait that lets anyone change their body whenever they want, like personal
wandless transfiguration. They could disguise themselves as anyone, make themselves look however they want. Hair, eyes, body, everything, right down to their voices. There's no detection spell that shows it up, it's flawless and with practice, even better than Polyjuice."

"Wicked!" The Weasley twins breathed out in awe.

"Again, it's passed down through the bloodlines." James pointed out. "The Black Family used to infamous for this trait, I have a minor version of it but never learnt to control it, thanks to one of my ancestors being married to a Black centuries ago. I can grow my hair back quickly, happened a few times growing up, but I never got the hang of it. The Potter messy hair curse is probably part of that actually, another thing for me to blame on the Black's." He explained with a snort of laughter. "For all we know, the Weasley's could have that trait too." He explained, pointing to the Weasley twins with his wand. "Their ancestor married a Black as well around the same time." He explained with a laugh at the horrified looks everyone was giving the twins. "Yeah, those two as metamorphmagus? I apologise now for any nightmares or paranoia that's going to give you lot." He grinned as the Gryffindor contingent of the class laughed openly at that.

"We're related to the Blacks?" The Weasley twins whispered to each other, the shock clear on their faces.

"Precognition, prophecies, being a seer, that's a bloodline gift." He explained, flicking his wand and writing 'seer' out too. "Veela magic, only passed down through female Veela bloodlines, there's another." He flicked his wand again. "Now we get to the negatives. Maledictions, bloodline curses that are passed down through the families for centuries. That one could wipe out an entire blood line in only two or three generations, it's all passed on through the blood just like the infamous Weasley hair." He explained, sobering up the class quickly and making a few of them laugh at the same time. "Magic is passed through blood, and pure blood supremacists want to keep these blood line gifts purely in their families, marrying into their bloodlines to preserve and strengthen the gift. They think that because those gifts run in pure blood families, it makes them better, superior in magic to those that don't, like muggle-borns."

"So we're right!" The Slytherin third year crowed happily at that proof.

"Like I said, these gifts," He indicated to the flaming writing with his wand. "Are only passed down through the blood lines. Old and pure blood families are known for these gifts, and treat them as being more precious than all the gold in their vaults. That's one of the reasons why family inheritance laws are always about the sons, not the daughters. They want pure blood sons to carry on the family name, and keep these magical traits linked to their family, not married out into another family name."

"But you said we were right too?" One of the Gryffindors asked.

"There's one metamorphmagus in England right now, only one, the daughter of Andromeda Tonks, your potions teacher, or Andromeda Black as she used to be known." James explained, linking back to the Black family so everyone would see what he was talking about. "That metamorphmagus? She's a half blood." He said bluntly, dropping the truth on everyone like an anvil. "There's two people in this school right now that I know of that can speak Parsel Tongue, neither of them are in Slytherin, and if we include Voldemort as a Parsel Tongue, all three are half blood." He explained, watching as the entire Slytherin side stared at him in shock and a little bit of horror at those facts. "Those traits have been dormant in pure blood families for decades, but as soon as there's a half blood child with a muggle-born lineage?" He snapped his fingers and grinned, destroying the pure blood argument in one easy step.

"There's the truth," He explained firmly. "The Pure Blood's know about these magical traits, and
they know that having a child with someone who has the same trait, would pass it on for certain to their child, keeping their blood line strong and magical." He explained, gesturing around the classroom. "The muggle-borns and anyone with a modern muggle education know that marrying, or more specifically, having a child with someone too close to your own bloodline, leads to deformities and genetic mutations which leads to problems."

"Mutations?" One of the Slytherins asked, not familiar with the word.

"Squibs." James explained bluntly, causing quite a few of the Slytherin students to look at him in horror. "That's what the Pure Blood Wars are all about. Magic and power, that's it, end of story. It diversified down the line, with some pure bloods trying to claim that muggle-borns were stealing their magic by marrying into pure families and giving birth to children that had these gifts, it's all a crock of shit of course, they're just using those lies to try and con people into following them because the truth doesn't back up what they want it to. When it comes right down to it, it's about power, and controlling the magic passed on down the blood lines. Controlling magic, controlling power, and making yourself feel more important than anyone else."

He happily wriggled up to sit on his desk properly after saying that, staring out at the classroom and watching as everyone understood what he was saying. "The pure blood's think the muggle-born's don't care about traditions or their world? That's a pile of bullshit, right there. Anyone with a half a brain should be able to see that. They don't know about the pure blood traditions or customs, they've never been taught them, there's no books about them, no classes to help them. Then the pure bloods blame them for not knowing these traditions when there's no way for them to have known them in the first place." He explained, ruffling his hair in frustration.

"If you want to believe you're better than other people because you're a pure blood wizard or witch? That's your choice, I honestly couldn't care less what you believe." James explained bluntly. "But if you think that gives you the right to dictate what other people do with their lives? To lord over them, control them, order them around and tell them what they can and can't do with their lives? Treat them as less than you? Then I'll be there with them, stood in their defence every step of the way, and I'll fight for them with every curse I've got." He said the last firmly, making sure every eye in the classroom was staring at him.

"Power is power, these blood line gifts aside and the others like them," He said, flicking his thumb to the flaming writing that was still hanging in the air. "Magical power comes from you, from your soul and your blood. Your magic, nobody else's." He said firmly. "I knew a half-blood wizard who cast a full corporeal patronus in his third year to drive off a swarm of Dementors. Third year." He asked, happily talking about himself. "Can any of you?" He asked, waving around the classroom to indicate them all with a grin. "The smartest witch I ever knew was a muggle-born witch, she earned more outstanding NEWT's than any pure blood in our entire year, but she was still looked down on just because of her blood."

"My godfather was an animagus by fourth year, so was my father." James continued on in the silence. "Casting a patronus, learning to become an animagus, anyone can do these things. It's down to you, your magic, your power. It's your responsibility to become the best wizard or witch you can be, not to live up to some pure blood bullshit that doesn't even affect you if you don't have one of their precious blood line gifts, but to harness that power because it's yours, nobody else's." He said firmly, flicking his open hand towards the flaming writing and dismissing it casually.

"Can you cast a patronus?" The Weasley twins asked together in glee.

Silently flicking his wand towards the middle of the classroom he grinned as Prongs made his entrance, silently ghosting through the classroom and moving around the shocked faces as he
prowled around to protect the room.

"Wicked!" The twins breathed out.

"That's Prongs," James grinned back, spotting the shocked recognition that fluttered over the Weasley twins faces. "The Patronus charm is the only charm that will defend you from dementors, also, it just looks plain cool." He added with a laugh. "It's takes a lot of power, but it's worth it to learn, if only to stop you from having your soul sucked out."

None of the class could disagree with that comment, so they all nodded along silently in agreement.

"Power, it's all about power." James explained simply as his patronus faded away. "Voldemort, the pure blood dark lord?" He asked with a snort of amusement. "You all heard me tell everyone he's a half blood in the great hall, he was there, no denial, nothing. He was a half blood with a muggle father, but he rose to power by surrounding himself with pure bloods because they all believed he was a powerful pure blood just because he had one of those bloodline gifts. Parseltongue." He explained. "He's powerful, but not because of his blood or that gift of his. He's powerful because he worked at it, he trained, learnt magic that nobody else had bothered to learn and mastered curses that other people didn't want to. That's where his power comes from, not his blood, not his Parseltongue lineage, but from knowledge, from books." He explained, pointing to the various books scattered around the room.

"Do you all know why Death Eaters can't cast a patronus?" He asked, looking around the room. "Hate, it's that simple." He explained bluntly. "To cast a patronus you've got to envelop yourself in happiness, in love, it's the exact opposite to the killing curse that's fed by hate and anger. If you can't feel love, then all that negative emotion will feed into the patronus and eat you alive. Raczidian was a dark wizard about six hundred years ago, he tried to cast a patronus in an act of evil, the spell literally ate him alive with maggots." He explained with a grimace, noting how the class started whispering amongst themselves at that. "You've heard people say that hate will eat you alive? With magic, that's a fact of life, not just a saying."

"That's why a lot of people believe the ability to cast a patronus charm works as a sort of judge, they believe only truly good people can cast one. It's a pile of dragon shit, as I've known some truly vile people that can cast it as well, but they must have at least been able to love and had their own happy memories, regardless of how horrible they were, or they wouldn't have been able to."

"Magic is directly linked to your emotions, that's why accidental magic happens when you were younger when you were angry or upset." He explained. "The patronus relies on happiness and love. The killing curse? Anger and hate. Everything inside you changes how you use your magic, how that magic responds to what you're trying to do."

"So, now that we've answered the Pure Blood conundrum, shall we get on with shields? Or do you want to start hexing each other and shouting again now that you all know the truth?" James asked, staring around the classroom. "Right then, shields." He grinned when nobody objected.

To both his pleasure and surprise, the rest of the double lesson went surprisingly well. Both the Slytherin and Gryffindor contingents settled down after their little discussion, and both sides seemed to be happy to get on with learning the shield charm to the best of their abilities.

Though he didn't quite get on to getting them to learning the patronus charm, by the end of the class, everyone in the room was casting respectable shields that could stand up to jinxes, hexes and the occasional curse that he tested against them, so for now, he was marking down that lesson as a success in his book and was happy to have a period without any students next before lunch so that
he could recover from this hellish hangover and hopefully settle back into a normal existence for the rest of the day.

"Professor Potter?"

"Hmm?" James looked up curiously, having thought he was alone in the classroom as everyone filed out as the bell chimed. "The infamous Weasley twins." He smiled over, noting the two still stood in the classroom. "Ah, you have something of mine?" He asked with a grin, spotting the marauders map that one of the twins was gingerly hiding behind his back.

"We filched it from Filtch in first year," The twin with the map admitted, holding out the map honourably. "You're really Prongs?"

"Sirius Black was Padfoot." James explained, sidestepping that question for now. "Peter Pettigrew was Wormtail." He explained, noting their look of disgust at that name.

"The betrayer!" The twins hissed out in tandem.

"That's him," James laughed, taking the map from the twins. "I'd actually forgotten all about this really." He admitted with a grin.

"Then we return it to you, oh Lord Prongs." The twins grinned, bowing graciously as James held up the map and laughed at their antics.

"How are you two doing anyway?" James grinned, leaning back against his desk and sitting on it comfortably. "Still driving Molly mad? Planning your joke shop yet?" He asked with a smirk.

"Professor Prongs knows all!" One of the twins whispered in awe to the other.

"Speak to Andr... Professor Tonks, potions." James pointed out, grinning at their faces. "You want to learn potions? Master how to mix up sweets and ideas for pranks? Potions is where you're going to learn all of that." He explained with a smile. "I know you two didn't learn much under Snape, but he's gone now, so I don't want to see either of you two faking your grades, alright?" He asked, fixing the two of them with a single look. "Dumbing your assignments down isn't going to fool anyone, except from maybe your mother." He explained with a shrug.

"How... how do you know?" The other twin asked, both of them looking at him in wide eyed shock.

"Just do it," James laughed, ignoring their question. "Speak to Professor Tonks, learn everything you can, and you two will blast through your OWL's without a problem." He explained with a nod before remembering one of Hermione's rants from his Hogwarts years. "Oh, and stop testing your puking sweets on first years? If McGonagall catches you, you'll be for it, and that'd mean..."

"More Howlers from mum!" Both the twins whispered in horror, shuddering at the thought.

"Go on, get out of here, and when you speak to Professor Tonks, tell her I sent you two to her, and then apologise from me for the inconvenience you two are likely to bring to her classroom." James added with a grin.

"You got it!" Both the twins grinned back happily before dashing out of the classroom, chatting loudly to each other as they ran into the hallway and trying to outdo each other with various theories about how Professor Prongs seemed to know quite literally everything about them and what they had got upto, and more worryingly, about what they had planned.
"Weasleys," James grinned to himself, watching them leave before throwing his trench-coat on and gently sliding the map into his inside pocket alongside his invisibility cloak.

Things were definitely going to be different this time around. The twins wouldn't leave Hogwarts because of Umbridge, he'd make sure of that, and Fred wouldn't die in the final battle, driving George into a drunken depression that lasted the better part of a year.

No, he was going to ensure both twins survived and got their joke shop this time around, and it was going to be better than ever.

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**Defence Against the Dark Arts Office**
**Second Floor**
**Hogwarts**

James smiled to himself as he happily walked through into the Defence office area that Minerva had set aside for him. The portrait entrance led directly into an office area with a wide desk already set up for him, an owl perch by the window, several shelves and book cases full already, along with three other chairs around the room that he guessed were for guests or students when they came to see him.

Shrugging off his dragon-skin coat for now he looked around, spotting the coat hanger on the side wall behind the portrait door before hanging it up there and moving to investigate further into the suite,

Through the door leading out of the office there was a more casual seating area, with two couches and a few matching chairs, a fire place and a window that looked out onto the grounds below. There were a few cabinets here as well, empty currently, but he was guessing they were for more personal things that past Professors didn't want out on display in their office area.

Moving through the lounge he found a comfortable looking bedroom, with a bed that simply looked like someone had taken one of the beds from the Gryffindor dorm room and super sized it beyond king size. It looked heavenly though and the ruby and gold satin sheets were calling to him already.

Poking his head through the door beyond the bedroom he smiled in satisfaction at the bathroom, it was more than large enough to meet his needs, and even included a large sunk in tub that would be easily big enough for two or three people to enjoy, on his own it was spacious enough to be decadent.

"I could get used to this," He grinned to himself as he wandered back to the office, looking around the professional looking area and getting comfortable there. There was already a large fireplace lit over to one side in the residential area of the office, linked to the floo system so he could come and go as needed.

"Yeah, I could definitely get used to this." He said with a smile as he sat down at the desk in the office, putting the Marauders Map aside for now, as he looked around and got comfortable with the room before standing up and heading over to the fireplace in the residential area, tossing some floo powder into the fire and stepping in, calling out 'Potter Manor' before vanishing in a blast of emerald flames.

Appearing in the manor living room he comfortably stepped out of the fire, looking around
curiously to see if he could spot Sirius. "Sirius?" He called out.

"Kitchen, get in here Junior."

James startled at that, walking through to the kitchen and pausing in the doorway, frowning at the sight of Sirius and Amelia sat at the kitchen table together, both with a mug of coffee, and both apparently reading letters that had been left on the table in front of them.

"OK, you two together. I'm worried." He said with a small smirk to show he was kidding.

"You should be," Sirius sighed. "Two owls came this morning, for me." He explained, pointing to one of the pieces of parchment on the table. "Andromeda." He explained before gesturing to the other one. "Narcissa."

"Narcissa Malfoy?" James asked, blinking at that revelation. "Concerned feels about right then." He admitted with a frown.

"I Floo'ed Amelia, figured you'd be at school all day." Sirius explained.

"I've got a free before lunch." James frowned thoughtfully. "Putting Andromeda's letter aside, because I'm guessing that's just catching up and talking about Tonks, Nymphadora I mean?"

"Pretty much," Sirius nodded in confirmation.

"What does Narcissa want?" James asked dubiously.

"To arrange a meeting. Me, her and Lucius." Sirius explained, gesturing for James to take the letter and read it for himself. "I already checked for curses, charms, hexes, jinxes, tracking charms, compulsions, everything I could think of when I recognised the handwriting." He explained as James took the parchment.

"Hmmm," James frowned, reading through the excessively polite and professional letter that somehow seemed to take up the entire piece of parchment without actually saying a damn thing. "Doesn't say why she wants to meet up, no reasons, nothing."

"Cissy was always good at this sort of thing," Sirius nodded. "I'm thinking it's a trap."

"Possibly," Amelia mused, nodding in agreement. "But why for you?" She asked, curiously looking at Sirius now. "Surely they'd want James, not you?" She pointed out.

"Narcissa is a sneaky one, I never actually figured out what side she was really on or what her game was." James pointed out. "But... she saved my life last time around, lying to Voldemort so I could pretend to be dead." He frowned, remembering how the Malfoy's had left the final battle on their own terms instead of siding with Voldemort again when it became clear that practically all of Hogwarts was standing against him. "Lying to Voldemort's face took some serious balls, and Lucius Malfoy took her and Draco out of Hogwarts during the last battle, so everyone knew they weren't siding with Voldemort anymore. Think they're playing their own side?" He mused aloud, looking to Amelia.

"I'd say so," Amelia nodded. "Lucius wouldn't want to be caught supporting Voldemort again, not when you've already shown quite publicly that you can beat him. It'd be like rooting for the losing side when you've already seen the quidditch score." She explained. "He's a pure blood bigot, but he's not an idiot, well, not much of one anyway. He'll want his family to survive, and being linked with Voldemort again would throw his imperius defence into question, and he'd stand to lose everything."
"He almost did last time," James nodded in agreement. "He lost most of his fortune buying off the Wizengamot to keep his family out of Azkaban for their crimes."

"So you think Lucius is trying to hedge his bets this time, so when you defeat Voldemort again, he isn't on the losing team?" Sirius asked, nodding slowly as he mused that over. "I could see that actually. He wouldn't want to be openly seen supporting Voldemort, not after you punched the snot out of him during the sorting ceremony. You made quite the impression with that you know?"

"Thank you," James smirked over.

"You don't... you don't think he came back with you... do you?" Sirius asked, the thought passing over his face as he tried to think about what someone like Malfoy could do with over twenty years of future knowledge at their disposal.

"No," James shook his head quickly at that. "If Malfoy had the same knowledge I had, then he'd have been at the school in the sorting ceremony to side with Voldemort. He'd have stopped your trial or just outright killed you so Draco could claim the family vaults as part of his Black inheritance." He explained. "No, something else is going on here."

"I can't argue with that," Amelia nodded in agreement. "Lucius was honestly shocked when Minister Fudge spoke about Voldemort's return and pushed the vote to remove Dumbledore from the castle. He hadn't known a damn thing about it until he got faced with the fallout of it all, if he'd have known what was coming, he'd have had some hint, but it was a real shock to him to hear about it from Cornelius."

"Alright, so he's not from the future, he's just your every day pure blood idiot then." Sirius said with a small smile. "So, what do we do with him? Meet him? Find out what his game is?"

"Find out what he wants first," James nodded, looking to Sirius now. "Write back to Narcissa, asking what she wants the meeting for. We all go, I'll stay under the cloak and watch, just in case it's a trap."

"I don't think even Lucius would be stupid enough to try something if I turned up alongside Sirius."

"Maybe, but I'm not going to risk everything on a Malfoy NOT doing something stupid." James countered with a smirk. "Find out what Narcissa wants, we can plan from there." James said, looking over at Sirius.

"Got it," Sirius nodded, standing up from the table and heading off to find some parchment to write back to Narcissa.

"Wait," Amelia said quickly, causing Sirius to pause in the kitchen doorway. "Tomorrow night? Any chance you could... vanish for the evening?" She asked hesitantly.

"Tomorrow?" Sirius asked, cocking his head to the side thoughtfully.

"I invited Julia for a meal, and to talk." Amelia explained, looking to James.

"Ah, that." Sirius nodded. "Alright, I'll vanish for the night." He said with a smirk. "Been meaning to get back into Grimmauld anyway and start going through the Black Library."

"Bring the books here if you want, just check them through for curses and anything nasty first." James said with a nod to Sirius. "Keep the nasty ones charmed shut, I don't want the mini-me or Susan stumbling onto any of them by accident. Expand the library if you want, I know you know
how to add an extra level or two to the room." He mused with a thoughtful smile before clicking his fingers. "Actually, make sure you grab everything on Horcruxes, anything you can find, rituals, removal, everything. I want to find out more about these damn things, maybe see if there's any way we can actually remove one from a distance without toasting the thing with fiendfyre."

"Gotta," Sirius grinned over. "Looting my family's library to add it to the Potter library, sounds like a great night to me." He added with a laugh, leaving the kitchen entirely to go and find some parchment.

"He knows?" Amelia asked, raising an eyebrow towards James.

"I talked with him about stuff last night," James admitted with a small smile. "And ex's, and witches in general, well, wizards in Sirius' case, and a whole lot of firewhiskey." He admitted, massaging his temples. "Which I admit, I'm actually regretting right now."

"Ah," Amelia smirked. "Did it help?" She asked curiously.

"A bit," James admitted with a sigh. "He answered a few questions I had, then we got to drinking. Which felt really weird, because we never did that sort of thing before." He explained.

"Maybe it helped both of you then," Amelia smiled, leaning over and stealing a kiss from James. "Tomorrow night, dinner for three then?" She asked with a small smirk.

"Alright," James nodded. "I'll cook something up, you'll have to bring her over though."

"I can do that, you just take care of the food and everything else," Amelia grinned, standing up from the table. "I should get back to the office, let me know what Sirius gets in reply alright?"

"Sure thing." James smiled, getting another kiss from Amelia before she headed out into the living room and floo'ed back to The Ministry. "Wait, dinner and everything else?" He asked himself aloud. "What's everything else?" He asked with a frown.

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**Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry**  
**Highlands of Scotland**

For young Harry Potter, he was having the absolute time of his life. Even just sitting at the Hufflepuff tables for lunch surrounded by friends was an experience that only two months ago, he could only dreamed of having.

It had only really been a month and a bit since his older self had come into his life, but in that month, his life had changed so drastically that some mornings he wanted to pinch himself to make sure he wasn't dreaming. He had a family, a real family. It was a twisted sort of family that belonged in some sort of science fiction TV series with time travel and magic, but it was his, and he was constantly amazed by it.

He even had a godfather who kept telling him stories about his parents, he had his own bedroom, a real bedroom with a bed, bookshelves, a desk of his own and everything! Living at his grandparents house with his older self and his 'Uncle Sirius' had been absolutely fantastic so far, and he wouldn't trade it for the world.

His older self was still a complete puzzle to him though. There were certain things he said or did, that Harry just couldn't understand or couldn't see himself ever understanding. The fact his older...
self was kissing Miss Bones was still a bit weird, but he figured that that was going to be something he'd likely understand when he got older.

He even had friends now, Susan had been amazing, and because his older self was dating Miss Bones, she was practically his sister the way he saw it, something they had both latched onto and were more than happy to consider each other as family. He'd learnt early on that Susan's past was very much like his own, almost identical actually, with Voldemort killing her parents the same way he had killed his parents.

The only difference was that Susan had grown up in a loving family with Miss Bones, where he'd been thrown to the Dursley's and then treated like a slave for god knows how many years. It gave them a foundation to build on, and something to talk about, both understanding what it was like to not know their parents or know what they were like, both having the same dream about one day meeting their parents, even though they both knew it could never happen.

"Um... Harry?"

Harry looked up, broken out of his thoughts to where he saw a Gryffindor coming over, looking pretty nervous as he looked up at him. "Hi?" He smiled up.

"I'm Neville, Neville Longbottom?" Neville half asked, introducing himself.

"Oh, oh yeah, my dad mentioned you'd come and say hi sometime." Harry grinned, waving towards some spare area on the tables. "Come on, grab a seat and join us."

"Thanks," Neville smiled over shyly.

"That's Susan," Harry pointed out where Susan was sat opposite him chatting with Hannah. "And Hannah." He explained, introducing them both. "My dad's Neville's godfather." He explained when Susan and Hannah both gave him a questioning look.

That was another chunk of weirdness that he was firmly putting down to his future self that he didn't understand, but his older counterpart had told him that he was taking over the role of Neville's godfather and just to go with it, and while it was a bit weird for him to think about, he'd resolved himself not to puzzle over it too much and simply make friends with Neville anyway.

"Ohhh," Susan nodded, waving across to Neville, both her and Hannah knew how important godparents were in the magical world.

"You OK?" Harry asked, shuffling down a bit at the Hufflepuff table so that Neville could slide in and chat with them all.

"Yeah... I'm... I'm OK." Neville stammered out.

"Dad says Neville's some sort of herbology prodigy," Harry explained to Susan and Hannah. "So if we ever need any help with that lesson..." He trailed off, laughing at Neville's shocked face.

"What?" He asked, looking at Neville.

"I'm... I'm not... I never spoke to your dad about my greenhouse?" Neville asked nervously.

"Dad just knows this stuff, I try not to think about it too much." Harry admitted, and it was the truth. His older self knew practically everything about what was going to happen in his life, and it was actually disturbing to know that his older self knew about things before they were going to happen.
It was definitely something he tried not to think too much about, because that led to very weird thoughts about any bad things that happened, had his older self let them happen on purpose, and simply not cared? He very rarely liked where those sorts of thoughts led, so he intentionally made sure he didn't follow that thought train too often.

"His defence class was amazing," Hannah nodded quickly. "We're going to be learning so much from him."

"Yeah," Susan grinned in agreement, having already had nearly a month's worth of tutoring from Mr Potter over the summer before school had even started.

"So, what lessons have you got this afternoon?" Harry asked, looking towards Neville and starting to get to know him, chatting easily about lessons as the two started to form the start of a friendship over their lunch.
For young Hermione Jean Granger, her short time at Hogwarts so far had been one giant shock to the system after another, leaving her floundering as several of her long held beliefs were shattered one after another.

It was several months ago now that Professor McGonagall had turned up at her home to talk to her parents, the giant shock of her being a witch had sent the entire family spinning as she tried to factor that change into her plans for her life.

In the short period she'd had before coming to Hogwarts, she'd read everything she could about magic, Hogwarts, and the magical world that she was apparently now part of, and the day she'd boarded the Hogwarts Express, she was certain she was going to be sorted into Gryffindor where the great Albus Dumbledore had been sorted.

In her books, everything she'd read about Professor Dumbledore painted him as a larger than life intellectual giant of a wizard, a genius who had studied everything from Alchemy to Xylomancy and was respected for his wisdom and power around the world.

He'd become a sort of hero to her after reading everything she could about the man, and true to form, she'd put her mind to it and had been sorted into Gryffindor house like Professor Dumbledore had been, exactly as she'd wanted.

And that night, minutes after she'd been sorted, her entire world had been shattered.

James Potter had revealed himself being still alive, that alone had her questions several of the books she'd read. Every book she'd bought about The Fall of The Dark Arts had mentioned The Potter's and their heroic sacrifice to save their child. Harry Potter had several chapters all to himself, chapters that now she had realised were all complete lies, leading her to wonder how much of the rest of the book had been fabricated as well?

But the shocks had kept coming. James Potter had confronted Professor Dumbledore and accused him of horrible things, she'd been waiting, hopeful that somehow this was all a mistake and that Professor Dumbledore would be able to explain everything, but instead of actually explaining things like an intellectual, Professor Dumbledore had attacked James Potter with magic, endangering all of the students in the great hall in the process.

She'd been unable to believe it when Professor Potter had defeated Professor Dumbledore, after all,
Professor Dumbledore was supposed to be the most powerful wizard alive, but Professor Potter had won the duel with him as if he was nothing more than an annoyance.

That alone had shaken her beliefs, causing her to question quite literally everything she'd read so far, then the biggest shock of all, Professor Potter had confronted another teacher that had revealed himself to be Voldemort in disguise all along.

She hadn't been able to take her eyes off of the duel that had followed, even with Professor McGonagall and Madame Bones protecting them she'd been terrified, but again Professor Potter had come out victorious and had banished Voldemort from the castle.

James Potter was still alive, when every book she'd read said that he'd been killed by Voldemort a decade ago, giving his life to protect his son. Voldemort was still alive, and had been in the school she had become a student of, and Professor Dumbledore was nowhere near the great man she'd read about, and had been fired from his position as Headmaster that same night.

With everything that had happened, she felt justified in being somewhat off for the first few days of school, regaining her balance so to speak as she tried to figure out where everything had gone wrong.

Everything she'd read was wrong, it was all lies and had been made up for reasons she still couldn't figure out, the stories in the Daily Prophet clearly showed the truth, and she'd been there, she'd witnessed it, so she couldn't deny the truth of what the papers were reporting.

"Come on now, I bet all of you have wanted to hex a teacher before right?"

Hermione pulled herself out of her thoughts with a shocked expression on her face as she looked up to where Professor Potter was smiling as he looked down around the classroom to the eager faces of her classmates. She was almost ashamed to admit she'd been so deep in thought that she hadn't been paying attention to the lesson at all.

With that horrifying thought pushing her worries out of her mind, she set her focus purely on the lesson ahead, she could worry about regaining her equilibrium later on when there wasn't a Professor around to learn from.

"The stinging jinx is quite a simple one, a milder version of the stinging hex that doesn't cause swelling, completely harmless, it feels like a pinch or a swat on the arm." Professor Potter explained. "It's a straight forward jinx to learn, no want movements, just a simple point cast and the incantation, pungo." He explained, making sure the entire class had heard him.

Hermione nodded along to that, making sure she jotted down the incantation along with the fact that there wasn't any wand motions needed to cast it. She also added notes on her parchment relating it to the stinging hex to look up later on, making another note that Professor Potter apparently liked a lot of minor hexes or jinxes that were related to more powerful spells that they would learn later on.

So if she could figure out what curses and hexes had less powerful jinx versions, she would very likely be able to figure out some of the jinxes they would be taught about as the year went on and be able to practice ahead of schedule.

"So, come on, stand up."

Looking around the class she noted a few of the Slytherins jumping up from their seats eagerly, she shared a look with Neville who was sharing her desk before both of them slowly stood up from
their desk to stand with everyone else.

A quick wave of his wand and the various desks around the classroom moved to either side, giving them a large open space to work with before Professor Potter moved to stand just in front of his desk at the front of the room.

"I want all of you to come up, one by one, and cast a stinging hex at me." He explained with a smile. "I'll shield it, I just want you all to be able to cast one."

Hermione was predictably horrified at this idea, the very idea of casting a jinx at a Professor went against everything she believed in.

"I reckon he can take it," Neville whispered over, nudging Hermione as they got into line with everyone else in the classroom. "I mean, Professor Potter can fight Voldemort and Dumbledore, what chance do any of us have against his shields?" He asked.

Hermione slowly nodded at that, worrying on her bottom lip as she contemplated what Neville was saying. It was perfectly reasonable to understand that Professor Potter could shield against a first year's jinx, after all, he was the Defence Against the Dark Arts Professor, and had faced down a Dark Lord himself, so his shields must be exceptional.

She heard a quick "Pungo!" from the front of the line before a "Great Job Daphne!" from Professor Potter, and had to assume that whoever 'Daphne' was, she'd managed to cast the jinx successfully and that Professor Potter was fine.

As the line went down there were a few times when the queue paused for a bit, with Professor Potter helping those who had trouble with it and casting the jinx alongside them for a few moments before letting them try again, but with his help, it seemed everyone in the class so far had been able to cast the jinx no problem.

She was nearly at the front of the queue with only Neville, Lavender and a few others in front of her, when her eyes went wide as a ghostly silver apparition bounded into the room through the window.

She had to blink a few times as she tried to focus on the ghostly form, recognising it as a fox after several moments as it ran through the class to stand in front of Professor Potter. "Diagon Alley's under attack, Death Eaters!" came out of the ghostly fox in a no-nonsense voice, and Professor Potter was grabbing his coat from behind his desk before the voice had even finished speaking.

"Class dismissed!" Professor Potter called out as he swung his heavy coat on and vanished from the classroom with a crack, apparating out of the Hogwarts grounds and punching through the Hogwarts wards like a bolt of lightning.

"Wha..." Hermione turned, looking at Neville who was staring at the space Professor Potter had been in with a worried and shocked expression on his face. "What was that?"

"Apparating," Neville blinked in shock, answering automatically.

"But... you can't apparate in Hogwarts, it says so in Hogwarts: A History." Hermione countered quickly.

"I don't think that matters when you're that powerful Hermione," Neville whispered, turning his attention to look out the window to where the ghostly fox had come in from, the worried expression on his face settling in as he tried to imagine what was going on in Diagon Alley right now.
Predictably the entire class had broken into whispers and talking, with everyone now talking about where Professor Potter had gone, how he'd gone, and most importantly, why.

**Diagon Alley**  
**London**

Amelia Bones was not having the best day, the attack on Diagon Alley couldn't have come at a worse time as far as she was concerned, but she'd managed to get there with five Aurors as soon as they'd been notified, four Aurors now, as one of them had already fallen to the savage Fenrir Greyback, leaving her to struggle to deal with the werewolf as the other four Aurors struggled with the three Death Eaters that were terrorising the Alley.

Sadly, Greyback adopted the same fighting technique that James had, and had got in close before she'd managed to get more than a single curse cast, leaving her struggling to fight off the stronger werewolf as he grappled and forced her around, using his height and weight to position himself in a stronger angle where she was struggling to ward off his blows.

"James, where the hell are..." She gasped out, gripping on to both of Greyback's wrists as he tried again to force his hands around her neck, she was nearly being forced onto her knees as an unfamiliar purple curse shot past her face, missing her face by several inches as it impacted Greyback on the side of the head, causing a misty explosion of blood, bone, and various scattered pieces that she didn't even want to think about.

Two more curses swept through the air and blasted past her as she turned to see who her rescuer was, breathing out a sigh of relief as she instantly recognised the copper coloured dragon skin trench-coat sweeping through the alley towards her. "Nice of you to make it." She smiled up as James let off two more curses, blowing off one Death Eater's arm entirely and blasting them away from where they'd been pushing forwards towards a fallen Auror.

"Wouldn't miss it," James smirked over, deflecting a curse easily and reflecting it back on it's caster, sending another Death Eater sprawling to the ground screaming in agony. "Was that...?" He trailed off, glancing down at the bloody mess of a body that had slumped by Amelia's feet.

"Greyback," Amelia nodded in confirmation, looking around the Alley to where her remaining four Aurors were now taking control and had the other two Death Eaters stunned and on the ground, though one of them was already missing most of his right arm from the look of things, and another had a chunk of granite conjured around their feet so they couldn't even move. "Your work?" She asked, raising an eyebrow towards James in a resigned sigh, annoyed that James had managed to dispatch three Death Eaters so quickly when her team of Aurors had struggled from the start.

"Huh," James frowned, glaring down at the body of the werewolf. "Didn't expect him to make an appearance yet."

"Yet?" Amelia asked, narrowing her eyes as she tried to wipe away the blood splatter from her face with the sleeve of her purple robe.

"He's about five years early," James nodded, watching carefully to make sure the Aurors got the three Death Eaters that were still alive gathered together and stunned. "Wonder who we have here?" He mused aloud as he followed Amelia over to the gathering. "Dawlish." He muttered, recognising one of the Aurors easily enough. "Shacklebolt." He nodded over to another.
"Potter," Shacklebolt nodded respectfully back. "Nice work." He said with a small twitch of his lips.

"We're supposed to stun them and take them into custody, I should be arresting you right now." Dawlish muttered, glaring across at James.

"Try it, go on, I dare you." James bit out, glaring across at Dawlish and waiting for him to do something stupid.

"Boys, enough." Amelia bit out, stepping away from them and flicking her wand towards the three Death Eaters, vanishing their masks so she could see who she was dealing with. "Oh Merlin!" She muttered, staring in disbelief at the group now that she could see their faces.

"Bugger," Dawlish grunted, looking up at Shacklebolt who was staring at the Death Eaters without any hint of surprise on his face.

"Albert Runcorn and Walden Macnair, are Death Eaters?" Amelia asked in shock, recognising the two men from The Ministry instantly.

"Angus Crabbe," James identified the third, remembering Crabbe easily enough from his trial after the final battle of Hogwarts. "Death Eaters working for The Ministry, I'm shocked." He drawled out sarcastically, glaring across at Dawlish and causing Amelia to glare at him for his tone.

"That's enough from you," Amelia shook her head in annoyance, watching as James knelt down to roll up their sleeves, displaying the black Dark Mark tattoo on all three of their arms for everyone to see. "Working with Greyback as well."

"Voldemort must have gone to Greyback for support, since he's still floating around like a ghost, he'd need some muscle to scare people into following him again." James reasoned aloud.

"That sounds Logical," Amelia nodded thoughtfully. "Runcorn and Macnair?" She asked, pondering what motives they could have for doing something like this.

"Returning to their master to lick his boots," James snorted, shaking his head. "Probably just trying to scare people again, attack in daylight, get people scared, so it draws off the Aurors before The Ministry implements the new contracts."

"You can't believe they're Death Eaters!" Dawlish defended the two quickly.

"You saw them, attacking, fighting alongside Greyback!" James bit out, snarling at Dawlish. "Their masks, the tattoo, is that not enough for you?" He demanded, stepping forwards and getting into Dawlish's face. "Or are you going to let them bullshit their way out of this, the Imperius defence is popular right now I hear? Maybe I should be checking your arm too?" He sneered over. "If these two try claiming that, I'm calling for an honour duel right there, on them, and the idiots that let them go." He said firmly.

"You... you can't do that!" Dawlish spluttered out.

"Try me," James sneered down at him. "You'll be top of my list, I'll call it out right in front of the Wizengamot, I'll even invite the Prophet, everyone I can to watch me take you apart." He bit out.

"Dawlish, Shack, take these three back to holding cells." Amelia interrupted, moving to stand between James and Dawlish to prevent either of them from pulling wands on each other. "Full interrogation, I want them all bleeding Veritaserum by the time I get back."
"Crabbe too?" Shacklebolt asked, speaking up for the first time.

"Definitely," Amelia nodded. "I want names, dates, victims, everything I can get from all three of them, including why they were here with Greyback and what they were planning."

Shacklebolt nodded at that, grabbing onto Albert Runcorn and Crabbe before apparating away, with Dawlish following quickly behind him with Walden Macnair's unconscious body, leaving Amelia and James alone with Greyback's body. "Dawlish?" Amelia asked, turning to James now with an expression that told him he'd better have a damn good explanation for his attitude.

"Pure blood bigot, when Voldemort took over The Ministry, he was one of his Aurors in charge of rounding up muggle born kids. He did it proudly, harassing their families and taking them in for Umbridge to torture and throw into camps." James explained with a dark look. "I couldn't tell you if he's got the Dark Mark or not, but even if he doesn't, he's as dark as the rest of the bastards that followed Voldemort."

"I wouldn't have guessed," Amelia muttered, looking over to where Dawlish had apparated away.

"He was supposed to take in Augusta Longbottom down before the final fight, Augusta blew off one of his legs with a blasting curse, had him in St Mungo's during the final battles." James explained. "He never saw a trial, he vanished like a coward when I'd defeated Voldemort. Probably knew I'd be able to identify him and point him out as one of Voldemort's followers." He said with a sigh. "Shacklebolt's got his head so far up Dumbledore's arse, I can never tell which one of them is speaking when he opens his mouth." He explained with a shrug. "You noticed he wasn't surprised when you unmasked them? I'll bet he and Dumbledore already knew about the Death Eaters in the Aurors, they just kept the information to themselves until they could use it for their own ends."

"I'll keep an eye on them," Amelia promised firmly.

James simply shrugged at that, already having decided that Dawlish was on the Death Eaters side, it was as simple as that as far as he was concerned. "Too many people got second, third, whatever chances last time, I'm not giving them any." He said firmly.

"I noticed," Amelia muttered dryly, looking down at Greyback's body. "There'll probably be a reward in it for you." She said thoughtfully. "Greyback's been top of the Undesirables list for years now."

James shrugged at that, not really caring in the least.

"You'll have to come in, write up a report on all of this." Amelia explained. "You can floo Minerva from The Ministry and explain what's going on."

"Hnh," James nodded, agreeing with that. He remembered all too well how the Auror department ran on paperwork just as much as the rest of The Ministry. "Fine." He grunted, reaching down to grab Greyback's body. "After you." He nodded, waiting for Amelia to apparate away before he twisted on the spot and vanished, pulling Greyback's body with him to The Ministry.
Harry looked up from his charms book, spotting Daphne Greengrass standing at the table and looking down at him.

"About Diagon Alley?" Daphne prompted him, noticing the lack of recognition on his face she quickly sat down at the library table. "There was trouble there earlier on, Professor Potter got called away half way through the lesson."

"Trouble?" Harry asked quickly.

"Death Eaters," Daphne whispered, looking around the library to make sure nobody else was listening in. "I've even heard rumours of werewolves as well."

"My dad, did he..." Harry whispered, trying not to think about his older self fighting down an army of werewolves.

"Nobody's heard anything yet," Daphne shook her head. "I'm sure he's alright though, The Ministry would have sent word if anything bad had happened to him."

"Yeah, I guess..." Harry nodded, trying to reassure himself of that, but his older self's comments about The Ministry hadn't installed Harry with much trust in them at all.

"Um, Harry?"

Both Harry and Daphne looked up, spotting Neville and Hermione approaching the table cautiously.

"I was trying to find you, but... I... I guess you've already heard?" Neville asked, giving Daphne a curious glance.

"About Diagon Alley?" Hermione clarified in a quiet voice.

"Yeah," Harry nodded. "Daphne told me about it." He explained. "My dad's gone to fight werewolves." He whispered, trying to reason that out in his head.

"I'm sure it isn't that bad," Hermione tried to console him. "I don't... I mean... I don't know your dad that well, but he's got to be good at what he does right?"

"He's the best," Harry said quickly, thinking back to everything that he'd seen his older self do.

"He'll have support there too right? Madame Bones will be there with the Aurors as well." Daphne explained. "She was probably the one that called for his help."

"If she needed help, my dad would be there." Harry said with a firm nod, knowing how disturbingly close Miss Bones and his older self were. "He'll be fine. I know it." He said, mostly to reassure himself as Neville and Hermione took seats at the table as well, electing to stay with Harry until word got back to them about what had happened.

It didn't take long for the four to start talking to each other, with Harry introducing Hermione and Neville to Daphne, and Neville introducing the two to Hermione properly, leading to Harry and Hermione quickly bonding over the differences between the muggle world and the magical world, while leaving Neville and Daphne giving each other bewildered looks at the various subjects that came up between the two.

As the afternoon went on, Neville and Harry both anxiously awaited news, with Neville, Susan and Hermione making sure not to leave Harry alone for too long, all knowing that Professor Potter was
Harry's only living relative and how bad it must be for him to wait without knowing what had happened.

______________________________


Department of Magical Law Enforcement
Ministry of Magic
London

Lounging lazily in one of the Auror chairs, James quite happily glared across the room to where Mafalda Hopkirk had come in to the Department of Magical Law Enforcement. She met his eyes for barely a fraction of a second before flinching and fleeing from the floor, running back to the elevators and nearly knocking over two Aurors on her way.

Satisfied with that, he leaned back on his chair and kicked his feet up, depositing his heavy leather boots on the desk in front of them and idly casting cleaning charms over them to get rid of the dirt, blood and viscera that was coating them after today's battle.

It was oddly nostalgic being back in the Auror Department after a few months, it wasn't HIS Auror department, that much was for certain, but it was familiar and comfortable enough for him to relax here and think back to all the times he'd spent evenings here pouring over paperwork while working on a case.

From here he could even see through to where his old office was, though currently it was a damn sight tidier than he'd ever managed to keep it back in his time. Though when it had been his office, he'd actually had a giant cat scratching post in the corner. It had been a joke gift from a few of the Aurors when he'd been promoted to Head Auror, and he'd kept the thing around just because it made him laugh, and used it as a pin board to attach various parchments and notices to.

He had to admit to himself that before he'd come back in time, he hadn't exactly had the healthiest lifestyle. Looking back at it, he'd thrown himself into the Aurors straight out of Hogwarts because it had been expected of him, and he'd simply followed those expectations like a little lost lamb. He could blame other people of course, nobody had ever spoken to him about career decisions or asked what he wanted to do with his life, but the fact was, he'd followed the crowd and buckled to their expectations like a sheep, just like he accused so many other people of doing.

Had he been happy being an Auror? Maybe, it was a good life and had fit him, he couldn't deny that, but maybe if he hadn't thrown himself into his work so much he could have been there for Hermione more. Maybe he could have seen how depressed and disheartened with the magical world she had gotten, maybe he could have helped somehow?

Of course, if he'd never become an Auror, he wouldn't have been thrown back in time and given a chance to change all of that, so maybe it was fate or god, or time, or whatever, giving him a second chance to get set things right.

"Potter,"

James looked up idly, not bothering to move from his comfortable position with his feet up where he could watch over almost the entire Auror department. He recognised Shacklebolt's voice without even looking, but he could see the hesitant expression on the man's face as he looked down at him.

"Shack," James replied, simply acknowledging him. "Let me guess, Dumbledore's spoken to you,
he wants me to meet him? Forgive him maybe? Give him another chance? Did he give you some spiel about how forgiveness was the hardest lesson to learn? Maybe some of his usual lies about everything he's done he's done for the Greater Good? You know, the usual bullshit that comes pouring out of his mouth?"

He spotted the frown flicker across Shacklebolt's face and he knew he'd hit the nail right on the head.

"Albus is..."

"Tell him thanks, but no thanks." James interrupted, holding his hand up to silence Shacklebolt. "I've got no time for that manipulative old bastard, he can go crucio himself for all I care."

"Albus did a lot for you." Kingsley frowned, glaring down at James.

"Albus Dumbledore kidnapped Harry from Sirius, put him in an abusive home until I rescued him. He stole the vault key from the cottage, ransacked the place not hours after Voldemort had been there." James bit out, glaring back at Kingsley. "He let Sirius rot in Azkaban when he was the Chief Warlock, he's always got his own agenda, and I really don't have time for wading through his verbal bullshit right now."

"He wants to meet you." Kingsley said simply, ignoring James' rant.

"He can go stuff it up his arse." James grunted, shaking his head. "Actually, you want to give him a message, fine?" He glared up before twisting in the chair, pulling his feet off the desk before sitting up properly.

Grabbing a quill and some parchment from the desk he quickly wrote out The Prophecy on the parchment, hating every word of it as he scribbled it down from memory. It was something he could never forget, those simple lines of words that had ruined his entire life thanks to Albus bloody Dumbledore.

Once he'd finished writing The Prophecy down, he noted down to the side of it his own interpretation of The Prophecy, twisting the facts and phrases around until it sounded like the only subject of The Prophecy was Harry, and the Dark Lord in The Prophecy that Harry was going to vanquish was actually Albus Dumbledore.

"Go on, give him that, I'd actually pay for the memory of his face when he reads it." James muttered, standing up from the desk and thrusting the parchment out for Kingsley to take.

He watched as Kingsley read The Prophecy, his eyebrows quirkling up, then both eyebrows raised and his eyes went wide as he looked up from James' notes towards him with a horrified expression.

It only took a bit of creative license with two lines. Harry being 'marked by Dumbledore' by Dumbledore kidnapping him from his family and forcing him into an abusive home for a decade. Him being 'his equal' for his fame, the stories of Harry defeating Voldemort as a baby, and Dumbledore defeating Grindlewald.

Then 'neither can live while the other survives' explained away as Harry could never live his life properly while Albus was pulling the strings and manipulating his life for him.

A final touch added himself as 'the power Dumbledore knows not', it was a stretch to include himself as someone Dumbledore didn't know, but fudged it as him being there when Dumbledore had thought him dead, and everything he'd learnt in the decade away from him.
"Tell your Lord and Master, if he comes near me or Harry again, or sends another of his followers, I'll take that to the Daily Prophet, the Wizarding Wireless, everywhere. I'll sign it myself, hell, I'll pose for a picture of it with Harry." James bit out.

"This... this would ruin him." Kingsley said softly, looking down at the parchment with a worried expression.

"I don't forgive, and I don't forget Shack." James said firmly. "Make sure he knows that." He bit out, making sure Kingsley was paying attention to him. "Albus Dumbledore is my enemy, just as sure as Voldemort is. Once those contracts Amelia sorts out come into play, you're going to have to pick a side, Dumbledore or The Ministry."

"Albus has done a lot for me." Kingsley explained.

"And I'll bet he cashed in every single favour," James sneered up to the taller man. "Spying for him on Auror investigations I'll bet? Maybe sabotaging a few? Dropping investigations into his friends and allies? That's it isn't it, you take care of any investigations into the school? Stop the Auror department from properly investigating attacks when Death Eater spawn attack decent students. Can't have the Aurors looking too close at Hogwarts, or they might find out how bad it actually is there." He snorted, shaking his head. "Bet you've let Mundungus Fletcher get off a few times as well right? You've never fought for what you believe in once, have you?" He demanded, seeing the truth ripple over Kingsley's face. "Just happy to tow the line, keep the status quo, make sure nobody rocks the boat."

"Potter, there are things..."

"I don't care," James interrupted with a dismissive wave. "Like I told someone else, Voldemort has his Death Eaters, Dumbledore has his little sycophants, you're both as bad as each other." He explained with a shrug. "Make sure Dumbledore gets that, the next time I write it down, it's going to The Prophet." He said, turning away from Shacklebolt and walking away, leaving the taller man stood in the Auror department with a pained and stunned expression on his face.

He didn't have to walk far before he ran into Amelia, giving her a quick explanation of what had happened he explained that he needed to blow off some steam and get out of here for a bit.

It was a quick conversation as Amelia didn't really need James around anymore, she'd already got the statements and signatures she needed from him and would be busy deal with interrogations for the rest of the afternoon anyway.

Leaving the Auror department, James quite happily just stuck his hands in his jeans pockets as he strode out of the Department of Magical Law Enforcement and out into The Ministry corridors, heading straight for the elevators and ignoring the hushed whispers that followed him in the corridor.

"Which floor?" The attendant asked quietly, noting James' angry face as he got into the elevator.

"Department of Mysteries." James bit out, spotting a few worried expressions on the other witches and wizards in the elevator before they quickly rushed out, leaving him alone in the elevator with the attendant.

"L... Level Nine," The attendant stammered out, closing the elevator grate before setting the elevator in motion.

James simply grunted in recognition, keeping his hands in his jeans pocket as he watched the floors
fly by out of the grate covering the elevator entrance.

He hadn't really meant to throw everything at Kingsley like that, not really anyway. He'd just been a suitable target, a reminder of everything that had gone wrong in his life the first time around.

He'd simply been there at a time when he'd been thinking about how Hermione had been pushed out of the magical world, and the Kingsley in his time hadn't lifted a finger to try and change things so that Hermione would be awarded the Order of Merlin she deserved.

Kingsley was just another cog in the wheel, he hadn't bothered to try and change things, he'd just fought for the same thing Dumbledore had, to keep things exactly as they were, stagnant, bigoted, unfair and biased. He'd kept all the same pure blood biased laws on the books, just like Fudge had, and hadn't bothered trying to make their world a better place one bit. He'd just enjoyed his time as Minister, in a peaceful time when Harry, Hermione and everyone else had given up so much for everything they'd fought for.

He didn't hate Kingsley, not like he hated Dumbledore, but the anger was still there. After all, Kingsley had been one of the ones that had sided with Dumbledore and kept him locked up at Privet Drive, he'd been one of the Order of the Phoenix that had kept Sirius locked up in the home he hated instead of trying to get him a trial and his freedom, and as a Lead Auror, that should have been his job, not following Dumbledore's orders like a good little puppy.

Everything was clearer with nearly twenty years hindsight, and things he'd simply accepted at the time were things he knew were wrong and stunk to high heaven right now.

"L... L... Level Nine."

James nodded in acknowledgement at the attendant as the voice brought him out of his musings, waiting for the attendant to pull open the grate before he stepped out, raising an eyebrow at the Unspeakable that was waiting at the elevators for him.

"I expected you sooner."

"Sorry to disappoint," James smirked back at the shadowed face. He'd got used to dealing with Unspeakables a long time ago, their nondescript robes and shadowed charms were specifically designed to unnerve people and hide their appearance, even right down to charms to change their voices down to a neutral and genderless tone to prevent people from even guessing if it was even a witch or wizard underneath them all.

"The Hall of Prophecies, you're here to confirm there's a prophecy for your son." The Unspeakable said simply, as if it was an easy conclusion to come to.

"Might as well," James nodded, falling in step to walk alongside the Unspeakable as they ambled through the corridors of the Department of Mysteries.

The Unspeakable didn't say anything else, they simply walked in silence, leading James through the corridors where James took idle note of the various rooms like the Chamber of Love and the chambers where Time Turners were kept and studied.

It wasn't until they passed the Death Chamber that James shuddered, pausing for half a step to look inside at the fabled archway that had cost Sirius his life in another time, swearing to himself that he would never let Sirius come down here this time around.

"You know who made The Prophecy? The Date? Who it was made to?" The Unspeakable asked as they led James through into The Hall of Prophecy.
James almost managed to resist the urge to snort at the question, but it escaped him anyway along with a roll of his eyes. "Sybill Trelawney to Albus Too Many Names Dumbledore." He explained, drawing a huff of laughter from the Unspeakable.

"Date?" The Unspeakable asked. Drawing James into The Hall and leading him through the various shelved corridors that made up almost a maze contained within the hall.

"Sometime mid nineteen eighty, probably June or July." James rattled off. It was easy enough of a supposition to make. Trelawney had made The Prophecy during a job interview for her position at Hogwarts, so it had to be during the summer months before school started. Likewise, The Prophecy spoke of his birth, so it had to have been made before he was born.

Putting those clues together put it in the summer holiday of nineteen eighty easily enough, it didn't take a genius to put it together. Since he knew Trelawney had started teaching at Hogwarts after the summer of nineteen eighty, it was pretty obvious when The Prophecy had been made.

"That narrows it down." The Unspeakable nodded, moving quicker now as they led James through the various paths that criss crossed each other, making sure not to disturb the various Prophecy Orbs on the shelves around them.

It didn't take long for The Unspeakable to find the correct shelf and narrow it down, finding the right Prophecy Orb on a low down shelf with a brass plaque in front of it. "Row Ninety Seven." The Unspeakable announced as they brought out their wand, flicking it up with a silent lumos so they could both read the plaque on the Prophecy Orb.

"S.P.T to A.P.W.B.D. Dark Lord and (?) Harry Potter." The Unspeakable announced.

"Who wrote in Harry Potter?" James asked, idly curious as he'd never actually figured that out before. Staring into the swimming wisps of smoke inside the Prophecy Orb, he had a small urge to keep the thing as a paper weight. If only to see Dumbledore's reaction when he told him what he'd done with the damn thing.

"No idea," The Unspeakable answered simply. "Only the people The Prophecy refers to can remove The Orb from our care." They explained bluntly. "You will have to bring your son here to hear what it says."

"Yeah, not going to happen." James muttered, shaking his head at that as he reached out and plucked the orb from it's platform, holding it easily in his hand as he tossed it gently in the air, bouncing it in his hand casually. "Imagine that." He said with a smirk.

"It appears the identification was wrong," The Unspeakable said after a moment's pause, watching James for any sign of the Madness Curse affecting him. "You are the one The Prophecy speaks of."

"Yeah," James nodded, tossing the Prophecy Orb in his hand again.

"You already know what it says." The Unspeakable said, making it a statement of fact instead of a question. "It is responsible for everything you have been through."

"More than you know," James muttered, glaring at the orb in question before letting it roll out of his hand and fall to the floor where it smashed against the cold stone underfoot, the wisps of smoke inside evaporating instantly, leaving the glass shards laying there, silent and empty.

"There are people that would have paid vaults of Galleons to learn what was said in that Prophecy." The Unspeakable said, cocking their head to the side as they studied James Potter as if
he was something they couldn't understand. "Others would have paid just as much to have a Prophecy made in their names."

"Those idiots don't know what it's like to have everyone try and manipulate you to make The Prophecy all about them." James bit out, stepping forwards and crunching the remainder of the Prophecy Orb under his heavy boots, making sure there was absolutely none of it left.

"No, I suppose they don't." The Unspeakable nodded at that, watching as James idly picked up the brass plaque with The Prophecy's information on it and slid it into his pocket.

"There's nothing else to say." James shrugged, turning around and walking away from The Prophecy, his mission complete as far as he was concerned.

"No, I don't think there is." The Unspeakable agreed, falling in step and following James out of The Hall of Prophecy, both walking silently and contemplating his actions as they walked out of the Hall together.
Chapter 18

TITLE: Double Back

DISCLAIMER: All things Harry Potter belong J K Rowling... basically, if you recognise it, it isn’t mine... Please don't sic the Aurors on me, I’m just here for the fun.

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Potter Manor
Honley

"James?"

"Kitchen," James called back, recognising Amelia's voice easily enough.

He'd floo'ed Minerva from The Ministry after destroying the Prophecy Orb, letting her know what had happened at Diagon Alley and she'd told him she'd already cancelled his Defence lessons for the rest of the day, leaving him time to head back to Potter Manor and unwind for a bit after everything that had happened.

"Hey," He grinned up, seeing Amelia walk in, already peeling off her purple over-robe to hang it up on the coat hanger outside of the kitchen door. "How'd it go?" He asked curiously.

"Confessions from Crabbe, Runcorn and Macnair. They're spending the night in the holding cells being patched up, I've got enough on them to have them in Azkaban for the rest of their lives." Amelia admitted as she walked into the kitchen, closely followed by Julia Greengrass.

"Julia, sorry, I completely forgot about tonight." James explained, standing up from the kitchen table where he'd been happily relaxing with a mug of coffee and one of the Transfiguration books from the library upstairs.

"I figured," Amelia chuckled at him, stepping over to pull him into a quick kiss. "Nice work today though, couldn't really say it at the offices, but I know everyone wanted to cheer for you after they found out what you'd done."

"Certainly made me feel better," James grinned down, standing back up after stealing another kiss. "Sorry, um... welcome to Potter Manor I guess?" He said, looking over to Julia and giving her a lop sided smile.

"My, how formal of you," Julia chuckled at him, shaking her head in amusement at his actions.

"I did warn you," Amelia smirked back. "James doesn't bother with any of the high brow formalities."

"I really don't," James confirmed quickly with a nod. "I should have remembered when Sirius wasn't here, the Manor hasn't been this quiet for weeks now." He explained with a laugh.

"Tippy?" Amelia asked aloud, waiting for a second before her house elf appeared in the kitchen.

"Miss calls for Tippy?" The elf in question asked, looking up at her Mistress then around the unfamiliar kitchen.
"Three for dinner tonight, we'll be eating here, so make use of any of the facilities you need." Amelia ordered, smiling down to the small elf. "There's no house elf here, so feel free to make yourself at home and do as you will."

"Yes Miss," Tippy nodded quickly, her elf ears flapping wildly before she vanished again with a pop.

"That's done, now there's no hiding away in the kitchen for you." Amelia explained, giving James a knowing look that said she'd caught on to his plan before he'd even properly concocted it.

"Right," James sighed, following as Amelia pulled him out of the kitchen and through to the living room where she pushed him down onto the couch so she could sit alongside him with Julia taking the seat next to her. "You know I don't know anything about all of this stuff right? Aside from what you and Sirius told me?" He explained, looking at Amelia and giving her a pained expression.

"I know," Amelia nodded at him before looking past him to where Julia was looking at him with a confused expression. "You will understand later, I promise you that, but for now..." She trailed off, turning back to James. "You understand what we're discussing here?"

"Getting married." James said simply.

"A betrothal at first," Amelia confirmed with a nod. "Both myself and Julia would enter a betrothal contract with you, set for a marriage that would join our three families."

"I would happily take the Potter name," Julia confirmed with a nod. "I would have to talk to Daphne and Astoria, but in the end it would be up to them if they wanted to keep the Greengrass name, or change their name as well." She explained before thinking for a second. "I can actually imagine both of them would be happy to take your name as well now that I think about it. It would offer them an extra layer of protection at school and allow them to come to you when they needed it."

"I'm still having trouble with the three way marriage thing," James admitted, ruffling his hair as he tried to get that part straight in his head. "I know Sirius said it wasn't unusual, but..." He trailed off with a sigh. "Fine, if this is what you want, then..." He shrugged, looking to Amelia.

"It's a good option," Amelia explained, looking to James now to reassure him. "I've told you that I couldn't marry you and take your name, either it would lead to the Bones line being left to Susan to continue on, or the Potter name being left to Harry." She explained. "And yes, I know you don't really care about these sorts of things, but if you're going to make the changes to our world you want, you're going to need the Wizengamot's support."

"Bigoted arseholes," James muttered, rubbing his stubbled jaw and making a mental note to shave when he got the chance.

"True, but unless you're going to duel them all, we're stuck with them." Amelia chuckled before catching the look James was giving her. "No, you will not be duelling your way through the Wizengamot!" She said firmly, swiping at his arm to ensure he got the message.

"Might actually be easier," Julia smirked over, watching the interaction with interest.

"See, Julia agrees with me." James grinned over.

"Children," Amelia muttered in response, shaking her head in amusement. "Back to our discussion, and do leave James' duelling tendencies alone please, you'd think vanquishing the greatest werewolf threat this country had ever had would have sufficed him for at least a short while."
"Werewolf?" Julia asked, raising an eyebrow at that. "Something you two haven't shared yet?" She smirked over.

"I'm surprised you haven't heard, Greyback led a team of Death Eaters into Diagon Alley," Amelia explained with a sigh. "We were there, but..." She trailed off, rolling her eyes. "James objected, rather strenuously, to Greyback's attack."

"Objected how?" Julia asked, quirking her lips in amusement.

"Some sort of blasting curse to the back of the head," Amelia explained. "I had Auror trainees cleaning up the blood splatter and skull fragments for several hours this afternoon."

"You do know what a stupefy is, don't you?" Julia asked, the laughter visible in her eyes as she turned her attention to James properly now.

"A waste of casting time? It's a weak spell anyway, easy to shield unless you're particularly strong at it, it not worth the time if you don't really have to use it." James answered with a grin. "I'll stun if I need to, or if I want to interrogate them later, Greyback? Death Eaters? I'm not holding back. They won't be casting stunners, neither will I."

"Well, it's about time the light side had someone sensible defending it." Julia nodded, visibly happy with what she was hearing. "Too many Death Eaters got away last time because of Albus' forgiveness and emphasis on disarming and stunning attackers. It's good to see things won't be the same this time around."

"Oh they definitely won't be," James confirmed firmly.

"We were talking about a possible betrothal, not sharing tips on how to kill your way through the Death Eaters in our society." Amelia prompted, nudging James in the ribs with her elbow to bring him back on topic. "Now, just so we're all on the same page, is this something all three of us could see working?" She asked, turning to James first and then back to Julia.

"I guess," James hesitated, looking at Julia curiously. It wasn't as if she wasn't attractive, she was just attractive in a way that he'd never really paid attention to before. Daphne certainly took after her mother, with her tall, pale and elegant features, her soft blue eyes and practically ice blonde hair.

"Certainly," Julia admitted with a nod.

"Right then," Amelia smiled, looking from side to side to glance at each of them before returning her gaze to James. "Perhaps Julia should be told the full story before we progress any further?" She asked, leaving the opening to him.

"Probably," James sighed, ruffling his hair. "Alright, but..." He sighed, frowning as he tried to get his thoughts in order. "I guess the best place to start would be an introduction right?" He asked, leaning across Amelia to hold out his hand towards Julia. "Harry James Potter." He said with a wry grin, watching the confusion and then shock register on Julia's face. "Nice to meet you."

Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry
Highlands of Scotland

That evening at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, various students in three of the four
houses were unsettled, all for different reasons.

In Slytherin House, sat in the dark of his private room, Draco Malfoy read through the letter he'd received from his father for perhaps the tenth or eleventh time since receiving it this morning, and had just as much trouble understanding it this time through as he had every other time he'd read it.

On first glance, his father's orders were very clear and concise. Keep his head down, don't refer to mudbloods as such outside of the Slytherin dorm, and do not antagonise Potter junior or senior, or their associates, in any way.

In short, the letter, signed by his father at the bottom, went against everything he knew and had been taught before coming to Hogwarts. He'd always been taught about the superiority of pure blood wizards over everyone else, and that at Hogwarts, he would be respected instantly for his family's name, wealth and power.

On the surface, not antagonising at least Professor Potter, was a good idea, and likewise, by association, Harry Potter. Even he couldn't deny that Professor Potter must be extraordinarily powerful to duel both Dumbledore and The Dark Lord, and walk away from both. Antagonising any wizard with that sort of power was just stupid, and that was something Malfoys certainly weren't.

But restricting him to acting civilly towards mudbloods and blood traitors? That didn't sound like father at all, and he couldn't understand why his father was ordering him to act this way.

Frowning to himself again he set down on his bed and unfolded the letter to read it yet again, there had to be something he was missing, some nuance or hidden meaning that he had yet to decode, it must be a test from his father to see where his loyalties really lay, he was certain of it.

Meanwhile, in the Gryffindor Common Room, Neville Longbottom and Hermione Granger sat on their own at the side of the bustling room, happily studying together and giving each other silent and reassuring glances every so often.

The common room was as loud as it always was, with Ron and Seamus arguing over a chess board on the far side of the room, while the Weasley Twins continued to discuss various pranks over a game of exploding snap with the trio of the Flying Foxes.

"I'm sure he's alright Neville, really." Hermione whispered quietly, making sure that nobody else overheard her. "He's James Potter right? He fought both Professor Dumbledore and... You-Know-Who, it's not like anything in Diagon Alley could be worse than that?"

"I know," Neville nodded, giving her a pained smile in thanks for her trying to help him. "It's just... he's... he's been in hiding for so long, I've not even got a chance to know him properly yet."

"You'll get that chance," Hermione said with a knowing nod. "And Harry seemed friendly enough as well right?"

"Yeah, I... I guess." Neville nodded slowly.

"Professor Potter will be fine, I'm sure he's back already and we'll see him tomorrow, you can talk to him then right?" Hermione prompted him. "You said he told you you could come to him any time you wanted to talk right?"

"I... but I don't want to bother him." Neville explained with a grimace.

"I'm sure you're not bothering him," Hermione shook her head quickly. "You're so lucky, I wish the
Professors would let me go and talk to them whenever I wanted to. I've got tons of questions I've been dying to ask."

"I bet," Neville laughed, knowing full well how Hermione always seemed full of questions. "Hey, you could come with me tomorrow, I bet Professor Potter would love to meet you as well." He said quickly, remembering how Professor Potter had been the one that had asked him to make friends with Hermione in the first place.

"I... I could?" Hermione whispered, looking at Neville like he was offering her a giant chocolate bar or the next line up of the Quidditch World Cup.

"Of course," Neville smiled over. "We can go together." He nodded, ensuring that Hermione joined him would also help bolster his courage in approaching his godfather as well.

"I'd... I'd like that." Hermione nodded with a smile, thankful for the offer.

Ever since Neville had extended his hand of friendship, she'd found the quiet boy to be quite a pleasant study partner. He wasn't as academically inclined as she was, but he was quiet and focused on his studies without bothering her, which was definitely better than most of the other options she'd found in Gryffindor House so far.

Down in the Hufflepuff Den, young Harry Potter and Susan Bones were sat on one of the leather couches, both talking in hushed whispers so they didn't disturb any of the older Hufflepuffs that were studying around them.

Both of them needed reassurance from each other, as they both knew equally well that if there was a problem in Diagon Alley, then Susan's mother would be in the thick of it just as much as Harry's older self would be.

Lapsing into silence they simply sat with each other sharing a charms book to read from, neither of them really studying, but neither of them wanting to say anything else either.

Everything that needed to be said had already been voiced, and while they had each other as a semblance of family, it didn't help the worries that knotted their stomachs as they thought of all the rumours about Death Eaters and werewolves that had been flooding Hogwarts this afternoon.

All they could do now was wait, and hopefully in the morning they would find out both their parents had survived whatever had happened today.

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**Godrics Hollow**  
**North of Cornwall**  
**Devon**

While various children worried for their parental figures, in Godric’s Hollow, Albus Dumbledore had worries of his own, as he stared at the parchment Kingsley Shacklebolt had given him with a expression of undisguised horror on his face.

"James Potter wrote this?" Albus asked, his voice catching in his throat as he tried to think of the ramifications of what he was being told.

"The message was, if he sees you, or anyone associated with you anywhere near him or his son, he'll take that to The Prophet." Kingsley confirmed with a stoic nod.
Albus glanced back at the parchment, idly wishing that the horrific words inscribed there would change or alter somehow.

"The one with the power to vanquish the Dark Lord approaches..." He read aloud before catching himself and falling quiet. The fact a decade on James remembered the entire Prophecy, word for word, was far more surprising than it should have been.

As far as he knew, he'd only told James The Prophecy once, back when he'd used it to convince James and Lily to go into hiding, but here it was, written perfectly as if he'd written it himself. That obviously meant James had access to a pensieve or some other memory retrieval magics that had aided him in remembering the exact words of The Prophecy, which was certainly worrying, as for the last decade he'd made certain that nobody else knew the entire Prophecy, not even Severus, but now there was no telling who else James Potter could have shared it with.

Either that, or the far more likely explanation was that James and Harry had already retrieved The Prophecy Orb from the Department of Mysteries at some point, and therefore had access for it to recite The Prophecy whenever they wanted.

It was a smart move, one that he would have made himself once he'd had Harry's confidence, and meant that The Prophecy Orb would now be secured away, and entirely likely hidden under the same Fidelius that kept James, Harry and Sirius hidden away from his searches.

Even more worrying was James' interpretation of The Prophecy that pointed to Albus as the Dark Lord to be vanquished. It was more than worrying, it was absolutely horrific to see how James interpreted things, but even worse, he could easily see how others would come to the same conclusion if James publicised his version of The Prophecy and vouched for it in The Prophet.

With his own waining star and James Potter's influence skyrocketing, it didn't take a genius to see who would be believed, and following that reveal, he would be denounced by The Ministry as a Dark Lord before the end of the day, followed very shortly by his picture being plastered on posters around the country and naming him as The Ministry's Undesirable Number One.

"He was very firm about things. He made sure I got the message that he doesn't forgive and he doesn't forget." Kingsley explained, watching Albus' reactions closely. "He holds you responsible for a lot of things that have happened."

Albus grimaced at that, he had to admit though, he was responsible for a lot of the things that had befallen James, and his mentality of 'I don't forgive and I don't forget' was certainly what he remembered of the young man who could keep a grudge even longer than Severus could, and be downright vicious when provoked.

"I see," Albus said with a small nod, laying down the horrifying piece of parchment on his desk for now. "And your progress in the department?"

"At a standstill," Kingsley explained bluntly. "With today's attack, Director Bones is using it to push for faster reforms in The Ministry. Even The Minister is on board after it became public knowledge that the two Death Eaters they'd taken down were working at The Ministry. We all reckon the magical contracts will be brought in early next week, maybe even by the weekend."

"Do you know anything about the contracts so far?" Albus asked hopefully.

"No," Kingsley shook his head. "They're keeping it quiet, probably to stop people trying to find their way around them. All I've heard is that they will prevent anyone working from The Ministry from working against them, or subverting their jobs by taking orders from anyone else."
"I see," Albus sighed, sinking down in his seat as he let the ramifications of that filter through to his brain. On the surface, it was a rather good idea, one he could easily see James' hand in. It would prevent any Aurors from working for or supporting Voldemort in his rise to power, and secure The Ministry quite effectively from having any inside infiltration. On the other hand, it meant that if Voldemort did manage to infiltrate The Ministry at a high enough level, or used influence like Lucius Malfoy to control The Minister, then he would have the entire Ministry loyal to his command without them even knowing they were under his control, and they would be unable to fight him without leaving The Ministry's employment.

Another thought was that, depending on the specific nature of these contracts, he would very likely lose any influence over Kingsley at all once he signed the contract, as Kingsley would be unable to work for him, or assist him while working for The Ministry.

Given how Kingsley had reported James' antagonistic attitude today and confirmed that James already knew that Kingsley was reporting to him, he could easily accept that James had planned this outcome already and had factored it into his plans, taking away even more of his support and influence in a stroke that targeted him just as much as it targeted Voldemort.

It was a rather sobering thought to realise that from James' perspective, he could easily see how he would come to the conclusion that he and Voldemort were the same. They had both been dispatched from Hogwarts by James rather easily, they both used their own methods to gather influence and information from within The Ministry through infiltrating it with people loyal to them, and they had both, to their own detriment, made plans to make young Harry Potter's life far shorter than he deserved.

As he looked across at the parchment James had written and took somber notice of how James had interpreted The Prophecy, he had to admit that looking at his actions now, he couldn't fault James for anything he had done or how he was looking at things now.

"Thank you Kingsley," Albus nodded with a small sigh, using his thumb and index finger to massage his temples as he tried to think where all his planning had gone wrong.

He'd arranged things so perfectly, taking young Harry when he was only a baby and committing to have him raised by those awful relatives of Lily's. Sirius being thrown into Azkaban had been an unexpected bonus at the time, he'd truly believed Sirius had been guilty which was why he'd never investigated the situation more thoroughly, a fact that was now working against him as now both James and Sirius were lined against him.

As Kingsley left, Albus slumped down in his chair and tried to picture where he could go from here. He had to regain control of Harry Potter somehow, but there was no way he could see to do it.

Infiltrating Hogwarts would have been the easiest option, but now he'd heard confirmation that James had taken the Defence Against the Dark Arts position, he knew that James would be keeping Harry under close watch.

He simply had to wait and bide his time, at least for a year. The Defence Against the Dark Arts position was cursed by Voldemort himself, so he would just have to wait and see how the curse affected James towards the end of the year. After that, he would be able to swoop in and take control of things.

Yes, patience and planning were his best options. He couldn't rush anything, he needed to examine every step and plan for every contingency, he just had to be patient, and soon, everything he'd worked for would be his again.
Sitting in his living room after finally taking the time to rearrange things to how he preferred the room to be laid out, James took a moment to enjoy the peace and quiet as he gathered his thoughts and tried to plan out his next move.

The evening had gone, well, about as well as he could have expected it to go really after his revaluation to Julia.

They'd all talked, for quite a while honestly, and then Amelia had floo'ed back to the Greengrass house with her to talk things through witch to witch, leaving him alone at The Manor to do whatever he wanted.

Honestly, he'd actually thought speaking with Julia had gone reasonably well. Amelia and Julia seemed to have quite a long friendship and past together, even though Julia was quite a few years older than she was.

One thing Amelia had pointed out, was that if they did go ahead with the betrothal, then Harry would legally have both Amelia and Julia looking out for his interests if the worst did happen. They were both happy to keep Sirius around and in touch with him, but it would add a layer of security to Harry's life that wouldn't be there otherwise.

He had to admit, that was a rather reassuring notion to contemplate. Not that he assumed anything bad was going to happen to himself, or that Sirius would do anything stupid, again, but having that extra reassurance that there was someone with the legal power to take his younger self in and help him through everything, instead of returning him to the Dursleys like Dumbledore would no doubt push for, was definitely worth having a plan for.

Both Amelia and Julia had also raised the point that having a witches figure in Harry's life, two in this case, might be exactly what he needed as well. Going from his own past, and the distinct lack of both a father or mothering figure in his life growing up, he couldn't deny that point either.

The fact was, both witches had given him a lot to think about tonight. All of their points had been well thought out and brought up things he hadn't considered before.

He was effectively in a very high risk situation here, with both Voldemort and Dumbledore gunning for him, not to mention however many Death Eaters in the process, and however many members of The Aurors and Wizengamot that he was going to piss off as well.

So having someone, two someone's there, to legally take custody of Harry if something should happen to him, in a way that Dumbledore couldn't interfere with, would definitely be a weight off his mind.

If he was honest with himself, he'd never actually pictured himself getting married before. Certainly not in a pure blood custom like this three way marriage would be. It had been a passing thought before, a daydream about what things between him and Hermione could have been if he'd actually pulled his head out of his arse in Hogwarts and realised how much Hermione had meant to him, instead of chasing after popular girls like Cho and Ginny.

Maybe having a mothering figure in Amelia and Julia would help his younger self figure out
witches in a way he'd never been able to, so that he didn't make the same stupid mistakes that he had made with his life.

That's what this was all about anyway, putting everything right so that his younger self, along with all the decent people in the magical world, didn't have to put up with the pure blood bigotry, incessant dark lords, ignorance and stupidity any longer.

Sitting back on his leather couch he took stock around the room, thinking that if they did go ahead with this betrothal contract thing, then he would have to rework several areas of the manor to make room for the Bones and Greengrass ladies if they all wanted to live together as one family.

This entire thing had come entirely out of the blue, leaving him floundering a bit and trying to figure out if it was a good idea or not.

Amelia was certainly a bright point in his life right now, which was something he'd given up looking for in his own time. She didn't want to be with him because of his money or his fame or because he was The-Boy-Who-Lived, or any of that crap. She loved him for who he was, and he loved her because of it.

That realisation caused him to sit up in the couch suddenly and rewind his mind slightly. He loved Amelia.

That was the first time that little sentence had ever rattled through his mind and it startled him a bit more than he'd like to admit. Love was a foreign thing, a nebulous and abstract concept that he'd never really been able to define before.

He loved Amelia.

Could he feel something without actually understanding it? Apparently it seemed like it, because the more he thought about it, the more sure he was about it.

He wanted Amelia in his life, to stand with him and be part of his crazy and messed up family. Being honest with himself, he wasn't even sure if he'd have even got this far in his plans to deal with Voldemort without her. She was important to him, and he valued that more than anything else.

"Wow," He breathed out, letting that realisation wash over him as he lent back in the couch again and contemplated that in the silence of the manor.

Love, he'd found love at last.
Chapter 19

TITLE: Double Back

DISCLAIMER: All things Harry Potter belong J K Rowling... basically, if you recognise it, it isn’t mine... Please don't sic the Aurors on me, I’m just here for the fun.

6th September

Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry
Highlands of Scotland
Great Hall

It was barely moments after breakfast had finished that Harry, Susan, Daphne, Neville and Hermione rushed up to the teachers platform at the front of the hall, Harry ignoring all sense of propriety as he ran forward and hugged his older self in a way that had Minerva, Filius and Andromeda all chuckling as they watched the display.

"Hey mini-mi," James grinned down.

"I was worried," Harry admitted, not wanting to let go of the hug at all. "You were fighting werewolves!" He whispered, looking up at his older self.

"Only one," James confirmed, ruffling his younger self's hair as he moved away from the teachers platform to sit down on the edge of it. "I take it you all heard what happened yesterday?" He asked, looking around the group with a surprised smile when he saw Hermione there as well.

Her bushy hair was just as wild as he remembered it, and her buck toothed nervous smile brought back so many memories of their first three years together at Hogwarts before everything had gone to hell.

"Everyone did Professor Potter," Daphne explained with a nod. "The stories were all around the school."

"I'm not surprised," James chuckled, ruffling his hair as he looked around the group. "Knowing the Hogwarts rumour mill, there was probably an army of werewolves and a hundred or so Death Eaters?" He asked, with a smirk.

"Something like that," Harry grinned over to his older self.

"Sorry to disappoint you, but it was one werewolf and three Death Eaters, that's it." James explained, noticing that Minerva, Filius and Andromeda had stuck around to listen in as well. "I'm sure some of you have heard of Fenrir Greyback?" He asked, looking around at everyone, noticing that aside from his younger self and Hermione, everyone in the group paled, including Minerva who was looking at him with a worried expression now.
"A truly sadistic werewolf, one of the worst of his kind ever recorded." Minerva explained when
Harry looked up at her.

"He's not a problem any more." James said bluntly, looking up at Minerva to reassure her.

"He's... the Aurors have him in custody at last?" Minerva asked in shock.

"Not quite," James shook his head. "It was a bit more... final than that." He explained, not wanting
to go into details about how close it had been with Susan here.

"I... I see," Minerva nodded at that.

"But I'm fine, Amelia's fine, Greyback was the only casualty. The three Death Eaters were arrested
by the Aurors, interrogated and charged. They'll be in Azkaban by now enjoying all the comforts
of the prison life." James explained with a chuckle, giving Susan a reassuring smile when he saw
her breath a sigh of relief at the news.

"I'm certain Remus will be heartened by the news," Minerva explained with a soft smile at the
thought, startling James as he hadn't considered that yet, and certainly hadn't known that Minerva
had known about Remus' furry little problem.

"Probably," James admitted with a nod. "You lot should get to class, come by my office at lunch
time, I'll floo Amelia and have her come through so you can hear that she's alright from her as
well." He explained, looking at Susan who smiled gratefully at him for the offer.

"Thanks Professor," Susan said with a wide smile, wiping her eyes to swipe away the tears of relief
that had fallen when she'd heard her aunt Amelia was alright.

"Anytime Susan," James replied with a soft smile. "We're going to have to have a time to get
everyone together soon though, with Daphne too." He explained, drawing puzzled expressions
from his younger self, Susan and Daphne together. "We'll try and set something up this weekend
alright?" He asked, waiting for the three of them to nod in response.

"Very well," Minerva nodded, clapping her hands twice to grab the students attention. "To class
with you, you don't want to be late." She informed the group, causing Harry to give his older self
another quick hug before Susan dashed in and hugged him as well, surprising everyone in the
group before the five of them broke away to head to their morning classes.

"Thanks for indulging that," James said, nodding over to Minerva as he stood up from the platform
and dusted off the back of his coat from where he'd been sitting.

"Not at all," Minerva waved away the comment with a reassuring smile. "You were telling the
truth about Greyback?"

"Entirely," James nodded, noticing Filius and Andromeda looking at him with awed glances now.
"Blasting curse to the side of the head," He explained, checking to make sure Susan and the rest
had left the Great Hall before he continued on. "He had Amelia in his claws when I got there, it
was the first curse that came to mind."

"I see," Minerva pursed her lips but nodded in agreement with his choice. "A single fatal cast I can
assume?"

"Definitely," James admitted. "Amelia was cleaning pieces of his brain out of her hair while we
arrested the Death Eaters. Two Ministry infiltrators with the Dark Mark, Runcorn and Macnair.
Angus Crabbe was there as well, they all got taken down, hard."
"I shall have to inform Mr Crabbe, I'm not entirely certain if his mother is still in the picture." Minerva explained hesitantly.

"He'll be in Azkaban now, Amelia had him display the Dark Mark openly for everyone to see before she interrogated him with Veritaserum just like the other two." James explained with a shrug. "I doubt it went well for him."

"I have to agree there," Minerva admitted with a sigh. "Very well, I shall speak to Mr Crabbe and enquire about his home situation before informing him of yesterday's events." She explained with a pained look. "Am I to assume your rather hostile policy of fatal casting is going to be your way forward then?"

"A hundred percent," James admitted without a care about how it sounded. "I've seen murders and rapists go free, just because they lied or bought their way out of it. I've had that hanging on my conscience before, I won't have it again." He explained bluntly. "If they've got the Dark Mark, they're following Voldemort's orders, they don't get any second chances from me." He explained with a shrug. "I'll be more generous with Dumbledore's stooges unless they try and take Harry, then all bets are off." He explained firmly. "I don't give second chances, not any more." He said, before walking off to make sure he got to the defence classroom in time for his morning lesson.

"I'm entirely sure he means it as well." Filius admitted in a hushed voice as he came to stand next to Minerva with Andromeda.

"I am almost certain he does." Minerva admitted with a frown. "Quite a change from Albus' policy of constant forgiveness no matter the crime."

"It's a good thing as far as I'm concerned," Andromeda said thoughtfully. "We all know how many Death Eaters got away with everything after the last war. Murders and rapists going free on the 'but he made me do it' defence that was always a pack of lies, and everyone knew it."

"I can't deny that," Minerva sighed with a pained expression on her face. "It just... it seems a rather dark path to take, no matter the instigation."

"After what James has been through?" Filius prompted her as he stroked his beard in thought. "Losing his wife to Voldemort, Albus kidnapping Harry? I admit, I don't know the full story, but it seems to me if anyone has cause for turning to this path, it would be James."

"Well, I certainly agree with his methods," Andromeda said with a look of approval. "For far too long the dark have got away with a slap on the wrist for everything they've done. Now that they realise that there are those of us that won't back down and will fight for what we believe in, maybe they will have cause to reassess their actions."

"Indeed, the dark factions have too long acted without consequence, I'm quite satisfied to see someone stand up in defence of others." Filius agreed with a small smile. "Hopefully now the younger generation will see this and be turned away from taking that path."

"We can hope," Andromeda nodded in agreement, happy that Filius was on her side for this as well.

"I only hope this does not escalate things further," Minerva admitted with a sigh. "Very well, I shall leave you while I contact Mr Crabbe's mother, if I can." She said, walking away while deep in thought about how James was happy using fatal casting in defence of others.

"I believe it is just an adjustment, Albus was well known for his lax attitude to punishments,
offering forgiveness without consequence for even the most vile offences." Filius explained when Andromeda turned to look at him in question.

"I remember him being very casual about things, but I can't honestly say I was ever in a situation where I needed or witnessed his attitude personally." Andromeda admitted thoughtfully. "That said, I was a Slytherin, and I seemed to view us all with disdain regardless of our actual actions."

"Indeed," Filius nodded with a sigh. "I've come to review Albus attitude and actions myself after the last few days, and have to admit that there are more than a few questionable things he did that I failed to take note of at the time." He explained. "I perhaps think that many of us were blinded by his past achievements and simply failed to notice the things he did that were not as light as he would have liked to appear."

"Perhaps," Andromeda admitted grudgingly. "As I said, he always looked on Slytherin with disdain, no matter what we did, it was always something that it seemed we had to apologise for to him. I remember Nymphadora writing to me when she was sorted, how Albus seemed overtly surprised by her sorting."

"I wouldn't surprise me in the least," Filius nodded thoughtfully. "Well, if you'll excuse me, I have other things to take care of this morning myself."

"Yes, of course." Andromeda smiled, watching Filius leave the Great Hall before she made her way down to the potions dungeons herself to prepare for the day.

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Defence Against the Dark Arts Office
Second Floor
Hogwarts

"Yeah, come on through." James said in acknowledgement, standing up from where he'd been reading through the curriculum textbook for the first time to actually figure out exactly what the first years were supposed to be learning, instead of going from his own experience and memories.

Tossing the text book by the side he grinned as the fireplace lit up green before Amelia stepped through, then flared again after a moment's pause for Julia to follow her through the fireplace.

"Hey," James smiled, leaning in to steal a quick kiss from Amelia. "Julia." He nodded over with a smile.

"Jam... you do still prefer James then?" Julia asked with a wry smile on her face.

"It'll keep things easier," James admitted, ruffling his hair a bit. "I know it's weird, but..."

"No, I understand." Julia nodded in agreement. "Rather cunning actually, not something I would have expected from a Gryffindor. Or was that Hufflepuff?"

"Gryffindor," James confirmed. "It was actually a surprise to me when the younger me got sent into Hufflepuff." He admitted. "Though the hat did want to put me in Slytherin, so there's that."

"I can only imagine the chaos that would have wrought." Julia exclaimed with a chuckle.

"Me and Malfoy in the same dorm?" James snorted, shaking his head. "I don't think I'd have survived first year, probably not even the first week." He admitted with a self-deprecating grin.
"Is everything alright?" Amelia asked, noticing James' hesitant mood already.

"Sort of," James sighed, gesturing for them to take a seat on one of the three couches or chairs he'd prepared in the living quarters of the office where they could talk before his mini-me and the other kids came up. "I think I screwed up yesterday, a bit anyway." He admitted as he sat down on the couch where he'd been while Amelia and Julia took a seat together on a couch opposite.

"Oh?" Amelia frowned, running over everything that had happened yesterday in her mind and wondering what mistake James was thinking he'd made.

"The rumour mill at Hogwarts already had all the details of what happened at Diagon Alley," James explained, rubbing his face in annoyance. "When I got to the hall this morning, you should have seen Susan and Harry's faces." He explained. "Neville as well now I think about it." He added on.

"Ah," Amelia grimaced. "I assume Harry, and Susan for that matter, had heard the worst had happened, or imagined as such?"

"Probably," James nodded. "Harry was hugging the stuffing out of me before I managed to explain what had happened, by the time I got to telling everyone we were both OK, Susan was actually crying with relief."

"We should have expected this," Amelia frowned thoughtfully. "Harry certainly, and Susan to an extent already, both see you as a father figure. I'm aware that this isn't something you had growing up, so it's... it's not something you would have been aware of." She admitted. "Both Harry and Susan have lost so much already, I dare say that the worry of losing you already was quite forefront in their minds when they heard about yesterday's attack."

"Ah," James grimaced, rubbing his face with his hands as he contemplated that. "Crap." He muttered.

"Indeed," Amelia chuckled with a wry smile at him. "Given that in your life, you haven't had anyone to worry about you before, not like this, it will be an adjustment you'll all have to make."

"It sort of cements something I was thinking about last night as well though," James admitted cautiously, looking between Amelia and Julia. "When you two said that if something does happen to me, you'll be willing to take in Harry? I'd obviously be more than willing to return the favour, with Susan, Daphne and Astoria." He explained, drawing smiles from Amelia and Julia in response.

"You're certain?" Amelia asked, her tone stating that she wasn't just asking about the kids now and his offer, but about the entire thing as one package.

"More than I've been about anything else," James nodded with a grin. "That is... I mean... if you two both still want to... you know..." He frowned, trying to gather his thoughts together.

"I did warn you he doesn't quite have the eloquence you're used to," Amelia chuckled, looking over at Julia who was smirking at James in response.

"Hah hah," James muttered dryly. "You know what I mean." He said with a grin. "Yes, I'm certain. For a dozen reasons or more, but giving Harry, Susan, Daphne and Astoria some extra security and safety means a hell of a lot."

"I'm certain Susan would love to call Harry her older brother, officially of course." Amelia smiled widely at the thought.
"I will speak to Daphne and Astoria of course, but provisionally with their acceptance, I can see..."

Julia cut off as a loud knocking noise came from the office area next door.

"Ah, sorry, they're early." James muttered, standing up from his couch and heading into the office area, leaving Amelia and Julia to stand up from the couch and look at each other with questioning looks.

It didn't take long for them to hear a few voices joining James as well, before Harry led the way through into the living area of the office cautiously, stopping by the door when he saw Amelia and Julia by the couches, followed by Susan, Daphne and two other students in Gryffindor robes.

"Go on, get in there." James chuckled, bringing up the rear as he shuffled the five students through into the living area.

"Auntie!" Susan was first to dive out of the group, dashing forwards to hug Amelia for all she was worth.

"Mother," Daphne smiled and gave a respectful nod over to her mother, though her expression showed how happy she was to see her mother again, even after barely a week of being at school and away from home.

"Go on, grab a chair. Sit wherever you want you lot." James explained, pushing everyone further into the room when Daphne moved to sit with her mother, and Susan stayed glued to Amelia.

"Amelia, Julia, this is Neville Longbottom and Hermione Granger, Gryffindors obviously." He explained with a smile, indicating the two Gryffindors.

"Ah, your godson." Amelia smiled over, not having met Neville before. "Relax, we don't bite." She chuckled when both Neville and Hermione offered nervous smiles at the group.

"Madame Bones," Neville gave a small smile to Amelia. "Madame Greengrass." He followed with a similar smile to Julia.

"Granger, of the Dagworth-Granger potioners perhaps?" Julia asked, raising her eyebrow in question.

"I... I don't think so?" Hermione asked, a bit unsure of herself at the question.

"Relax everyone, seriously." James chuckled, grabbing his seat back and settling on the couch before his younger self jumped up and sat next to him with a grin.

"This place is amazing, is this what the Gryffindor dorms are like?" Harry smiled widely, looking around at the dark furniture with red and gold accents and decorations.

"Pretty similar," James confirmed with a nod, watching as everyone took a seat, with Neville and Hermione nervously taking two chairs that were away from the couches. "I thought Susan could do with seeing you, especially after this morning." He explained with a chuckle when he saw Amelia's questioning look.

"I was so worried," Susan explained, happily sitting next to Amelia, in the middle next to Daphne while Julia was at the far end of the couch.

"I'm fine honey, really." Amelia said quickly, reassuring the girl that was all but a daughter to her. "James took care of things rather quickly, he actually put my Aurors to shame, something I am quite loathed to admit." She explained with a dry laugh.
"I wish there was some way we could be in touch easier," Harry frowned. "It's not like they have any phones around here, but owls take ages to get anywhere, and we only get them every morning." He explained, noticing how Hermione was nodding in agreement with his complaint about phones.

"Actually..." James grinned, remembering the communication mirrors Sirius had giving him back in Hogwarts. "I might have an idea there, I'll have to talk to Sirius when I get chance." He said, wondering how easily they'd be able to make communication mirrors for the entire group so they could talk with each other when they needed to.

"I'm just happy you're OK." Susan said, smiling over to James happily.

"Honestly, I'm fine, really. None of them even got close with a curse." James confirmed.

"As much as it pains me to confirm his ego, that is the truth." Amelia admitted with a hard done by sigh, drawing laughs from the children around the room.

"Hey, I'm not that bad." James complained with a mock frown.

"Yes dear," Amelia smiled, drawing a laugh from Julia and the kids, even Harry, at her dry response.

"Anyway," James drawled, moving the discussion on. "How are you five settling in? I haven't really had time to make it down to the Hufflepuff common room or to any of the others yet, so I figured I'd ask while I've got you all here?"

"Great!" Harry grinned up eagerly. "Everyone in Hufflepuff is super friendly, it's a really relaxing place. The common room is just perfect, it's quiet and peaceful, I can just relax there and read without anyone bugging me!"

"Really?" Hermione demanded, the jealousy plain on her face. "Sorry." She whispered quickly when she realised she'd drawn everyone's attention.

"I know what you mean," Neville said quickly, trying to draw the attention off of Hermione. "The Gryffindor common room isn't exactly a quiet place, trying to read there or get anything done is a nightmare." He explained.

"I remember," James commented, rubbing his forehead as the memories of how loud the Gryffindor common room was came back to him.

"Can't they come and study with us?" Susan asked, looking over at James.

"Um, actually, I don't know?" James said with a frown. "I'll ask Pomona, see what she says. Honestly I can't see why not, I don't actually think there's a rule against being invited into another common room, at least, not that I know of." He mused, idly smiling that now he'd actually visited all four of the common rooms and was probably one of the very rare people that had done so.

"I can't think of one either," Amelia frowned thoughtfully, looking over to Julia who shook her head as well.

"I'll ask this afternoon," James promised, looking over to Hermione with a firm nod. He could do that much for her at least to start with, especially after all the time she'd stuck with him over the years.

"And Slytherin?" Julia asked, looking at Daphne with a curious glance.
"As expected," Daphne nodded thoughtfully. "Several groups, each vying for popularity in the house, I've remained neutral for now however and plan to remain so."

"Neutral?" Harry asked, not really understanding what Daphne was talking about.

"Slytherin house is a lot more... political and formal than Gryffindor or Hufflepuff seem to be. There is a greater emphasis on traditions and propriety than I can imagine the other houses have." Julia explained patiently. "Where Gryffindor places more emphasis on popularity and fame?" She asked, looking to James who nodded in response. "Slytherins gain acclaim in their house through family political connections, wealth and influence."

"Oh," Harry frowned, not really understanding that at all.

"Don't worry about it," James said, shaking his head down to Harry. "Unless you decide to date a Slytherin, you'll never have to bother about what goes on down there."

"Oh, alright." Harry nodded reluctantly, wondering exactly how Slytherins were different now.

"Actually, what... what we're talking about, will affect Daphne a great deal." Julia said thoughtfully. "In both her in-house acclaim, and her perceived reputation."

"Right, yeah, that." James grimaced. "I forgot." He admitted with a sigh. "You want to talk to them both about it now then?" He asked, flicking his eyes between Amelia and Julia.

"It would be better than several owls," Amelia admitted with a nod.

"Alright," James shrugged, standing up from the couch. "If you three come with me, we'll leave these four to chat for a minute. You mind throwing up a silencing charm around the doorway?" He asked when Harry, Hermione and Neville stood up to follow up.

"Of course," Amelia nodded at that, waiting for James to lead his group through to the other room before casting a silencing charm around the four of them so they could talk without being overhead.

"Auntie?" Susan asked, looking up at her aunt with a questioning expression.

"There's... something, we need to discuss with you, that will affect both of you." Amelia admitted with a soft smile, looking down at Susan.

"Dad?" Harry questioned as he followed his older self out into the office area. "Is something wrong?"

"No, it's nothing like that." James chuckled, shaking his head. "Me and Amelia, we've just been... talking and planning on what we'd like to do with our lives." He explained, trying to ease his younger self into this slowly.

"This is amazing."

James turned around at the whisper, seeing Hermione had automatically been drawn to the office bookshelves where she was looking through the titles with an excited smile on her face. "Should have known you'd be drawn back there." He chuckled. "Tell you what, next week we're starting on the knockback jinx, standard book of spells grade two, it's a relatively simple cast, I'm sure the
three of you will have no problems mastering it."

"I'm... I don't know if I can..."

"Nonsense Neville, I'm sure with practice you'll be able to do it just as well as any of us." Hermione said quickly, spotting Neville's nervousness coming to the surface. "I mean, um, Professor Potter..."

"She's right," James laughed, waving off Hermione's worried expression. "You're going to be a great wizard Neville, trust me on that." He said with a firm smile over at him. "Actually..." James frowned, remembering all the troubles Neville had in school. "Let me have a look at your wand for a second?"

"My... um... OK Professor?" Neville stammered out, sliding his wand out of his pocket and gingerly offering it for James to take.

Eyeing the wand that had caused Neville so many problems over the years, James rolled his eyes at how a simple little thing like this had been the cause of Neville's confidence issues for so long. "This isn't your wand, is it Neville?" He asked with a sigh, handing the wand back to Neville and forcing down the grimace that came when he realised he'd completely forgotten about Neville's wand problems.

"It's... it's my dad's wand Professor." Neville admitted, causing Hermione to gasp in response.

"Exactly," James nodded, nodding to Hermione. "The wand chooses the wizard Neville, not the other way around." He explained with a nod. "Just because that wand was right for your dad, doesn't mean it's right for you." He simplified. "You're as much your mother as your father, just like my parents wands wouldn't work for me."

"Oh... I... I didn't know?" Neville looked up to James and then back down to his wand. "But... my gran said..."

"Let me deal with your gran," James said, waving that thought off. "I'll take you down to Ollivander's when I get a second, I'll probably have to check in with Minerva first, but I'll get it done."

"You can trust my dad Neville, when he says he's going to do something, he does it." Harry grinned over, happy that his older self was going to help Neville like this.

"Why don't you two go and practice the knockback jinx in the common room?" James prompted them. "I'll figure things through with Minerva and come and find you when I get chance." He explained, nodding to Neville. "And you can both come to me if you get stuck on anything alright? Defence, Charms, Transfiguration, probably not Herbology, but that's Neville's best subject anyway." He explained with a laugh.

"Thanks Professor!" Hermione smiled widely at that, accepting the offer for what it was.

"Go on, go practice and let me know how you get on," James laughed, shaking his head at Hermione's enthusiasm as he moved to open the door to let Hermione and Neville out of the office area, letting Harry wave to them before he closed it quietly.

"So, um... it's family stuff then?" Harry asked hesitantly, looking at the doorway where he still couldn't hear any noise coming from the other room where he'd left Susan and Daphne with their parents.
"Pretty much," James sighed, leaning on his desk and sitting there comfortably as he contemplated how to word this. "You know, um, me and Amelia have been... dating I guess?"

"Uhuh," Harry nodded, wrinkling his nose a bit as he thought about it.

"I know you don't know what a betrothal is, hell, I didn't at your age." James explained, ruffling his hair nervously. "Alright, you know what engaged means right?"

"You and Miss Bones are going to get married?" Harry whispered, his eyes going wide at that revelation.

"Yes, well, sort of." James grimaced. "It's a bit more complicated than that because of traditions, family names and all that sort of stuff."

"Alright?" Harry frowned. "Would that... I mean, does that mean Susan is going to be my sister for real?"

"Pretty much," James confirmed with a nod, simplifying it down. "And Daphne." He said bluntly, ripping the bandage off in one go.

"Da... uh... huh?" Harry frowned over, frowning as he tried to figure out how that worked.

"The betrothal... lets call it engagement, I'll be engaged to Amelia, and to Julia." James explained, watching his younger self's reactions carefully to see how he was taking this.

"And... there's an and? You can do that?" Harry asked in shock.

"You can," James nodded. "So I'd be marrying Amelia and Julia."

"Oh... I... oh," Harry whispered, furrowing his brow as that thought nestled in his brain and he tried to think his way through it. "So... they'd be like my new mums?"

"If you wanted to call them that, then... that's something you can talk about with them." James explained with a sigh. "Julia knows, about... about me, us, that whole time travel thing anyway." He explained, ruffling his hair as he got caught up in the pronouns again. "I'm sure our mum is going to hex the life out of me for this someday, but..." He paused with a shrug. "Is that OK?" He asked curiously.

"I'm... I like Susan I guess, she'd be a great sister." Harry admitted slowly. "Daphne... I mean, she's fun but... I haven't really spent time with her like I have Susan. She comes across... she's a bit cold sometimes, and really formal, like all the time."

"That's because she's a Slytherin, outside of school you can help her relax a bit more and get used to how we are. We can arrange some time for you and Susan to spent time with Daphne and her sister." James explained with a nod.

"Sister?" Harry whispered, his eyes going wide again.

"Oh, yeah, sorry." James grimaced over at his younger self. "Astoria, she's two or three years younger than Daphne I think, something like that." He explained. "So you'll be getting three sisters out of it."

"Three..." Harry whispered to himself. "That's a big family." He said with a grin, drawing a snort of laughter out of his older self.
"Don't forget Neville as well," James grinned over. "He's my godson, so... you can think of him as an extra brother." He said with a laugh.

"Wow!" Harry exclaimed, shaking his head at that thought. "And Uncle Sirius! I... I always wanted a family, a real family."


"We're getting a family?" Harry asked in a whisper.

"It looks that way," James said with a wide smile at how happy his younger self seemed to be with the decision.

"I'm getting a real family," Harry whispered to himself, unable to stop his smile from practically splitting his face in two.

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**Living room area**

"Auntie?" Susan asked, looking up at her aunt with a questioning expression.

"There's... something, we need to discuss with you, that will affect both of you." Amelia admitted with a soft smile, looking down at Susan.

"That will affect both of you." Julia clarified, making sure Daphne was paying apt attention as well.

"Yes," Amelia nodded, frowning when Julia gestured for her to go first. "There's, well, there is talk of a betrothal contract." She explained bluntly.

"For me?" Susan squeaked out in shock.

"For me," Amelia shook her head quickly, pausing Susan's imminent panic attack.

"You and James?" Susan bounced on the couch excitedly when she realised what her aunt was saying.

"Yes," Amelia confirmed with a nod.

"Oh auntie!" Susan smiled widely, turning around on the couch so she could hug her auntie properly. "That's amazing!"

"I know," Amelia laughed, hugging Susan back and laughing down into her hair as she held her close. "However, I know you're aware of our line continuance issues?"

"Me," Susan whispered, her hug growing loose as she realised what this meant for her.

"Actually, me." Julia interrupted, causing Susan to flick her head around to Julia in shock.

"Mother?" Daphne asked, raising a single pale blonde eyebrow at that piece of news.

"We have discussed it, and yes, we are... going to see if we are suitable together for the arrangement." Julia confirmed with a nod. "I will be taking the Potter name if the betrothal goes through to a wedding." She explained.
"Which means I'll still be a Bones, even though I'm married to James." Amelia explained. "Which also means, there won't be any continuance problems for you, hopefully." She explained, looking down to Susan with a soft smile.

"So Harry will be my brother?" Susan asked with a wide grin. "A real brother?"

"Our brother," Daphne corrected her with a small smile of her own. "And I've acquired another sister it seems." She said with a smirk.

"Oh my god, sisters?" Susan whispered as that fact filtered into her brain.

"Of course, if you, and Astoria for that matter, chose to take the Potter name, that will be up to you." Julia confirmed, looking down at her daughter.

"Father was happy to see our name fall extinct with my generation," Daphne mused aloud. "I see no reason not to allow it." She explained with a nod. "I'll think about it." She said with a small smile, running 'Daphne Elise Potter' through her head a few times to see how she felt about it.

"Daphne Potter?" Susan voiced aloud with a giggle as if she was reading Daphne's mind. "I like it." She admitted, smiling as she thought about it.

"It does have certain connotations to it." Daphne admitted, being linked to Harry and Professor Potter as family would certainly have both a lot of positive aspects, as well as more than a few negative aspects for her to consider as a Slytherin. "I assume there is no date set for these discussions yet?"

"No," Julia shook her head. "We have only... I would say we are entering the betrothal slowly as we speak."

"Of course," Daphne nodded thoughtfully at that. "Astoria?"

"I'll be speaking to her this afternoon when I am finished here." Julia admitted.

"Then... I hope it goes well." Daphne said softly, giving her mother a soft smile at the news. "It would be good to see you happy again with someone." She admitted with another smile.

"I know," Julia smiled down, nodding at her daughter to indicate she knew what she meant.

"So, you don't mind this then?" Amelia asked curiously, looking to Susan and Daphne in turn.

"Nope, it's great!" Susan grinned up at her. "I get a brother, and two sisters!" She said with an excited laugh.

"If it makes my mother happy, I'm not going to object." Daphne shook her head at that. "This... this will be a rather large family now." She explained after thinking about it.

"Two Hufflepuffs and a Slytherin," Amelia chuckled at the thought. "Maybe two if Astoria is sorted the same way."

"And a Gryffindor," Julia added in with a small smirk. "Neville is James' godson, since his parents are... well, it's down to James to fill in the role of his father for him."

"I see," Daphne nodded at that. "Two brothers then." She mused aloud. "Interesting." She whispered to herself, wondering how that would affect things when it became public knowledge that her family was linked to the Potters, Bones, and Longbottom families.
"We just need a Ravelclaw to collect the entire set," Amelia laughed, shaking her head at the thought.

"Astoria," Daphne said wryly, looking up at Amelia with a nod. "She spends more time around books than anyone else I know."

"She'll fit right in with Susan and Harry then," Amelia chuckled. "Those two barely took their heads out of their Charms book in the month before Hogwarts started."

"Auntie!" Susan exclaimed with an embarrassed frown on her face.

"So you both are alright with this then?" Amelia double checked. "I understand if things might be a bit weird, having James as a Professor as well as... well, a step father if things go as well as I think they will." She explained thoughtfully. "I know James wouldn't want to replace your father, either of you, but he will be there for you if you need him for anything like that."

"Of course," Daphne nodded thoughtfully. That was certainly a positive thing to add to the thought, having the Defeater-of-Dumbledore and Vanquisher-of-Voldemort as a father figure would definitely stop any betrothal contracts heading her way, or to Astoria, from the darker families.

She could certainly see why her mother would be interested in a betrothal like this, it protected her and Astoria with a far greater threat than anything the Greengrass family would be able to manage on their own.

"Fine," Amelia smiled over to Julia who nodded in response before she flicked her wand towards the doorway and cancelled the silencing charm around them. "You can come back in now." She called out, waiting for a brief moment before James came back into the room with Harry following a few steps behind him.

Susan was up in an instant, dashing over to Harry where she practically glom hugged him, causing him to tumble into the wall and hold onto it to keep from falling over. "We'll be brother and sister, really really brother and sister!" She grinned excitedly at him.

"So, I guess they don't have a problem with it then?" James asked with a grin as he looked around the room to where Amelia was trying not to laugh at Susan's reaction.

"It doesn't appear so," Julia shook her head with a small smile on her lips.

"Congratulations Po... Harry," Daphne stood up, catching herself in time before giving him a wry smile of her own. "You seem to have acquired three sisters in a single day. Perhaps setting a record at the same time." She mused thoughtfully.

"Probably," Harry laughed as Susan untangled herself from her hugging position.

"Where's Neville and Hermione?" Susan asked, looking through to the office to see if they were waiting there politely.

"Out practising knockback charms," James explained. "I forgot I'd invited them before I floo'ed you." He explained to Amelia. "They probably went to the Gryffindor common room, or down to get some more lunch."

"Knockback charms are going to be our next homework then?" Daphne asked curiously, always wanting to get ahead with some inside information if she could.

"Next week," James nodded at her. "After that, the full body-bind curse. Used in tandem, they can
be quite effective and chain together relatively easily with practice."

"Thank you," Daphne nodded at that, making a mental note to check both those out so that she could start practising ahead of schedule.

"Should we... um... leave the adults to talk?" Harry asked, looking at Susan first and then to Daphne.

"Or find somewhere where we can talk as well?" Susan nodded, drawing a nod of agreement from Daphne as well.

"Right, um... nice to see you again Miss Bones, and to meet you Miss Greengrass." Harry smiled over politely to the two other adults.

"How many times do I have to ask you to call me Amelia?" Amelia laughed, standing up from the couch and smiling at him.

"And I'm Julia to you young man." Julia smiled down at him as well. "It was nice to meet you too."

"I'm glad you're OK," Susan said, quickly running to give her auntie one last hug. "And I'm really glad we're all going to be one big family now."

"Mother," Daphne smiled, quickly giving her mother a small hug.

"Owl me if you need anything, or speak with James of course, he can contact me by floo, I'll arrange for him to have the address as well." Julia said with a smile over to her daughter.

"Of course," Daphne smiled back, waiting for Susan to finish hugging her aunt before she followed Harry out of the room with Susan following her out into the corridor and closing the office door behind them.

"That... was really awkward." Harry admitted with a groan.

"Exceedingly," Daphne nodded in agreement.

"I thought it was cute," Susan laughed. "It's going to be weird, going from practically no family to..."

"A huge family," Harry finished off for her, firmly in agreement with her thought.

Living with the Dursleys had never really been like a family for him, his aunt and uncle made sure that Harry knew that he wasn't part of their family and repeatedly told him that freaks like him didn't really deserve a family of their own anyway.

Living with his older self and Sirius had been the closest thing to a family he'd ever actually been part of, and now he was adding three sisters and apparently step-mums, plural, to that family as well.

"I've never had a mum before," Harry admitted quietly, looking at Susan and Daphne with a small amount of jealousy at how they'd grown up with loving families like that.

"I've never had a brother or sisters before," Susan admitted. "I don't even have cousins." She said softly.

"I've got one," Harry frowned at the thought of Dudley. "I wouldn't inflict him on anyone though, he's like Malfoy's bodyguards, put together."
Even Daphne shuddered at that mental image, wondering how anyone in the Potter family could be like that.

"I'm happy to forget he even exists, I'm sure he's thinking the same about me." Harry said simply with a small shrug. "I've got my dad, that's all I need right?"

"And us, you've got us now too." Susan reminded him with a wide smile.

"Obviously," Daphne nodded in agreement. "And now we know the upcoming spells Professor Potter is going to be teaching next week. Flipendo and Petrificus Totalus. We can practice those together as well."

"Um," Susan blushed slightly as she looked away from Daphne while Harry grinned openly at that.

"What?" Daphne frowned at them both.

"We already know those," Harry grinned over. "Dad taught us tons before Hogwarts, we got upto Glacius and Ventus before we got on the train."

"You're joking?" Daphne drawled out, looking to Harry first then narrowing her eyes and turning to Susan, noticing her blush was still evident. "Really?" She whispered, shock creeping in as she realised how far ahead this meant Harry and Susan were.

"I'm not that great at them yet, but I can get Glacius to work, most of the time." Susan admitted. "Harry's better at Ventus though, but he's always flying around so he just understands air and wind better I think."

"You... you both..." Daphne stuttered out before setting her hands on her hips and glaring at them both together. "You two are teaching me everything, starting now!" She demanded. "I am NOT going to be the underachiever in this family, you hear me!" She practically shouted, grabbing on to both Harry and Susan and dragging them away to find somewhere where they could actually go over exactly how far ahead they were and what they needed to teach Daphne to fend off her temper before it blew.

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**AN: Just for anyone commenting about Harry and Susan learning spells from 3rd year already... in canon in happens regularly, Harry learns the patronus spell at least 4 years early, as it's 'beyond NEWT level' apparently... and Draco uses serpensortia, a 4th year spell, early in second year.**

*Learning Spells in the magical world doesn't seem to be restricted by age, only by the power of the caster and how the curriculum is taught, so any student that had the power and skill to cast spells ahead of what they've been taught, can do so without issue.*
Chapter 20

TITLE: Double Back

DISCLAIMER: All things Harry Potter belong J K Rowling... basically, if you recognise it, it isn’t mine... Please don't sic the Aurors on me, I'm just here for the fun.

7th September

Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry
Highlands of Scotland

As the first weekend of the school year rolled around, James had spent the Saturday morning so far rearranging his office at Hogwarts, making it feel more 'him' and not just another office at the school that he was squatting in.

He'd tossed out quite a few of the books from the shelves that he knew were either biased, outright lies, or simply not worth the paper they were printed on, and replaced them with better tomes from the Potter and Black libraries, so he could read them in peace in the office without Sirius bothering him at The Manor.

He'd set up a nice new perch for Hedwig by the main window of the office, looking out onto the Quidditch pitch and the grounds below. It had been a surprise that Hedwig seemed to split her time between him and his younger self, but seeing as neither of them really sent any owl mail at all, it didn't really bother him and he found it quite nostalgic to have his old familiar around again pestering him for treats and slips of bacon.

A copy of 'The Rise and Fall of the Dark Arts' by Bathilda Bagshot was open underneath Hedwig's perch, as the best use James could find for it was catching treats, feathers, and Hedwig's droppings on it's pages. Hermione would have probably strenuously objected to his treatment of a book like that, but given how laughably biased and intrusive to his life the damned book was, it was either using it like that, or leaving it in the bathroom to be used as emergency toilet paper.

He'd happily re-arranged the office as well, moving the desk and a few chairs around to make it a more comfortable area, that way Harry, Susan and Daphne, or even Hermione or Neville, would be able to come in and chat with him any time they wanted and have space to sit down in a more casual setting, instead of the professional and rigid arrangement the furniture had been placed in originally.

On the wall above his desk he'd spread out the marauders map and stuck it to the wall with a quick charm, a few more charms protected it and stopped anyone from noticing it aside from him, but it was a nice feature in the room and gave him something to idly watch while sitting at his desk, letting him keep an eye on the various people around the school while reading or relaxing.

It was quite amusing to watch when he'd noticed that the map still recognised him as 'Harry James Potter', along with his younger self as well, giving them both the same name tags that were indistinguishable from each other. That had been the main reason for securing it away behind a few notice-me-not charms, along with being able to keep an eye on his younger self, along with Susan, Daphne, Hermione and Neville.
"Come in Neville," He shouted aloud, spotting Neville on the map hanging around outside his office. After a second he flicked his wand towards the door, pushing it open to reveal Neville stood outside with a surprised look on his face. "Professor McGonagall spoke to you already then?"

"This morning," Neville admitted as he nervously stepped inside the office.

"Figured as much," James nodded at that, having spoken to Minerva last night about Neville's wand problems. "Come on then, no time like the present." He grinned, grabbing his trench-coat from the coat-stand and closing his office door before leading Neville through to the living room area where the fireplace was situated. "Leaky Cauldron, then we'll go from there."

"Pro... Professor McGonagall said... she said you'd be buying my wand?" Neville asked hesitantly.

"Yup," James nodded before sighing. "Relax Neville, seriously." He said with a smile. "I'm not your gran, I'm not going to shout or tell you off or anything like that." He explained. "It's her fault you haven't got a matching wand, not yours. And it's my job to sort that out, both as your professor, and as your godfather." He pointed out.

"I just... I don't want to be a bother." Neville practically whispered.

"Neville, you're not a bother. Not to me, not to your friends, not to anyone that matters." James said firmly, making sure Neville understood exactly what he was saying. "Go on, you can go first." He said, nudging Neville towards the fireplace to take some of the floo powder first.

He watched with an approving nod as Neville took the floo powder and stepped into the fireplace, vanishing after announcing "The Leaky Cauldron". James then waited a few seconds for Neville to get out of the fireplace at the pub before stepping in himself and vanishing from Hogwarts in a swirl of emerald fire.

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**Outskirts of Hartoft End**  
**North York Moors National Park**

The forests around the North Yorkshire Moors were thick and overgrown, making it perfect camouflage as Sirius Black apparated onto the deserted moor and stepped out onto the hillside, looking around with his wand already out as he checked his surroundings.

"Alright, I'm here." He called out, listening to his voice reverberate around the empty moors.

"Padfoot?"

He spun instantly at the voice, his wand up and a dozen curses on his lips instantly before he recognised the voice and spotted who it belonged to. "Mooney!" He grinned, stepping forward and pulling his old friend into a tight hug, not even bothering to pocket his wand as he savoured the feeling of friendship again. "Where in the name of Morgana's knickers have you been you old wolf?"

"France," Remus admitted as Sirius let go of the hug and stepped back. "I was under a quite a few wards with a pack there. I only just got your owls a few days ago, it took me that long to get back here."

"That explains it," Sirius nodded thoughtfully.
"Mind explaining all of this then?" Remus asked, fishing out a few newspaper clippings from his tweet suit jacket "James Potter defeats Voldemort? Expels Dumbledore from Hogwarts? The rise of the Prophecised Potters?" He asked aloud, reading a few of the headlines. "Potter strikes again, Potter three, werewolf headless?"

"That last one was Greyback," Sirius pointed out to Remus' visible shock. "He attacked Diagon Alley a few days ago with a group of Death Eaters, Junior objected and blew off his head."

"Junior?" Remus asked, raising a lone eyebrow at the name.

"I mean..." Sirius sighed, running his hand through his long curly hair. "Remus, where the hell have you been?" He demanded. "They tossed me in Azkaban, no trial, nothing, where in Merlin's name were you?"

"I..." Remus winced, looking down at the ground when he didn't have a suitable excuse. "After... After James and Lily... then hearing you were the one that betrayed them to Voldemort..." He winced, hearing how stupid it sounded. "Dumbledore asked me to keep an eye on the werewolf packs across the water."

"Dumbledore asked?" Sirius asked, raising an eyebrow. "What about Harry? You were supposed to take him in if anything happened to me and James, what happened there?"

"Dumbledore said..."

"Dumbledore can go to fucking hell!" Sirius yelled out, interrupting Remus and leaving him with a shocked expression on his face. "Dumbledore kidnapped Harry from me, you know that? If he hadn't taken Harry, then I never would have gone after Pettigrew and been tossed into Azkaban!" He shouted before continuing on with his rant. "Dumbledore was the Chief Warlock of the Wizengamot, you know that right? So how come I was left to rot in Azkaban for a decade when he could have got me a trial any time he wanted?"

"Padfoot, I was only..."

"Following Dumbledore's orders?" Sirius interrupted him again. "Did you even argue? Try and see Harry? Take him in, make sure he was alright after James and Lily had been killed by that monster?"

The way Remus looked away told him everything he needed to know.

"Sirius..."

"Did you try?" Sirius demanded.

"I asked Dumbledore, he said..."

"Dumbledore said!" Sirius cut him off again. "Have you got any other reasons for anything you've done that doesn't start with bloody Dumbledore said?" He asked.

As Remus looked down at his feet again, Sirius realised that Junior was right on the galleon. Remus had abandoned him exactly as he'd said, he'd followed Dumbledore's orders like a good little puppy and had simply forgotten about him and about Harry, content to just do whatever Dumbledore asked him to, and forget about the loyalty that was supposedly so important to them as The Marauders.

"They never would have let me even get close to Harry, you know that." Remus explained with a
pained expression on his face.

"Don't pull that shit with me Remus," Sirius said bluntly, pointing at Remus as he stalked away and paced around angrily. "You could have tried. Even if you didn't take him in, you could have got a place nearby and looked in on him, checked up on him, been there for him."

"I'm a werewolf, they wouldn't let me anywhere near him, it wasn't even worth trying!" Remus argued back. "I'm dangerous, you know that!"

"You're a werewolf thirteen nights of the year!" Sirius shot back. "Thirteen!"

"Why does it even matter? I saw the papers, James is alive, why does it even matter that I couldn't take him in when James should have..." Remus trailed off as he saw the thundering look on Sirius' face glaring at him.

"You have absolutely no idea what's been going on," Sirius growled out.

Remus backed up at that, having past experience with Sirius temper when he got riled up about something.

"Junior was right, you abandoned Harry, abandoned me, abandoned everyone." Sirius spat out. "Go back to France, and stay the hell away from me and Harry." He shouted before twisting on the spot and vanishing with an angry crack that echoed out across the moors.

Remus was simply left there at the edge of the woodlands wondering exactly what the hell was going on.

For the last ten years he'd thought James and Lily were dead, just like Peter, Sirius was their betrayer and murderer, and that Harry was safe and happy, growing up secure under Albus Dumbledore's careful watch.

The copies of the Daily Prophet however told an entirely different story. A story of Sirius being exonerated after a decade of unjust imprisonment, of James Potter's resurgent return at the same time as Voldemort, his war against both Voldemort and Albus Dumbledore.

None of it made any sense whatsoever, and Sirius' anger at his answers made even less sense than that. He needed answers, he needed a lot of answers, the problem was, he had absolutely no idea where to go to get them now.

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**Ministry of Magic**

**London**

"But Cornelius, surely you must see that..."

Amelia smirked to herself as she approached Minister Fudge's office, recognising the screeching tones of Dolores Umbridge from inside.

"I've said enough Dolores," Minister Fudge's voice replied with a harsher tone than Amelia had ever heard from him before. "You will abide by the new contracts, or find another job. Security of The Ministry is our number one priority right now. If you can't accept that, I'll find someone that will."
Amelia smiled at that comment before steeling herself, returning her face to a controlled mask before she knocked on the door firmly and waited. "Come in." After hearing Minister Fudge's usual welcome she pushed the door open and walked through, happily ignoring the vicious glare that Undersecretary Umbridge sent her way as she walked in and closed the door behind her.

"Ah, Amelia, perfect, I was waiting for you." Minister Fudge beamed, standing up from his desk with a wide smile on his face.

"Minister," Amelia gave a small nod of recognition, happy to completely ignore Dolores for the moment.

"I'm sure you've heard, we got the finished copies of the contracts written up by the Unspeakables." Minister Fudge explained.

"I looked over them myself," Amelia said with a glance towards one of the contracts on Minister Fudge's desk. "They look suitable enough."

"Quite so, quite so." Minister Fudge quickly nodded. "I was saying just the same thing myself." He continued as he walked around his desk. "Loyalty to The Ministry, to all of The Ministry's laws, and to enforce the laws regardless of blood purity or race."

Amelia nodded at that, it was a rather simplistic view of the contracts involved, but it hit on the finer points well enough. Nobody who signed the contracts could work or assist anyone who was involved in disrupting or infiltrating The Ministry for any reason, and must at all times both abide by, and uphold, the laws of The Ministry. Anyone who broke their contract would be notified immediately of their dismissal by an automatic parchment, and a copy of a broken contract would be sent both to The Minister, to Amelia, and to The Unspeakables.

There were separate contracts for both Aurors, Department Heads and above, and for regular Ministry workers. Each detailing specific clauses, regulations, and expected behaviour from each of them.

They weren't perfect by a long stretch, but The Unspeakables had done absolutely fantastic work on them given the short time they had to work with.

"Ahem," Umbridge coughed gently. "Surely these contracts are... well, superfluous. You can't seriously be suggesting that anyone in The Ministry would be working against our goals Minister?"

"We've already found two Death Eaters working in The Auror department, I've received a tip of at least one more, with another working for a different person trying to use their position to compromise the Aurors." Amelia explained bluntly.

"Who?" Minister Fudge demanded, looking at Amelia with a surprised look on his face.

"Auror Dawlish has been confirmed as a pure blood bigot in line with Voldemort's regime." Amelia said, watching as Umbridge flinched at the name. "I've checked through his records, there's a few times he's let known Death Eaters skate when they should have been brought in, and he's had more than a few complaints from other Aurors about his brazen attitude and thug handed methods when dealing with muggle-born incidents."

"Surely that doesn't justify..."

"I'm keeping an eye on him for this weekend, if he isn't willing to sign the contract, we'll have our answer then." Amelia said, happily cutting off Umbridge without a care about what she was going to say.
"And... the other? The one not working for Lord Thingie?" Minister Fudge asked curiously.

"Auror Shacklebolt." Amelia explained with a frown. "Apparently he's been under Dumbledore's influence for some time now. Albus used him to stop investigations into the school and whatever else he was up to, along with hiding away investigations into other members of the so called 'Order of the Phoenix' that Albus lead."

"Well, not good, not good at all. No, we certainly can't have that." Minister Fudge said, shaking his head quickly at that piece of news. "They'll both be signing the contracts?"

"If they don't, they'll be fired on the spot." Amelia explained with a small nod. "I won't have my Aurors suborned by anyone. Not Voldemort, not Albus Dumbledore, nobody."

"Yes, yes, I quite agree." Minister Fudge nodded eagerly at that. "We shall roll out the contracts first thing Monday."

"I'll have the Aurors sign them first, then arrange for an Unspeakable to join me in presenting them to the rest of the Department Heads. From there, we'll work our way around the entire Ministry." Amelia gave a small smile at the way Minister Fudge was happy to go along with everything she was doing.

"Well, I certainly won't be signing one of these hideous things. They're completely unneeded, why, it's almost as if..."

"You have a problem with upholding our security and law?" Amelia asked, cutting Umbridge off.

"Of course not," Undersecretary Umbridge explained sweetly. "But there are certain compromises that must be adhered to. Why, you can't seriously expect half-breeds and... muggle-born's to have the same freedoms and laws that our respected pure blood families have?"

"I do, and I will enforce those laws, regardless of blood purity." Amelia said bluntly.

"And... James, what does he think of this?" Minister Fudge asked curiously, looking to Amelia to get a hint as to what the most popular wizard in the country was planning.

"He's a hundred percent behind me," Amelia explained with a wry smile. "He supports the security of The Ministry and keeping it out of Voldemort's hands entirely. I'm sure you're aware of how he dealt with the werewolf attack a few days ago?"

"I had heard, yes." Minister Fudge agreed with a nod. "Dreadful business that, he was the one who... err..."

"Killed Greyback, yes. A single fatal curse, rather messy, but entirely justified in my eyes." Amelia confirmed.

"Of course, dealing with beasts like that is another matter entirely Cornelius." Undersecretary Umbridge simpered with a girlish laugh. "But surely you can't be expecting pure blood families to follow the same laws and behaviours as beasts like that? Or mud... muggle-borns?"

"You'll remember, James Potter's first wife was a muggle-born, or as you were about to call her, a mudblood." Amelia said scathingly, catching on to what Umbridge was about to say before she corrected herself. "Young Harry has made good friends with a muggle-born witch from what I've heard. I'm sure James would have quite a few words for you if he heard what you were suggesting." She said bluntly, fixing Umbridge with a glare that told her most of those words would be suitably fatal curses that would leave Umbridge as little more than a smear on the wall.
"Yes, yes, of course. Lily Potter. Dreadful what happened to her." Minister Fudge said quickly. "Yes, I can certainly see where James would be coming from. Equal laws and rights for all, certainly a law I can bring my office behind."

"I'm happy to hear that Minister." Amelia smiled, turning from Umbridge when she saw the murderous look in her eyes. "If you wish to take it up with James, I'm certain he would oblige you Dolores. He's already made a point of informing a few of the bigots he's come across that he will happily invoke an honour duel to clear up the situation if you prefer?"

"An... an honour duel? Really Amelia?" Cornelius stammered out.

"Oh yes, he's quite confident about it." Amelia smirked as she saw fear starting to leak into Umbridge's expression. "Anyone targeting muggle born students or families would be the first called out by him. I get the impression he's rather eager actually, after all, he's defeated Voldemort and Albus Dumbledore, killed Fenrir Greyback, I imagine it's quite hard for him to find a suitable challenge." She said bluntly, fixing Umbridge with a look. "Should I let him know you'll be happy to face him then?"

"I most certainly will not," Undersecretary Umbridge huffed quickly. "And I certainly won't be signing one of those... those dreadful things." She spat out, glaring down at the contract on The Minister's desk.

"Then you can leave." Minister Fudge said firmly. Standing beside Amelia and feeling a hundred times the man he used to be.

"But Cornelius, surely you have to see that..."

"I mean it Dolores. Monday morning, I'll be expecting everyone in this office to sign one. If you don't, then you won't be returning to The Ministry. Not on my watch."

"Cornelius, surely you can't expect..."

"Out Dolores, either sign the contract, or pack your desk up and leave. It's a simple choice." Minister Fudge ordered, pointing towards the office door.

It was a very satisfied Amelia that watched Undersecretary Umbridge slink away, thinking of all the people she knew that would actually pay money to see the memory of her walking away like that after the way she'd treated people for years.

As Dolores closed the door behind her, Amelia made a mental note to warn James to keep an eye out for her in the future. She already knew that he had a specific grudge against the woman for what she'd done in his future, so it was entirely likely he was already keeping tabs on her and making plans to deal with her in his own time.

"Dreadful business," Minister Fudge explained, shaking his head as he watched the door close.

"She won't sign the contract. I wouldn't expect her or Auror Dawlish to sign them." Amelia explained her thoughts. "Dirk Cresswell might be worth considering to replace her." She added after a moment's thought.

"Cresswell?" Minister Fudge asked quickly, more than happy to listen to Amelia's advice on this matter.

"Yes, down in the Goblin Liaison Office at the moment. He's been passed over for promotions quite a few times now, quite the wizard actually. Fluent in Gobbledygook as well, he has better
dealings with Gringotts than anyone else I know come to think of it.” Amelia explained.

"Hmm, have him come and see me on Monday if he signs one of the contracts." Minister Fudge agreed, making a mental note of the name to look it up.

"I was planning to speak to him anyway," Amelia admitted. "He'd certainly be a far better replacement than anyone Dolores would expect to take her place."

"I'll keep that in mind," Minister Fudge smiled genially at that. "Now, shall we go over plans for distributing and collecting these contracts?" He asked, moving back to his desk and picking up the contract in question before waiting for Amelia to take a seat and start their planning.

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**Hyde Park**

**London**

The sun was hanging low on the horizon that evening as James, Sirius and Amelia cautiously made their way into Hyde Park for the meeting Sirius had arranged. None of them really knew what to expect, with James thinking there was a fifty fifty chance the entire thing was a trap, and Sirius simply spoiling for a fight after spending half the afternoon ranting at James about Remus.

"Up there," Amelia said, nodding up towards the stone stairway in the park that led up to the areas with the bandstand and path back into the city.

It was an area off the beaten track so to speak, so they'd be able to talk there without fear of being interrupted, but it was also a public enough area that in theory, everyone meeting should be wary about breaking into spellfire.

"You two head on, I'll follow." James commented, falling back a few paces and pulling out his invisible cloak with practised ease.

Amelia turned her head just in time to see the shimmer of James' cloak before he vanished entirely from view, then setting her mind to the task ahead she simply strode on without breaking step, heading to the stairway and making her way towards the top, her wand already in hand just in case James was right and it was a trick.

They were about half way up the stairs when the clocks around the city started to chime, marking eight o'clock in the evening. The chimes punctuated by two loud cracks from behind Sirius and Amelia, causing them to spin around on the stairs with their wands out ready for action.

"Punctual as always," Amelia commented, not lowering her wand as she carefully watched Lucius and Narcissa disdainfully look around their surroundings.

"A muggle park, really?" Lucius drawled out, looking around but subtly evaluating both Amelia and Sirius as he approached them with Narcissa a step behind him.

"A good and neutral location," Amelia pointed out quickly before Sirius could say anything and start an argument.

"Very well," Lucius sniffed before nodding slowly, accepting that that sort of strategy would be something he would employ for a meeting like this as well. "I assume you have made sure we are not being followed or overheard?"
"There's no one around, not unless you count the various muggles anyway." Amelia pointed out.

"I'm sure," Lucius drawled out, rolling his eyes as he placed his snake motif cane down regally and casually started playing with the silver snake head, running his fingers over it's teeth in a practised move as he watched Bones and Black carefully for their reactions. "I'm sure you're both curious why I asked for this meeting."

"I'd be lying if I wasn't," Amelia admitted with a nod.

"Tom Riddle has returned." Lucius explained simply.

"I didn't expect to hear you using that name," Amelia frowned, the fact that Lucius was calling Voldemort by his real name was very telling indeed. "You believe the Prophet then?"

"I have my own avenues of proof that I chose to trust," Lucius explained dryly, his smirk saying everything about how he knew the Daily Prophet couldn't be trusted for something as simple as a weather report, let alone something as important as this.

"And?" Sirius interrupted, stepping forward before Amelia could say anything else. "We all know you sided with him last time, what's this all about?" He demanded.

"I sided with him," Lucius sneered disdainfully at the simplistic nature of the words. "Without knowing the truth. Now that I know, things are different."

"Don't want to be kissing the robes of a half blood then," Sirius smirked over, seeing the look of disgust on Lucius face.

"My reasons are my own," Lucius bit out firmly, glaring across at Sirius and fighting back the urge to turn the meeting into a far more antagonistic place than would be profitable. "Are you aware of the method Riddle used to prevent his demise?"

"We are," Amelia said quickly, fixing Sirius with a look to tell him she'd take care of this.

"Then you know how dangerous these... objects are." Lucius nodded thoughtfully. "Might I assume you are already working to destroy them?"

"You can assume," Amelia said, not confirming or denying Lucius suspicions.

"Your vague dissembling is beneath you," Lucius bit out firmly, glaring across at Sirius and fighting back the urge to turn the meeting into a far more antagonistic place than would be profitable. "Are you aware of the method Riddle used to prevent his demise?"

"We are," Amelia said quickly, fixing Sirius with a look to tell him she'd take care of this.

"Then you know how dangerous these... objects are." Lucius nodded thoughtfully. "Might I assume you are already working to destroy them?"

"You can assume," Amelia said, not confirming or denying Lucius suspicions.

"Your vague dissembling is beneath you," Lucius muttered, shaking his head slowly. "If you weren't working to destroy them, you would be supporting him. Something I know neither you or Black would ever do." He explained, rolling his eyes at their simplistic thought processes and blundering bluffs.

"Fine, yes, we're destroying the damn things." Sirius said firmly. "What about it?"

"I had assumed that he had made more than just the one... three perhaps?" Lucius asked curiously. "More?" He asked, the colour fading from his face when he realised how depraved Riddle really had been. "How many?" He asked in a horrified voice.

"Five," Amelia confirmed after sharing a look with Sirius.

"I see," Lucius muttered, calculating that with a wince as he realised how fractured and distorted Riddle's soul must actually be. Five wasn't even a magical number of any significance, which left him dubious about why Riddle would chose to only make five of the abominations. "Very well, a peace offering if you will..." He explained, slowly reaching into his robes and removing the parcel,
lifting it out so that Amelia and Sirius could see he wasn't about to attack them before holding it out.

"Oh Merlin's bollocks," Sirius whispered quickly, backing up a few steps when he felt the dark magic radiating from the parcel in Malfoy's hands.

"Is that..."

"I'll take that,"

Lucius flinched slightly at the new voice, his eyes automatically flicking around to find where it was coming from while his hand tightened around the head of his cane, ready to retrieve his wand and start casting at a moment's notice.

The gossamer shimmer on the steps nearly evaded his notice until he spotted someone coming out from beneath it, wrapping the shimmer up in a practised sweep of his hand and stuffing it into his pocket.

The wizard was dressed distressingly like Black was, in half muggle clothing with a magical twist. The faded blue muggle jeans were something he saw on mudbloods enough in Diagon Alley to recognise. The thick and heavy boots were very clearly muggle instead of wizarding wear, but the long copper coloured dragon-skin trench-coat indicated very clearly of this new wizard's allegiance, and made identifying him pathetically easy given the descriptions he'd heard of James Potter already.

"If you wish," Lucius smirked, not showing any visible sign that Potter's appearance had surprised him in the least.

James nodded, pacing over slowly and gingerly taking the wrapped book from Lucius' hand, unwrapping it only enough to identify it as the diary he remembered from his second year. "Riddle's diary." He confirmed with a nod, wrapping it up again before stuffing it into his outside pocket. "Why?" He asked, fixing Malfoy with a curious look.

"Malfoy's don't lose," Lucius said simply. "We certainly don't bow down to half blood traitors." He explained with a sneer. "Any other reasons I have are my own."

"Fair enough," James commented after a moment's contemplation. "We're going to destroy him this time, you know that right?" He asked, drawing a single raised eyebrow from Lucius. "Him and any of the Death Eaters that go crawling back to him."

"I had heard about Angus' capture already, I assume it was you that relieved him of his arm in battle?" Lucius asked curiously.

"And took off Greyback's head," Sirius jumped in with a grin.

"Quite," Lucius grimaced at the pathetically blunt nature of the warning. "And this is your warning perhaps?"

"I won't be giving the other Death Eaters any warning," James explained without breaking eye contact with Malfoy. "I'm not playing by Dumbledore's half-arsed rules anymore. Anyone siding with that bastard is the walking dead, they just don't know it yet."

"I had assumed not," Malfoy sneered, continuing to stare across at Potter and happily ignoring Bones and Black as if they were irrelevant. "Not since you attacked your old mentor as well."
"He had it coming," James frowned over. "That and a whole lot more."

"Indeed?" Lucius smirked, raising an eyebrow at that piece of knowledge.

"As of Monday, the Aurors will officially have been brought up to war footing." Amelia interrupted, drawing Lucius' attention over to her. "Lethal casting in situations where suspected Death Eaters are involved." She explained bluntly.

"I see," Lucius nodded, not really surprised by this piece of news either. With Cornelius running to Amelia instead of him and Dumbledore, there was no surprise she'd used the influence to push for a more aggressive Auror force. "Veritaserum questioning as well I can assume?"

"Naturally." Amelia confirmed with a nod. "Nobody's buying their way out of it this time around. When Death Eaters are caught, if they're still alive, it's Azkaban or a Kiss for them."

"Then it would seem I have certainly chosen the right side, as you can see." Lucius smirked, gesturing to James' pocket where the diary was stored. "I have very little doubt that Riddle will expect me to come to him when he regains a body, when that happens, I will of course be removing my family from the country entirely."

"It won't." James said bluntly. "He's not getting a body back, not now, not ever." He said with a firm nod.

"You seem awfully sure of yourself," Lucius drawled out. "Pride goeth before the fall."

"Maybe, but if I fall, I'm dragging that bastard down with me." James explained. "And anyone else that gets in my way."

"The prophecy I assume," Lucius mused aloud. "Giving you courage perhaps? I can assume it speaks of you defeating him, given how he was quite single minded in his pursuit of you ten years ago before his defeat, it's the only thing that makes sense." He frowned at that thought, drumming his fingers along his cane. "Very well, I have laid my marker as you can see, I have no wish to rejoin Riddle and his suicidal followers."

"He hasn't been in contact with you yet then?" Amelia pressed on.

"No," Lucius answered simply. "Nor did I have any indication of his plans for Hogwarts this year. If I had, I would have insisted Draco attend Durmstrang instead."

"You know Igor Karkaroff's the headmaster there then?" James asked with a small smirk as he saw the shock flicker across Malfoy's face for a second before it vanished behind his mask again.

"I did," Lucius bit out. "Not many people are aware of that fact Mr Potter." He frowned, Potter obviously had wider reaching connections than he had assumed. "I would assume you know where Riddle has been all these years then?"

"A few of them," James admitted. "Albania recently, until Dumbledore lured him back to the country with the Philosophers Stone."

"I had heard rumours that he had created a trap for Riddle, he planned on luring Riddle to the school while my son was there?" Lucius demanded, the anger now visible on his face as he contemplated what he was being told.

"Dumbledore's a bastard, we all know that." Sirius interrupted. "As interesting as this voyage down Voldemort's history is, what does it have to do with anything?"
"As Albania is one of the countries that sends students to Durmstrang, I find it certainly interesting that Riddle would spend time there where Karkaroff is so close." Lucius explained with a glare towards Sirius. "You don't find that curious?"

"I don't believe in coincidences." James admitted. He hadn't really thought about the connection before, but given that Voldemort had had Karkaroff hunted down and killed in the years after the Tri-Wizard Tournament, he wasn't really betting on there being any serious connection between the two. "He gave evidence against other Death Eaters in exchange for leniency. Fled the country rather than hang around for any remaining Death Eaters to hunt him down." He explained thoughtfully. "I'm actually surprised you stayed on good terms with him, good enough to send Draco out to Durmstrang?"

"Karkaroff knew my allegiance was never fully with Riddle," Lucius confirmed, seeing no point in denying anything now. "I may agree with his sentiments, but never to his methods."

"Interesting," James mused, watching Malfoy's reactions very carefully. "And Snape?"

"Severus?" Lucius asked, raising an eyebrow at the unexpected question. "I'm aware of the antagonistic history between the two of you if that's what you mean." He mused aloud. "Am I to assume he is a target of your wrath, much like Riddle and Dumbledore?"

"He's on my shitlist," James admitted. "For a few personal reasons, but he's not high up there at the moment." He said thoughtfully. "Heard from him?"

"No," Lucius admitted. "He is Draco's godfather, I believe he had been looking forward to spending time with him at Hogwarts."

"Sorry to ruin that for him," James smirked, making Sirius snort with laughter at the dry comment. "Considering he's the one who passed The Prophecy over to Voldemort, I don't really have that much sympathy for any trouble I'm sending his way."

"I see," Lucius nodded, accepting that this was Potter's subtle way of indicating that Severus' life expectancy should be measured in days and weeks, barely anything longer. After all, anyone that had caused someone to target his family and brutally slaughter Narcissa, would certainly be in for a very painful death when he caught up with them. So he could certainly understand where James' ire was coming from on that fact.

At least knowing that, he could indicate to Draco to write to his godfather while he still had the chance. "Who has taken his position at Hogwarts then? I have not kept up with the current staffing situation."

"Andromeda," James explained, flicking his eyes over to Narcissa who was still stood patiently and silently behind Lucius.

"Andy?" Narcissa whispered, speaking up for the first time with her eyes showing her surprise at this piece of news.

"Haven't spoken to her yet either," Sirius admitted. "Didn't even know until Ju... James told me she'd got the position there."

"Ah yes, you took the position of Defence." Lucius smirked back. "I hope you aren't too worried about the curse."

"The one Voldemort left?" James snorted, shaking his head. "Already found the cursed artifact and dealt with it, did that before I even started my first class. Not exactly a challenge, Dumbledore
should have dealt with it years ago, if he wasn't such a manipulative bastard I'd swear the old git's going senile."

"Charming, though I do agree with your conclusions." Lucius drawled out, making another mental note that Potter was apparently skilled enough to identify and destroy cursed artifacts made by Riddle, which gave a lot of credence to his story about tracking down and destroying the other dark artifacts he'd created. "I am curious, despite The Prophecy, why both Riddle and Dumbledore took so much time and effort over attempts to control your family." He mused aloud, looking over at James curiously now. "I do remember he offered you a position at his right hand several times before coming for you that night, no one else was ever given that many chances to defy him."

"Oh?" James asked, actually curious now. He'd never really heard about Voldemort trying to recruit his parents before, though given a lot of what he knew about them came from Dumbledore, Minerva and a few others, that wasn't saying much.

"Curious isn't it," Lucius mused. "Why both Riddle and Dumbledore would expend so much effort over one family. Your blood line perhaps?"

"You know then," James said simply, not bothering to deny it.

"Your link to the Peverell blood line obviously." Lucius nodded. "Ignotus wasn't it?"

"You should do the same research on Tom Riddle, he could claim the same." James explained with a small grin at the flicker of uncertainty that crossed Lucius face. "His mother was from the Gaunt family, you can trace that back to Cadmus Peverell."

"He always claimed he was of Slytherin's own bloodline," Lucius frowned thoughtfully, making a note to double check what Potter was claiming when he got chance. "His use of Parseltongue was proof enough of the claim. It is possible the Peverell's descended from Slytherin himself?" He mused before shaking the thought away to research later on. "Very well, I believe we have each made our positions clear with each other."

"Entirely," James nodded.

"I have written to Draco and instructed him on how he is to behave, I would... appreciate it if you have any problems with him, to contact me yourself." Lucius admitted, biting out the words as if they were a bad taste in his mouth.

"You take care of yours, I'll take care of mine." James nodded in agreement.

"Precisely." Lucius nodded amicably at that. "Very well, Narcissa." He said, gesturing for them both to take their leave.

'Bye Death Eater' James hissed out in Parseltongue as Lucius got ready to apparate away, causing him to stumble halfway through his twist at stare at him in a mixture of surprise and curiosity before he vanished with a crack.

"Really?" Amelia muttered, glaring at James.

"Couldn't resist," James smirked, flicking his tongue curiously. "Haven't spoken Parseltongue in years, I'd forgotten how weird that feels."

"You can speak Parseltongue?" Sirius whispered in shock.

"Really?" James muttered, rolling his eyes at Sirius. "I showed you my memories of my second
year, how they were all thinking I was the Heir of Slytherin because of it?"

"I forgot that part," Sirius admitted with a grimace.

"And showing it off to Lucius Malfoy was..." Amelia prompted him.

"Keeping him off balance," James admitted. "He's still a pure blood bigot, even if he's not cheering Voldemort on. This way, he's thinking that me and the mini-me are descended from Slytherin as well, and he'll be wondering what other tricks I've got up my sleeve."

"You're not right though, descended from the snakes?" Sirius asked hopefully. "James never said any of that you know?"

"No, we're not," James explained, rolling his eyes at Sirius. "Can we get back to the manor now, I'd actually like to torch this thing before it starts leaking evil all over my coat."

"Good idea," Amelia nodded, thankful for the reminder of the Horcrux that was nestled in James' pocket right now. "One more down."

"One to go," James said aloud, though was inwardly still trying to figure out what to do about the one still nestled safely in his younger self.

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