Summary

Harry Potter, Lone Traveler, is sent to a world where he is supposed to teach Defense to the Mauraders and others during their OWL year. Well, he's going to do it right. And make a right pain out of himself for Voldemort and anyone else who wants to get in the way.
Albus Dumbledore was sitting at his desk, finishing some paperwork. He glanced at his old clock and saw that his appointment was very soon.

His annual search for a Defense Professor normally took weeks buts luckily, this year, he had an application arrive just the day after the notice went to the Prophet and other publications

He heard the knock and pushed the parchments to the side. "Come in, Minerva and Guest."

His Deputy Headmistress appeared, leading a rather well-dressed wizard. He stood. "Good afternoon. I assume you are Mr. Septimus."

The man bowed briefly. "I am."

"Please have a seat, Mr. Septimus. Thank you, Minerva. You may go."

The man replied, "Actually, if the Deputy Headmistress wishes to stay, I have no objection. I imagine if I am hired, she will need some sense of whom is answering to her – assuming that the staff would normally go to the Deputy before troubling the Headmaster. Or am I presuming?"

Dumbledore looked at the man briefly and then nodded to Professor McGonagall. "You are welcome to stay as well, of course."

Minerva peered at the new applicant and then shook her head. "As much as I would like to, I have things that need to be completed for the year-end reports. I am certain we will become acquainted should he be hired."

The man nodded respectfully at her. "Thank you for your assistance then."

She nodded back and left.

"So, I received your application. Most impressive. I was curious though. Your application is for one year only. Is there a reason for this?"

The wizard smiled. "I have heard rumor that there is a curse on the Defense Position – no professor has lasted more than one year for one reason or another, almost all unlooked for and many times unpleasant. To avoid such a curse if it does exist, I felt it best to apply for a single year. And with the job currently held, it will give you time to search for next year's applicant without undue haste and worry."

Dumbledore sat back. "You know? I have never considered it quite that way. I have always attempted to find a permanent solution."

The man chuckled. "Such a curse, like most things of the Dark, are more easily countered or at least avoided if one works to understand first before running off half-cocked. And that takes an honest looking first."

Dumbledore smiled. "A good attitude to take."

"As I heard an Auror explain to one of his underlings one time: Constant Vigilance."
Dumbledore chuckled. "I believe that you describe an old friend, Alastor Moody."

The man shrugged with a smile. "I was just around when he was dealing with an idiot who was a bit hex-happy out of his cups."

Before Dumbledore could answer, they were interrupted by a trill coming from the side of the office. Looking over, Dumbledore's phoenix appeared to have just woken up. "You have a phoenix companion! Wonderful creatures."

Dumbledore nodded. "Fawkes and I go back quite a few years now."

The visitor nodded. "Do you mind if I …" he motioned toward the phoenix.

Dumbledore motioned him forward. The man stood up and walked over. "Hello, Fawkes. I am Garrick Septimus."

Fawkes, who knew exactly who his visitor was, trilled in cheerful greeting. He accepted the caress of his fellow phoenix.

Dumbledore, watching, smiled. He was much more sanguine about this applicant, seeing how positively Fawkes reacted to him. If he had been concerned at first, such was no longer the case.

Mr. Septimus returned to his seat. "Thank you."

"Oh, no need for thanks. I should thank you. Very few take the time to greet him properly."

The man smiled. "I have a great affinity for phoenixes. A phoenix was very instrumental, after all, in my wand's creation." He saw that the Headmaster assumed he had the feather of a phoenix as a wand core – let him assume, Garrick Septimus – Gary Seven in English – would not disabuse him of the notion.

Dumbledore finally said, "Let us return to your application." After a thorough review of the document and a quiz on different items related to Defense, Albus was satisfied. "Well, I do believe that we have our Defense Professor for the 1975/1976 school year. Do you have particular texts in mind?"

His newest professor gave an enigmatic smile. "I started working on that as soon as I decided to apply. How long before you need a list?"

"Well, it is 17 June currently and Hogwarts has just ended for the year. New letters will have to go out as of July 24th for the first years and August 1st for the remaining years." Albus pawed through some parchment until he found the item he was looking for. "This was the list used last year. You can either approve it or bring a new list. We begin our planning by 15 July. Your time, until then, is your own."

Professor Septimus stood and shook Albus' hand. "Very well. I shall begin reviewing this list and, begin my preparations. Although I have access to other quarters in necessary, can I perhaps acquaint myself with the rooms that shall be mine for the next year?"

"Most certainly! Where will you be staying until 15 July?"

"I have taken a room at the Leaky Cauldron – my home not currently being in Britain, as it said in my parchmentwork. It is sufficient for my needs."

Dumbledore nodded. "Would you mind a house elf as a guide?"
The man shrugged. "No. I would assume they know the best ways – and the way to the kitchens." He said this last with a grin.

"Yes Quite." Raising his voice, the Headmaster called, "Floxy!"

A house elf popped into the room and said, "Headmaster calls for Floxy?"

"Yes. This is Professor Garrick Septimus. He will be teaching here next year."

The house elf turned and looked at the new arrival. Garrick saw the house elf's eyes go very wide. Before the house elf outed him, he took charge.

"Hello, Floxy. You and the house elves may call me Garrick or Professor Septimus. Do you mind showing me around?"

With real enthusiasm Floxy replied, "Floxy would be happy to show Hogwarts to Great Professor!"

"Good," he said with a smile. "I shall follow you!" Garrick turned. "Thank you, Headmaster."

"Oh, we'll be working together. Feel free to call me Albus." Garrick nodded and followed the elf out of the office. The Headmaster had been taken aback by the house elf's reaction, but it wasn't too far out of the norm. Resolving to think about it later, he went back to finishing what he had been doing before Garrick Septimus had arrived.

Harry Potter, Lone Traveler, also known as Marek Ilumian, Fury of the Light, and God of Free Will, Knowledge and Travel, made his way out of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry.

When he had arrived, he had found himself standing in front of a notice board. He had immediately dismissed this, looking around to see who in the area might need his assistance. Finding no one about, he returned to his arrival point and looked more carefully.

The notice board (this was at the Ministry of Magic and it was the middle of the night) had several things on it, mostly dealing with things Ministry employees needed to know. But one particular thing stuck out: A notice that Hogwarts was looking for a Wizard in Good Standing, knowledgeable in Defense Against the Dark Arts, to become the Professor for the next year.

At first, Harry had assumed that he was to find someone. But somehow (he thanked Ry and My sarcastically) he knew that this was not the right answer. And suddenly it came to him: He was to be the new Professor. After getting a Divine ping that he was right, Harry had rolled his eyes and started thinking.

It didn't take him too long to realize that he was, in effect, immortal, and spending time in one dimension for a significant period did not detract from his duties – indeed, he arrived when he arrived and he left when he was done, and he was not locked in to any particular time stream.

And so, after a time, he realized that he could do much good parking himself in one dimension and doing one needed job, and he was not going to harm any other dimension by doing so. In fact, if he did things well, he could conceivably affect quite a number of dimensions because they split off and merged on a regular basis.

Conceivably, this dimension could positively (or negatively) affect hundreds or thousands of others.

And so, there was every reason in the Multiverse to do the job and to do it right.
And after he decided to do it, he started grinning. He was going to have fun.
Making Preperations

Harry considered what he would do about textbooks. He knew that there was no one textbook for Defense Against the Dark Arts. Every wizard and witch approached it in their own way.

After considering it for a moment, Harry made his way to someone who could help him.

Griselda Marchbanks sat with her fellows in the Wizarding Examination Authority working on grading the OWL and NEWT exams that had just been completed at Hogwarts.

The group had completed the NEWTs first, as was their procedure, as those waiting for these grades needed them for job applications and other things much more urgently than students who were waiting for OWL results.

They had just begun grading OWL papers when a visitor knocked on the open door.

Professor Tofty, who was closest to the door, asked, "Can we help you young man?"

Their visitor nodded. "Hello. I am Garrick Septimus and I was recently hired by Albus Dumbledore regarding the Hogwarts' Defense post. I came here to ask a question or two if it isn't too inconvenient."

Tofty looked to the others, who looked interested. He looked back. "And what can we do to assist Hogwarts' newest Professor?"

"I was curious if there is a list of spells and subjects that each student is expected to be familiar with at the end of each of the seven years of Hogwarts as regards the subject of Defense Against the Dark Arts?"

Griselda gave their visitor a shocked but happy look. "In thirty years, not one professor has come to inquire about that very subject. Although most professors base their teachings on past years or on what they learned themselves, no one has just come to ask the question – at least not until it is far too late to do much to prepare the students. I believe we can help you with this."

Griselda Marchbanks stood and walked slowly over to a file cabinet. She retrieved the Department's list of subjects to test for homeschooled students.

Unlike Hogwarts, where each student was tested by the professor except for standardized testing for OWLs and NEWTs, homeschooled students could come to the Ministry and take an exam for each year.

The Department had a minimum passing list and a recommended list. Most students fell between these two.

Griselda thoughtfully lifted one more document. "This, young man, will require a contract for you to take. It is the WOMBAT examination. You are not allowed to show this to any who is underage. But part of Defense Against the Dark Arts includes basic laws and who to contact regarding different emergencies one may run into. I don't know if you have time to include the information, but we at the Examination Authority would like to see it included."

Septimus nodded. "Thank you. I will be happy to sign the agreement. I have only a few weeks and I must include a list of texts. Is there a standard list?"
Tofty retrieved another item. "This is not a list of texts organized for individual classes or years, but a list of texts that are recommended for the study of Defense as a whole."

Garrick thanked the Examiners. "Do you mind if I return about 12 July and ask you to review the texts I come up with for their appropriateness?"

"Not at all, young man," Griselda replied. "We will welcome it."

Garrick Septimus, better known as Marek Ilumian and even Harry Potter, made his way into Gringotts Bank.

The Goblins, like many other Magical creatures, recognized instantly the nature of their visitor. Thus, as soon as he walked through the door, nodding politely to the guards, a messenger was sent to the Bank Manager.

And so, as he stood waiting in line for a free teller, the Traveler was asked to follow the Goblin who came to retrieve him.

After being led through Gringotts, he was led to a door he recognized. "Thank you, Warrior," he said to his guide. "May the blood of your enemies brighten your blade."

The Warrior bowed and replied, "May you achieve your victories with Honor." It was difficult to properly farewell one such as this as the Goblins knew that such beings had concerns different than their own.

Harry entered the office. The Goblin, a younger version of a Goblin he had met before, stood up. "I am Ragnok, Bank Manager. How may Gringotts be of service?" he asked.

"Good afternoon. While the name I am best known by in most worlds is Marek Ilumian, I am have taken the name of Garrick Septimus here and I will be teaching Defense Against the Dark Arts at Hogwarts this next year. I would like to initiate contact between you and … my normal bank."

"Oh?" Ragnok asked.

Harry grinned. "Yes. I have significant accounts which I use on occasion during my work. Would you mind if I set up a link here?"

"You certainly may, Mr. Septimus."

"Do you have a room nearby which could serve as a … well, a meeting room. One where you might monitor and control inter-dimensional travel and business?"

Ragnok stood and led his guest away from his office. After a bit of travel, the two (along with some others that Ragnok had gathered on the way) arrived at a large unused room cut out of bedrock. "This was originally slated for other purposes, but this use is perhaps more useful."

Harry nodded. "Okay. First – do you mind if I cast a few spells?"

The Bank Manager motioned his agreement. Thinking carefully, Harry transfigured a large arched opening in one wall. It looked like a door which exited into rock. At the top of the arch was a large display which used liquid crystals. He decided it was the easiest system type to control via magic rather than electricity.

He then put a panel with different crystals/gems on the wall next to the arch. And then added a
locator spell.

"Okay. Wait here – I'll be back in a few minutes."

Concentrating, Harry disappeared in his customary show of light.

The waiting goblins were curious but none had any clue as to what would happen next.

But, after about fifteen minutes, they noticed one of the crystals next to the door light up and the screen above the door said, "1st InterDimensional Savings and Loan, Universe A1." It also gave the date and time for the connection and Ragnok noted it was roughly twenty years beyond their own time. A green light appeared in the doorway and their customer plus another Goblin came through.

"Well, we're going to set up an inter-dimensional connection. I will be having some items completed in that world and we will need to arrange payment for transport when it is ready," Harry said. "You can negotiate with A1 – you are A2 by the way – with either Gold or information – you choose. I'm sure you can come to an equitable arrangement with my account manager at A1."

Ragnok, who had finished greeting their guest, nodded. Their guest was correct: Sometimes information was more valuable than immediate gold. He was certain something could be arranged.

Harry got things back on track. "I will be in A1 for an unknown number of weeks while I get a set of textbooks made – which will be about one week on this side. I will be bringing back, after another week, about 800 books – of which 700 will be for sale. I will need a publishing house to distribute these texts through. You will be able to handle this?" he asked Ragnok.

"Contracts will be ready for review when you return."

Harry nodded. "Good. Good business and good health to you."

"Good business to you as well."

Ragnok was waiting for their client when the week was up. He would normally have an underling doing such things – but this new aspect of their bank was new and untested and he was the one who needed to be on hand.

Just as it had a week before, the crystals lit and the connecting universe was shown on the screen. The door lit a green color and very soon Marek Ilumian and his Accounts Manager at A1 had arrived.

"Very good. I will leave Slipknife here to negotiate the fees for my use of this portal and your services on my behalf. Is that acceptable?"

Ragnok nodded. "We will negotiate fairly."

He nodded. "I need to go visit the Ministry and then I will return to review the parchment-work on the publishing agent. Here are several copies of the three texts – although they are Wizarding text books, I am certain that you can find use of such books, for a library or to educate your human employees as needed."

Ragnok nodded and a guard took the box containing the books.
"I will return in a couple of hours."

The Goblins in charge remained behind to negotiate. Instead of receiving gold, Gringotts received a list of sure moneymakers for both the Muggle and Wizarding worlds for the period between 1975 and 1985. The local Gringotts had to agree not to use the information to harm significantly the economy of either world – possible inside information could be used quite nefariously and no one who was part of this agreement wanted too much damage to occur to Magical or non-Magical societies. It was also understood that there was no guarantee that their worlds were the same – so use of the information was limited already.

But the gamble appealed to Goblin nature.

Slipknife and the local Gringotts would work on basic agreements to prevent too much mineral loss in either world, minimize risk due to timeline contamination and many other factors. This agreement would form the basis of most agreements that 1st Interdimensional would make over the next millennia or two.

1st Interdimensional had been very grateful to receive a Dimensional Key once it had been stripped from the consciousness that had once been attached. Harry decided that he would need to check up on Dawn in the world where God had remade her into a real human, rather than the idiot Monks doing a piss-poor job of it.

Griselda and the team of examiners were just finishing the last letters with OWL scores. It had been a tiring week as it normally was, but they were glad this yearly exercise was finally completed and the results recorded.

There was a knock on the door. "Come in!" cried out Griselda Marchbanks.

The door opened and the examiners recognized the man who walked in. "Professor Septimus! What can we do for you today?"

"Good afternoon, Ladies and Gentlewizards of the Wizarding Examination Authority. I have brought back copies of the texts that I plan on using and wish for you to review them. If that isn't too much of a problem?"

The Examiners looked at each other and back at their visitor. Professor Tofty said, "Actually, I have been looking forward to seeing the texts – it's always good to know what exactly is being taught."

Harry nodded. He withdrew a matchbox-sized box from his pocket and set it on the table. Tapping it with his wand, the box expanded. Each of the five examiners accepted three books from the man.

Griselda looked at the title page of each:

Basic Defense for the Modern Magical, by M.I. Bullard – A text for students beginning their education in Defense Against the Dark Arts as well as necessary additional information on personal defense and magical safety – Years 1-3

Normal Defense for the Modern Magical, by M.I. Bullard – A text for ORDINARY WIZARDING LEVELS for Defense Against the Dark Arts and required laws and regulations for Wizards' Ordinary Magic and Basic Aptitude Testing as well as necessary additional information on Formal Dueling – Years 4-5

Advanced Defense for the Modern Magical, by M.I. Bullard – A text for NASTILY EXHAUSTING
WIZARDING TESTS for Defense Against the Dark Arts as well as necessary additional information on Magical Combat – Years 6-7

Madam Marchbanks' eyes widened on seeing the nature of the texts. She expected random texts, not books specifically compiled for the curriculum.

"Well, I believe we will need a few days to review these. How can we contact you when we are finished?"

Harry considered that. "Well, I will need at least a week to ensure that the publisher prints enough copies – they are waiting for your approval or any objections you might have. Call it a day or two for corrections. Once approved, I will ask for enough copies to be made. So perhaps I can return by 1 July? I will need to ensure that the bookstores have copies by 15 July. If I am needed urgently, I suppose you can write a letter through my Account Manager at Gringotts."

Madam Marchbanks nodded. "That is acceptable." She paused. "Did you write these books?"

Harry chuckled. "In a way. The Bullard name is a quill-name meaning Scribe. To be perfectly frank, I have been compiling instructions on defense for a while. Your list just allowed me to get them, with some assistance, put in an order that matches the requirements you gave me. Those whose work I have borrowed from will be suitable compensated and you will find that there is an extensive bibliography which includes which authors and books were used as reference. Thank Merlin we have magic or it would have taken far longer to put together."

Truthfully, it had taken him weeks to compile all the texts in the other dimension – and one minute of a Divine-level spell to compile it. Truthfully, the texts were spell and law heavy and only moderate in theory, but he had also included several articles and speeches by those knowledgeable in Defense.

Harry felt that teaching the mindset of proper defense was as important as teaching the required spells and procedures. He had visited a few dimensions and sat in on lectures by various wizards and witches, usually hidden fully, and had recorded the best information he could retrieve.

He had even used some of what the fake Moody had spouted in one dimension where he knew that he had repaired the world after – he had refrained from changing the timelines despite, at times, wishing to go full Vengeful Wrath from God on some of those he observed.

He had even included a lecture by Quirrell in a world where Voldemort had been somewhat repaired and made sane and was working with Harry Potter to take down Dumbledore. It was a bit sad to see the potential that had been wasted by so many versions of the man because it was perhaps the most brilliant first lecture he had ever seen for Defense in any world, ever. (See Lily's Changes by arekay, Chapter 11, STID 6992471)

Madam Marchbanks looked at the bibliography and nodded in appreciation. She recognized several names and several books which were reputable. She saw no books she considered useless, such as that drivel from that Slinkhard chap.

"Well, one week should be sufficient. I look forward to giving you our review."

Their visitor bowed and left. The examiners, having finished their immediate duties, opened the new books with curiosity.

For the next week, Harry moved through Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry without the occupants even being aware that he was doing so – beyond a house elf or two who would not speak
of the movements of a God.

One of the first things that Harry did was go to each House area and check for and remove any curses he could find. He also found a ward or two that were not part of the larger Hogwarts wards. These were to hide illicit materials, from what he could gather.

Surprisingly, only one was in Slytherin. There were two in Ravenclaw and one in Gryffindor. The Dark Arts books that had been hidden in Ravenclaw he moved to the Room of Requirement – he had plans for such. And the cursed item in Slytherin he just destroyed.

The wizard porn hidden in Gryffindor he actually sent back to the student who left it – with an admonition by an anonymous Professor to leave it at home.

Harry wasn't the type to overly moralize some things. He, as a God, still took time for a dalliance or three when he wanted to have some fun. And he had much better control over his urges than any mortal might have. So, he took care not to punish the Gryffindor more than that.

He found the curse on the Defense position right where he suspected it to be: The Award for Special Services to the School for Tom Riddle. He had often wondered why Dumbledore never took it down and, after inspecting it, he realized why: There was a very selective confundus charm on it as well as a few spells which acted like a notice-me-not charm. Luckily, the curse was all it held and Riddle's death would see the curse die out. So as long as his counterparts defeated Riddle in their own worlds, the curse would eventually be gone.

That didn't mean he didn't take personal pleasure in destroying the curse here. He did set up a modified curse that would see any Professor who wasn't truly working to educate the students suffer a mishap which would prevent them from returning after one term.

The Professor could be lackadaisical about it, snarky, mean, or disagreeable. He was a God of Free Will and he would not seek to alter personalities by compulsion charms or such. They just had to be honestly there and not intending to harm Hogwarts or its students as a whole.

And finally, he had slipped into the Ward Room at Hogwarts, and copied down all of the various rune-sequences and wards which he could find. He would have the Goblins review it and see what they could make of it.

Honestly, he could do it. But he wanted to have the locals do as much as they were able to.

Finally, it was time to return to the Ministry and see if the Examiners were happy.
It was 15 July and Hogwarts was hosting the first meeting with the staff for the upcoming year.

When all were assembled, Albus Dumbledore stood up and said, "To most of you, I say: Welcome Back! And to our newest Professor, I say Welcome to Hogwarts. For those who have not met him, this is Garrick Septimus. He shall be taking the role of Defense Against the Dark Arts Professor for this year."

There were murmurs of greetings all around. Horace Slughorn was curious. "Septimus. I am not familiar with that name. Are you Muggleborn?" It should be said in Horace's defense that his tone expressed only curiosity and not any distaste.

Harry smiled. "No. Technically, I believe I would be considered a Halfblood. Like the Headmaster, I had a Pureblood father and a Muggleborn mother. Septimus is from the continent. One of my ancestors was chosen as the seventh Consul of a city in the Roman Empire. With his previous name showing his less than pure Roman roots, he took the name of Septimus. His descendents were known as the Line of Septimus and it became the family name. It happened to be that some came to Briton. We tend to be homeschooled which is why we are not well known."

Horace nodded. It was quite plausible.

"Now, textbooks. For those returning, any changes in the textbooks assigned for your subjects?" the Headmaster asked.

There were negative replies all around.

"Very good. And Professor Septimus?"

"Please, everyone call me Garrick – or Gary if you like. Probably better to separate me from Mr. Ollivander. Anyway, I have the list of texts here."

He pushed the small parchment over to the Headmaster.

Dumbledore looked over the short list. "I am not familiar with these texts."

Gary nodded. "Newly published. Flourish & Blotts took delivery just this morning, or so I was informed by the printer would be the case." He took a small box from his robes and placed it on the table and tapped it with his wand. The item expanded to a larger box. He withdrew three books and passed them to the Headmaster.

The Headmaster opened the first text and his eyes widened momentarily. He flipped to cover on the other two and saw the same thing. He looked up. "You had these reviewed by the Wizarding Examination Authority." He stated it, and didn't form it as a question.
There were murmurs of surprise. Gary shrugged. "Well, I knew the author was working on Defense texts already. I went to Madam Marchbanks and retrieved a list of required materials for each year based on standard tests given at the Ministry. I then spent a good deal of time helping the author organize them into appropriate sections. You see the result before you. I felt it was better to ensure that the texts filled the requirements than to pass off random books which would need supplemental texts and lectures to bring students to the necessary requirements. They do reference the works for the other Hogwarts subjects as necessary for things which are relevant from those classes. There is also a list of books referenced which can be perused if a student wishes to study further on the various spells and related material. Those copies are for your own library as you might desire."

As Dumbledore glanced through the books, Gary retrieved several sets. He passed a set to each professor for reference as most subjects taught at Hogwarts had some relation to protecting oneself from magic in one way or another. Even the Divination and Astronomy professors received copies.

The librarian received five copies of each for the library – he knew that some professor would pick their own books as textbooks in later years. Better to have a good reference with several copies on hand as needed.

Dumbledore finally put his copies aside and returned to the meeting.

Once everything was completed, Gary asked to speak to the Headmaster. Albus invited him into his office.

"What seems to be on your mind, Garrick?" the Headmaster asked.

"Well, I took one more step which might offend you but it was done with the best of intentions."

"Oh?" the Headmaster asked curiously.

"Well, as my subject has much to do with safety, I snuck in about two weeks ago to check on a few things. I dispelled a few curses that I encountered in various places – nothing too egregious but better removed. And then I snuck into the room containing the Ward Stones."

Albus' eyes widened. "How did you achieve that?"

"I'm a Master of Defense – any Master worth their salt would be able to do the same. As a point of curiosity, I copied the various ward schemes and rune clusters to parchment and paid Gringotts to review what I found. I just received the report back and felt you should receive it as it is your area of responsibility."

Albus nodded. "We shall discuss your clandestine actions at a later point, but perhaps it was for the best. The report, please."

Harry pulled a set of folded parchment from his pocket and placed it on the desk. "I will have to say: Having a venerable goblin Ward Master sit there and laugh about the stupidity of wizards tends to put one off one's lunch."

Albus' eyes widened at that. Even some of the portraits voiced some objection to what was said. Albus called for silence even as he quickly reviewed the parchments.

His eyes widened at one of the pages and he started to become angry. "This says …." Albus stood up and whirled toward the wall containing the vast number of portraits.

In a voice rich with magic, Albus Dumbledore called out, "Headmasters of Hogwarts! Attend!"
Gary Seven, Marek Ilumian, or Harry Potter, whichever guise he took at any particular time was impressed with the sheer power that was rolling off of the Headmaster. Gary noted that Albus Dumbledore, still in his prime and not yet weighted down by the Voldemort conflict, was much more impressive than he would have expected.

Once all of the portraits were filled, Albus asked, "As current Headmaster, I demand to know: Which of you deliberately negated the Anti-Rape wards on the castle?"

There were sounds of shock and surprise at this question. The various Headmasters and Headmistresses, most of them, were appalled at the idea. Gary noted one, however, that seemed to be struggling.

"Headmaster? Third from the top and two in from the right side."

Albus looked at the portrait that was pointed out and said, "Phineas Nigellus Black! What do you know of the Anti-Rape wards being disabled?"

It was obvious that the portrait was struggling against answering. Gary squinted at the portrait with suspicion. While every portrait was paying attention to what was happening in front of them, Gary sent a spell at the portrait. Albus twirled as saw the painting freeze in its canvas. He turned. "Why did you do that?" he asked.

Gary stood. "A suspicion. Would you mind if I checked?"

Albus considered that and motioned him to get on with it.

With a precise wand movement and non-verbally, Gary conjured a simple ladder. "I believe that you should check that frame. From the materials I was given, the Headmasters should all answer to you. That he was able to fight it seems suspicious. I wonder if he left anything on his portrait to negate the requirement."

Albus looked thoughtfully at his Professor and back to the portrait. Somewhat spryly for his age, Albus climbed the ladder and took the frame from the wall, casually negating the permanent sticking charm that held it in place – Gary's eyes widened.

"I thought that removing those portraits was impossible." He wondered if many of Albus' counterparts knew that spell and refused to remove Walburga's portrait during the time the Order was located at Grimmauld Place as a distraction or for some other reason.

Albus smiled. "I am keyed into the wards here. I would not be able to do this if this was any other location. But here I am Master."

Gary nodded appreciatively. With that he was satisfied. He still felt that the Headmaster could have helped Sirius in quite a few places to do the same. But that was a matter for other times and universes.

Albus carefully lifted the portrait and passed it down to Gary who held it as the Headmaster returned down the ladder.

The two carefully inspected the frame and, as Gary suspected, they found a very small rune sequence hidden on the frame, carved into it. Gary said, "Do you mind if I tackle this? It's been a while since I could use these skills."

"Go ahead – as long as you do no permanent damage."
Moving his wand carefully, Gary drained the magical residue from the rune sequence. He then reached into his pocket and retrieved a pocket knife. That he had conjured this Albus did not need to know.

Scraping carefully, Gary removed the runes by the simple expedient of removing layers of wood until they were gone. Looking around, Gary saw the desk. He grinned. "Don't get too upset – I'm going to be careful."

Albus watched curiously as Gary went below the desk and removed wood shavings from hidden portions – but not enough from any one spot to be seen as obvious removal. Picking these up, he returned to the portrait and, after placing the wood shavings on the frame, cast a Reparo spell.

They watched as the wood shavings melded back into the frame and it was as if the wood had never been disturbed. The Headmaster climbed the ladder once more and then accepted the portrait again and placed it on the wall, replacing the permanent sticking charm.

After he climbed back down, the Headmaster vanished the ladder. After getting back into position, the Headmaster removed the spell freezing the painting.

"Phineas Nigellus Black. I ask again: What do you know of the Anti-Rape wards being disabled?"

The painting no longer struggled against the Headmaster's questions and commands. "Pureblood students were being denied their rightful due from the mudbloods that were attending. I ensured that this would no longer be a problem."

Gary interrupted, "Order him to stay in his frame." Albus quickly did so. "Ask him what other wards he disabled or added and their purpose. You might need to order him to answer as I believe he's against the idea. And you probably should directly order him not to pass on information that he learns from Hogwarts to any other portraits without the sitting Headmaster's explicit permission."

Albus considered that and nodded. He turned back to the portrait. His voice once again steeped with magic the Headmaster ordered, "Phineas Nigellus Black! From this moment on your highest allegiance is to Hogwarts and its Headmaster or Headmistress. You shall answer any question put to you by such fully and without prevarication. You shall not pass on any information or request unless specifically ordered to do so or where it shall be for the benefit of all Hogwarts students regardless of blood status. Do you understand?"

Gary could see the resentment as the portrait replied, "I understand, Headmaster."

Albus gave a wintry smile. "Now, list all wards you disabled or placed on Hogwarts and why. You will also tell me anything that you have done in contravention to your magical requirements or which goes against the Charter of Hogwarts."

While it was not a large list, the items listed were significant. It was apparent that work needed to be done to repair the wards. The Headmaster also had to remove spells that had been placed on the Sorting Hat.

Phineus watched with some active dislike as the Sorting Hat cried, "Oh! Now that's much better." The Hat turned itself and said, "Professor Septimus! You have Hogwarts' thanks for you assistance in clearing up this travesty. For too long have I been forced to place certain purebloods in Slytherin regardless of their traits unless the student specifically desires another House. For too many Gryffindor-like students have been mislabeled as cunning."
Gary smiled. "You are quite welcome. I would only ask that you not place anyone in unnecessary danger by your placement of them. But, you are the authority as it was intended to be."

Albus, who had been watching, asked, "Would you like to be sorted? While not required, I admit to some curiosity."

"As long as my secrets are kept."

The Sorting Hat said, "Keeping secrets was part of my enchantment. You have nothing to be concerned about."

Gary sat at the desk and the Headmaster put the Hat on his head. Gary deliberately opened up his collected knowledge to the Sorting Hat in case it would find the information useful.

"My, my, there is quite a lot here that I did not expect." The Sorting Hat sounded amazed.

"Well, my experiences might be a bit richer than you are used to," Gary replied.

With some amusement the Hat said, "I do not believe I have ever sorted a God before. You could be any house you wish to be in, depending on the circumstances."

"Yes. But considering I am a God of Knowledge, that might give you a place without giving away too much."

"Yes. While the Four would each have loved to have you, your chosen nature gives you a place in," and the Hat Spoke the next part aloud, "RAVENCLAW!"

Albus picked the Hat off of Gary's head. "Well, I can well understand your placement in Ravenclaw. You seem to have great intelligence and wit."

Gary shrugged with a smile. "The Hat did mention that I could have been placed in the other houses as well. I believe that any well-rounded individual would have traits of each house."

"Quite." Albus returned the Hat to its shelf. He then returned to his chair. "Seeing that you seem to have a knack for sussing out inconsistencies and seem to have a good head on your shoulders, would you be willing to assist me in repairing the damage?"

"Most certainly. I also have a fair bit of power, so charging the corrected wards would be something I can assist with. Although I suggest you have seven Professors, including yourself, assist with the final step of charging the wards, under the direction of the School Healer." He pulled another set of parchments. "These were the suggestions of the Ward Master who reviewed the wards."

"And how did this all come to be paid for?"

Gary grinned. "Well, to be perfectly honest, I might have asked a house elf or two to retrieve anything that might be of value from the school's lost and found which could not be identified as belonging to any one individual in the last two centuries. They found a pile of emeralds. Gringotts bought them." He pulled one more parchment from his pocket. "This is the account information on what remains. I suggest some of it be spent on some new brooms – rumour has it that your school is lacking in this area and could use some updating."

Albus was reviewing the parchment with some surprise. There was quite a bit on money left in the account. He noted that it was listed as a "Hogwarts Headmaster's Discretionary Fund."
"I wonder what else is in the Lost and Found."

Gary asked curiously, "Headmaster? If I ask a question, can you give me an honest answer? It will go no further than us."

Albus replied, "Certainly." He looked curious.

"What are your feelings about what should be taught to people and what should be kept locked away from general knowledge?"

Albus considered that. "There are magics which, I believe, should never see the light of day. When I became Headmaster, I removed quite a number of books from the Restricted Section to the Headmaster's Library as no one should be able to study them unless absolutely necessary. Much of magic is wonderful, but there are many things which are restricted for good reason. To be perfectly honest, at times I feel like removing even more as I see misuse on the rise. My instincts as a moral wizard fight with my duties as an educator. Where does one draw the line?"

"But isn't it true that if you remove knowledge from circulation, those remaining who have to find counters to what is removed are thereby hamstrung in their efforts?"

Albus sighed. "Yes. This is the moral dilemma. How does one allow those who might need the information to become aware of it and prevent those who should not learn such things from doing so?"

Gary was satisfied that his initial assessment of this Albus Dumbledore from his initial meeting was the correct one: This was one of the good ones, who still struggled to do the right thing and was willing to listen still to advice from others. The Voldemort conflict had not heated up enough where he had to appear to be all-wise and infallible to keep the Light side together.

"How long until you will be ready to repair the wards?"

Albus considered that. "I believe I will take the necessary steps within the month. I will assemble the needed professors and those who are necessary. I mustn't be too obvious as there are … radical elements which would attempt to persuade me toward another path. I would do right by my students however – and could come under backlash from those who have different ideas of what is optimum. I walk a tight rope across a canyon at times.:

"Well, within the month I will see if I can come up with a possible solution. I might fail – but a new set of eyes often can see things that have become invisible to those who live somewhere every day."

Albus twinkled as he said, "I look forward to your insights."

"As far as the Lost and Found, there is a thousand years of old, damaged, and lost things. Furniture that is no longer useful. Old wands, old artifacts. Just an unbelievable number of things.

"Anything which can be identified as belonging to a particular family could be returned to their Gringotts vault and anything which can be identified as Goblin-made could be given over to Gringotts for the value of their good will alone.

"I might suggest that you have underprivileged students assist in repairing the old furniture. Once repaired and cleared of any magic, some pieces you have could fetch thousands of galleons if sold to collectors in the Muggle world. You could literally have a stream of money flowing in to update and improve Hogwarts.
"Old wands, once Ollivander checks them over – you can pay him a fee to do so – could be gathered and, whenever a student comes with a poorly matched wand due to financial hardship, Ollivander could oversee testing the lost wands on new people for a better match. Anyone who cannot be matched would then be taken to his shop and your fund could pay for their wand – all without creating waves for those who suffer under such circumstances.

"Old clothing can be repaired and sold to the Muggle world – Muggles will buy anything that is vintage or antique. Hire a Muggleborn witch out of school who has no other prospects and they can act as your agent to sell such things and deposit the profits into the Discretionary Fund. Old uniforms that are still repairable could be given to poor students who currently have even more worn clothing. More modern clothes could also be given over to those who could use them.

"Old books, if unowned or unreturnable, can be repaired and either put into the library or sold – anything too Dark can be put in the restricted section or in the Headmaster's Library.

"Magical artifacts that are repairable and not dark, if unowned, can be used by the Professors to teach. Old sneakoscopes, foe glasses, etc.

"Old brooms could be serviced and put into use or sold to those wizards who collect them.

"Parchment, quills, and other school supplies could be given surreptitiously to those who have financial hardships and who could use a leg up.

"You have a treasure trove, Headmaster. I suggest you use it."

The Headmaster was astounded by the vision his newest professor gave. As an academic, he would never have considered much of what was being said. But as an administrator who always needed more funds than were available – these suggestions might prove a real difference to Hogwarts and its students.

"I shall take your suggestions under real advisement." Gary could see that Dumbledore – this Dumbledore – really would.

Soon, Gary was on his way. He wondered what he could do for the next little while.
Gary Seven – Garrick Septimus – looked at the product of his handiwork.

Upon inspection, Gary found that there was a large section at the back of the Restricted Section which was not currently in use in the Hogwarts Library.

The few tomes it did contain could more easily be put in with the rest of the books and cannibalizing an unused classroom to one side of the Library had yielded an area forty feet by forty feet.

After a quick drawing of the space, Gary traveled …

Molly and Arthur Weasley (Lone Traveler: Building a Better Burrow) were quite happy to see their very occasionally visiting guest.

The last of their children had just been sent off to Hogwarts. And while Gary was there to retrieve the Warding Schemes from the Weasley Box, he had to admit that this Burrow was one of the most welcoming places in any world.

He also learned that his tryst with Bellatrix Black in this world had produced a boy which was doted upon by most relatives. The boy was named Hardin, which was the name of a star but also he was named after Harry himself. Bellatrix had finally married another wizard who treated her and Hardin well – the Traveler was glad to hear it and did not want to intrude on their happy life.

Knowing he had another happy child was always a blessing though. The Weasleys had decided that Harry's efforts to increase their wealth deserved a portion of the company that the Potters, Prewitts, and Weasleys had with regards Wards. And so Hardin's future was assured.

All in all, each family was doing quite well for themselves. Harry was glad to hear that.

Harry was also startled to learn that the Muggles (with some backing for development from Gringotts on the sly) had already started manufacturing and selling white LED lighting for widespread use. While it was still currently very expensive, the magical side had started to embrace it as an improvement over candles and wall sconces with live flame. Powered by magic rather than electricity, and enchanted properly through their company, it was guaranteed to last for 300 years.

With that in mind, after visiting and getting caught up, Gary once again moved to Gringotts. His raised status was obvious to them. Hooking them up to 1st Interdimensional was fairly straightforward and the fact that they had a commodity currently unknown outside of their home universe gave them an advantageous position.

Gary made an order for delivery to A2 via A1 of enough LED lighting for the entire Hogwarts library and a Goblin artificer from what was now Universe A3 (A was the designation for worlds with Gringotts and a Wizarding World and the dimensions were numbered according to the order they were hooked up to A1) to help with installation.

Harry then searched through his recollections for someone to help do the woodwork that would be required for the new section of the Library.

The biggest pain would be ensuring that each board or panel of wood contained the runework to tie into the wards which he would erect.
And because he wanted it to last a very long time, he would use mahogany. And not just any mahogany. He would go to a point in the past and retrieve mahogany from areas that had yet to see humans arrive – so called old growth. He would plant trees where he took them and ensure that no one would be the wiser when humans eventually arrived to the area he planned to take them from.

He would also pick up some Brazilian cherry wood for flooring and rosewood for accents.

Gary would admit if forced that he absolutely loved to design and build things. He had helped build the Burrow in one universe, Pogara's cottage in another, and had put his hand in at various times.

The most confusing project he ever worked on was helping an old retired US Marine on his boat in the man's basement – he still hadn't figured out how the man would get the boat out of the house. He could do it with magic – but the man was as Muggle as the world he lived in. It had been something of a moral dilemma when he had chosen to let the man keep his secrets and not use legilimency on him.

In the end, after retrieving the extremely heavy and dense woods, Gary had to turn to Muggle wood shops to convert the materials to usable pieces. He had stamps made for the runes to be added and explained them away as brand marks.

In the end, he actually didn't have to spend much cash at all – he paid for the work with excess amounts of the woods as the craftsmen he contracted to do the work recognized the extreme high quality and most were happy to receive several extra logs of each wood (Gary had to ensure that no insects or diseases were transferred from the Earth's past – that would have been a nightmare). They planned on selling the wood to make veneers or to custom wood workers for a premium price.

He even had to convince a few that the logs were not illegally obtained. The type of men that Harry liked to do business with also tended to have the highest moral standards in addition to being perfectionists when it came to detail. It was extra work – but worth it.

When he had accepted delivery through Gringotts on 7 August, he had to then get help from Gringotts to find craftsmen to install everything.

Ragnok offered Goblin craftsmen. Even he had recognized the quality of material and work which went into the various parts to be installed. Gary then went to the Headmaster.

"Ah, Gary. Still working on that project in the Library?" the Headmaster asked.

"Yes. You saw the area I cleared out?"

Dumbledore nodded. "Madam Pince was startled when she returned and found an area that had been made devoid of everything down to the stone. It is good you mentioned that you were using the space for that matter we were discussing."

Gary grinned. "Yes. I imagine it would have been quite a shock."

The Headmaster asked curiously. "If I may ask …" Gary nodded him on. "Why are you investing so much time and effort? You are not a Hogwarts Alumnus. You have no stake in these matters. Yet, from every indication you seem to treat these matters as a personal concern. And while I applaud such effort on Hogwarts' behalf, it leaves me asking: Why?"
"The truth?" Dumbledore nodded. "Someone I respect suggested that I apply for this position and expend my efforts into making my time here a success. I am … well, I pay attention to details. I like solving problems. I enjoy making plans. I love to see my solutions and plans put into action. I also have a history of confronting the Dark – and from everything I know, if you truly want to combat the Dark you must start with education. No one is born evil. Hardships and lack of vision force people to do things that they originally would never have imagined doing. At first they try to minimize harm – but then they find they like the feeling of being in charge even if others get hurt. And then they begin liking that."

Gary shook his head. "No. The path to Evil does not start with a desire to harm. It starts with a desire to protect oneself and to survive. No child grows up with dreams of being a thief – but many criminals enjoy stealing. Where did it start? It started with a problem they had for which they could conceive no other solution. So why do I work so hard on these things?"

Gary smiled. "Because you can only head off those troubles by ensuring that people have options. That was the reason for my suggesting you pay underprivileged students to help restore furniture and what not. The money for the budget will be nice – but putting someone on a road where they can see future success is much more the goal than having nice things for this school. And if it keeps them from becoming Dark wizards and witches? It's all for the better. People don't want things handed to them – which his why I don't recommend just giving poor families money – but they do want the opportunity to earn their way out of their problems."

Gary paused. "And the library? I wish I had access to such things when I first studying to oppose a particular Dark wizard who confounded my family. I eventually ensured he received justice but it would have been far easier if my family had access to a place where answers could be found. I envision a Library which can be accessed at need by Aurors, Healers, and Masters and apprentices to ensure that those things which afflict those they deal with are properly handled. Thus my work on a Masters' Library for Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. The hardest part of this whole thing is setting up a system where Dark elements in government or the community can't force good people from benefitting from it while also preventing Dark elements from accessing it at the same time. When I have the warding planned, I'll show you and we can enact it."

Gary gave a vicious smile. "And then I'd like to see a Dark wizard or someone who doesn't have the best interests of Hogwarts in mind try to get in – just so that I can point and laugh."

Albus contemplated his newest professor. He appeared to be young – his listed age was 36 but he looked even younger than that – but it was immediately apparent that he hadn't lived a cloistered life. He had faced hardships and those who would do harm. It was quite apparent that instead of becoming Dark himself, he had decided to champion the fight against it.

He found he quite liked the boy's idealism.

"That satisfies my curiosity. Now what brings you to my office today?"

"I have taken delivery on the materials needed for the Masters' Library. When I tried to use Gringotts to contact skilled artisans to install everything, I was given a counterproposal. Gringotts would have Goblin artisans put everything together. I need your permission before allowing it."

Albus' eyes widened. "Why would the Goblins want to do the work?"

"Because they are just as passionate about detail as I am and while they are warriors, they also have craftspeople who love to work. They were taken by my vision and – well, they want a piece of it."
"And how much will this cost Hogwarts or the Discretionary fund?" Albus asked.

Gary grinned a sly grin. "Nothing. I will pay them with materials and wood that they normally wouldn't have access to – much like the wood which will make up the furnishings and floors of the Library. The Goblins love Gold and Silver and Bronze – but they don't disdain other useful things."

Albus considered it. "I wonder if I should ask the Board of Governors."

"I might suggest that in this case an old adage is appropriate: Sometimes it is better to ask forgiveness than permission. I suggest presenting it as fait accompli – no room for Darker elements to shut down something so obviously useful to society. And Hogwarts can charge Masters to bring their Apprentices here to study as needed – a Galleon a day or some such or even more. My wards will prevent any books from being removed or damaged or the information from being used nefariously in the future. I think you'll quite like them."

"Well, this Saturday, the 9th of August, no one will be about yet other than those who reside here. After that, things will be too busy to allow it. Will one day suffice?"

"We'll set it for two. How about that?"

Albus nodded. "So – it will be ready in four days."

"That's the plan. Now we'll see if Ragnok will go for it."

Albus was startled. "Ragnok? You refer to the current Bank Manager Ragnok?"

Gary nodded. "That's who I've been dealing with." With that, Gary left.

Albus watched his Professor curiously as he walked out the door. There was more to him than was apparent – that much was obvious. It was niggling in his mind but he didn't yet have enough data.

Very early on Saturday, 9 August, 1975, several Goblins appeared at the gates of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. With them they brought several trunks which had materiel shrunk into them. And, as requested, Mr. Septimus was waiting for the group.

In the dim early light, the Goblins were led to the fabled castle and allowed to enter the front door. The Goblins, taciturn as they were wont to be, still appreciated good work, especially good stone work, and Hogwarts was definitely this.

They were led up the stairs and finally to the Library. Gary quickly showed them where they would work and where they would eat (the house elves would be providing food as the day went through) and where to take care of personal needs.

Gary left them to it.

After a few hours, the Headmaster arrived to see progress. He was asked for two things: The artisans wanted to be left to complete their work without interruption and the ward master wanted access to the ward stone so that they could tie in the libraries protections.

He was given a detailed list of exactly what would be added and what each ward accomplished. He also, alone of those outside of the team of Goblins, was told exactly where the tied in stone would go within the added room.

Gary's rune schemes allowing smaller ward stones to be tied into the main one was put into
excellent use.

While the Library's stone wasn't in place, the tying scheme would allow it to be charged as soon as it was ready.

As a courtesy, the Ward Master removed the anti-Rape sequence, remarking that the wards as a whole still needed to be reworked to removed redundancies, close a few holes, and to allow the sitting Headmaster a bit more control.

The Headmaster told him that he had his Professor of Ancient Runes who would be assisting according to the report he had already received regarding the wards from Gringotts.

The ward master grunted and went back to the Library to continue his work. He was monitoring the installation of items to ensure the tying rune on each piece was not damaged.

By 11:00 that night, the entire room was fully installed. Included were contracts for each person who accessed the Library to sign. There was one contract for healers, another for Magical Law Enforcement, another for Masters, one for Apprentices, one for Examiners, and one for the Headmaster.

The Headmaster's included the caveat that he would ensure that the strictures on who could access the room would remain in place, as well as the protections against books being removed.

The Healer contract required the Healer use the library for the sole purpose of advancing their craft or to find counter-curses or cures for unknown or little known maladies. Any Healer who used the information to harm others or who attempted to pass on information to any outside of his fellow oath-bonded healers would lose all knowledge of that which they had retrieved from the room. There was a warning system in place so they knew they had to stop whatever they were doing which could violate the contract.

The Auror contract required that the Auror or other Law Enforcement employee had the authorization of the Head of the DMLE and/or the Headmaster to access the library, and that their purpose was to find counters to curses they would encounter or to recognize magical effects which would allow them to identify Dark magic. Their contract also had a clause which would cause misuse to result in the information being lost to them.

The Master and Apprentice contracts had to do with the proper education of their field and to ensure that counter-curses and ways to oppose Dark magic was not lost. Misuse would see the information disappear from their minds and notes.

Cursebreakers were allowed to research wards, curses, and counters. In exchange for free access, Gringotts would enter copies of 200 books into the Library so that they had a place to send their Cursebreakers to study outside of their own caves.

The Librarian was allowed to enter only to ensure the room was being kept up. Elves could only clean and repair, and not remove any books.

Several pairs of silk gloves of various sizes were made available so that human hands did not touch the more dangerous books.

The room was magically set to expand as needed as more and more titles appeared. As long as there was magic, the room would maintain itself.

Any Hogwarts student who was of age had to have permission from the Headmaster and one of
several people to access the room: Head of the Wizarding Examination Authority, Head of the DMLE, Head of St. Mungo's, Chief Warlock of the Wizengamot or a certified master of the field they were studying. Anyone who wasn't of age needed approval from the Headmaster and one other plus their guardian. No one person could provide both approvals even if the Headmaster also took on that position.

The Headmaster could allow people to enter, if present, to see the room but even these could not get near the books. The Board of Governors for example. No curses could reach through the wards and the books that were properly put into the library could not be damaged without the person being ejected immediately.

The lighting came from what appeared to be flat panels. The fact that it was LED lighting was obscured. Muggleborns would comment on how much it looked like Muggle lighting even if it was powered by magic.

The entire library was now brightly lit with light sconces throughout.

Unfortunately, it exposed much more dirt and wear than had previously been apparent. A team of house elves exhausted themselves on Sunday as they cleaned and repaired the now exposed problem.

Even exhausted, however, they were quite proud of themselves and their work. The Library hadn't looked so good – ever.

It was the Wednesday following the installation of the Master's Library at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry.

Having put it off as long as he could, Albus Dumbledore had invited several people to Hogwarts. This included the Head of St. Mungo's, the Head of the DMLE, the Head of the Wizarding Examination Authority, the Board of Governors, as well as the Professors who held Masteries in their field. Also present was the school librarian.

The group was to be served lunch at 12:15 and at 1:00 there would be the meeting which was still a mystery to most of the people (except the Hogwarts staff).

After a good meal, they were led up to the doors to the library. The Headmaster turned. "First of all, due to a generous contribution from a source who wishes to remain anonymous, the Library has been subject to … an update."

With that the Headmaster opened the doors. It wasn't that impressive – a few lights turned on throughout the room, but it was very mild. Before anyone could say anything, the Headmaster said, "If you would, Madam Pince?"

The Librarian nodded and quickly moved to her desk, which was 15 feet from the door. Getting behind it, she did something and suddenly the room was brighter than anyone there had remembered it being.

The Headmaster led them to the Librarian's desk and they saw a panel there. Along with several crystals activated by wand, there was a map on the desk which showed everyone present.

One of the Board of Governors asked, "How do those fixtures give off so much light?"

"To be honest, I don't know," the Headmaster answered smiling. "All I do know is that the process was patented at the Ministry last Friday and the anonymous donor contacted us through Gringotts.
who arranged the installation. The map is copyrighted under Marauders' Maps Ltd. Once again, it was arranged through Gringotts."

Barty Crouch Senior was impressed but confused. "This is all well and good, but why were I and these others invited here? This is a Hogwarts matter."

"Well, we have another part to show off." The Headmaster led the group toward the back of the library. He cast a sonorous and called out, "Now, Madam Pince, if you will!"

Suddenly the back wall folded away and they were confronted by an entirely new area. A Ministry employee was there. "Ah, Mr. Dimple. Mr. Dimple is here to connect this floo, he pointed off to the side of the area now exposed, "with the floo in my office, the office of the Director of the DMLE, the office of the Director of St. Mungo's, and a connection to Gringott's for the Cursebreaking division. No other direct access shall be granted."

Another Governor asked with some distaste, "And why Gringotts?"

"It was part of the agreement which saw this marvelous room installed."

"And what is this room?"

"This, Ladies and Gentlewizards, is the Master's Library. As you are aware, many books due to their nature and the information they contain are prohibited from public access or are best kept restricted from general study. While some of these are sufficiently protected by their placement in Restricted section, many books are best accessible to Master's only. Also, there are times when Aurors or Healers may need to review very objectionable material to find counters to curses and other Dark magics.

"In the past, I put all such books in the Headmaster's personal library. However, such would prevent access by healers and Aurors as needed. This was the main donation to Hogwarts."

Crouch looked at the large wood wall with frosted glass and said, "And how will access be obtained?"

"First, everyone accessing it must sign a contract that the use of the information shall be limited to countering Dark and obscure magics and that the information will not be used against innocent Wizards, magical creatures, or Muggles. If anyone attempts to misuse the information, it will disappear from their mind – such is part of the contract."

There were a few objections from the Board of Governors. "Magic should be accessible to any who can responsibly use it!"

"I agree," the Headmaster said with a twinkle in his eyes. "The contract just ensures that such remains the case. There are tomes within this room which I could easily justify destroying out of hand just for the horrible things they contain. I was tempted to do so on many occasions. BUT. There are times when such information must be used to counter the magics they describe. If I destroyed these books, those who already have access to such information would be unchecked. And thus my decision to permit access by healers and Aurors and other recognized Masters."

The Headmaster clapped his hands. "First! I must have the Director of the DMLE, the head of the Examinations Authority, and the Head of St. Mungo's sign a contract. These are some of the only people that will ever be able to give access – and thus they will be signing the contract for their position, not themselves. Anyone who succeeds them legally – according to established law or precedence – will be able to give the same access."
The contracts were quickly reviewed and signed and put in a slot which would tie them to the wards on the room. "I would mention that even with approved access 24 hours a day, there are intent based wards. Any who desire harm to Hogwarts, its students, Muggles in general, or the Wizarding World shall not be able to access the floo. The opening to Hogwarts shall only be accessible during the times that the Library is open."

Albus smiled. "Now, one more demonstration before we enter the Master's Library. Professor Semptimus."

Gary walked forward. "This is the newest Professor for Defense Against the Dark Arts. I believe Madam Marchbanks has met him."

Madam Marchbanks replied, "Yes. A most impressive wizard. We heartily approved his placement."

"Quite. He will assist with the demonstration. If everyone will return to the outside area." Everyone did so. "He shall demonstrate what happens when someone attempts to force entry." He motioned Gary to go ahead. Gary pulled his wand and cast a fairly strong (but not divinely so) curse which should have been able to break the windows.

Immediately, an alarm flared and the doors closed.

"As you can see, there are defenses. It will take my hand or the Director of the DMLE's to release this. Barty. Put your hand on that crystal."

Barty stepped forward and the doors folded back. Gary was locked into a Petrificus Totalus spell, lying on the floor. "Now Barty, to release him you must place your hand on the crystal next to the door."

Barty stepped forward and put his hand as indicated. Gary was released and groaned. "That wasn't pleasant."

Albus was amused. "You offered to demonstrate."

"Yes," he replied as he slowly stood. "Next time, get someone else."

Albus chuckled. "If you had only just tried to unlock it, only the alarm would sound." He turned to those watching who were spellbound. "The reaction is in direct proportion to how much effort it put into breaking in. I hope this satisfies that the wards are sufficient?"

There were murmurs of agreement.

"Now, those with access, please put your hand on the crystal and enter one at a time. You must clear the inner door and it must close before the next can enter."

It took a few minutes as the four foot short hall required one door to be closed before the other could open. But eventually they were all inside. "Now, as Headmaster, I am going to stand here and allow the rest to enter. You will not need to put your hand on the crystal as you are not keyed in."

The Board of Governors soon was also inside. The Headmaster then went through himself.

"I will warn you that no one not keyed in can actually reach the books. And any spells will result in the same as what you already saw. Since Professor Septimus has declined to help with the next demonstration, perhaps Professor McGonagall can do so."
She nodded and moved to pick up a pair of silk gloves from the table in the middle of the room. "These are to protect the books and those reading them." She went and picked up a book. She then tried to take it out of the door.

As soon as the inner door locked, the alarm went off and she couldn't go further. She could return, however, and put the book back. She then could leave the room. She did so and returned.

"And thus you see how the books cannot be taken away. Any notes will be subject to the contracts meaning only those keyed in can read even their own notes. Now, feel free to look as much as you like – but only those who have access can pass the ward line."

It was quite a beautiful room. Done mostly with wood, even the floor was covered completely. There were a few rugs. It was a surprisingly warm environment.

The light was bright enough that there was no strain in seeing the titles. Horace tried to take one tome, but could not reach it. "Gloves, Horace," was McGonagall's comment.

He retrieved a set of silk gloves and was then allowed to pick up the book. He remembered his conversation those years ago with Tom Riddle – with the current protections, he would never have been able to access the book. He carefully returned it to the shelves and then returned the gloves.

Soon, everyone was led out. The Board was quietly speaking to each other. Finally, one of them said "What stops the Board of Governors from ordering you to allow access to the Board and anyone the Board deems acceptable?"

The Headmaster smiled. "The contract I signed which was required to receive the donation. The stipulations, ladies and gentlewizards, are locked in to place. Even I cannot now contravene them. And why would I want to? This will ensure that good people can access the information as necessary and those with ill intent cannot. I cannot imagine a better result."

The Board, or at least a couple of them, had to hide their dislike of this. Some knew that there was a Dark wizard they were beholden to which would become enraged when he found there was now information forever beyond his own access. And the contracts prevented the Library from being closed fully as even if Hogwarts was cut off: The DMLE, St. Mungo's and Gringotts would still be able to access it. And no one could raid it and change the rules because the wards would prevent it. Thus, they couldn't justify preventing access by Hogwarts under the strictures as already put in to place.

Their Master would not be happy.
While there are a number of relevant plot points, there is also a little more architectural porn included for those who are interested. And pointers toward the more traditional type where appropriate.

Gary was walking around the dungeon of Hogwarts, considering what else he could change at Hogwarts.

To be honest, he was mostly meddling for his own amusement at this point. There were so many things that could be changed but there was also much to be said for tradition.

He had already taken delivery of the creatures he would be using for various lessons. His personal library had been "delivered" – he had mostly cheated in that respect.

Most of the subjects taught at Hogwarts were being taught at an acceptable level – except perhaps History of Magic. He still didn't know what he would do about Binns, if anything.

Suddenly, he was at the door of the Potions lab. His mind still a bit distracted, he casually unlocked the door with a thought and entered into the room.

Looking around, his smile started growing. Very quickly, he rushed out of the dungeon and traveled …

Gary looked at where he was now. Needing more time than he had available, Gary had moved to a different dimension. He planned on returning just after he left.

This particular world was one he had been to before. Here he had assisted Severus Snape when he became the Potions Professor (Lone Traveler: The Slytherin Chronicles).

He had deliberately moved himself to a point after his alternate would have attended but where he could still find Severus easily – assuming he was still at Hogwarts: June 1999.

Gary went to Gringotts and made arrangements for another interdimensional connection to his bank – he needed funds and he had work to do.

Severus Snape, Head of Slytherin House, Potions Professor at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, and recently made Deputy Headmaster was cheerfully eating his lunch at the Head Table.

With Albus deciding to retire and travel, Minerva McGonagall had finally been made Headmistress and he had been the almost unanimous choice by the remaining staff as the new Deputy.

He was known as being utterly strict regarding necessary discipline but also utterly fair when it came to inter-house situations.
It was with only mild surprise that he noticed a postal owl landing in front of him and presenting its leg to deliver a message. He said, "Thank you," to the owl even as he pushed some small bits of meat forward as a reward. The Owl eagerly ate the items and took off.

"What you got there, Sevvie?" he heard coming from his left side.

Severus rolled his eyes at his former teenage rival and long time friend and collaborator, Sirius Black. Sirius had accepted the position of Tranfiguration Professor when McGonagall became Headmistress. The fact that his children were set to start attending had nothing to do with that.

"I don't know, Sirius. Give me a chance to read it." He glanced over and saw the irrepressible grin that his fellow Professor wore. His lips twitched – he really had become close to the man he had formerly loathed with a passion.

Upon reading the letter, Severus' eyes widened. After completing it, he took on a very thoughtful look. "Well? What is it?"

He glanced over to Sirius. "Do you think you can make arrangements for you and the Wolf to join me for a private lunch on Saturday? It will likely take a bit of time so you will have to clear it with the wives."

Sirius shrugged. "Shouldn't be a problem. Where are we going?"

"We are going to meet an old friend at the Leaky Cauldron."

"Who?"

Severus smirked and answered so that only Padfoot could hear, "The Traveler."

It was Sirius' turn for his eyes to widen to the size of dinner plates.

It was Saturday at noon, the first Saturday after Hogwarts year finished and three men made their way into the Leaky Cauldron.

Seeing their quarry, the moved quickly to join him. Remember the name he used, Severus said, "Gary Seven. It has been quite a long time since you've visited."

"Hello, folks. It's good to be back. Tom's got me a private room. I thought we'd catch up before talking about why I came."

The four were soon being served a decent lunch by Tom and he withdrew.

"So, what's been happening since I helped you take over Slytherin House?" Gary asked.

For the next while, the three men filled Gary in on what had been happening in the last 17 or so years. All in all, Gary decided, these had done well for themselves and the world looked in good shape.

Sirius finally asked, "And what kind of stories do you have for us?"

Gary smirked and said, "First I should mention: I was promoted."

The three looked a bit confused at that. Remus asked, "Promoted? What does that mean?"

"Well, instead of a Wizard being moved from World to World I've been given a bit more control at
times. It's what allowed me to come here. And then there's that other thing."

"The other thing?" Severus asked.

Gary's face took on a full-on grin. "Yes. I was made a God."

The three looked at him in shock. Sirius finally exclaimed, "A GOD! How did THAT happen?"

Gary replied, "I happened into a dimension where the local Powers That Be had their little world off from Divine influence – the Creator was not pleased. Using a bit of the Power I'd already been given, along with some intuitive leaps, and the help of the local hero as well as a whole crapload of Religious leaders, I broke the barrier. The Creator, as a reward, elevated me and gave me carte blanche to do that dimension over – as long as the guilty had all their hard work destroyed."

Sirius whistled. "Damn. Not an easy gig. What kind of God are you?"

Gary smiled. "You are looking at Marek Ilumian, Fury of the Light, Patron God of Free Will and a God of Knowledge and Travel."

"Congratulations," was Severus comment. Remus echoed that.

Sirius had a peculiar look. "That's nice. But couldn't you have been a God of Pranks? Or maybe sex?"

Sirius' friends rolled their eyes even as Gary laughed. "I do alright with those."

Sirius latched onto that one. "Really? Do tell!"

Gary chuckled at that. "I'm not going to go into details – even if they aren't here it's not respectful to be telling tales regarding a Lady's virtue, but I will say: If you ever have a sexual encounter with a Veela Matriarch – best to have stamina and energy potions on hand or she will use you up and throw you out." (Trysts of the Lone Traveler HPFanFicArchive story 1690 Ch 7)

Sirius' eyes were wide. "You had a Veela Matriarch?"

Gary nodded. "As she said to me after a particular point in our tryst: Veela are sex. I have no problem agreeing with her about that."

"Wow!" Sirius said. "I'm jealous!"

Remus rolled his eyes as Severus' mouth twitched. "You're a happily married man, Padfoot!"

"I know! But still – a Veela Matriarch …." It was obvious that Sirius' imagination was running wild.

Gary smirked and watched as he said, "I think the only time that compared was Branwen." (Trysts of the Lone Traveler HPFanFicArchive story 1690 Ch 8)

Remus asked, curious, "Branwen?"

Severus was thinking. "Where have I heard that name before?"

Sirius was also thinking furiously. He was the one who suddenly stopped and gasped. "Branwen, Sister of Bran?" Gary nodded. "As in the Celtic Goddess of Love and Beauty Branwen?"

Gary nodded, his smirk obvious. "Oooh. Padfoot does remember some of his Pureblood
education!"

As the remaining Marauders looked at him in amazement, Severus only reply was, "Now I'm feeling jealous. A Veela sounds wonderful – but not truly unobtainable. But a Goddess is a different matter altogether."

"It was fun. It's not much different than bedding a wife or human lover. They just have a bit more stamina and instinctual knowledge. I won't give details because, as I said it's disrespectful, but with one particular thing Branwen went from complete novice to expert in the space of about ten minutes. I was happy to be the one she practiced with, let me tell you."

Severus finally said, "I will not even try to imagine. I am quite happy with my wife and that is what I shall concentrate on as regards this subject. Now, you said you needed my assistance?"

Gary nodded. "Yes! I am designing the perfect Potions preparation station."

"I don't understand."

"Okay. I have taken the position of Hogwarts Defense Professor in 1975 in the dimension I am currently working on. I am going to prepare the world to defeat Voldemort while having fun improving Hogwarts and other things. I've already created a Masters' Library to hold all the restricted books which allows those who are truly working to improve things to study them and preventing those with malicious intent from accessing it – ever. That's to head off Albus' tendency to try to keep information hidden so it can't be misused. I've already handled a number of curses and even the Defense curse – Voldemort is not aware of that yet and won't be until the next professor lasts more than a year."

"I have set up a plan for Hogwarts to fund improvements on a regular basis using only what is available. I am going to try to knock some sense into your younger selves and their classmates – that will be my ongoing assignment."

"But, I have a hobby: Building things. I like to build the future. So I am going to redo Sluggy's classroom so that is the best Potions Classroom in any world. And I need advice to ensure I don't miss anything."

"How much time do you have?" Severus asked curiously.

"That's the beauty of it! I can take the time I need to plan and put things together here and I will have a few days to install things. I have access to an effectively unlimited budget. So I need ideas."

Severus looked at Gary for a long moment and then said, "Let me speak to my compatriots here for a moment."

Gary shrugged and said, "Sure. I'll go get more butterbeers."

Gary left them furiously talking under a privacy ward. He could have listened in but he did have some respect for privacy.

Having taken a good ten minutes deliberately, Gary returned with the refreshments and sat down.

Severus glanced at Sirius and Remus and then back to Gary. "I will do as you ask. But I expect something in return."

"Certainly! That's only fair. What do you want?"
With a victorious smile Severus replied, "I want detailed instructions on the improvements you've already made in addition to the method you plan to use to ensure Hogwarts has a continuing budget for improvements on a regular basis. And instead of just working out a plan, since you have effectively as much time as you need, we will create this Potions classroom here this summer, funded by your effectively unlimited budget. Just to make certain we have it right, of course."

Gary took a long look at Severus and then laughed. "I forgot! I should have remembered that you were the Head of Slytherin for a reason! You have yourself a deal. Of course, you'll have to give up any vacation plans – or make certain they won't interfere. We'll only have these two and a half-months."

"Acceptable. Where do we begin?"

Gary grinned. "We begin where most Muggles begin when planning out a construction project: The Home Depot." With their confused looks, Gary added, "A store for Muggles who build things. I don't know if they have them here in Britain yet, but a trip across the pond is simple for me and those I bring. Actually – we need to clear out the Potion's classroom first. Then we'll know what we have to work with."

Over that summer, Severus – with occasional assistance from the Mauraders and others – worked with Gary to build this perfect environment.

The first step was to entirely clear out the room and to patch every crack, nook, and cranny. Using a combination of Muggle and Magical means, they ensured that the room was entirely free of any residue.

Severus had to design and brew a few potions that could be used as cleaning agents to ensure no volatile reactions to potions residue. Gary promised that he would ensure that the formula was patented and the proceeds made their way to his younger self in the world he was planning for.

Once that was done, Muggle pipes and plating was put down to regulate the temperature of the floor. Each piece was protected with runes so that it would not wear out or be damaged. These were fed by a magically modified set of water valves which created hot and cold water and which would then vanish it at the end of the loop. This would be kept magically charged by Hogwarts environment. The floor was flattened with leveling cement over the heating tubes and an epoxy coating was put down. Finally, it was charmed to be truly impenetrable by potions spilling. The heating system still worked – they tested to make certain.

There was also a magically modified air system which would push fresh air through a radiator-like set of controls. The difference was that, once again, the water used to modify the temperature was created and vanished magically, making it a fully self-contained system.

The temperature of the room was controlled by a Muggle-made thermostat that used absolutely no electricity. The temperature was taken by elements that would expand or contract according to the temperature and it being charmed to be invulnerable did not affect this. The flow of hot or cold water through the air handlers was directly by the thermostat and not the manual valves which could be shut off in an emergency.

Even the hottest day of summer was overcome by the new magical air conditioning system. It was assumed that the cold of winter was also controllable as such systems were already in use by Muggles.

To reduce the amount of open flames other than those used to brew the potions, instead of magical
torches, LED lighting imported from Universe A3 was put into the room. Severus was the only one that was told it was Muggle lighting that was modified to be used in a magical environment. The local Gringotts was more than happy to fund the improvements at Hogwarts in exchange for the local franchise on Magical LED lighting that Gary helped negotiate.

This system was becoming the commodity of choice for dealing with each new Gringotts location that he assisted in connecting to the Interdimensional network. It helped prevent too many minerals and metals from being displaced from one world to another in the form of Gold, Silver, and Bronze.

At the suggestion of Marek Ilumian, 1st Interdimensional tried to keep a balance of material trades between different universes. When he had brought what was effectively a ton of paper in the form of books from one dimension, 1st Interdimensional had brought about a ton of waste paper back to be put into the Muggle recycling system.

When something was placed just to be held but eventually returned, they did not take this extra step. But when something was imported or exported permanently, an equivalent amount of raw material was returned to ensure no imbalances on the Dimensional level.

Luckily, things like sand, wood pulp, and manufacturing waste was cheap and easy to find and easily transported using magic.

When possible, 1st Interdimensional tried to get the raw material needed for manufacturing from the world it would eventually go to. This negated the need to collect and transport waste and such things.

Gary's account manager had been mightily amused by the story of replacing the biomass of a thousands and thousands of witches, wizards, goblins and magical creatures from one world with an equivalent biomass of pests, rodents, and other undesirable living things to the dimension they were fleeing. They also considered it appropriate revenge for the actions of the non-magicals there.

1st Interdimensional also started researching, with the help of the various universes it connected with, ways to cheaply reclaim carbon from the air as a source of balance material. That the system they eventually came up with also allowed a control over the greenhouse gas effects on the worlds where it was put into use was an added bonus.

In various dimensions, the massive ongoing work by the Magicals to help the entire Earth smoothed the way when the various Magical communities were eventually no longer able to hide. With such a situation, it was extremely inadvisable to destroy something that was deemed by scientists the world over as absolutely vital to the world.

The recovered carbon was also a new source of energy and manufacturing when fossil fuels sources began to dry up, as well as for fertilizers for growing enough to feed the world.

Gary and Severus, with Sirius tagging along for comic effect, were perusing Muggle stores that sold stainless steel countertops and stoves.

"So Severus, can these surfaces be given runes that will make them invulnerable to potion spills or reactions with different ingredients?"

Stainless steel was a new material to Severus. Even though he had grown up a Muggle, he had never considered it for the purposes of potions preparations.
"We would have to test it. It looks like it would work – but I would prefer to make certain."

Gary nodded. He immediately purchased one stainless steel countertop with built in stove and had it taken to the truck he had rented to blend in with the Muggles.

A week was spent trying different rune sequences and also modifying the Muggle burners to something that was more familiar to Wizards and Witches.

The raised edges of the countertops would also decrease the chances of potions spilling onto the floor.

Once they had a countertop with stove elements that was as close to perfect as they could get, Gary started working on a way to draw the fumes away and the residue banished.

Severus and Gary devised a system that under normal circumstances would gently draw the air up to a stainless steel hood which would then magically banish potions residue.

However, they also added a panic button. In an emergency, the hood would increase the pull on the air a hundredfold and the residue would be contained by the station where an overly-fuming accident happened. In addition, an explosion that was magically detected would automatically turn on this feature.

In addition to containing the residue a small ward covering the area above the burners and no more would activate. The ward was based on the bubble head charm but reversed: All oxygen would be drawn out to quell any flame.

When they were done, there were places for twenty individual students or forty paired students to work on potions.

Also, there were risers available to ensure that any student, even one of Flitwick's size, could stand and work at the station comfortably. Stools for students to sit on during lectures were available and fit underneath the countertops. It was deemed safer for students to be standing during brewing so that they could retreat in an emergency.

With a few cabinets specifically designed for glassware, ingredients, and other potions related items, as well as places for the Professor to store books and other things, the new Potions classroom was as good as it could be made.

Gary had a detailed list of material, modifications, wards, spells, and everything needed to set this up in the other world.

The Wizarding Examination Authority as well as the former Headmaster were invited to inspect the room to ensure that nothing was missing. In addition, Madam Pomfrey was also there – the methods to reduce potions-based injuries was a matter of her interest.

Those who came were uttered speechless by the difference from what had been there previously. Gary was under a God-level notice me not charm as he watched the inspection. Severus took everyone through every feature and, finally, demonstrated both the successful brewing of a potion and a "Longbottom Special" level of accident.

Neville Longbottom apparently was still famous for potions accidents even if he was otherwise a well-respected and powerful wizard.

The room passed with flying colors. The anonymous donation story was accepted as well.
Dumbledore, as an accomplished Alchemist, was the most impressed.

Leaving Severus to deal with the visiting Headmaster, he traveled back to the world he was currently working on but earlier in time. He acquired all of the materials needed from that world where available and brought them back to the world he was working out of.

Severus helped him create the delivery package and account for the materials which would have to be gotten for the proper balancing. While Gary wasn't planning on using Gringotts dimensional links, he followed his own ideas when possible. The items that were not available were the newer Muggle countertops – they would have to be specially manufactured by Wizards if other institutions like St. Mungo's wanted to set up a similar potions lab. Also the tubing used by the floor heating system was also too new to find in the 1970s, but Gary found a contemporary alternative.

Gary retrieved one more thing from Severus before saying his farewells to those he was leaving behind. He was invited to come back whenever he liked. Gary knew it was unlikely – that world was well on its way. But, you didn't know until it happened so he said nothing on the matter.

Albus was sitting at his desk doing even more paperwork that was necessary for the beginning of the year when there was a knock on the door. "Come in!" he called.

His newest professor entered and Albus stood with a smile. "Ah, Garrick. What can I do for you today?" He motioned the man into one of the chairs.

Gary sat down and said, "Well, I need a few things."

"Oh?"

"I need you to get Professor Slughorn out of Hogwarts for one week and I need your approval to hire students to come and work on a project that will take one week."

Albus paused for a moment and then asked, "Is there a reason for these things?"

Gary grinned. "I'm going to do for the Potions classroom what I did for the Library. With the help of a Potions Master I have designed improvements that should reduce potion-accident-related injuries to almost nothing, while making it the best classroom for teaching potions in the world."

Albus was flabbergasted. "And the cost …"


Albus chuckled. "You are truly attempting to put your stamp on Hogwarts while you are here."

"Well, true. But once again, you have to take credit for the plans. I'm only here a year and few people know me. I guarantee that you will absolutely love the changes I make. And not just as a Headmaster but as an alchemist of some repute."

Albus' eyes twinkled as he said, "I suppose I can finance a week to gather ingredients on the continent from the Discretionary Fund. How soon will you be ready to start?"

"Just as soon as you give me a list of NEWT level students who love potions or plan to become builders. Plus the address for one Severus Snape, whom I am reliably informed is somewhat of a prodigy at potions as well."
Albus' eyebrows rose. "You are aware of the boy's reputation?"

"Somewhat unsociable with an interest in Dark Arts, regularly conflicting with a group of Gryffindor boys over the stupidest of things, including but not limited to teenage hormones? I have no idea what you are talking about."

Albus' mouth dropped and then he laughed. "I see you have made yourself at least somewhat acquainted with the students who you will be teaching. I do worry about that boy's … leanings."

"Well, call it a personal project. This is one of those times that you have someone who has personal problems which cause bad decisions. I will warn you now: I have plans to curb the targeting of particular students from others from my posting as Defense Professor. While I enjoy a prank much as the next, you allow far too much from those who come from 'respectable families' and ignore the true harm they sometimes do. The first time these Marauders perform a malicious prank without provocation, they shall experience the result of such decisions."

Albus took on a serious look. "And what do you plan to do?"

Gary grinned. "Well, since they 'love pranking' so much, I plan to …. " Gary explained in detail the prank he had already planned and exactly why. He also explained what would be needed for it to be countered. After a moment Albus, who had been seriously worried that his Defense Professor would take it too far, laughed quite loudly.

"As loath as I am to admit it, you perhaps have a point about what we allow. Your planned response is, if I may say, entirely appropriate given the circumstances you describe. And I always did love Baum."

"Yes. I also plan to re-educate Snape. Oh – and I want you to hire his mother as a special assistant on the Lost and Found project and allow one house elf who would be happier with a family to be released to serve the Snapes."

"And why is this?"

"Because, from my investigations if she is allowed to remain trapped in her loveless marriage with an abusive Muggle, you will have a dead witch on your hands and one of your students will be lost to the Dark." Gary said this with perfect seriousness. "While I plan no breaking of the law, I will not allow atrocities to continue. By this time next week, the Muggle who regularly abuses his family will be out of the picture and thousands of miles away. With a two-year separation, a divorce will become possible in the Muggle world. And a woman currently in despair will have new and much better options. And a boy will no longer have to witness an abomination."

Albus sat back and sighed. "While I am firmly against meddling in the lives of my students and their personal lives (Gary snorted internally) I cannot in good conscience prevent anyone else from taking action. And since you propose nothing illegal, I have no grounds to protest." He smiled. "And since Mrs. Snape lives in the Muggle world even if she is a Pureblood, she will have some sense of how to navigate as necessary to achieve the desired results with the detritus that Hogwarts has collected these many centuries. You have my permission. She will earn 80 Galleons a week – 400 pounds – plus five percent of whatever profits are realized from the sale of items formerly considered too old or damaged to use. She will be responsible for ensuring that items whose owners can be located are returned to them or their descendants."

Gary nodded. "Quite acceptable. Since she will be operating in the Muggle world, she will retain her residence there, but perhaps the house elves can ready a room or two for the use of mother and son when she is staying over?"
Albus nodded. "I will have them ready by this evening."

Gary nodded and moved to leave. Before he left, Albus Dumbledore said, "You are going good things and I do appreciate it." Gary nodded in thanks for the sentiment.
Taking Care of Muggle Trash

Thinking rapidly, Gary thought about the next step. He needed to visit the Snapes (and retrieve the list from Albus – he had forgotten) but perhaps there was one thing he could do which might assist him.

Knowing that Hogwarts employed many elves and always accepted more, he knew that there needed to be enough magic to do so. He planned on calling unbonded elves when he had the Project Manager in place so that any extra work not done by humans could be done.

And so, he was going to ensure that Hogwarts had the most direct connection to the ley lines as was safe and possible.

Arriving at the lowest levels of Hogwarts, where almost no one ever went, he concentrated. In this case, this had nothing to do with charging wards. This was entirely about magic. And so he did not need the Ward Room for this.

Extending his awareness down, he searched for the connections that Hogwarts had to the Earth and its ley lines. They weren't hard to find. He did discover, however, that over the last thousand years one or two of the lines had drifted slightly and thus the connection was not as strong as it was in times past. Also, one of the connections was tenuous at best.

With a smile and every ounce of his concentration, Gary moved his awareness along this tenuous connection first until he found the problem: There was a deep level break in the bedrock layer which made the connection less than optimum. It had filled itself with other types of sedimentary rock, but this didn't carry the magic quite so well. And so slowly, ever so slowly, Gary willed a reshaping of the rock and soil. He was not trying to change any rock – just reposition where the connections were.

And finally, he felt when the spears of bedrock from below that he was extending from the lower level met the spears from above through the sediment. With that direct connection established, Gary could feel the fundamental increase in available magic coming through.

After taking a few long breaths to center himself again, Gary then moved to the connections which were now pulled off of the drifting ley lines. Once again moving slowly and carefully, Gary lengthened the connections so as to ensure the optimum placement for each line. And to help prevent a repeat due to future drift, Gary put enough excess on the connection (very much like a coiling of rope) so that future drift would automatically extend the connections.

Withdrawing his consciousness from the ground, Gary took stock of the rising levels of magic that now reached Hogwarts. While the average wizard would never notice, magical creatures would be able to sense the change. House elves would be more willing to bond when they lacked a tie to someone or somewhere else.

Gary spread his consciousness down one more time to see if there were any other lines that could be reached. There was one which might be reached with much effort, but it was still too far for it to be worthwhile. It was, however, drifting closer. In a thousand years, it would be close enough to connect to.
His mind did brush over one particular detail. And that detail caused him to pause in his current purpose and consider what he should do. It was something that would stay in his mind while he went about his current purpose. It could be of vital importance … at some time in the future.

Gary made his way into Gringotts. He needed assistance and Ragnok was the best choice. Ragnok was in a good mood. He had already received inquiries as to the magical lighting that was in place in Hogwarts library. It was a path to much profit. And his current guest was responsible for the new opportunity.

"How may Gringotts help you today?" Ragnok asked.

"I need to set up a meeting between two families and a particular businessman. I have need of a value assessment of a Muggle property done as quickly as possible, then funds sufficient to buy that property, and a solicitor who can oversee the contracts. And a few items to take care of a certain Muggle presence."

Ragnok blinked. "Perhaps you should give me details."

Gary sighed and nodded. Ragnok listened patiently as the God before him laid out his plan and why. Gringotts would have done it differently, but Marek had a point that they were also dealing with Muggle law and so different options were not, perhaps, the wisest of choices.

"I will expend the effort to do this as quickly as possible. As requested, we will be slightly generous – but not overly so. Just ensure that the contracts this man signs include the stipulation that Gringotts will be the institution that will monitor compliance." Ragnok gave a vicious grin. "If he attempts to renege, we will deal with this … Muggle."

Gary nodded. Ragnok seemed to have the appropriate idea of what he was going for. Gary hated those who treated family poorly and he could stomach only so much of coddling the Legal system and not striking the bastard down.

"How long?"

"Give me an hour. I would appreciate that you kept the expedited nature of this a secret – I am doing it this way in consideration for your needs even if we lose a bit of profit. We would normally charge much more but we owe you much. Better to work off this debt than to leave it. The meeting can be arranged for 3:00 this afternoon, of course depending on availability."

Gary nodded. It was always fun dealing with the mindset of a Goblin.

Gary took the time he was waiting to cast his awareness out to find the next piece of the puzzle. It took a while, but he found exactly what he was looking for. With a smile, he sent a mental message off – he knew that the receiver would accept his proposal.

The small creature who had been cast out was working in the old house that she had found. Since she had been given clothes, no other family would take her. To survive, she had found a magical house that was currently unattended and expended her efforts to keep it from decaying away. The small amount of magic that she could get from these efforts was never enough but it kept her alive.

Suddenly, she heard a mental call in her head but not to go to where it came from. Concentrating, she listened. The words struck her and suddenly she had hope. The message ended with a transfer of magic so that she could easily come when she was called.
The small creature began waiting with longing for the call that was to come.

Gary smiled and shut the connection down. Soon, the Solicitor and his new assistant arrived. Gary was well pleased to meet this particular witch.

Luckily, the solicitor was familiar with working in the Muggle world and had a car.

The three spoke with each other as they made their way to Spinner's End.

**Tobias Snape, recently unemployed once again for drunkenness on the job, sat on his couch and drank his ale. He watched as that sniveling bitch tried to continue working on cleaning up the house they lived in.**

He knew that the bitch was the reason he couldn't keep a job. As he drank, he contemplated what he would do to teach her her place.

Suddenly, there was a knock on the door. Making no effort to get up, Tobias snarled, "WOMAN! Get the damn door!" He went back to drinking his beer.

Eileen Snape moved to answer the door. She opened it to find a man dressed very professionally, along with a younger woman who looked somewhat familiar. With them was another man who was dressed in a suit and tie. "Can I help you?"

"Mrs. Snape?"

"Yes?"

"I am Dominic Stanswick, Solicitor. I have come with my assistant Ms. Tonks and another interested party, Mr. Septimus, to speak to you and your husband about certain financial matters. I assure you that this is not a sales or collection call and I believe you will both find the meeting … profitable."

Eileen was hesitant, but finally said, "Please wait here. I will inform my husband and then retrieve you."

"That's fine."

Soon the group was inside the Snape home. It was rather small. Tobias made an attempt to be polite – but it was minimal at best.

"What is this about? She said you came to talk about money and that it wasn't bad news." His poor temper was not well hidden.

Before Dominic could say anything, Gary raised his hand. "Tobias Snape. Currently unemployed. You have a history of drunkenness on the job and altercations with co-workers. Your bank accounts are at an appallingly low level and your only asset is this house, which is worth not very much money. You are married to Eileen Snape nee Prince with whom you have a rocky relationship since you found out that she was a Witch and you despise your son because he also is Magical. Is any of what I said inaccurate?"

Tobias Snape was about to stand up and charge this upstart when suddenly the man took on a much more menacing stance. "If I were you, I would sit calmly and listen to the proposal you are about to receive. It is truly in your best interest. I would highly recommend you accept. And while
there is little I can do to you physically without getting into trouble with Magical Law Enforcement, I am very capable of physical violence and I can do it in such a way that there is no evidence and no reason for the police to be involved.

"In addition, although Mr. Stanswick here is without his own magic even though he is from a Magical family, his assistant, Ms. Tonks, is a powerful witch from a family which despises people like you. And while she has turned her back on such prejudice, she is more than aware of exactly how much she can legally get away with if she only claims she was protecting herself, her boss, and their new client, Eileen Prince. And she can be particularly vicious if she is dealing with someone she dislikes. Ms. Tonks? What are your feelings as regards Mr. Snape here?"

Andromeda was quick on the uptake. "I quite despise him. It is almost painful standing here and being polite. I desperately hope he does something which would justify my stepping in."

Gary turned his head and winked. Turning back he said, "So, Mr. Snape, would you like to make a ruckus or will you sit there quietly while this far-too-generous offer is made?"

Biting back his hatred, Tobias Snape said, "I'll listen."

"Good. While you meet with them, I need to speak to your son, Severus. Ms. Tonks? Please keep an eye on him – purely for self-defense of course."

"Certainly, Mr. Septimus. I will be most diligent."

"Mrs. Snape? Where can I find your son?"

She called out, "Severus!"

The boy quickly appeared. It was obvious that he had been listening in. "Ah, good. Hello. My name is Garrick Septimus and I work for Hogwarts. I need to speak to you for a moment."

Severus nodded and said with a voice already quite silky for his age, "This way." Gary followed him out of the room.

Dominic Stanswick put the briefcase he carried down. "Now, Mr. and Mrs. Snape. I am here to make you offers that will, I believe, give you both an opportunity for success, prosperity, and happiness. As Mr. Septimus stated, I am actually representing Mrs. Snape more than yourself. Do you understand, Mr. Snape?"

He nodded.

"Good. Current British law, unfortunately, gives you certain ... freedoms which, although acceptable to some, are quite disagreeable. One such freedom is to chastise your wife as you see fit."

Tobias smirked as he said, "Yeah. And there's nothing you can do about it."

"I am aware. I should point out that Mr. Septimus has stated to me that if you do not accept the agreements that I am prepared to offer that he will do everything in his power to destroy your life and reputation through legal channels. Just so that you are aware."

Tobias nodded sourly.

"Now, here is what we are offering: This house, which you own outright, is valued at 20,000 pounds. This is in part due to the depressed nature of the area and the average state of repair. And
this 20,000 pounds is actually quite generous. If you tried to sell it, you would likely receive much less."

Tobias nodded and Eileen sighed.

"Now, to expedite the contracts that we wish you to sign, we are prepared to give you, cash in hand in part and a certified check for the remainder, 30,000 pounds. This is with the understanding that you will take 20,000 and your wife will take 10,000. We will give you this generous sum if you agree as follows:

"1. You will sign a contract which recognized that you and your wife are legally separating. You will agree to stay 1000 yards away from your wife and son. You will sign all custodial rights to your son over to your wife.

"2. When two years are passed, you will allow your wife to submit for a divorce decree with your full agreement which, of course, will be allowed because you will have been legally separated for the minimum required time under English Law.

"3. Within one week, you will take the passport that I will provide and the plane ticket which I will provide and the visa that I will provide and you will move to the United States of America, seeking a new start. You will not return to Britain for any reason in the next ten years at a minimum unless forced to by Governmental authority. And if you are returned you shall not return to anywhere within 100 miles of this area.

"4. Once in the United States, you will contact the lawyer that I will give you information for and allow him to assist you in the necessary steps to becoming a permanent resident of the United States and eventually one of its citizens.

"5. You shall never contact your wife, son, or any descendant from same without their attempting to contact you first."

Dominic looked up from his papers and asked, "Do you agree to the contracts and stipulations as laid forth by me?"

Tobias considered the offer. "I will need to speak to my wife."

"Certainly. We will stand away. But we will not accept any physical force – remember we are representing her and not you."

Tobias nodded. The couple withdrew but remained in sight and spoke in low tones.

Soon, they returned. Both agreed to the contracts.

It took quite a bit of time, but eventually all the paperwork was done. When the last signature was placed and the money handed over, the papers flashed.

Tobias asked, "What was that?"

"That, Mr. Snape, signifies that the contracts are legal and now on file. It gives leave to Gringotts to ensure compliance on your part if you violate them. And I should tell you that the Muggle Mafia has nothing on how vicious Gringotts can be if they run across someone who violates a contract. You have an hour to vacate these premises."

"I have to pack!"
Dominic smirked. "No matter. We have that in hand." He turned. "Andromeda?"

Tonks withdrew three miniaturized trunks and placed them on the floor. After unshrinking them she said, "These are not magical – I just brought them this way for convenience."

With a flourish of her wand, she quickly gathered Tobias' signature and then said, "Pack!"

Tobias watched in amazement as his clothes, personal effects, and tools all flew in and mostly filled the three trunks. When they were done, each one closed.

"Now, do you have an auto?" Tobias shook his head. "A telephone to call for a taxi?" Tobias shook his head again. "Very well. Give me a moment."

Septimus was quickly retrieved to keep an eye on Tobias while Andromeda popped off to call for a taxi.

Dominic took the opportunity to explain to Severus exactly what had happened and to give them time to say goodbye. Neither Snape really had much to say either way – the two truly despised each other and both felt they were well shot of the other.

Very soon, Andromeda popped back in and said, "The taxi will be here within twenty minutes. They expect 20 pounds up front as this is a dodgy neighborhood. They will take you to an inexpensive hotel near the airport so that you can make your final preparations to leave from there."

Tobias nodded. Severus was more than happy to help move the trunks to the kerb. The taxi arrived and Tobias was off with very little fanfare.

Everyone met back inside. Gary said, "Now that the disagreeable Muggle is gone, we can move on. First of all, Mrs. Snape, I am here on behalf of Professor Dumbledore to offer you a job."

"A job?" she asked with surprise.

"Yes. Hogwarts as a vast store of old and damaged things which can be repaired and, once cleared of magic, sold for considerable profit in the Muggle world. These funds will be used for improvements at Hogwarts. Albus therefore needs someone with a Muggle address who knows both the Magical and Muggle worlds."

"But we just sold the house!"

Dominic laughed. "Of course. I forgot. For a price of 10,000 pounds, are you willing to buy this property which is a drag on the current owner's portfolio?"

Eileen blinked. "So all of this was to get rid of Tobias? Why?" Her voice was almost plaintive.

Septimus answered, "Because I grew up with abusive Muggles." Severus' eyes widened but no one noticed. "Your soon-to-be-ex-husband is not redeemable and short of killing him and burying the body, this was the best way to ensure he was gone. Your services are needed and your son has a bright future – as long as he isn't hindered by prejudice at home."

Eileen nodded. "What does this job pay?"

"I was told that it was 80 Galleons – 400 Pounds – a week plus five percent of whatever profits from the sales of the antique items. In addition, you will be responsible for returning items to
people whom you can identify as proper owners from Hogwarts Lost and Found. There is a thousand years of things and you will be clearing it out. It will likely be a job for quite some time."

Severus was curious. "I wasn't aware there was a lost and found."

Septimus smirked. "I know. Most people aren't which is why it has grown so much. This will be a job which will serve many people. I am certain that personal items and diaries from ancestors will be much appreciated."

Eileen considered it and finally smiled. "I guess being newly free I will need to do something – and the wage is decent, much more than Tobias earned."

"Yes. Oh – you will also have rooms, both of you, at Hogwarts. As a matter of fact, you should prepare to go there after we visit Gringotts to finalize some business."

Eileen nodded. "Of course."

The two were about to go prepare when Gary motioned them to wait. "Perhaps you could use some help?"

The two Snapes looked at each other. Eileen asked, "What do you have in mind?"

Gary called out, "FLUXIE!"

A house elf popped into the room. "Fluxie, you are currently without a bond. I have a family here which finally is free from the Muggle that used to live here. Are you willing to bond with Mrs. Snape?"

Eileen was staring at the house elf. Finally she gasped, "Fluxie?"

The house elf whirled at the voice and looked. With a cry of "MISTRESS!" she flung herself forward and threw her arms around Eileen's legs.

Severus was surprised and looked at Gary for an explanation. "Fluxie used to serve the Prince family. When she was no longer needed, they gave her clothes. She hasn't had a place to go. I thought your Mum might like to see an old friend."

Very soon, Fluxie was re-bonded and with joy she began packing Severus' and Eileen's things for Hogwarts, knowing that she would be allowed to serve them there as well. When that was done and she had assured Eileen she would bring the trunks when called from Hogwarts, Fluxie joyfully started cleaning and repairing the house her family now lived in.

Eileen watched for a long moment before standing up and walking to Gary. She gave him a large hug, unlike the proper Pureblood embrace. Quietly she said, "Thank you."

Gary nodded. "All to improve the world a bit. Now, we have people to pick up and places to go. Severus? You have the books?"

He nodded and tapped the bag he was carrying.

Gary nodded. "We're going to a meeting at Gringotts. Do you mind if I perform a bit of transfiguration on your clothes?"

Severus indicated it was alright. With quite a bit of finesse, Severus now looked to be the proper Pureblood wizard. His mother's robe also suddenly appeared to be a much higher quality. "This
will last a few days – my skills are sound in this area. By then you both should have enough funds to replace your worn clothes."

Both were grateful for the assistance.

Very soon, the car was filled with all five. Gary sat in the back with Andromeda in the middle and Severus on the other side behind his mother.

They made it back to Diagon Alley by 2:45. As the group entered the Leaky Cauldron, they were interrupted by a voice. "Sev!"

Severus Snape turned and smiled (for him) as he saw his long-time friend, Lily Evans, sitting a table with her Muggle family.

Gary grinned internally when he saw Petunia was also present. This would be fun.

Chapter End Notes

I posted a Poll about this last part and put it on my profile, or so the site says. It's about what to do about Petunia - given the Traveler's Fix-It goals in mind.
Relations Close and Distant

Harry Potter, Lone Traveler, currently disguised as Garrick Septimus, Wizard and Professor, took in the sight of his mother's alternate and her family.

As he was somewhat expecting, both parents seemed somewhat pleasant, Petunia seemed discontent to be there, and Lily was fairly bubbly. Having met his mother and heard some stories none of it was a surprise.

Severus, answering Lily's original call, replied with some attempt at decorum, "Hello, Lily. How are you?"

"I'm doing well. You remember my parents and sister?" she asked.

Severus nodded and greeted each cordially. Until he got to Petunia. The mutual dislike was obvious.

Gary couldn't help himself. "Lord God save me from Teenage angst and hormones!"

Everyone turned at the unexpected comment. Lily was actually the one to ask, "What do you mean?"

"Hello. I am Garrick Septimus, I will be one of your professors this year. I came with Severus and his mother, as well as these," he pointed to the solicitor and his assistant. "I was just commenting on the extreme emotional reactions teenagers have for very little reason. Your sister and your friend dislike each other – most likely because they view each other as thieves of your time. And you tend to ignore it, concentrating on the moment. You'll all grow out of it … eventually." Gary finished with a grin.

The Evans parents and Eileen Snape were trying to withhold their amusement at Gary's accurate observation. The teenagers weren't amused.

Lily tried to ignore the man after that. "What are you doing here?"

"I have a meeting at 3:00 at Gringotts." Severus had been told why but didn't want to speak of it out in public.

"So do I!" Lily exclaimed. Severus also already knew that. "We got the message a few hours ago. Do you know what it's about?"

"I am certain it will be clear then," was all Severus would say.

Eventually, all of them made their way to Diagon and to Gringotts. Gary was, perhaps, the only one who noticed that Petunia, for all of her apparent disdain, was quite interested in the Alley.

Finally, the entire group was in the room with Ragnok overseeing the meeting. Also present was a man who was introduced as Antonius Scribnar, who was the publisher of most of the Hogwarts potion texts.

Gary took charge. "Mr. Snape. Please bring out the books that I asked you to bring."

Lily immediately recognized the books. "These are the texts we've been working on since we
began Hogwarts."

Gary nodded. "Yes. According to Mr. Snape here, both of you have been, for the last several years, revising and adding to these books, correcting mistakes, as well as introducing modifications to known potions so as to improve them or make them more likely to actually achieve the recommended characteristics. Is this accurate?"

Severus and Lily looked at each other and then back. "It has been a common effort on both of our parts since Hogwarts began," Severus replied.

Gary nodded. "Mr. Scribnar. Please take a look at the modifications."

The man pulled the texts to him and started leafing through the books. He was actually astounded by exactly how many changes these two Hogwarts students had introduced to the texts.

"Now, the issue at hand is this: Both of these students could keep their advances to themselves. Life goes on. But, eventually, these advances could be lost. My purpose is to arrange for the Hogwarts texts to be updated after a licensed Potions Master reviews what has been written. The credit for the improvements shall be treated as the intellectual property of Mr. Snape and Ms. Evans. And, with a thorough update of the books used at Hogwarts, they would receive royalties."

Scribnar was curious. "What is your stake in this?"

"Me? I'm just trying to improve Hogwarts. I am now teaching there, if only for one year. Perhaps you saw the story of the Masters' Library? I assisted in creating that. I am also working on other improvements under the Headmaster's supervision."

Scribnar grunted. Not wanting to give away too much, he said, "I don't know that I could convince the author to share the proceeds. Texts are not a great moneymaker."

Gary sighed. "That's fine then. I will just have to put them into contact with Illuminated Publishing. They were quite helpful in ensuring the publication of the new Defense textbooks. They are even approved by the Examination Authority. I am certain that they would be interested in offering Mr. Snape and Ms. Evans a deal to write completely new textbooks instead of updating the old ones."

Ragnok commented, "That was my first suggestion when I was asked to arrange this meeting. Mr. Septimus thought it better to work with the original publisher if possible. I do believe the publisher of Illuminated was quite interested when he heard of this meeting – Mr. Septimus made a passing comment I believe." Ragnok glanced at Gary – it was him they were speaking of anyway, even if Gringotts was actually doing the work behind the scenes.

"That publisher is willing to invest quite a bit to ensure his share into the British Market is increased. Even if it took a few years to ensure that Mr. Snape and/or Ms. Evans achieved masteries first – it would give them opportunity to test the advances as well as to ensure the remaining three years are also reviewed. I believe he is also willing to pay for the research to be recouped by future profits. I was not under any secrecy agreements when these offers were made. I was asked to specifically ensure that the two were aware of all offers."

Scribnar was becoming more and more worried as the offer from the newly recognized competitor was explained roughly. Scribnar had seen the new textbooks and bought a set. Whoever Illuminated was, they did beautiful work. He would be hard pressed to match quality in a pinch. His attempt to convince the two to accept less had backfired. He did not want to see more books published by Illuminated competing against his own publishing house.
"If you will give me time to speak to the authors, I will be prepared to fund the research into improving the remaining Hogwarts' texts through NEWTs; the cost of having the improvements reviewed by the Most Extraordinary Society of Potioneers to be deducted from the profits. But, if I can come to an agreement with my authors, I will also ensure that the information is credited to you two against a future Potions mastery."

Gary nodded. "So, it is likely a choice of reduced profits in the long term but a much easier path to receiving a Masters Certificate against the gamble of going with a new publisher and it likely taking longer overall for possibly more money – if nothing interferes. I believe that I, Mr. Scribnar, his solicitor, and the Bank Manager will withdraw to allow your families and your solicitor here to discuss it."

Ragnok nodded. "I will send in refreshments. You have twenty minutes to freely use this room."

Those who Gary mentioned left. After 10 minutes of waiting Scribnar who was standing nearby with his solicitor came over. "Mr. Septimus is it?" Gary nodded. "Why did you suggest they work with my Publishing House if you seem so close to your own publisher?"

Gary looked at him and said, "Honestly? I believe working with the established publisher and authors will be better for them in the long run. They will spend less time working on this and have more opportunity to continue advancing the craft of Potion making, especially young Mr. Snape whom, I am reliably informed, is an absolute genius as regards the subject. If it was only about money, I would have recommended they go with Illuminated. But from a societal standpoint, you honestly are the better option. Their advances will be published more quickly. And their time will be freed up for newer and better things more quickly. You, perhaps, can get in at the outset on at least one young wizard who will likely be publishing for years and years to come. I don't know if the young witch really is interested in long term publishing, but I know that Potions is Mr. Snape's passion."

Scribnar took a long look at Gary. It was as if the idea of money being a secondary concern was alien to him.

Gary nodded and smiled. "Both come from families that are, perhaps, less well off than they could be or should be. So money might be the deciding factor for them. But we'll have to see."

Scribnar nodded and returned to his solicitor, and they began to speak in low voices.

Soon, they returned to the meeting. Dominic Stanswick took charge. "Mr. Scribnar. Both Mr. Snape and Ms. Evans are more interested in publishing more quickly and seeing their improvements put into wide circulation. They will wait for an offer for ten days. Please send word through me. If you decline or your offer is less than what is appropriate, they will contact Illuminated for a competing offer."

Scribnar had to hide his sigh of relief. He could see that this was the real deal and he really didn't want to lose this particular skirmish. "Very well. I will also be interested in speaking to them in the future about their plans for after Hogwarts. Their ideas don't have to be limited to the textbooks, after all."

At this Lily brightened, but (if you knew him) Severus looked absolutely flabbergasted. Such things did not happen so easily for him.

Soon the publisher left.
"Now, Ms. Evans," Gary said.

"Call me Lily."

"Very well. Lily. Have you ever had an inheritance test?" Gary was curious.

Lily was confused. "What's that?"

Ragnok took over and explained. Lily was very excited and begged her parents to approve. They decided the cost was worth it and approved the procedure.

Gary was the most interested. One thing he had noticed was the in many worlds, Lily Evans' ancestry was the most variable thing in the different dimensions. Sometimes she was adopted, sometimes she was related to Slytherin, sometimes she was related to Ravenclaw, sometimes she was related to nobody of note. It was the most exasperating thing that Gary often ran into. It often accounted for the eventual differences between Harry and his other dimensional counterparts.

Everyone watched curiously as Ragnok took her blood and performed the needed ritual. The results were a bit of a surprise.

After receiving permission, after Lily and her parents saw the results, Gary took a long look – and promptly started laughing uproariously. Petunia, who hadn't seen the results yet, sneered, "What's so funny?"

He handed the results over and allowed her to see. Her eyes widened after a long moment. She turned to Severus. "We're cousins?"

Severus and Eileen were wide-eyed at that. Petunia handed it over. Eileen was the first to comment even if they were reading it simultaneously. "This says that your father and I are second cousins – my father had an uncle who was a squib and that was your great-grandfather," she said to Lily.

Everyone saw that this was correct – Lily and Severus were third cousins.

Gary commented, "I was actually more amused by who your mother is related to. Look back four generations."

Everyone did so. Lily went wide-eyed. "Dumbledore?"

Gary chuckled. "Your mother is the Headmaster's 1st cousin twice removed. I want to be there when you call him Cousin Albus, or maybe Uncle Albus would be funnier."

Finally Severus got the parchment and looked at it curiously. "What is this? Why is Petunia's name that color?"

Ragnok looked at it and replied, "Because unlike Ms. Evans' parents who are squibs, Ms. Petunia Evans, although not powerful enough to qualify for Hogwarts, is a witch."

Petunia almost snatched the parchment and took a long look. "What does that mean?"

Ragnok shrugged. "If you choose to ignore this, it will lie dormant and you would be classed as a squib. Many of those whose magic takes longer to appear end up going this route. However, if you were to receive some tuition, you may – may but not guaranteed – eventually achieve the level of what the Ministry classes as Ordinary Wizarding Levels. You will never achieve the higher level of NEWT qualification. It is truly your choice."
After a long moment Petunia asked (free of the snide attitude that had been present the entire time), "But who could teach me?"

Gary smirked. "Well, perhaps you can ask your Cousin Albus for a reusable portkey so that you could go to Hogwarts every Sunday and your sister could tutor you – it would probably be a good review for her OWLs anyway. You then would return to your regular school every Monday morning."

Petunia looked over to the sister that she had rowed with for several years. Instead of the disdain she half-expected due to her continuing attitude, Lily looked truly excited about the idea of teaching her sister to wield magic.

The two girls fell into each others arms.

Severus, who was witnessing this whole thing, added, "I suppose I can assist her with some Potions tutoring as well since she, too, is apparently my cousin." Gary could tell this was almost painful for Severus to admit.

Severus and Gary had spoken at Spinners End and, alone of almost everyone in that dimension, he had explained who he was and who he was born as and who his parents were. Severus had not been happy. But then Gary explained exactly what he planned to do to assist Severus because he felt some residual guilt as to how his father had treated his alternate. Severus had promised to keep it to himself.

After some consideration, Severus realized he was getting more out of this than anyone: His Muggle father run off, his name being published, early recognition toward his Mastery, his mother gainfully employed, his own poverty greatly abated, and a way to ensure that he would not lose Lily's friendship. All this for letting go the dream of marrying her eventually.

He had decided to accept it but this revelation that they were actually related had set it in stone: He would be a brother-figure instead of a possible paramour. He found he quite liked the idea. Even if it also meant accepting Petunia, whom Gary explained he would also try to save from a future of misery and pain.

At this statement, Petunia did something she would never have done prior to this: She gave Severus a small, tentative embrace, quickly over. Severus was then glomped by Lily. He decided that it was worth it.

Then Petunia had a sudden thought. "What about money? This will cost some money!" She knew her family already had issues with one witch.

Gary interrupted. "Well, if you are willing to come with Severus and Lily to Hogwarts for a week, I have a job that I plan on paying students to do. We're refurbishing a classroom. Severus hasn't been told but he will be the foreman, with some NEWT students as well as a couple of others. He will make 60 Galleons as the boss – and be penalized if it gets messed up, and the other students will make 45 Galleons each. That's 225 pounds. More than enough for a wand, books, a robe or two, and whatever else you might need. You only need your parents permission." He turned toward the Evans parents. "So can your daughters work for a week at Hogwarts for some extra money?"

The Evans looked at each other and to their daughters who were giving them longing looks and finally acquiesced. "Fine. I believe we can allow that."

Gary said, "Good. I'm going to see if your whole family can go to Hogwarts for the evening. Since you are squibs and not Muggles, it will most likely be alright."
They all were interested in that.

He turned to Ragnok. "Can I send a Patronus from here? I'd like to message the Headmaster and ask for a portkey for two witches and their squib parents as well as Severus and Eileen to come to Hogwarts this afternoon after we buy Petunia her wand at least."

Ragnok gave permission. Gary cast the Patronus and gave it the bare-bones message and sent it off.

Very soon, Fawkes arrived with a rope and a note from the Headmaster. He expected their arrival at 5:30. That gave sufficient time for Petunia to get a wand and a set of basic Hogwarts robes.

Ragnok farewelled the group and the group was treated to the sight of Lily Evans enthusiastically dragging her sister to Ollivanders to get her wand.

It took quite a while but Petunia finally received a birch wand, 12 inches, with a Dragon heartstring from a Welch Green as a core. To help stabilize the connection, Ollivander blood-bound the wand; Petunia's circumstance of being just powerful enough for a wand was one which allowed him to take this additional step. As she had just turned seventeen, she did not have a trace put on her wand, thus allowing her to practice at home in addition to receiving tutoring. Ollivander sent a message to the Ministry to alert them that an of-age witch was now living at the Evans home, thus negating any monitoring equipment. Petunia was bought a set of Hogwarts robes.

At 5:30, in an out of the way area of the Alley, the entire group grabbed the portkey. Gary gave some instruction on how not to fall down at the end (which no one had taught him originally). The group did fairly well.

As they came to front doors of Hogwarts, they were met by the Headmaster, who was a bit surprised at his guests. A smirking Gary made the introductions. "Hello, Headmaster Dumbledore. I would like to re-introduce you to Eileen Snape. She will be your Special Project manager. You know her son, Severus, who will be my foreman on the Classroom upgrade. I would also like to introduce you to Robert Evans, whom we have just found happens to be Eileen's second cousin – their grandfathers were brothers. His wife, Rose Evans. You know Lily, and this is Petunia, whom we found today is a late-developing witch. We need to talk about her tutoring. Oh, and before I forget, we also found that Rose here had a great-grandfather who happened to be Safford Dumbledore – Percival Dumbledore's brother who happened to be a squib."

Rose, who found the whole thing amusing, said, "Hello, Cousin Albus."

At that moment, Albus Dumbledore had eyes which looked like dinner plates.

(A/N: There will be more written about the visit but I am leaving this next part in that I wrote a week ago to show other things coming)

Toward the end of the Potions Classroom upgrade:

Gary stood with the Headmaster as the Ancient Runes Professor and the Arithmancy Professor looked over the ward stone and the notes from Gringotts.

Professor Septima Vector was one of the younger professors at this point in time. While not quite a contemporary of Professor McGonagall, it was obvious that she tried to emulate the older witch in how she dealt with people.
Gary was amused by it actually. Septima was far less strict than she appeared to be, but being young she was concerned with holding the students' and her colleagues' respect. She really did know her subject though.

Finally, after their inspection, they returned to the Headmaster. Professor Charlus Chattering took charge.

"Well, I would have to agree with the report." He led the old wizard forward and proceeded to detail what changes he proposed to make.

Finally Albus asked, "And how long will this take?"

"With Professors Vector and Septimus assisting, I believe we can do it in two to three days, if Garrick is as proficient as he claims."

Albus smiled as he glanced at the younger man. "From all indications, he is."

"Then I believe we will be ready to charge the changed wards by 28 August. We will begin work on Monday, 25 August. Garrick said he will be available by then."

"Very well. Please inform me of any needed supplies – I have a fund available for such things now. I believe this is a valid expense."
Getting Started

Finally, Professor Dumbledore gathered himself. "Mrs. Evans, please know that while I was not aware of our kinship, I find myself quite overjoyed at the idea of finding lost family. Please be welcome to Hogwarts."

With that, the Headmaster clasped Rose's hands warmly with his own. He repeated this with the two girls and shook Robert's hand.

They weren't quite familiar enough to embrace.

Dumbledore led them to the Great Hall, where the staff that was currently available were all getting ready to eat.

Gary noticed immediately. "Professor Slughorn?"

Albus' eyes twinkled as he replied, "I financed a last trip for him to gather potions ingredients. You have one week."

Gary nodded. "Excellent. You have that list of students? These three will be assisting from the start but we will need more assistance soon."

The Headmaster pulled out a parchment which had the list. "I have taken liberty of sending missives that they were invited to arrive in the morning for a small job at Hogwarts which would earn them a few Galleons. Such seemed to be what you requested. All who are interested will arrive by Knight Bus or floo at the Three Broomsticks in Hogsmeade by 9:30 in the morning."

Gary laughed. "Thank you. That saves me a whole lot of running around. After dinner, I believe you and the Evans family need to have a discussion."

Albus nodded. He was quite interested in getting to know the family.

After dinner, while the Snapes were being shown to their rooms, the Headmaster and the Evans spoke in Albus' office. Surprisingly, he apologized to Petunia for any seeming callousness on his part in the letter he had sent when she had requested to come to Hogwarts. Gary was tempted to call him on his mild legilemency but, considering he did it himself without much effort, he decided not to be a hypocrite.

In the end, the agreements were made: Petunia would come to Hogwarts on Saturday night and she would sleep in the dorms with her sister and Sunday Petunia would receive tutoring from Lily, Severus, or other students as might be arranged. Lily was certain that her friends would want to help. Petunia would return home after dinner on Sunday.

Petunia would be able to use all of the books Lily had acquired over the years as her texts, meaning they would not have to purchase any additional texts. Gary did gift her the first two Defense texts as a "Welcome to being a Witch" gift.

To be perfectly honest, a happy, smiling Petunia Evans was freaking him out a bit – he was far more used to a more snarky version, even in the worlds where she turned out alright.

He was more than happy to see Lily lead Petunia to explore Hogwarts. The Evans parents were sent through the floo to the Leaky Cauldron to pick up their car and return home. Floxy (the Hogwarts elf) would be sent to retrieve clothes for Petunia and Lily for the week as well as other
Fluxie (the Snapes' elf) had already been called to bring their things from the Spinner's End home.

Gary commandeered Severus to help direct the elves in clearing out the Potions classroom. When he found that this was the project he would be working on, his enthusiasm was evident.

Gary left the various trunks, numbered in order, with explicit directions on how to install each item in order, right outside of the Potions classroom. Gary also gave Severus the potions formulas for the cleaning of the room as well as the potions specifically created by his dimensional alternate to maintain the cleanliness of the room and to clean up the potions spills, residues, etc.

Severus was a bit embarrassed to find the formula for cleaning his hair included. However, after Gary took a few hairs from Severus and then a few from himself and showed him how much more volatile Severus' hair was with the residues that built up, he was much more willing to listen to reason.

Severus sent copies of the formulas to the solicitor for submission to the Ministry for patent and to negotiate the sale of it to Apothecaries and other businesses who could use such products.

Luckily, the solicitor had already agreed to work on commission, deducting costs from profits. The Solicitor would also submit the new formulas to the Potions society.

Severus immediately retrieved the Evans sisters and began to brew the required agents from the material on hand, ensuring that the supplies would be replaced by the beginning of the year. The cost of the ingredients was included in the budget.

At 9:30 the next morning, Gary was sitting in the Three Broomsticks. He was interested to see that there were about 8 people of Hogwarts age. Each, when asked, had the letter which was sent by the Headmaster.

"Okay, folks. It appears that this is the entire group. Hello. My name is Garrick Septimus. I will be the Hogwarts Defense Professor for the upcoming year. I am reliably informed by Professor Dumbledore that each of you is, or will be this year, a NEWT-level Potions student. Is this correct?"

Each of the students looked at each other and then to him and nodded.

"Good. You are also all interested in earning a few Galleons assisting in a project that will take up to one week. Is that also correct?"

The nods were more definite.

"Okay. Then all of you: Please follow me. We will be going to Hogwarts and meeting in the Dungeon outside of the Potions classroom. I have brought two Hogwarts carriages with me today and I believe that this will be sufficient to transport you all. Let's go."

The students followed dutifully. Very soon, the entire group was in front of the potions classroom as was Severus and the Evans sisters.

"Okay. First thing: Each of you will receive 45 Galleons if you complete the entire week of work. We are, this week going to clean out and then upgrade the Potions classroom so that it is the absolute best classroom for the subject in the world. You will see that there the Hogwarts elves
have removed all desks and chairs. Also, these trunks over here are the books and the materials that were in the classroom – some of that will be returning. But first we will have to do an absolute thorough cleaning of the room – which will take the entire first day. Any questions so far?"

One of the students asked, "Why so long? Should a few charms be enough to clean it up?"

Gary nodded. "Good question. Here is a question which may answer that: Do you really want to try to apply magical cleaning to the residue of magical potions that have been building up over the time that this room has been in use?"

The students considered that. "If we can't use magic, how will we clean it?"

"First, each of you will be dressing in protective clothing. This trunk," he pointed to one of them, "has cotton coveralls that are spelled to be resistant to spilling things on yourselves. There are also gloves that are made of rubber which are spelled to not corrode with any potions residue that you will run into. There are glasses that will fit over any face, whether you are wearing spectacles or not. There are also masks to breath through because I do not want to see anyone poisoned."

"Understand this: If you do not wear the necessary equipment, you will be sent home without any Galleons. Any questions?"

There were none so far.

"Mr. Snape here – is anyone not aware of Mr. Snape's expertise in potions?" Once again, no one moved – he was widely known as exceptional. "Mr. Snape here has brewed a potion which we will spray onto the walls, let sit for a minute and then you will use hot water, brushes, and rags to clean the residue off. When the water in your bucket is clouded, you will dump it in the sink, rinse it, and refill it again. Do not worry if stone seemed damaged. We will repair any damage tomorrow. I have conjured scaffolding along the walls which will allow you all to reach all the way to the top of the walls as well as the ceiling. I am powerful enough that it will last all day – no worries. This entire room must be scrubbed absolutely clean of potions residue by the end of the day."

Seeing no confusion, Gary added, "You will be taking directions from Mr. Snape. Does anyone have any problem with that?"

One lone Gryffindor raised his hand. "He's a Slytherin!"

Gary took on look that was, on the surface, pleasant but no one was fooled. "And this matters because …?" The Gryffindor didn't respond. 'Because obviously if a Slytherin is in charge, it must be 'Dark Magic'. Oooo Evil cleaning – how diabolical! He's a Slytherin – he must be evil … or some such rot? Let me be clear: If you cannot leave your prejudices at the door, leave. I have Muggleborn, or at least Squibborn witches here. Petunia here is a late-blooming witch. I have purebloods here – halfbloods too. How many are Gryffindor? Slytherin? Ravenclaw? Hufflpuff?"

Each one had at least one raise their hands.

"Let me clue you in on a little secret: When you finish Hogwarts? No one cares. Your Hogwarts robes are put away and no one can tell who was in what house. You'll find Gryffindors and Slytherins working side by side as Aurors – and no Senior Auror has any time for stupid nonsense about blood status or Hogwarts house when he's giving out assignments. You do the job you're given or you go home. Any more questions?"

It was obvious that no one wanted to push this subject any further. Gary had them each retrieve a jumpsuit and foot coverings – each of these also spelled against soaking up any residue. As each returned, Gary hit each one with a spell which caused the jumpsuit to sit correctly on each. The
plastic bottles were each filled with potion and the white plastic buckets each filled with hot water. Severus began assigning different areas to different students.

Gary watched to ensure it was going along and, informing Severus he would return before lunch, left them to it.

When Gary returned at 11:20, the Headmaster was with him. Dumbledore took a long look at the room and what the students were doing, each wearing a bubble head charm at Gary's insistence. Gary noticed something. "Severus?"

Severus looked up from the particularly nasty stain he was working on one wall. "Professor?"

"Where are Lily and Petunia?"

"Next door brewing more cleaning solvent. There was much more potions residue on the ceiling that first anticipated. We needed to make more before we ran out."

Gary looked and saw that, yes, the supply was running down. "How is it working?"

"It works well as long as one allows it to set long enough. Some were starting to scrub too quickly but I corrected them."

Gary nodded. "Good. Good. It's already looking much better."

Dumbledore echoed that. "Yes. You are doing a wonderful job. I do not believe I have ever seen this room so clean."

Severus nodded, willing himself not to blush at the recognition. "We should have the room entirely clean by 4:00 this afternoon."

"Good. We can put up the lights this afternoon if that's the case. At 12:00, take them to eat in the Great Hall – one hour for lunch. I will be back periodically to check on progress."

Severus nodded and, after a quick look at everyone else to see that they were still working, he returned to the troublesome stain.

Severus had the entire room done by 3:30. Each student had even gone through and checked the entire room themselves to ensure nothing was missed. When Gary had done this in the other world, he only had three or four people at a time, and so he had mis-estimated how long it would take. It was fine – ahead of schedule was better than being behind.

Getting himself into a protective suit (he had to act like a mortal wizard for his audience) Gary took the final step of dousing the entire room with an augamenti charm to wash any last solvent away and then he directed the water to the drain in the floor which would vanish it. The room was very damp at that point.

He walked out and said, "Okay, students. Drying charms!"

Lily took about ten minutes to teach Petunia the charm and have her practice until she had it right. She wouldn't be doing large areas, but it worked. She happily went through and helped dry the entire room. Because she wasn't powerful enough to do large areas, she took the time to work over the small nooks and crannies to ensure each one was dry.

Gary nodded approvingly at the two and ensured they saw it.
By 4:30, the entire room was dry.

"Okay. We're going to replace the flaming sconces with a different type of lighting. Here's what I need you to do." Gary went through and showed the students how to measure the position of each plate which attached to the ceiling with a permanent sticking charm – which he alone would cast. Gary just wanted the students to mark out the exact locations using the drawn plans and muggle measuring tapes.

Once the positions were all marked, each plate would be held in place by a student standing on a scaffold and Gary would hit it with a permanent sticking charm. When a plate was set, the two hanging rods would be screwed in and then the fixture which attached to the hanging rods would push into place.

Because the goblins didn't want it known that real gold wire was being used to transmit the magic from the control panel, the connection was hidden until the rods were fully inserted. Each plate then had a small tube which travelled across the ceiling until they met at a single box at the wall and then a magical control very much like a light switch was placed next to the door.

Hit with the proper spell, the lights would light up like muggle fixtures. Another spell would turn the lights off. All of the tubes would be covered so that when the repairs were done and the room painted they would blend in and not be easily seen. The system was guaranteed for 300 years, assuming proper installation and an environment rich enough in magic to power it. Alternately, a ward stone could be used by in this application but there was no need here – Hogwarts had plenty of ambient magic. The small ward stone in the "switch" could easily gather the needed magic.

When it was done, the students were amazed at how bright the room was and how obvious the imperfections were.

"And that is what we will be fixing tomorrow. Now, you will all go to your normal dorms to clean up – leave the jumpsuits on your bed and the elves will ensure they are ready for tomorrow. If you arrive by 8:30 by floo, Bus, or walking in from Hogsmead, you can eat breakfast here. If not, be here by 9:30. By 10:00, we will expect you dressed and ready to work. Lunch will be provided. You can also eat dinner here and go home, or go home and eat there. This was a hard day and I will be giving you your first 10 Galleons today. Any questions?"

Besides arranging floo access via the different common rooms – one time use each way each day for each person – there were none. All the students were happy to be taking home actual gold for their efforts. Lily and Petunia would be sleeping in the Gryffindor dorms because Lily would be tutoring Petunia each night this week. They asked that Gary hold their gold until the end of the week.

Luckily, there had been no conflict that was not quickly diffused by Severus and Gary congratulated him for a job well done. He was still the snarky boy that Gary had expected, but being free of his father and seeing his mother working and fairly happy had made a huge difference for him.

Earlier that day

Gary met up with Eileen at 10:30, as they had agreed the day before. "You're going to show me what I'll be working with?"

"Absolutely. We just have to go to the seventh floor."
Gary led Eileen to the seventh floor and showed her the painting of the dancing trolls. "What is the significance of this?" she asked.

"Only as a point of reference. Watch." Gary walked over a few feet and said out loud, "I need a place for lost thing." He said this three times as he walked back and forth past Eileen. Just as she was going to ask what he was doing, she was startled to see a door appear. Gary smiled and said, "Let's see what we have."

Gary led Eileen to the room of lost things. She was shocked at the sheer amount of material that was in the room – a thousand years of things.

"What am I to do with all of this?" she asked.

"Well, when the house elves cannot easily find who owns something that was left behind, this is where they put it. Some of it is just junk. But there are things which, while looking fairly worthless, could be worth thousands of Galleons – in the right circumstance. You, Eileen, are going to be in charge of making this junk into a resource for Hogwarts."

The sheer scope of what was there was overwhelming. "How am I to do that?"

Gary nodded. "Walk back outside." They left and Eileen noticed the door disappeared. "What you just saw was the Room of Requirement. Anyone who has a real need for something who walks back and forth will be met with that need as best as Hogwarts can deliver. What you saw was just one aspect of the room. Now, many of those things could be traced back to their rightful owners – and in that case we want to ensure they are returned. I'm going to try something – watch."

Instead of asking for the entire room, Harry instead asked, "I need a room which has things lost by a Weasley. I need a room which has things lost by a Weasley. I need a room which has things lost by a Weasley."

The two re-entered the room. Instead of a vast room filled to the brim, they found a very small room with a few items, some old clothes, even a statute which looked .. quite odd. There was also a broken trunk. "Now – first, let's fix the trunk." He cast a quick Reparo and the trunk was whole again. "Now, we put everything in that trunk and shrink it. When you next visit Gringotts, ask them to put it in the Weasley vault. Also, write a letter. Watch." Gary found some parchment in the pile and retrieved a quill and ink bottle from a pocket.

"Write this down."

Eileen got ready.

"To the Head of House Weasley

"Good day to you.

"My name is Eileen Snape. I am currently employed by the Headmaster of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry to assist in returning items that can be identified as belonging to former students and clearing out things whose ownership cannot be determined.

"Contained within this trunk are all of the items that Hogwarts can identify as belonging to any Weasley from the past which was left behind. While some items might be useless, there might be items which have either sentimental or monetary value to you and so this trunk was placed within your Gringotts vault."
"Upon inspection of the items, if you find that there are, for example, old clothes or really anything that is not of real value or use, I implore you not to just throw them away. While a dress from 400 years ago might not seem valuable, there are places where such items can fetch a profit. This is one area I am working on.

"Should you find that there are such items and you wish to sell them for the best possible profit, please feel free to contact me at Hogwarts. For a commission of 10 percent of whatever profits are realized, I will endeavour to ensure that you receive the maximum amount of money you can for items that you no longer wish to keep.

"It might be that there is no value – but please do not assume. Something that looks worthless to you could fetch a hundred or even a thousand Galleons – in the right place. If I am asked to attempt to sell such items, I will work to ensure that every effort is made to produce a profit as it will also be in my best interest as I will receive only a part of what I can sell it for.

"Yours in Business,

"Eileen Prince, Special Project Director for the Headmaster of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry"

Eileen finished the letter and signed it.

"Okay. Now let's take this out and shrink it after marking it Weasley. We will retrieve items that are likely to get a profit sooner."

They left the room.

"You don't have to speak out loud – I am doing it for demonstration. Hogwarts, however, can hear you even if you are just thinking it. Now: I need a room for unowned really old clothes. I need a room for unowned really old clothes. I need a room for unowned really old clothes."

Another door appeared.

"Now, let us see what we have."

The two entered the room and found quite a pile of clothing from various eras. Quickly working toward the back, Gary showed Eileen dresses that looked to be from the 1500s. "First to check for any spells – we can't put enchanted things into the Muggle world."

After a quick check, these items were found to be clear of any spells except an old warming charm which Gary dispelled. He had Eileen bring the items.

"Now, call for a Hogwarts elf."

Eileen nodded. "I need a Hogwarts Elf!"

One popped in. "Mistress needs help?"

"What's your name?" Gary asked.

"I is Daisy."

"Well, Daisy, can you please repair and clean these dresses in such a way that no new thread is used. We need to make certain that the dress is kept in as much of the original condition as possible. If you have to repair a seam, please attempt to match the style of thread and sewing..."
originally used. Can you do that?"

Daisy looked through the dresses and said, "Daisy can!"

"When done, please return them to Mrs. Snape's quarters." Daisy nodded and popped out.

Gary turned to Eileen. "Now, you should retrieve a trunk from the room of lost things. Then, contact your solicitor and tell him that you need directions to a reputable Muggle appraiser who deals with vintage clothing. Use the money from the Discretionary Fund as needed to pay for the appraisal. All items should be identified as Iverness Academy Historical Collection – the Muggle name for Hogwarts. Once the value is set, you will need to work with auction houses to sell the collections of items that you will be getting appraised or with reputable antiques sales shops – sometimes you can get more money there. If needed, pay for Gringotts to certify it as owned by Iverness Academy. I am certain they have a Muggle name which is reputable as well. Get the items sold. Collect the profits. Ask your solicitor to ensure all laws are followed. The auction house or sales shop gets their cut. The solicitor gets his fees. Gringotts gets their fees. And Hogwarts gets the rest. You get 5% of the profit to Hogwarts in addition to your salary."

"Any questions?"

Eileen's head was spinning a bit. "Not really. But I will probably need advice here and there as to my next step until I am familiar with the procedure."

Gary chuckled. "I know. It's not something you've dealt with. But I think you'll do fine." He paused. "I might suggest that you find out exactly who is on the Board of Governors and, as an early step, retrieve every item that can be identified as lost by their families first. You will probably need the Headmaster to get a letter signed by the Board of Governors for Iverness Academy which authorizes you to act as their agent in selling off antiquities that the Academy no longer wishes to retain. Returning lost items will provide an incentive for them to agree. When they ask what you are doing, tell them that you are selling old Muggle things that were left behind for a few galleons for the Headmaster's use so that he will be able to avoid troubling them for minor amounts here and there for unexpected expenses. Square the story with the Headmaster – but you know how most purebloods will react to 'old Muggle things left behind'. They won't really see the value and so will ignore it. It will give the Headmaster some operating room which he doesn't currently enjoy."

Eileen smirked. "What house were you in at Hogwarts?"

Gary laughed. "I didn't attend but the Hat placed me in Ravenclaw when I was hired – just to satisfy the Headmaster's and my own curiosity. It did say I had qualities of all the houses."

Eileen nodded. "I think you'd fit right in with my old House, Slytherin."

Gary bowed briefly, smirking himself. "Why, thank you."
Okay. I'm making some shit up just for fun – the Sirens are completely new and my own invention. But such a group makes sense. Anyway … on with the story. And I would point out that if they became animaguses in 5th years - the Mauraders wouldn't have their nicknames yet

See the end of the chapter for more notes

"Good morning, people. Welcome to the second day of Hell. Just kidding. But today will be a messy thing. Today we are going to be patching cracks and imperfections in the walls and, most especially, the floor. We need a completely flat floor by the end of the day – or as close as we can get it. This means mixing mortar and cement and it's a dirty job. When these dry, we will be casting Duro charms to ensure that it sets as stone. First step."

After Gary showed students how to clean out the cracks with a chisel and hammer, he showed other students how to mix the mortar and to fill in cracks and smooth the walls and ceiling.

Other students he showed how to mix cement and to apply it.

Luckily, the actual number of repairs were not that many – Hogwarts elves had done a fairly decent job. Only in a few places was repair required. By lunch, it was drying.

After lunch, Gary showed the students how to lay out the plates which held the tubing for the water that would be used to control the floor temperature. Soon, the entire floor was covered and the students began connecting the tubes. With a few spells to ensure they didn't break the floor was now covered by copper tubing which carried water to all parts of the room. Gary installed the manifold to feed the tubing and the device which would vanish the water at the end.

The students were amazed at the idea of controlling the temperature of the floor with simple water tubing.

Out of the proper trunk, bucket upon bucket of something called leveling cement was poured over the floor. The soupy mix quickly leveled itself and, with only a board at the door to hold it back, it started setting as a completely smooth surface fairly quickly.

To allow it to cure smoothly, the water controlled air-cooling and heating systems had also been installed and the room had a constant flow of dry air at a constant temperature of 68 degrees. Not knowing how it would affect the floor, the control of the tubing for the floor was turned off.

Gary showed the students how the still-slightly malleable surface could have runes inscribed which would become part of the protections against damage by spilled potions.

By the next morning, the floor was fully cured and Gary brought out the paint which needed to cover the walls. It was a special blend which would dry to an impervious surface so that potions residue would not seep into the stone.

Paint application charms were the order of the day and even Petunia found these easy. Severus, at
first, protested the white color of the paint, but Gary argued it would show up stains more easily and therefore allow for easier cleaning and a safer environment.

Severus sulked about that the rest of the day. However, when he got over this when Gary showed him the green and silver chips that would be covering the floor with a special coating (Muggle epoxy but he didn't tell the Magical-raised wizards that) which would make the floor have a rougher texture so that shoes would not slip even if it was still impervious to potions seeping into it.

The Headmaster visited the room at the beginning of the next day (the fourth day) and was astounded at how far the room had come. That day saw the completion of the environmental systems including the installation of the stainless steel stations and air hoods which would draw fumes away and vanish them.

While some of the students worked on these, others worked on the large stainless steel sinks which would allow students to clean their cauldrons. Gary showed the students the etched runes which ensured the stainless steel would remain corrosion free for the foreseeable future no matter what spilled on them.

Getting all the burners set up, in addition to the emergency controls which prevented explosions from harming students, in addition to the reverse bubble head charms which would take away all oxygen around a cauldron in an emergency took the rest of the day.

The warding controls for the Professor was also a major project to install.

The large closet at the back was also a major work. This would allow cauldrons, in some instances, to be placed where they could brew for hours at a time where extremely long brew times were necessary. Each one had its own air hood so that one potion would not contaminate the others.

There was also twenty cubbies for cauldrons which, once put inside, would be held in stasis where the potion's instructions allowed for this. Each one had its own control set by wards as well as either glass coverings allowing the potion to be seen or opaque covers where extra light would harm the potion. This was also stainless steel.

An extremely large number of grease pencils were provided which would allow names, dates, and the potion name to be written on the stainless steel but easily washed away when finished.

Severus carefully inspected these grease pencils and conceded that such could easily be used to mark potions vials as well as glass cups holding ingredients once retrieved from the potions cupboard.

The Potions cupboard had large bins which could be sealed to hold non-volatile ingredients and glass jars with glass lids for ingredients which would damage the weaker bins.

For ingredients that had to be storied in darkness, several jars that were completely black glass rather than clear were also provided.

Some of the sealed bins were also completely opaque for the same reason.

Severus oversaw the careful transfer of the ingredients which had been taken out of student storage back into it. He also even more carefully oversaw the transfer of the Potion Master's storage which held rarer and possibly harmful ingredients.

Extra bins and jars for ingredients not present were stored away in one of the storage bays along one wall along with the papers, books and other things that were removed from the older storage
There was a mirror which could be used to allow students to see how the Potions Professor handled certain ingredients or potions steps on his own station as well as mirrors above each station allowing the Potions Professor to watch a student or a pair of students without hovering.

These took some tricky placement but it got done.

When it was all done, the students were shocked and amazed at the transformation of the room. While it looked almost nothing like the Potions classroom that they had stared with beyond the basic layout, it was – even Severus admitted – a classroom for which he could see no way to improve.

For an added bonus, Gary paid the students to clean the old cauldrons which was a common detention using the new potion developed by "Severus Snape." To everyone's amazement, cauldrons which were known to be almost beyond hope were now clean and available for use.

A book detailing how the room was set up, how it could be used, a list of potions to clean equipment, stations, and even the students hands were provided.

The students were happy to receive 60 galleons each instead of the promised 45. Lily and Petunia, because they worked extra hours in the evening, were given 75 each, the price of Petunia's wand and holster being removed from hers (Lily insisted on sharing this cost). Severus received a total of 100 Galleons.

Severus, with his mother's permission, was given the day off and allowed to visit Diagon Alley to update his wardrobe and make a few extra purchases for himself. Petunia and Lily tagged along and got to see some shops that Lily had normally missed. They went home after this.

The next day, the Headmaster had invited – once more – the Board of Governors and the Wizarding Examination Authority to visit Hogwarts. Horace Slughorn was also invited to see the new addition at the same time. Poppy Pomfrey was asked to tag along so that she would be familiar with the new safety protocols.

Severus Snape, newly dressed in much higher quality clothes than he had previously worn, and under the supervision of Albus Dumbledore, Alchemist, toured them around the new classroom and showed everyone how everything worked.

The environmental controls and safety procedures were the most impressive to the Examiners, as well as the mirrors allowing the Professor to see each station from his desk. The Board was astounded at how much time and effort had been put into the upgrade.

Horace loved it all, including the controls which allowed him to alter the lighting to a more intimate environment or brighten it for brewing. His new storage closet was also a hit, with everything clearly marked. Severus had ensured supplies that were used had been refilled in addition to a bit more ingredients which would allow students more practice at some of the rarer potions.

The new unbreakable glassware was also quite appreciated. Slughorn was shocked that all the cauldrons had been cleaned. He was a bit put out that the new potion that allowed this was already filed as a patent with the Ministry even though he tried to hide it.

Horace Slughorn was somewhat amoral when possible profit was involved.
And finally, the item which surprised them the most: A closet which contained 100 white cotton lab coats. These were auto-sizing, charmed to be impervious, with temperature controls to ensure a student did not become too hot or cold. A very large box of hairnets was also present in this closet as well as very large bin of safety goggles which were also charmed to be impervious. In addition, these were charmed to return to the bin at the end of the day – lest a student inadvertently walk off with them.

The Headmaster explained that a homeless house elf had been added to the Hogwarts contingent and his job was to ensure that the equipment was maintained.

The lab coats had charms which would ensure that there were no openings for potions spilled to get into the hole which the hand came out of. As soon as it was tied, the sleeves would constrict enough to prevent it from accidentally dragging in ingredients when a student was working at a station.

When asked, the Headmaster explained that, although they were similar to Muggle lab coats, the design and charms for these were now available at Madam Malkins and other stores selling Wizarding clothing. They were called Potion Coats.

The safety goggles and hair nets were available where cauldrons and other potions equipment were sold.

After the enthusiastic comments from the examiners, the Hogwarts healer's definite approval of the idea, and the assurance that it wasn't Muggle trash, the Board of Governors conceded that it did seem to make for a much less accident-prone Potions classroom.

While this was going on, Gary was working with the Ancient Runes Professor and a team on correcting the issues that Gringotts had found with the wards.

Overall, it wasn't that they were all that bad. They just had been made overcomplicated by the constant tinkering over the centuries by various headmasters – some who were not as educated as others.

Some wards were interfering with other wards – the ward which detected Dark objects was virtually useless due to one ward which a Headmaster had added which was supposed to make castle even more unnoticeable but instead made Dark magic unnoticeable.

The various anti-apparition wards were redundant as all hell. Gary had suggested making two wards total: One to cover everything other than the Great Hall and one for the Great Hall alone which the Headmaster could disable for a set amount of time for instruction.

Gary was going to sneak in one additional set of wards – and let them find out about it later. He was going to make the ward against males entering female student quarters, save the staff as necessary, Castle-wide rather than individual wards – no Pureblood Slytherin could bypass the local ward even if they got a Head of House which had … ideas. Also, he put intent wards on the male dorms so that any female who was being forced would trigger an alarm. This was in addition to the anti-rape wards that were now in place.

He didn't want a bad definition of "rape" to allow a loophole.

As before, Heads of Houses could temporarily shut down the gender-based wards on an emergency basis, but only for a limited time.

And when the gathered Professors charged the wards, he tried to hide the fact that his contribution
was, perhaps, a bit more permanent than if a mortal wizard had done it.

All in all, the time leading up to Hogwarts was fairly busy compared to what most people experienced. Gary's hope was that this particular year would spawn improvements in several universes as they split off or when split universes recombined.

Through experience he knew that one change could spark changes in many, many universes.

So it was with interest that September 1 dawned. Gary was going to have fun this year.

September 1 was the day that students from all over England and Scotland returned to Hogwarts aboard the Hogwarts Express. And so it was on that Monday Lily Evans was walking along the train looking for her long-time friend and new-found cousin Severus Snape.

Earlier that day, Lily had been there when Petunia went back to school. The girls, newly reconciled were teary at their goodbyes but they would be seeing each other in less than a week.

Finding Severus, Lily enthusiastically said hello. "Do you want to sit with me and my friends or do you want to sit with other friends?"

Severus gave a tight smile. "While your company is enjoyable, I would prefer to avoid the babble of teenage girls if I can help it."

Lily laughed. "Well, I'll see you at Hogwarts then!" Snape nodded and went back to the potions book he was reading.

Lily finally found her Gryffindor house mates and settled in before the prefects meeting that would take place right after the train left the station.

The Mauraders congregated in a compartment toward the back of the Hogwarts Express.

The first to arrive was Remus Lupin. The young werewolf found an empty compartment and put his trunk on the upper rack, waiting for his friends to arrive. At 10:45, Sirius Black arrived. Remus saw him come onto the platform and quickly enter the train before the rest of the Blacks arrived. Remus went to the door and waved his friend down.

"Remus!" Sirius grinned upon seeing his friend. "How are you?"

"I'm fine. How was summer?"

Remus helped Sirius with his trunk as Sirius gave him a grimace. "Another summer in Black Hell. I can't stand my family. They were going on about this wizard who would bring glory back to the Purebloods and put the mudbloods and riff raff in their place. I shut it out as much as possible."

"Was it really that bad?"

Sirius nodded. "Oh, yeah. My crazy bitch of a cousin Bellatrix couldn't shut up about him. Her and the equally nutty family she married into were all about regaining Pureblood honor and all that shite when they visited. I locked myself in my room as much as possible."

Remus shuddered. "I thank Merlin that I missed seeing her in Hogwarts by a year. Your Cousin Narcissa wasn't as bad as you describe Bella to be, but she was bad enough."

"Thank Merlin she graduated at the end of second year. I couldn't have taken more of dealing with my cousins. My mother over summer is bad enough."
The two were interrupted once more by the arrival of the most popular member of their little group. "James!" Sirius called out. "How are you?"

James Potter gave his easy grin which (he knew) caused girls' knees to go weak. "Great! I decided that this year I'm going to get Lily-Flower to go out with me."

Sirius and Remus rolled their eyes. They loved his confidence but that target of his affections was more likely to hex him than go out with him. "That's great," Remus said. "How are your parents?"

"Good." He sighed then. "Mostly. They are getting old and slowing down a bit. It makes me worried sometimes."

Sirius scoffed at that. "Your parents are that old. I'm sure they'll be fine for a long while."

"I hope so."

Then, the last member arrive. "Peter! Welcome back to the Express and Hogwarts. How was summer?" Remus asked.

"It was fine," Peter replied, not as confidently as the others. "I just got my homework done this last weekend."

Sirius gave another grimace. "I still have an assignment or two to finish."

Remus rolled his eyes at his friend. "You had all summer!"

"I was busy!" Sirius replied.

"With what?" Remus asked.

"Er. Avoiding my snake-like relatives?" Sirius said.

"You have no excuse. Which assignments do you have left?"

"Potions and History."

"Well, we're going to have to finish them tonight." The 11:00 sound was heard throughout the train and they all felt the train start moving.

Remus stood up. "If you'll excuse me, I have to go meet with the other prefects."

The other three boys all froze for a moment. "We forgot!" James said. "Congratulations."

Sirius barked a laugh. "I don't know. Now he's part of the people who enforce the rules. He might not want to prank with us anymore."

Remus gave a small smile. "I'm as much a Marauder as ever. I think Professor McGonagall gave it to me because she thinks I can control you miscreants."

They all laughed. Peter said, "You just don't get caught as much as we do."

"True. Prank smarter, not harder I always say."

James suddenly asked, "Who's the female prefect?"

Remus sighed. "Lily Evans."
James started pouting. "Why couldn't I have been the prefect? It would give me more chances to win her over."

Peter giggled as Sirius shook his head. Remus replied with a straight face, "I think it's the hundred or so detentions you've gotten since you became a student."

James grinned. "Well, yeah, that's true. Well, tell the lovely Lily I said Hello."

Remus rolled his eyes. "Like that's going to happen. After the hexing she left you with on the train last June?"

"It wasn't my fault that Snivellus was turned green!" James Potter was really trying to look innocent but it wasn't working.

"Whatever. I'm going." Remus quickly left.

Once the young werewolf was gone and they ensured he wasn't watching, the three remaining boys put their heads together. "Okay. Progress on meditating for our forms. What have we got?" James asked his two fellow conspirators.

Peter replied, "All I know is that I'm really small."

Sirius replied, "I have paws – I seem to be a fairly big animal. I hope it's a dog or wolf – I hate cats."

James smirked. "I seem to be the size of a hippogriff – or almost. But I don't think I have wings. So it's got to be something else."

The discussion continued. Finally, the trio decided that the meditation route was taking too long – they would go the potion route. Sirius, being a Black, had gotten away with going to Knockturn Alley and found the apothecary there willing to sell three doses of the potion.

He had even told his family he was going there "to explore" – they hadn't even batted an eyelid. There had to be some benefit for coming from such a Dark family and so far this was all he had found.

Sirius would sneak through the floo on the next Hogsmead weekend and then bring back the potions then.

The three continued talking until Remus came back. He would be patrolling at 3:00 for an hour.

After more talk, the group got bored. Sirius had an idea. "Hey. We haven't pranked Snape yet! Did you notice which cabin he's in?"

Remus looked at his long time friend. He was tempted to point out that he was being ridiculous, even as James and Peter seemed to agree with him, but then decided he was bored too. "Let me think ...." Remus thought for a long moment. "You know? I don't remember seeing his greasy hair anywhere on the train?"

"Maybe you just weren't looking," Peter volunteered.

Remus thought about it. "While I didn't see everyone's face, I am certain I did not see his hair. Maybe he missed the train?"

James said gleefully, "Maybe he finally quit!"
Sirius said, "We aren't that lucky. Maybe he's sick or something from studying Dark magic."

Peter rolled his eyes as he said, "Or maybe when you Patrol you can look more carefully."
Sometimes the other Marauders forgot that Peter wasn't completely useless.

Everyone nodded in agreement.

After Remus came back after his patrol, he looked shocked. "What?" Peter asked.

"Did you find Snivellus?" Sirius asked.

"Yes," Remus replied blankly.

"Well, then you just missed him. Where is he? We have a prank planned."

Remus looked at the others and said, "I didn't see him before because … well, his hair wasn't greasy at all. He's sitting in a compartment with 4 Slytherin girls from the upper years."

Sirius snorted. "Obviously kissing up to the dogs." There were definitely a few Slytherin girls who got the worst end of the defects from in-breeding.

Remus replied quickly, "No. He was sitting with this year's Sirens." The Sirens were the really attractive upper-year Slytherin girls who, according to Gryffindor legend, likely sold their souls for their looks. The Sirens lured you in with their beauty and then spat you out as a husk.

Slytherin really had a bad reputation with Gryffindor.

Everyone looked at him with wide eyes. "What were they doing to him?" James asked.

"Talking. Politely. And giggling at something he said."

The Marauders were tempted to go look, but the Sirens always included the more talented Slytherin females who had no compunction about hexing boys who annoyed them.

Peter finally said, "Must be under the Imperius."

No one had an answer. The four speculated for the rest of the ride to Hogwarts.

Chapter End Notes

Yes. Snape ended up with the Babble of teenage girls in the end. I thought it was funny. I can imagine Severus looking more acceptable and being considered "safe" as a half-blood.
The four Marauders caught a carriage to Hogwarts from the Express. James still hadn't seen Lily yet. When they finally entered the Great Hall, James saw the object of his affection sitting with the other 5th year Gryffindor girls. He made a B-line.

"Lily-Flower! You are looking wondrous as ever! Might you go with me to the first Hogsmeade weekend?"

Lily rolled her eyes. Her very secret crush still hadn't grown up. "Not as long as you're an arrogant toe-rag."

James started pouting then even as the Gryffindor girls giggled together. He quickly withdrew.

Gary, watching from the staff table, groaned internally. His father was less mature than Ron Weasley was in fifth year. No wonder his mother couldn't stand him until he got to seventh year. He saw his father sit back with the rest of the Marauders and soon he was cheerful as ever.

Finally, the time for the beginning of the sorting arrived. After Professor McGonagall got the students' attention (already having checked on the new students), the Headmaster spoke.

"Welcome back to Hogwarts! Please join me in welcoming the new first year students, newly arrived to learn magic."

The staff and students all applauded and the first years, newly retrieved blushed at the attention. The Headmaster turned and said, "Minerva?"

The Deputy Headmistress moved to the back of the dias and returned with a stool and an old-looking hat. The new students were shocked when the hat began singing!

Come and set me upon your brow  
And when we're done you will know  
The place that shall fit you best of all  
Which House for you will be the call?

Perhaps Gryffindor shall welcome your heart  
When Bravery is needed you'll do your part  
Courage and action seek you here  
To face your future regardless of fear.

Or perhaps your mind is for Ravenclaw  
Knowledge and wit your clarion cause  
To contemplate and to learn what you can  
A future of knowledge is your plan.

Perhaps the ambition of Slytherin House  
For you and yours is what you espouse  
Cunning and guile the tools embraced  
On planning and position your world is based.

Or perhaps you belong to Hufflepuff  
Loyalty and hard work when times are tough  
You'll succeed there by sheer strength of will
With friends to help to fill the bill.
But remember well as I find your trait
And place you where you best relate
For best success and to avoid strife
Unite together to succeed in life.

There was a pause before the students started applauding. Something about this year's song seemed more serious than the students remembered other songs being. The staff all looked thoughtful at the Hat's words even as they also applauded. But finally, Professor McGonagall began calling each new student forward.

When the sorting was done, each house received about the same number of students – about ten each.

And when it was done and the Hat was taken away, Professor Dumbledore stood up. "There is a time for speaking and that time is not now! Announcements shall be after dinner. Let the feast – Begin!" And with a wave of his hand, the tables were now groaning with the weight of the food and drink now placed upon them.

The students dug in with gusto. Soon the hall was full of plates clanking, knives cutting, forks spearing food, liquids pouring and a background chatter as the students caught up with each other.

While enjoying his meal, Harry looked out and considered the students. While he was planning on having fun foiling the Marauders so that they would learn some semblance of responsibility and the difference between pranking and bullying, he also had plans to ensure those who used malicious magic were punished properly.

And from what he was gathering from (unsurprisingly) a few older Slytherins and (more surprisingly) some students from other houses showed him that his work was cut out for him. He should have known better but he had almost got himself caught in the "Slytherins are the ones who are evil" trap – even if he knew that it was wrong.

That being said, the Marauders were the first to be caught: During the meal, after being goaded by Sirius and Peter – and against the advice of Remus – James Potter was going to send a surreptitious spell toward the Slytherin table. Luckily for James, it was a harmless color-changing charm toward his "nemesis."

Just as James was casting, the other staff watched their new Defense Professor quickly point his wand at the students – or between them. Suddenly, a shield popped into the room … and James Potter turned green with very green hair by the reflected spell.

The entire Great Hall stopped at the sudden action and everyone took a long look at James Potter – and the entire room burst out laughing. James however, didn't: He saw his skin color and gave a little scream.

Before any of the other staff could say or do anything, Gary was down among the students. The staff watched curiously as Gary leaned over and said something quietly in James' ear. James' face went from outraged to mutinous to sheepish to resigned very quickly. Gary quickly retreated, the students still laughing.

With gathered poise, James stood up and bowed to the students around him in each direction and said, "Thank you! Thank you! I'm here all week!" and then sat down. The laughter suddenly went from somewhat derisive to more amused and the tension gathering quickly dissipated.
Albus looked out at the students and back to his Defense Professor who calmly sat back down and went back to his meal. Curious, Albus asked quietly so that only the staff could hear, "What did you say to him, Garrick?"

With a small smile, Gary swallowed. He then replied calmly, "I pointed out that if what he did was intended as a funny prank that he should still find it funny if it got reflected back at him. He should therefore take the laughter with grace and dignity. Otherwise, it was a malicious prank – and therefore deserved some heavy punishment. I told him it was his choice and then I came back."

The other staff contemplated what the new Defense Professor said – and most nodded in agreement. Most also had amused smiles. They, each of them, appreciated the lesson in what Garrick had said. It was far different than what Minerva would have done – but she decided that perhaps this was slightly better – in this case only of course.

When most peoples' attention had been returned to their meal, with James Potter finally having accepted the reversal, Gary moved as though to go to the toilet. No one paid any attention – except the Headmaster. When Gary stopped, he motioned for the Headmaster to be quiet.

Albus resigned himself to allowing his new Defense Professor to do what he wanted. He had already assured himself that the man had no true malice in him except for those whom would harm others. So, Albus watched the hall expectantly to see what would happen.

His curiosity was satisfied quietly as suddenly, instead of James Potter standing out as Green among the rest of the normal students, EVERYBODY now had been changed: Gryffindors now all matched James Potter in being green, Slytherins were all Hufflepuff yellow, Hufflepuffs were Ravenclaw blue, and Ravenclaws were all Gryffindor red.

The staff took one gobsmacked look at the students, and then, when they turned to their colleagues, they noticed that they too had all been changed. The exception was the Headmaster – who blinked in all four colors. The now-Red (he had been chosen Ravenclaw here after all) Garrick Septimus tried to quietly return to his seat even as the Great Hall was torn between laughter and outrage.

Minerva first looked to the Headmaster and saw that he would not be of any help, but she did notice his eyes following the new Defense Professor. The Great Hall was interrupted in their reactions by the call of "Professor Septimus! What mad spirit possessed you to do this?"

Everyone in the hall looked to the man they now confirmed as the new Defense Professor who, at first tried to look innocent. "What?" When he saw Minerva wasn't buying it, Gary grinned. "Well – I didn't want anyone to feel left out! I mean, the new first years could have been scarred for life feeling that they weren't worth the time or effort to be pranked like the older years. I mean, look at those cute faces! Who could disappoint such young, curious minds by leaving them out?"

Almost against her will, the Deputy Headmistress looked at the afore-mentioned first years – who all looked terribly amused especially as compared to the older female students in each house.

"Besides!" Gary continued. "You look absolutely smashing in green!"

At that, Minerva, who had quickly calmed down, suddenly couldn't help herself – she let out a small laugh which she tried to hide but no one was buying it. "Fine! But reverse it now that you've had your fun!"

"It will automatically go away when one passes any threshold of the room. Making it permanent or hard to reverse would have been bullying," the entire room suddenly saw a much harder and more serious man than had been apparent, "and I loathe bullies," (the collected bullies in the room were...
suddenly feeling very nervous – as were the Marauders and a few others who had crossed the line on more than one occasion), "so – no worries," the man was smiling once more, "it will all go away soon and we'll all have had a good laugh. No one hurt and everyone can smile: the only acceptable way to prank, in my book."

The Marauders had quickly gotten the point that was being made, as had a few others. Severus Snape contemplated the man who had given him a job and ensured he had new clothes and supplies this year, as well as who had gotten him and his mother legally away from his arsehole of a Muggle father. Severus was feeling particularly fond, in that moment, of the new Professor – his rival's hated spawn that he was not-withstanding. That he, too, was a bit nervous considering some of the spells he had cast back at the Marauders over the years was to be understood.

Albus was rubbing his (color-changing) beard and contemplating his new Professor with a smile and twinkle. Yes, he was a man of good conviction. He would do.

Minerva rolled her eyes and decided to let it go – it was obvious that it wasn't worth it. Those who were most bothered quickly exited and returned and confirmed that, yes, it would go away once one passed the doorways.

The entire room was now more amused than anything. The first years were almost disappointed that it would go away so soon – it was very interesting magic to them.

Very soon, the last of the deserts were eaten and the tables cleared. The Headmaster stood to address his students.

"Good evening and Welcome back for those who are in second year and above and Welcome to Hogwarts to the first years. I am Albus Dumbledore and I am your Headmaster. There are a few announcements to be made.

"First: Let me introduce you all to a new member of staff: Teaching Defense Against the Dark Arts, Professor Garrick Septimus." He motioned to Gary who stood up and bowed briefly before sitting back down. "Professor Septimus is quite trained in the subject and should be a fine Professor for you all." Albus had a kind smile on his face.

"Second: Also now working here is Eileen Snape, a Hogwarts Alumni." He motioned to Eileen who also stood briefly and bowed her head respectfully and sat down. "She is a special assistant to the Headmaster. At times, she will be having students assisting her. As she is faculty, she has all the powers, privileges and responsibilities. She can give and take points and is to be respected utterly." The students applauded her briefly and then put their attention back to Dumbledore.

"Thirdly: Forbidden items, as always, can be found on a list which is posted next to the Caretaker's office. If you have any questions, please feel free to ensure what is contained therein. You might find that items that you have brought might not be in your luggage. Hogwarts' wards were updated this summer so as to ensure your best protection. As a result, I believe that you are far safer here than ever before." There was loud applause to that, though some looked worried (for good reason they would find out later).

"Fourthly: Though many might be aware as it was announced in the Daily Prophet, there have been some improvements to Hogwarts made over the summer. For students taking Potions, which is most all of you, the classroom has been updated to be safer and more conducive to teaching the subject. I believe you will enjoy it. In addition, the Library has had some additions. While the vast majority of material has stayed the same with both general access and the restricted section, improvements were made to the lighting and layout so as to allow students an easier time in finding and studying material there.
"Also, there is now an additional section: The Masters' Library." The room was actually a bit excited just hearing the name. "While the Restricted section can be accessed with permission of any staff member, more advanced, rare, and even questionable texts were all placed within this Library. It's purpose is to allow a repository of ALL magics of ALL types – many included just to ensure their counters can be researched or found."

Albus took on a more pronounced look – less grandfatherly and more Sorcerer. "No texts can be taken from this room – once included, it stays there. Permanently. Access is only with permission of myself as Headmaster plus one other person from the following list: A recognized Master (several Professors qualify), the Director of the DMLE, the Head of the Department of Mysteries, the Head of St. Mungo's, or the Wizarding Examination Authority. In addition, a contract must be signed which agrees that any information obtained shall not be used for nefarious purposes or for purposes contrasting basic Magical Law. This means that if an underage person wishes to use this room – a very hard proposition to argue for successfully – than that person's guardian must also approve as it is a magical contract."

Albus took on a serious look. "Let me be clear: Any violation of this contract will have severe consequences for those who do so. You have been warned." Albus took on a much more congenial look. "That being said, the Master's Library is a permanent tool ensuring that no magic, regardless of its obscurity or even its character, will even be lost again from Magical Britain – once it has been entered into the record. Such can only be considered a gift … for the future of us all." There was a massive applause for the announcement and for such a valuable resource.

"Will the following please stand up." Albus listed all of the students who had worked over the summer on the Potion's classroom. "For everyone save Mr. Severus Snape: 25 points each for your assistance this summer in the improvement of the Potions classroom." There was a lot of applause – there were students from each house present.

"And for Mr. Snape who was the leader of the group: 40 points." Severus sat down to much more applause from his own House than any other.

Albus sighed. "And finally: I must mention that there has been rumor of Dark activity against the Muggleborns and those that some traditionalists feel are lesser. I would remind you all that such is not acceptable in this school. I expect any who have information to pass it along to the Department of Magical Law Enforcement so that the perpetrators can be brought to swift justice. But, such things will not be allowed to invade this sanctuary of learning. On this: You have my word."

"And now, the school song. Everyone, find your own tune!"

"Hogwarts, Hogwarts, Hoggy Warty Hogwarts,  
Teach us something please,  
Whether we be old and bald,  
Or young with scabby knees,  
"Our heads could do with filling,  
With some interesting stuff,  
For now they're bare and full of air,  
Dead flies and bits of fluff,  
"So teach us things worth knowing,  
Bring back what we've forgot,  
Just do your best, we'll do the rest,  
And learn until our brains all rot."
Looking extremely happy with the singing the Headmaster soon dismissed the students.

Later than night, the Marauders talked about what had happened at dinner.

Remus said, "I don't think this new Professor will be as lenient as the Professors have been in the past."

James shuddered at how his prank had been reflected back. "Yeah. Being the only one green wasn't fun – it was much funnier when everyone else joined me."

Sirius scoffed. "He can't be everywhere! We'll still be able to have some fun."

Peter nodded in agreement and then said, "What do you think that Dark activity is about?"

Sirius said with some disdain, "I bet it's that Lord Voldemort that my cousin and her husband were so glowing about – taking steps to clean the Wizarding world of bad influences. Merlin I hate my family."

The others commiserated with Sirius' long dislike for his family and Dark magic.

"I say we start planning something fun against Snivellus. He looked entirely too smug at the Feast," James said.

Peter replied, "We have to be careful though – I think that new employee is his Mum. We don't have the luxury of having our Mums on hand in case we get in trouble."

Sirius sighed, "As if mine would say anything against it."

For a moment, Remus considered that Sirius sounded like a broken record. But then he shook that off and asked James, "What's the idea?"
One reviewer commented that this story was predicated upon Severus Snape's idea that the Marauders were, in fact, bullying in their behaviour and he at least started out fairly innocent and put upon. His path toward darkness started with a bad home life and was cemented at the end of 5th year by the vicious pranking of the Marauders hoisting him in the air and his loss of control and final succumbing to peer pressure in Slytherin.

Snape's character is so dubious that even knowing what he believed, canon really doesn't tell us whether the Marauders were the caricatures that Snape saw or that their behaviour was more balanced against students who were vicious in their attitudes and they made it more even.

I know some prefer one view over the other. This world has a Snape which is redeemable and the Marauder's were immature idiots, at least until James grew up a bit. Sirius is a bit too reactionary against all things Dark and/or all things Slytherin. Which I plan on fixing in this world.

In other stories, we'll see the other viewpoint where Snape was truly just a malicious bastard and the Marauders were more of a balance against that type of attitude. So if you dislike this particular world view – let go of the rest of the story and wait for versions you can stomach better. I won't be offended.

[Rant – kind of]: Okay. I just realized how screwed up the various combinations of schedules could be from the teachers' standpoint. I was trying to work out a schedule which accounted for Harry Potter's schedule according to the books and then extrapolating a Professor's schedule, including ensuring enough time for each class to operate and I realize that … it's fucking hard.

It's also harder because English and Scottish traditions are different when it comes to school. In order to make a Hogwarts schedule work, with core subjects receiving two to three periods per week and electives receiving one to two … I have to hereby decree that Hogwarts has five periods per day Monday through Friday. 2 are between breakfast and lunch and 3 are after lunch. The times before dinner are for Professor's to grade homework and meet with students as needed. Detentions are during the evenings.

The four periods per day that most people … and even Rowling … seem to use for Hogwarts schedules would never work because Professors wouldn't have enough time per day to teach. It's impossible to have, for example, three Defense classes per week for 1st years – that would be six total for first year alone – and have only twenty periods a week (4 a day, 5 days). So I googled traditional English schedules and found one site which says 5 per day – and I'm using that cause I can make it work.

The website I used was eal. Britishcouncil.org – it seemed sufficiently credible to me to use as a basis.

I have only first and second years only getting 4 periods a day. Third year and up (with extra electives) need 5 per day. Every year gets two periods a week split with another house and 6 and 7 years have combined classes for all houses. That's 24 periods total. The twenty fifth period is for
whatever the teacher needs it for. No way any year can have more than two periods of any core class unless all four houses combine.

Avoiding magical exhaustion is the prime reason why students have free periods rather than a traditional full schedule which is why it is different than most boarding schools.

Rowling and her inability to do math strikes again.

Also … there has to be some Astronomy classes held at 10:50 instead of midnight – if there are more than five years of Astronomy.

As to why Astronomy can't be held in the Great Hall with the ceiling reflecting the night sky, the resolution of the image is strong enough for the naked eye but not for telescopes to see further. Also – you wouldn't be able to see the horizon in the Great Hall – only up.

I am wondering if Gary can fix that so that some classes can be held in the Great Hall but that's for during the year if he does it. I am willing to take suggestions as to other ways Gary can improve Hogwarts during his stay.

I'm wondering if there are charms on magical telescopes to see the sky even if there are clouds – I am assuming it's often cloudy during the winter in Scotland. Otherwise muggle telescopes are usually stronger. And there has got to be some warming charms or something on the tower. Or am I not taking into account the stupidity of wizards again?

Anyway – rant over.

Monday through Friday, Garrick Septimus teaching schedule.

Period 1 – 1 (GR) 5 (RS) 7 ALL FREE 4 (HS)
Period 2 – 7 ALL 1 (HS) 1 (GR) 6 ALL 3 (HR)
Period 3 – 2 (GH) 5 (GH) 2 (RS) 4 (GR) 2 (RS)
Period 4 – 3 (GS) 6 ALL 2 (GH) 1 (HS) 3 (GS)
Period 5 – 3 (HR) 4 (GR) 4 (HS) 5 (GH) 5 (RS)

Classes Begin

It was Tuesday morning on the 2nd of September and Professor Garrick Septimus looked out at his first class: Fifth year Ravenclaws and Slytherins.

"Good morning, OWL-Level students of Ravenclaw and Slytherin. My name is Professor Garrick Septimus and it is my distinct pleasure to be teaching you Defense Against the Dark Arts. I will tell you now: This will be one of the more intensive years of your education. Mostly because the tests you take at the end of this year will, in many ways, decide the rest of your life. A good OWL score allows you to then continue on to NEWT level and these are the tests which future employers are interested in.

"A poor OWL Level Defense grade means no NEWT level class for you. Which immediately disqualifies you as a possible Auror, Cursebreaker, Hit-Wizard, and a host of other interesting and challenging careers or futures."
"That being said," here Gary gave them a friendly smile, "I feel that a poor grade from you is a reflection of poor teaching on my part. And I would be very disappointed if any of you would so callously insult me by failing such important examinations. Are there any questions so far?"

There seemed to be none. "Now, to assist you as much as possible, I have ensured that the textbooks in use now accurately reflect the required knowledge according to Ministry guidelines. That being said, do not fall into the trap of believing that this one text is the be all and end all of the subject. No one person, no matter how gifted, can ensure that all possible theory is included in a text – unless one was to spend decades compiling and reviewing all past texts and current research.

"These texts are tools – no more, no less. Indeed, I would say that your success will have less to do with the book used and more to do with how much effort you take to truly understand. Luckily for you, you have other classes such as Charms and Transfiguration and even Potions and History which will assist you in understanding Defense Against the Dark Arts and the theory behind spells. Each of these have a use in the Defense. For en example: What defenses are most effective against the Killing Curse?"

Several students raised their hand. "Ms. Vaisley."

One of the Ravenclaw students answered, "According to the books we've studied, there are no shields that can stop the killing curse."

Gary sighed. "Yes. Quite true. But that is not what I asked for. What did I ask for? Mr. Temple?" he asked one of the Slytherin students.

"You asked for the most effective way to stop a killing curse."

"I am tempted to take points for failure to listen. But let's try again. Mr. Snape. What did I ask for?"

With his somewhat silkier voice than his peers, Severus replied, "You asked for the most effective defenses against the Killing Curse."

"Good! Finally, an accurate response. 5 points. And for a further 10 – what are the best defenses for such curses?"

Severus thought about it for a long moment and then finally answered, "Anything which prevents the curse from hitting you."

Garrick paused for just a moment and then finally laughed. The room was confused. Finally Gary said before Severus was offended, "A better answer I could not hope to achieve. The 10 points for Slytherin, Mr. Snape, and an additional 5 for putting it in words which even a dunderhead could understand." He looked out at the students. "That answer is actually better than the one I had. My answer was: Not being where the curse is. A secondary answer was transfiguring or conjuring a solid object to take the hit.

"As to why Mr. Snape's answer is more correct than my own, my answer was predicated upon moving, or dodging, or running away; or, barring that, having your wand at least ready. These are not the only defenses. But if you limit yourself to 'this is the best way' and you can't retreat – in the face of a killing curse you might freeze. If retreat is impossible and your wand is across the room – there goes my solutions. Instead, let's try it Mr. Snape's way." He looked out at the students. "Mr. Proudfoot. Please come up here."
One of the Ravenclaws got up and came forward. Gary reached into a drawer and pulled out a stick painted bright blue and handed this to the student. "We are not going to play around with any chance of mistakes. Do you know the killing curse's incantation?"

Proudfoot nodded and said quietly, "Avada Kedavra."

Gary nodded solemnly. "This is a fake wand – there is no core and, in fact, there is an iron spike put inside just to make it even less conductive of magic. We will not be practicing any Unforgivable Curses in my class. That being said, I want you to act as though you've come in to kill me. Point this wand and say the incantation – and let's see what I can do. Okay?"

Proudfoot nodded and took the bright blue stick. He went to the door and called out, "I have come to kill you! Avada Ke …" This was as far as Proudfoot got before he was suddenly hit with the cold water that was in the cup that Gary had been drinking from. And one instant later, Proudfoot was then hit with an incarcerous once the Professor had pulled his wand out.

The room was a bit shocked.

"There is an application of Mr. Snape's answer: Whatever you can do to not be hit. I was drinking water – I threw it in his face. Poof – distraction." He quickly let Proudfoot go. "Do you want me to use a drying charm?"

Proudfoot shook his head and cast his own charm.

"10 points to Ravenclaw for not being stupid."

The room was confused. Gary looked at them. "I'm not his mother or his caretaker. I've taken no oaths not to harm him. Even if I feel it would be a good thing for Professors to give some sort of oath, it isn't required. By refusing me, he prevented an unknown from having a free shot at him. I could just as easily cast a cutting curse and he, expecting a drying charm, would be dead. Wands are, among other things, deadly weapons, people. If you let anyone point one at you, you best be damned sure they have your best interests at heart. Otherwise – I recommend you treat any wand pointed at you as the threat it is."

The room was solemn.

"Anyway, in addition, 5 points for your assistance. Mr. Proudfoot, what happened when I threw the water at you?"

He shrugged. "I was distracted."

Garrick nodded. "You may return to your seat – I'll take the dummy wand." Proudfoot returned the blue wand and sat down.

"As you can see, my defense wasn't even magical at the start – I just threw something I was drinking at him. But – it was enough. Now, if he was ready, he could have banished the water or used non-verbal spells to stop me. The man isn't truly a Dark wizard and I used that. I will say though: The Killing curse had a long incantation and honestly, anyone who can't use that split moment to do anything is kind of an idiot. Cast a spell, dodge, apparate, get behind something – ANYTHING to stop the curse from hitting you. Any questions?"

There were none.

"Also, what other mistake did he make besides not being ready for a response?"
One of the Ravenclaws raised their hand. "Ms. Vaisley again."

"He warned you."

Gary grinned. "10 points to Ravenclaw. Classic bad guy mistake: Monologueing. Do you know what most Dark wizards have in common?" There were no answers. "Ego. Every one of them start crowing about how great they are and how pitiful you are and how they're going to kill you and whatever other stupid thing they can think of." Gary made a motion where he opened and closed his fingers like a duck's bill. "Blah blah blah blah. Hero types make the same mistake but instead they start talking about how they will defeat the evilness that they are facing and how living a moral lifestyle would have been soo much better for their opponent. Blah blah blah blah. My answer?"

The students waited. "Just cast a bloody spell. When a Dark wizard is facing you, there go the rules. Take the idiot down. Use a stunner if you feel confident in your abilities; otherwise you're better off going for pain or damage. It is a much better distraction than a simple stunner."

The students were taking notes. When they all seemed ready, Gary continued on. Before teaching them any actual spells and techniques, he wanted to make certain they understood the mindset when it came to defending oneself.

When there was fifteen minutes left, Garrick stopped lecturing and started passing something out. "Now, just to be contrary, I have decided that I need to know where you are – or at least have an idea. So I will be passing out a quiz. Ravenclaws? Don't give me an essay for an answer – you'll have ten minutes to finish the quiz. You people have a tendency to talk too much. Just answer with simple answers. Maybe a sentence – at the most two. If it's a paragraph – it's too long. Any questions? Okay. Begin."

Soon, students were quickly going through and answering the questions. Some were done within two minutes and Gary motioned them to bring their tests forward and then to sit back down. The Ravenclaws, as expected, were writing the longest answers but even they kept it simple (for them). With only a minute left, all quizzes had been returned. "Okay. No homework today – homework next time. But read chapters 1 and 2 and be ready to answer questions." The bell sounded. "Okay, see you later this week."

The students quickly gathered their things and made their way out. The students were quite respectful as they passed the Professor to make their way to the next lesson.

Gary had first years next: Hufflepuffs and Slytherins.

Once all the students were sitting down, Gary introduced himself once more.

"Okay. Everyone here is just attending your very first lesson on Defense Against the Dark Arts. To be honest – you're all quite vulnerable at this point. But we'll fix that up. At this point in your training, your ability to defend yourself is limited. It is my job to increase that ability. Now, first question: What is your best tool in defending yourself?"

Various people raised their hands and Gary picked one of the Slytherins. The young boy answered, "My wand."

Gary nodded. "Okay. Show of hands: Who agrees with our young friend here?" Most hands went up. Gary sighed internally. "Okay. You!" He pointed to a Hufflepuff who had not raised her hand. "What's your answer?"
The Hufflepuff girl replied, "My mind."

Gary gave the girl an approving look. "10 points to Hufflepuff. That is exactly what I was looking for." He looked out at the class. "There will be times where your wand is not easily accessible. There are times you will face people who have much more magic or skill or sheer meanness and are willing to use magic that is best left alone. Whatever you do to defend yourself must be tailored according to the circumstances at hand. If you are alone without your wand, your best bet might be running away. It might be acting dead. It could be calling for help. It all depends on where you are, who is attacking, who else is around."

Gary took on a somber look. "Someone comes into your house to meet with your parents. While your mother or father are distracted, this visitor tries to take advantage of you – do things you don't want. A good scream might save your life – it makes the idiot who thinks he has the upper hand nervous and, hopefully, stops him for just a moment. This allows your parent to come and get you away. There are bad people around. Make certain that you don't fall victim if you can avoid it. Now, the man silences you before you can scream – what do you do?"

"If you can – absolutely. 5 points to Slytherin. The man is blocking the exit. What do you do?" He pointed to another Slytherin.

"Grab anything around and throw it."

"10 points. By the by, I tend to give 5 points for a correct answer and 10 points for things that I feel are … more. Some people will only try to throw things that they know will cause harm. But you don't always have a choice. Even something that is batted aside might distract the man, giving you more time to think. Dropping a glass vase on the floor makes it more dangerous for him to walk toward you and makes a loud sound for your parents to hear. Anything is better than just giving up. Any questions?"

"But if I have my wand, I can send a spell," one Slytherin girl said.

"Yes. What spell?"

She thought about that. "Whatever spell you teach us?" she replied.

Gary chuckled. "Nice try. How about a spell that Professor Flitwick teaches? Like – Lumos. A bright light right in a person's eye can make it harder to see other things. So if they are close, a Lumos might be best. Or a fire spell. Or a disarming charm. Or whatever. Just don't sit there – cast something."

Gary looked around. "Now, Let is talk about wands. Wands are tools. They are also weapons. A wand can kill with a simple spell if the spell is used in that way. I've seen a simple levitation spell cast by a first years student defeat a mountain troll. Any ideas on how that could be done?"

There was confusion all around. One of the Slytherins said, "Trolls are magically resistant. No way you can levitate one."

Gary nodded. "I didn't say that it was used to levitate the troll. I said the spell was used, not what it was used on."

A Hufflepuff said, "A table."

"That might work but no."
The room gave up. Gary smiled. "Nice try – but perhaps you don't know that mountain trolls tend to carry big clubs. They use this to knock out what they want to eat. And they are quite stupid. The troll got into the school I was at and it had cornered a girl in a toilet. Desperate, the boy who was in the girl's class used the same spell which he had learned that day: Wingardium Leviosa. It hit the club. When the troll noticed it wasn't holding its club, it looked around in confusion – and then up at the floating club. And that was when the boy let go of the charm – allowing the heavy club to fall right on the troll's face. Bamn – unconscious troll. Defeated by a first year. The End."

The students were all impressed with the story. Even the magically raised children who had heard of trolls before realized how much easier this was than attacking the troll itself.

"The funny thing was that the girl was in the bathroom because she was crying because the same boy had insulted her when she tried to help him learn the spell. He failed in class to perform it and was insulting to her to try to make himself feel better about his failure. If I see anyone here doing anything like that – detention. And it won't be a fun one. You are all new – realize it and give your fellow students a little slack. And if one of your fellow students truly is trying to help you, don't insult them even if you don't accept their help. Sometimes we only succeed with help from our friends. I suggest making as many friends as possible – you'll live longer."

The Hufflepuffs beamed at the validation of their basic nature. The Slytherins were non-committal.

"Now, this is something from me to you as new students. ONLY the first years are getting this from me. Everyone else will have to buy their own." Gary withdrew a box from his robe, set it on the desk, and then tapped it. The box expanded a lot. Gary opened it and said, "Everyone come one at a time and get one of things I am passing out."

Each student came up. Gary had to take points from one Slytherin who impatiently pushed one of the Puffs to get in front. In addition, he made that student wait until the end. He was very careful to not otherwise treat the boy any different when he finally made it up front.

"Okay. Each of you now has a wand care kit. If you are going to use a wand, taking care of it will ensure that it will work its best for you. A well-cared for wand is much better at casting spells than a poorly-cared for wand. So – today we will learn to take care of it. Open up your kits."

Soon, the entire cadre of students were following the directions and polishing their wands. A few had to be corrected into actually reading the directions first but this was easily done. Before the end of the class, each student had a polished wand.

"Okay. I expect you to polish your wands on a regular basis." One of the Hufflepuff boys sniggered which set off a few more. Gary rolled his eyes. "A little young to be thinking of that, aren't you?"

Gary said with a small amount of amusement. The sniggering students got themselves under control. "Anyway, as first years, I would suggest at least once every two months or as needed if you notice it become dirty. As you use your wand more, you might take it to every month or even every two weeks. Replacement polish can be purchased at Ollivanders for 12 sickles. Any cotton cloth will do. Any questions?"

There were none. "Very good. Read the first two chapters and be ready to go over them in the next class. Start cleaning up. When the bell sounds, you're dismissed for lunch."

The rest of his classes were also fairly smooth. His class after lunch included the Marauders with the 5th year Hufflepuffs and he pretty much repeated what he did with the Slytherins and Ravenclaws.
He was pleasantly surprised by how intelligent the Marauders could be when they weren't being immature idiots. It probably was to be expected that the creators of the Marauders Map and the group of students who could become animagi in by the middle of 5th year weren't complete slouches in the brains department. Even Peter was actually fairly intelligent, or at least a quick thinker. It was suddenly less strange of a concept that Peter, in another life, so could easily get one over on Sirius.

Sirius, due to his bigotry against his family, was the most reactionary and easily prodded. Gary would need to work on that. If only they would grow up a bit everything would be smashing.

The 5th year class took the quiz that Harry had prepared and went off to their next classes.

The 6th years was the first class which contained students from all classes. "Good afternoon. Welcome to NEWT-level Defense Against the Dark Arts.

"By this point in your education, you have no progressed beyond what the average, ordinary, every-day wizard on the street is expected to know as far as Defense and now you have to consider what use this subject might be for those who wish to ensure they, their family, their friends, and perhaps society as a whole is protected against the Dark Arts." Gary grimaced.

"While I am aware that you all must have at least passed the OWL for this class, that information tells me absolutely nothing about your mindset and mentality when it comes to defending yourself. And so, as a diagnostic tool, I will be giving each of you a quiz. Unlike quizzes from earlier years, this one is more detailed. I would like simple answers where appropriate, and when appropriate, I want a full explanation. Use your best judgment. No – wait. Use any best judgment. If yours is suspect, try to think of what I'm looking for. I want to know your approach – so that's more important than what spells you might use. Any questions? Good. Begin."

Gary watched as the combined students began taking the quiz. It took at least half the period before all were done, but it would give him insight into how they approached Defense.

As the week progressed, most classes received some type of quiz and, for the first years only, a wand care kit. Other classes were advised to buy their own.

It was Friday at 5:00 and the teaching staff of Hogwarts was having their weekly meeting.

The Headmaster started them off. "Alright. The first week has come to an end. How are the students doing? Minerva?"

"Things are progressing as expected. The OWL and NEWT students have been given a rough outline of what is expected of them for their tests as given by the Ministry at the end of the year. No real problems."

"Good. Good. Filius?"

The Headmaster went through each Professor until only two of them were left. "And now Professor Septimus. Garrick, how have your classes been?"

"For the most part, pretty well. I've spent time more getting an assessment on where they were and weaknesses before working on overcoming these and moving forward. I do have one area of concern."

"Oh?" Albus asked curiously.
"Yes. My guess is that in the younger years, 1 in ten students are using legacy wands. And it's closer to 1 in twenty for the older ones. From family pressure, poverty, or some other reason, the wands they use are not a suited as they could be. I would like to rectify this."

Albus sighed. "And what is your plan to do so without involving the Board or their parents or large sums of money?"

Gary grinned. "Eileen? Does the room still contain that large barrel of lost and old wands?"

Eileen thought about it. "I do believe so. Red with no cover if I remember correctly."

Gary nodded. "If we can, perhaps, pay a few students to help polish the wands on hand – students who have less means than others – and then we can bring Ollivander to inspect the wands. First to return those that can be identified as having owners, second to ensure no damaged wands are kept, and thirdly to see if any wand on hand will be a better match than the ones they currently use. If they find a better wand, we give them the option of returning the wand they were using to their family or putting the wand they were using back with the others for future students who might find it a better match. And finally, if any student cannot be matched to a wand on hand, we sent them to Ollivander's for a proper wand using the money they made from assisting us in getting the wands ready."

Albus considered that. "Any objections?" There seemed to be none. "How do we identify those who are not using wands matched for them?"

Gary grinned and withdrew a parchment. "These are the ones that I find are most likely using ill-suited wands." He pushed the list over.

Albus accepted the list and had the other Professors look as well. Filius nodded, "From their performance in class, a number of these names make sense."

Minerva, upon looking at the list, had to agree. "Yes. This list includes some of the poorer performers."

Gary took the list back. "And as for paying for it: Eileen? How are profits from your special project?"

Eileen chuckled. "Well, currently we have about a Ten Thousand Galleon cushion."

Everyone's eyes rose at that figure. "How?" Albus asked.

"When we identified the first dresses whose ownership could not be determined and had them appraised, we had an immediate offer for all of the dresses from a wealthy Muggle woman who collected such items. For the five dresses, she offered 60,000 Pounds. After a little haggling on the part of the agent at Christie's who was selling them for us, it came to 75,000 to 78,000 Pounds. After paying the commission, solicitor's fee, and the conversion at Gringotts and all other monies due from these, we came away with about 9,000 Galleons. Add to that about 400 Galleons from a family as a donation in appreciation for returning quite a number of items that they had thought long lost to time and we have about 10,000 Galleons. Or the Headmaster does, anyway."

Albus had not had time to check in with his new special assistant and the sums she spoke of were staggering. "Can we expect similar results as times goes on?" he asked curiously.

"Probably not quite as much. But it's likely that we can realize a significant amount each year. Gringotts is assisting us in auctioning off some old brooms that had no owner but are quite
collectible. I have also given some older but still serviceable brooms to the Flying teacher for use in teaching students. She was quite happy to burn a few of the ones that we replaced," Eileen added that with a chuckle as Rolanda Hooch voiced her adamant agreement.

"Well, then. I believe that we can pay Garrick Ollivander to come and inspect the wands in preparation for matching them to students as possible. Can you arrange that, Eileen?"

"Certainly. I would like a list of students who might want to earn a few Galleons assisting in polishing them up. Hard luck cases and then any student who wants to."

Gary said, "Because I am fairly neutral to most students – no real bias and they aren't as embarrassed when dealing with me as I haven't become a fixture like most Professors – I will approach the ones I know about. Anyone want to give me a list? I will keep it confidential." The other professors each scribbled some names. Gary would find there was some overlap as well.

Eileen added, "I will arrange an empty classroom and ensure it is secure – we have no need of old untraceable wands getting out without proper supervision."

Albus nodded. "Good. Now: Horace. How has the first week been in the new Potions classroom?"

Horace Slughorn gave a wide smile. "Absolutely wonderful! You know that the early weeks often see the most accidents as students aren't fully back in the habit of paying attention to detail. This week alone the new safety procedures have kept at least four students from having to go to infirmary from exploding cauldrons. And the one major accident which caused toxic fumes was contained quite easily as well. The new Potions coats and hairnets have prevented common instances of contamination as well. Overall, it has been the least stressful week of teaching potions that I've ever had."

"Excellent!" Albus said loudly. "Garrick? You and the students did a wonderful job with that. I will be happy to report this to the Board of Governors." He looked around. "Anything else that we need to discuss?" There were no replied. "Well, then. Let us go to dinner. Have a good week everyone."
Lessons Given, Lessons Learned

Time Moves Forward

Garrick Septimus, Professor for Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, watched with a cheerful smile as the students moved through the hallways between classes.

He had been having a very good time this last month teaching.

First, he had observed Lily's sister, Petunia, visiting each Sunday. A number of students had been curious about the new girl who looked to be of age, but only the Gryffindors really interacted with her to any significant degree.

The most surprising aspect of that situation was that, while a few Gryffindors had stepped up to assist Lily in teaching her sister magic on Sundays, one of the ones doing the best job was a complete surprise: Peter Pettigrew.

Peter had often felt like the tag-along; he was not as rich as James or Sirius, as good looking as the other three, or as smart as Remus. It didn't do much for his self-esteem. Gary had also picked up via legilemency his hidden dissatisfaction with having a rat as an animagus form.

(Gary had been surprised to learn of the Potions route the Marauders minus Remus had taken to shortcut the process. He had assumed they had either started that way or used the meditation route in its entirety.)

When the various Marauders had volunteered to help, Lily had been leery but allowed them to try. It was immediate obvious that James and Sirius, like Lily herself, had problems because they picked up things a little too easily. Trying to teach someone who was average or mediocre was actually quite difficult for them. Remus, who was far more patient, also had some difficulty, mostly because Petunia felt intimidated by the boy's obvious intelligence.

Enter Peter Pettigrew, the Fourth Marauder. Less attractive than his fellows many would say, certainly less wealthy (he had taken advantage of the offer of ways to earn pocket money, as had Remus), and – while clever in his own way – he knew he was less book smart than his friends. Peter was far more familiar with the process of learning than his fellow Gryffindors. As a result, he was much quicker to discern the troubles that Petunia ran into and therefore much quicker on showing her where she had run off the rails before she got all the way into the woods.

The older girl was actually becoming quite fond of her tutor because he never made her feel stupid or intimidated her with his "superior magic skills".

Lily and the other Marauders had been amazed. As had Gary when he figured it out.

As an indirect result, Peter was also far less bored than he would normally be and many of the pranks that the Marauders would have committed due to his instigation just never happened. Peter was often making plans on what next to teach the older girl and how to approach it so she would more quickly catch on.

Gary also smiled in amusement when he recalled when the pence had dropped regarding Lily and Severus Snape being related.

Flashback
James Potter and Sirius Black were walking along the corridor with the other Marauders following. Peter was distracted as he thought about the next Sunday and helping Petunia – she had specifically asked him after the first time he helped her which was during her second visit.

Remus was trying to calm down the two Marauders walking up front. Finally, their eyes lit on their favorite target. James called out quite loudly, "Snivellus! Contaminating Hogwarts with your very presence as usual I see." Sirius sniggered even as Remus rolled his eyes. Peter mostly didn't pay attention.

Severus turned toward the four boys and sighed. "What do you want, Pothead?"

James and Sirius both took offense. "Who do you think you are to call me that?"

Severus calmly replied, "Well, considering your normal nickname for me, I assumed we had reverted to the eleven-year old level of making fun of someone's name. Or isn't that what you are doing when you called me 'Snivellus'?"

James and Sirius were actually slightly embarrassed when it was put in that way. Remus actually had to hold in his chuckle – Severus Snape was much quicker this year. Peter even looked at the Slytherin boy with some surprise.

Ignoring the reply James asked, "What are you doing anyway? Coming up with even Darker ways to take out those you don't like?"

Severus rolled his eyes. "Oh, yes. I'm standing in the hallway waiting for my lab partner contemplating the horrible ways I can mow down the dunderheads which infest my day. I'm quite certain I shall be the new Dark Wizard Snivellus. I am Slytherin and therefore Eeevil. My angst overcomes me. Feel … my … wrath." The utter deadpan with which he delivered this showed, in his own way, exactly how sarcastic he was being.

James had becoming more irritated as Snape spoke. He was about to deliver a scathing reply when he was interrupted. "James!"

Lily roller her own eyes as the boy's over the top delivery. With a sweet but fake smile Lily asked, "You aren't giving a hard time to my cousin now, are you?"

James and the other Marauders were gobsmacked. "Cousin?" he asked hesitantly.

Lily gave a bright smile. "Yes. I did an inheritance test this summer at Gringotts. It was quite a surprise, let me tell you."

Severus, now behind the four, had a small smile as he added, "Yes. My mother was quite astounded to find that Lily's father was her second cousin – apparently the Prince family didn't like having a squib as a son and sent him to the Muggle world."

James whirled back. He squeaked out, "Really?"

Severus had that same small smile as Lily moved next to him and put her arm through his. "Yes. We were overjoyed to find out we are family – having been such close friends since we were much younger. It's amazing that we were living so close together as children coming from the Wizarding world as our ancestors did. You could almost call it the hand of God."
Lily giggled. "Yes. Now I get to have a say on who dates him … just like I want him to approve those who ask me out." Lily's smile was somewhat vicious.

James, Sirius, Remus, and Peter were all speechless. Lily continued, "Well, anyway. My cousin and I have to go work on the improvements to the potions book we are working on. Have a good day!" The two quickly left.

Sirius and James looked at the two walking away and then at each other. Sirius could only say, "That is seriously … kicked …up!"

James could only whimper at the idea of getting approval from Snivellus of all people.

The four were distracted by the Defense Professor. "Not making any trouble are you? I hope you are keeping yourself clean?"

Sirius suddenly was knocked out of his surprise. "No. We're good. Just going to our next stop."

Remus volunteered, "The Library. We're going to work on our homework."

"Good, good! I'm always happy to see students working on improving themselves. Well, move along now. You need to have time to get it all done."

The four quickly fled. When they were out of sight, Gary let go and laughed.

End of Flashback

As Gary watched the students, there was suddenly a commotion from down the hall. He quickly moved to find out what was going on. The scene was quite interesting that he came upon. Wanting to keep everyone there, he called out, "STOP!"

A few students who had quickly tried to withdraw almost involuntarily stopped moving away. "Now, what is going on here?"

There was a Slytherin girl standing there, looking quite upset. Finally, one of her fellow Slytherins said, "Moseby there was pointing his wand at Felicia here." He recognized the Fifth year Slytherins – one of the Sirens. "When he wouldn't back off, she kicked him in his wedding tackle."

Gary walked over to the boy on the ground – a sixth year Ravenclaw who wasn't in his class. Likely had failed the OWL or something. He leaned over and looked at the boy. "Wow, Ms. Channing. You got him good."

Suddenly they were interrupted by a voice, "Professor Septimus." The Deputy Headmistress arrived and was apparently disagreeing with the approval which was obvious in his voice.

Quickly casting a muffliato, Gary said, "Privacy spell. What's the problem?"

McGonagall was taken aback but answered, "You can't be encouraging such behaviour – it's not right."

Gary took on a serious look. "According to witnesses, the boy had his wand in her face. She asked him to back down – he didn't. She cast no spell but protected herself. As her Defense Professor I can only approve."

Minerva was taken aback by that. "But she used physical violence! Like a Muggle!"

Gary sighed. "Yes. There are rules against using magic in the hallway – and his wand was in her
face. What was she supposed to do?"

McGonagall had no answer so Gary said, "Let me handle this my way this time. Next time, your way?"

Minerva sighed and motioned him to continue. He dropped the spell.

Gary looked around. He found a Gryffindor. "Was what she" he pointed to the Slytherin girl, "reported accurate according to what you saw?"

It was obvious to the boy that he didn't want to agree (she was a Slytherin) but he finally nodded. "Yeah. He was mouthin' off because she refused his offer to go to Hogsmead."

Gary nodded. "Thank you."

He turned to the girl who was both angry and crying. "Ms. Channing. 25 points to Slytherin for properly reacting to an immediate threat to your person. While we would prefer you find a less violent way should this happen again, we cannot fault you for protecting yourself in the quickest way available."

Gary looked down at the incredulous 6th year Ravenclaw who was still on the ground. "Mr. Moseby. Be thankful you aren't in my class – my punishment against those who ignore what I teach is much harsher. As it is: 25 points from Ravenclaw. And a detention from 1:00 to 6:00 this Saturday helping Rubeus Hagrid, the Groundskeeper, with whatever mucking out of whatever animal habitat that he most needs help cleaning."

The boy was getting his voice back. "But that's a Hogsmeade weekend!" His voice still showed the strain of getting kicked.

"Do I look like this concerns me one bit? If you wish to appeal, take it up with the Deputy Headmistress. If she doesn't reverse it, she just might increase the punishment."

Moseby took a hopeful look at Minerva – and found absolutely no compassion in her face for the boy. He finally got the hint and shut up.

"Now – get up and walk it off. Or go to the infirmary if you think you've been damaged. But get off the floor and move before I become more annoyed."

The boy quickly stood and rushed away. "Bell – 5 points to Gryffindor for being honest and helping a girl that you are obviously prejudiced against just because she's Slytherin. Next time – don't hesitate. It would have been 10 points if you hadn't considered lying to me." Bell sighed and nodded. "Now everyone move along." He turned the girl next to Felecia Channing and handed her a quick note. "Please help her to the ladies' room and help her clean up. This will tell your next teacher that your lateness is excused."

The two girls started turning but Felicia Channing stopped and said, "Thank you, Professor."

Gary gave her a gentle smile and said, "You're quite welcome. I'm just happy to see my students take my lessons seriously."

She nodded with a tremulous smile and the two girls withdrew.

Gary thought for a long moment before deciding on something. He had four students to find.

Later that afternoon, Gary was walking down the hall and encountered the students in question.
"Did you boys hear?"

The Marauders were confused. "Hear what, Professor?" Remus asked.

"About the 6th year Ravenclaw boy who threatened the fifth year girl from Slytherin when she refused to go to Hogsmeade? Your fellow Gryffindor, Bell, saw it first hand."

James and Sirius looked at each other and then Sirius said, "We hadn't heard."

"Oh – too bad. I was just going to mention that while I am opposed to bullying, a lesson on not being a horse's arse is not bullying – when it's deserved."

The four were taken aback for a moment. This new Professor had put quite a crimp on their pranking this year and they needed to be certain. "Oh?" James asked.

"Yes. I am certain that Ms. Felicia Channing would be quite cheered up if Mr. Moseby learned a harmless lesson where everyone could see it take place. I'm just saying."

Peter finally nodded. "We'll keep that in mind."

Gary smiled. It was a small smirk that cheered the Marauders up quite a bit. "Do that. Have fun, boys." He walked away.

Remus looked with wide eyes at his fellow Marauders. "Did Professor Septimus do what I think he just did?"

Sirius had a gleam in his eyes. "Why don't we go find Bell and get a first hand report. Then we can, perhaps, do a good deed for our fellow student – even if she's a Slytherin."

James also had a smile. "She's quite attractive even if she wears Green and Silver."

Peter nodded. "She is that."

James nodded. "Let's go – we have a fourth year to interrogate."

It was Friday lunch and Felicia Channing was sitting with her fellow Fifth year Slytherins. She was still a little upset about the incident from two days before – especially because she kept getting dark looks from the boy who had upset her.

If it continued on, she would make a complaint to the Professor who seemed the most sympathetic. Suddenly, she noticed that the post owl that had come with the rest of the mail. It was sitting in front of her expectantly.

She was concerned for just a moment as she recognized this was a school owl. Finally, she took the letter and thanked it. It hooted and quickly took off.

"What is it?" her friend asked. The other Fifth years were also curious.

"I don't know." She opened the parchment. In very flowing script it said,

"Ms Felicia Channing,

"With respect for your person, we heard about the unfortunate incident from two days prior.

"We wanted to assure you that such behaviour, in our consideration, is unacceptable.
"Please watch carefully as a certain fellow student learns a valuable lesson.

"Hoping that you enjoy the spectacle and are cheered up thereby,

"We are,

"Respectfully Yours,

"The Marauders"

Felicia looked at the letter in confusion. It was quickly grabbed by her friend and then passed to the other fifth years. Severus’ eyes widened as he contemplated what he was reading. Soon, however, he was distracted by the happenings a table over.

Michael Moseby was eating his food, a sullen look upon his face. After taking a drink after a particularly large bite, he noticed the school owl which had a letter for him.

Curiously, he took the letter and opened it. This action – unknown to him – tripped the timer for the spell which had been cast without his knowledge just a few hours earlier.

He read:

"Mr. Michael Moseby,

"It is with concern that we learn of your lack of tact in recent days.

"As concerned fellow students, it would be remiss of us not to express our concern about such actions as you were reported as taking when a female student refused your advances – as was her right.

"Please contemplate, for the next hour while it continues, the following lesson:

"When a girl says 'No', she means 'No'. It is proper manners to just accept it and move on. Ask again after some time maybe. But simply refusing such a simple reply makes you an ass. Don't be an ass.

"Best, Your Concerned Fellow Students"

He looked at the letter and said out loud, "What is this?" However, he noted, his voice did not come out normally. In fact – it came out as a braying sound.

Suddenly he reached for his own face and confirmed by touch that he no longer had his own face – he now had the head of a Donkey!

He immediately tried to protest but the sound continued only as braying to those who could hear it.

The entire Great Hall, after a moment of shock, quickly erupted in loud laughter at the sight.

Michael Moseby quickly jumped up and rushed out of the room.

Professor Flitwick, curious, went over to where his sixth year had been sitting and picked up the letter left behind. With a raised eyebrow, he read the words it contained. Looking around, he noted the entirely-too-innocent expression the Four Marauders seemed to be sporting. After a long moment, he realized that there was no proof and so he quietly returned to the head table.
It should be noted that his face showed just the slightest hint of amusement. He sat down and went back to his lunch, casually turning to letter over to Minerva when she asked for it. Slughorn, who had also heard about the incident with his student, asked for it after. Minerva tried to keep a straight face as she allowed the corpulent man to take it from her.

His only reply was a raised brow. He looked at his student, Ms. Channing, and noted that she was suddenly far more cheerful than she had been in the last two days. Shrugging, Horace dropped the letter into the candle, letting the evidence burn away.

He was a Slytherin, after all. Some things were better left alone – any good Slytherin would tell you that.

The staff were shocked when quite a few girls from different houses suddenly stood and applauded the staff’s lack of action. Filius considered the implications of that for a long moment. It seems that Moseby needed to have a close eye on him – there were far too many girls who seemed inordinately cheerful at what had occurred.

Felicia Channing walked with a purpose as she stalked the hallways, her fellow Slytherins following behind. Suddenly, she saw her intended quarries. She called out, "You!"

The group of Gryffindor students stopped and turned around at the voice. The Marauders watched as Felicia Channing, Slytherin Siren, quickly walked up to them. Lily watched, wondering what this was about.

The Gryffindors and the Slytherins watching were all shocked when the beautiful Ms. Channing walked up to each Marauder and kissed each on the cheek, in full view of everyone. With a smile, when she was done, she only said, "Thank you."

The four bowed before the girl with rakish smiles. James replied with aplomb, "You are quite welcome, Lady. Should you need our assistance in the future you need only ask."

With that, Felicia Channing, stoic Slytherin that she was, giggled a little bit and said, "I'll keep that in mind." She gave them one more smile and quickly withdrew, taking the other Slytherins with her.

Lily watched this with narrow eyes. When the girl kissed James' cheek, she felt a snarl in her gut. She absolutely refused to believe that she was feeling anything other than confusion and curiosity. She was not feeling any jealousy. That was her story and she was sticking to it.

She decided she really needed to interrogate Sev as to exactly what this had been about.
Things get a bit more serious – it’s not all fun and games. I’m warning you now.

Harry Potter, Lone Traveler, Wizard and God, was walking around the village of Hogsmeade in his persona of Garrick Septimus, Defense Professor. It was Hogwarts first Hogsmeade weekend and, like many Professors, agreed to be present to ensure the students didn’t get out of control.

It was much the same as it would be years later in his own world.

Feeling thirsty – or at least desiring something to drink – Gary made his way to the Three Broomsticks. After ordering mead and receiving a glass, he sipped the drink while watching the students interact.

Gary was glad for the mead as drinking it allowed him to hide the smile when a particular couple walked in. A nervous Peter Pettigrew was leading in a starry-eyed Petunia Evans.

From overhearing the gossip, Peter had sent an owl to Petunia’s parents asking for their permission for her to arrive early and experience Hogsmeade, which they had heard about from Lily previously.

After ordering butterbeer, the two sat at a table talking. The other Marauders and Lily Evans and her friends coincidentally arrived shortly thereafter and Gary noted the attempts at being sly in watching the two.

The dance of teenage hormones was quite fun to watch when it didn't involve oneself.

Another arrival was quite interesting: Severus Snape arrived by himself. Severus was wearing a wizard's robe which was not his normal Hogwarts attire. It was deep green and, while it wasn't acromatula silk, it was not the threadbare and worn clothes he had previously been commonly seen wearing.

Even at this distance, Gary could feel the confusion of some of those who observed him.

Soon, however, a more worrying sight was seen: Lucius Malfoy walked in with his superior look on his somewhat young face. The twenty-one year old Pureblood had not yet taken to carrying his cane with wand, but he was wearing robes of superior quality.

Upon sighting Severus Snape, Lucius' eyes lit up in a way that Gary found … troublesome. He saw the man walk over to the boy. Gary tuned his ears to listen in.

"Hello! You are Severus Snape if I remember correctly." Severus nodded. "If you remember, I am Lucius Malfoy. I was Seventh Year prefect when you began Hogwarts. I haven't seen you since your first year. How is Hogwarts these days?"

"I remember you quite well, Mr. Malfoy. Hogwarts is … well, I have to say I am enjoying myself."
"Oh?" Lucius was taken aback. From rumours, this boy was bullied ceaselessly from the Gryffindors and should be ripe for the taking. "You are in your OWL year, are you not? Isn’t that quite taxing?"

Severus nodded. "Oh, it is a lot of work. But I am doing well with it. I have recently been relieved of a number of distractions though and I find that my education is much more enjoyable thereby."

"Good, good," Lucius said, contradicting what Gary could feel he was truly feeling. "What kind of distractions got relieved, if I may be so curious?"

Severus gave a small smile. "First, my mother has been relieved of the sad excuse that my father was. He is gone and steps have been taken to ensure he never darkens our lives again. My mother no longer has to live as a Muggle – which means that I no longer have to live that way either. And the Hogwarts staff have improved quite a few things this year, making a more comfortable learning environment, especially in potions which is my best subject. The new Defense Professor has also been extremely competent, unlike the dunderheads we were saddled with previously. Added to the improvements in the Library, Hogwarts has been absolutely wonderful this year."

"It’s hard to believe that a few changes can make such a difference. I heard that they still have that group of Gryffindors making the other students’ lives annoying." Lucius was not truly in the loop – he was just guessing.

"Actually, the staff has stamped down on bullying, led by the new Defense Professor. A humorous prank here and there is let go, but the instances of them crossing the line have all but ceased. In fact, that group of Gryffindors recently assisted a Slytherin girl who was being treated poorly by a Ravenclaw boy. I might not like them any more than I did, but they have been … unproblematic this year." Severus sipped his drink. He then said with a small smile, "Perhaps they are just growing up now, like the rest of us."

Lucius was a bit irritated. The reports of this boy being a discontented youth was out of date. He decided to use this connection to learn about what was happening in Hogwarts for his master. But first, one more avenue perhaps …

"Well, I am happy to hear that. What plans do you have once you complete Hogwarts?" Lucius asked.

"I plan on achieving my Potions Mastery shortly thereafter. It has long been one of my goals," Severus replied.

"Ambitious, just as a proper Slytherin should be. Have you considered that you might need a sponsor to achieve that?" Lucius was slippery when trying to get what he wanted.

"Oh, I have already made great strides. Already the works of my cousin and I are being reviewed by Potions Masters. I believe that if you keep an eye out, by September 1 of next year, the first fruits shall be obvious."

Lucius was about to enquire about this cousin the boys spoke of when they were interrupted. "Mr. Snape! How has your weekend been?" Professor Septimus asked.

"It has been quite enjoyable. Professor Septimus, I am please to introduce Lucius Malfoy. Mr. Malfoy was the Seventh-year prefect during my first year. Mr. Malfoy, this is Professor Garrick Septimus, Defense Against the Dark Arts Professor at Hogwarts."

Gary reached out his hand and smile. "Mr. Malfoy. I am pleased to make your acquaintance."
Lucius returned the handshake. "As am I, Professor. I don't recognize your name though."

"Yes, well, my name is from a magical family on the continent. If you should happen to peruse records from the Wizarding families of the Romans, we pop up regularly in various histories under the Line of Septimus," Gary responded with an easy smile. "I have heard the name Malfoy. Your family is quite well powerful in governmental circles in Britain if I remember correctly."

Malfoy preened a little bit. "Yes, we are. We've been a fixture since the time of King William the First. We were advisors for him when he took the English throne."

"Smashing pedigree. It was wonderful to meet you. Severus? I was planning on introducing Lily and Petunia to another person. Would you like to tag along?"

Severus looked curious, curious enough to let go the conversation with the Slytherin graduate. "Mr. Malfoy. It was good to speak to you. Should you ever need something I can provide, contact me by owl at Hogwarts."

Lucius withdrew quietly using his own platitudes. Gary knew exactly how annoyed he was at being interrupted, but … then again that was Gary's whole point.

Severus tagged along as Gary first walked up to Lily and then to Petunia. Soon, there was quite the cavalcade (minus the horses) walking down the Hogsmeade road. They soon arrived at the Hogs Head.

Petunia looked at the ratty building with some distaste. "Who is so important to meet here?" she asked.

Gary smiled and replied, "Another relative that you have."

The Marauders were taken aback even as Severus looked curious.

Gary led them inside. The Hogshead wasn't quite as grimy as he remembered it, but it definitely did not have that "welcoming" aura that most Hogsmeade businesses tried to give Hogwarts students. Gary walked right up to the bar.

A man who looked remarkably like the Headmaster said, "What do you need?"

"Oh, no. I don't need anything. I wanted to introduce you to a couple of people."

Abe looked mildly curious. "Oh?"

Gary motioned the two girls forward. "Mr. Albeforth Dumbledore" (Age grimaced slightly as he often did when someone used his last name – only Severus noticed though) "recently it came to light that your father had a brother who was a squib. He had children, and grandchildren and now, great-grandchildren. I would like to introduce you to Lily and Petunia Evans, your first cousins, twice removed."

A man who looked remarkably like the Headmaster said, "Girls? I introduce you to the Headmaster's younger brother, Abe, who is a cousin of yours, and the owner of the Hogs Head Inn."

Albeforth Dumbeldore was amazed. He hadn't known he had any other relatives other than his brother. "Wow. Cousins. I had no idea. I believe you deserve at least a butterbeer from me." He quickly got two bottles and uncapped them and handed them to the girls. "The rest have to buy their own," he said with some asperity.

Gary laughed. "I should have warned you. Abe is famous as somewhat of a curmudgeon. Don't
take it personally. I'll pay for the rest of them – butterbeer only. Not old enough for fire-whiskey – except Petunia here but she's not quite ready for that I think."

Gary paid for the whole group and they all toasted the finding of new family members. For about an hour, interrupted at different times when Abe had to serve other customers, they got to know the relative they had just met.

Both promised to come back and say hello regularly. Abe had softened (only a tiny bit) and told them he looked forward to it – he didn't easily volunteer that but Gary prodded him.

Gary left them shortly thereafter, amused, as he saw the Marauders gravitate toward the various girls that Lily had brought with her: Sirius toward Marlene McKinnon, Remus toward a girl names Mary, and James with Lily. Petunia and Peter finished off the group, though they stood back a bit, chatting with each other.

Gary also was quite happy to have interrupted Malfoy's obvious recruitment interview (obvious to him anyway). He was perfectly willing to draw attention toward himself and away from others who could be corrupted with a few kind words or actions.

Thank God, Gary mused, that Severus was now much more confident in himself with the changes this year.

Gary noticed an increase in curiosity from some of the older Slytherins and even a Ravenclaw or two over the weeks following the trip to Hogsmeade. He guessed that there were efforts being made to learn more about him.

Gary ensured any attempt to disrupt his classes were squashed down tight before they even had a chance to begin – it was fairly easy as a God to suss out such things. Just as it was easy to ensure that it wasn't obvious as to why such attempts failed before they even began – a Detention from another teacher, a target being paired with a student that they didn't want to annoy, even the Headmaster showing up to watch lessons on occasion. Each of these had stopped one effort or another to provide a disruption in Professor Septimus' class.

The Marauders had been mostly quiet as far as pranks went. While some wondered why, Gary knew: They were concentrating on learning their Animagus transformations. While they would likely not be ready by the 20th of October, the 18th of November was looking fairly good for them.

Remus had found out and was looking even more friendly than normal toward his friends.

Gary sat at his desk contemplating the book he had in front of him. He had planned on having to teach the Marauders a much more severe lesson about humiliation and pranks but, luckily for them even if he was slightly disappointed, they had learned much more easily than he had expected.

He had quite amused himself with the idea of the Four Marauders playing the parts listed in the book.

He had constructed quite the plan to recreate the Wizard of Oz with James as the Tinman (needing a Heart), Sirius as the Cowardly Lion (needing Courage), Remus as the Scarecrow (if I only had a Brain) and Peter as Dorothy (just wanting to get the flock out of there), but the four had settled down and started acting mature – it was almost disheartening. Still, he could hold it in reserve for the future. He would have to tell Albus he no longer needed to play the Great Wizard of Oz – he could just imagine his disappointment.
Gary watched in amusement and interest as Hogwarts prepared for Halloween, which was on a Friday this year.

For the first time he could remember, Gary got a chance to experience a Hogwarts Halloween without being attacked, weird petrifications, intruders, a tournament, High Inquisitor, or something else to make it less fun.

The whole thing was entirely enjoyable and Gary went to bed cheerful and happy. He would later curse himself for jinxing it (even a God had some respect for Murphy).

Later that night

Lord Voldemort looked at his followers. They were outside of a Muggle home.

"Good Evening my Death Eaters! I have learned from my friends at the Ministry that this house contains not one, but two, of the Mudblood filth. If nothing is done, they will eventually be brought to Hogwarts to contaminate further our world."

He looked around. "I am certain that at least one or two of you can, perhaps, take steps to prevent this tragedy from taking place. Lord Voldemort always rewards enthusiasm, after all." With a cold smile, he watched several masked figures descend upon the previously unaware Muggle home.

It was time to show the fools who ran the Ministry his willingness to act.
Garrick Septimus came to the Great Hall on Saturday morning to eat breakfast. As he was eating, he watched the students who had arrived. As normal for a Saturday, the room was far from fully packed.

Toward the end of breakfast, the Great Hall was inundated with owls. Gary watched them curiously as they seemed more … frenetic than usual. He continued watching as several copies of the Daily Prophet were opened and there were looks that were less than pleasant.

He really needed to pay more attention. Looking over to his colleague and fellow Professor he asked gently, "Septima? Can I read the front page when you are finished?"

Professor Vector nodded and passed over the paper. "Those poor people."

Gary took the paper and read the main story. As he did, an enormous anger grew within his mind and soul. Knowing he could not fix everything himself he immediately pondered what could be done. He thought about it and came to a decision.

Returning the paper to the Arithmancy Professor he thanked her. After, he quickly withdrew – he needed to find the Headmaster. A quick point-me spell showed that the man was likely already in his office.

Gary made his way there and knocked.

"Come in, Garrick." Gary gave a brief smile – Albus had his tricks and sometimes it was amusing. "Ahh, Garrick. Welcome. What can I do for you this morning?" The Headmaster motioned him to a seat.

Gary nodded and sat down. "Have you read the Prophet today?"

Albus sighed. "Yes. I assume you are speaking of the attack on the Muggle house where the magical sigel of Voldemort was placed."

Gary nodded. "I would like to verify this."

Curious, Albus asked, "How?"

"First, do you know the name of the family killed?"

Albus shook his head. "No. That wasn't a part of the report I received."

"I would like you to contact the DMLE and ask, if you would."
Albus nodded, wondering where his Professor was going with he enquiry, but curious enough to play along. Although it took a few minutes, Albus finally had the names.

"Now, it is commonly understood that Hogwarts has a book. This book was enchanted to record the birth of every magical born within the British Isles, so that – when the time came – every effort could be made to invite these to Hogwarts. Is this correct?"

"It is. Access to this book is only allowed the Headmaster. The Deputy can retrieve a list of eligible students for the next year after 1 September so that preparations can be made and invitations sent as appropriate."

Gary nodded. "I assumed. Now I have a question: Have you ever actually read the Hogwarts book?"

Albus was taken aback for a moment. "Well, yes. When I became Headmaster it was one of the things explained and the procedure for access was given over. I do not make a habit of it."

"One more question: When a prospective student dies, does the name disappear or is it crossed off in some way?"

Albus replied with some surprise, "I actually do not know."

"Well, if you have the names and the ages, please check your book to see if these names appear or if a name seems to have been lost."

Albus looked at Gary a long moment and then stood up. He went to a particular portrait. "Professor Childress. I, Albus Percivel Wulfric Brian Dumbledore, Headmaster of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, hereby formally request access to the Book of Hogwarts."

The woman in the painting, one of the older ones, nodded and the frame clicked as it swung away from the wall on one side. The Headmaster carefully reached in to the exposed cubby and grabbed the very large tome. Once he had it securely, he took it to his desk and set it down.

Opening it with care, the Headmaster read a page and then flipped through, carefully checking the name he had with the book, he found that, Yes, there was a record and it was not erased just crossed out. He told Gary.

Gary sighed once more. "Okay. Final step. In the last ten years, how many Muggleborn students were listed but did not get an invitation because they died?"

Albus gave him a piercing look and then went back to the lists. As he looked up each year, his face became more and more grave. When done Albus sat back and took a long look at his Defense Professor. "It is as you suspected. Far, far too many have died for it to be just a matter of accident or disease. What made you guess?"

Gary replied, "The sheer arrogance. The complete certainty they had that they will get away with it. And just a guess. The question is: How do we counter it?"

Albus gave a long thought too this. After a minute or two he said, "I honestly have no idea."

Gary gave him an incredulous look. "So you are just going to give up?"

"I cannot see a solution to this! Yes! I have the names of all potential students, but this information does not come from me. This comes from the Ministry. There is no other way. There is just far too many ways go get around any security that may be put into place. What can I do?"
Gary stood up and said, "You are Albus Dumbledore, Order of Merlin First Class, Supreme Sorcerer of the British Islands, Defeater of Grindelwald and companion to a phoenix! If you take a stand, people will listen. Do not give me this 'impossible' shite that you seem to be spewing." Gary then paused and squinted his eyes.

"Have you lost yourself so much? If you cannot conceive of a solution with a minute's thought than it is impossible? Have you even tried consulting with the Unspeakables, the Goblins … hell, have you even thought of making this widely known? Yes! You say something than your list of current enemies goes up. But I am more than certain that there are already quite a number of Dark wizards who would kill you if they felt they had any chance."

Gary could see that Albus was thinking a vastly increased speeds as Gary talked. "If it were me, I would immediately introduce law to the Wizengamot that anyone with access to this information be required to give magical oath to see it protected and not used for murder or other criminal activities. And when those fossils refuse then I would propose that the damn department be put under Gringotts control because I am certain that unlike these murderous, magic-hating, baby killers, Goblins have honor and don't resort to eating their own young. I would explain in gruesome detail exactly what these unknown criminals were doing and refuse to allow it to continue unhindered."

Gary gave a hard smirk. "And when some biddy started tut-tutting about saying such vile things about members of good families, I would ask exactly where the Founding Fathers of Hogwarts and the Wizengamot wrote that killing children was acceptable? Murder has been illegal for thousands of years. Let's not pretty it up and call it something else so it's less unpalatable. A murderer is a murderer – they lose all rights to social safety when they start killing the innocent. To treat such things in any other way is to doom the society. So, Albus Dumbledore: What will you do?"

With that Gary turned and walked out, leaving Albus Dumbledore to contemplate the things just said.

As the weekend progressed, Gary was very careful about ensuring that any student who asked was given the information as he knew it.

Over the next week, Gary started teaching students about Dark wizards and the ways they were eventually defeated. He did leave out the early years, only pointing out that Dark wizards who killed innocents were, by definition, criminals. His Seventh-year class on Monday started out with some interest.

"Okay. Considering what occurred on Friday night, we're going to have a quick review on countering Dark spells. We apparently have some Dark idiot who has decided to kill defenseless people to 'prove how great he is' and it's always good to know possible counters. Now, first question: What do all Dark wizards and/or witches have in common?"

There were a few suggestions which Gary easily countered with examples where it was not the case. There was even a "Dark witch" who didn't use Dark magic at all, for all that she was quite destructive. Finally, Gary relented and answered himself: "Every one of them, eventually, was defeated by either someone opposing them or just time itself."

Eventually one of the Slytherins asked, "But aren't there rituals which will prevent someone from dying?"

Gary nodded. "Certainly. There are some very Dark rituals involving sacrifice and all kinds of things. But it's not foolproof. Eventually those magics are overcome. Dark wizards have been
trying for immortality since Ancient Egypt – do you see any Egyptian Dark Lords still causing a ruckus?"

He let them think about that for a long moment and said, "The only question that has to be answered is: How much innocent blood must be spilled before the Dark idiot is defeated? We have numerous examples throughout history. Sometimes, whole societies are destroyed to defeat it. Atlantis sunk beneath the sea. The Fall of the Roman Empire against the Gothic mages who set upon them. Yeah – they might succeed for a few years or even decades but eventually they all die. We're going to cover ways to keep yourself and others safe when you have such an idiot running around."

In the 6th year class, Gary was very clear about where he fell on the Dark Lord issue. "First of all, I refuse to call this criminal a Lord. He can call himself whatever the hell he wants, but I won't dignify him by acknowledging his self-given status. Show me a writ of nobility from a Queen, King or some other legal entity with authority to issue them and then I might listen. But as far as I'm concerned Lord Funny-name isn't a Lord and you can't convince me otherwise without proof. Dark Lord." Gary snorted. "Delusions of a madman."

Another Slytherin tried to argue to nobility of cleaning up outside influences, claiming the Death Eaters had a point. "You want to protect Magical society against Muggle influence? It's quite easy to do. Simple. TEACH THE NEW ARRIVALS YOUR CUSTOMS." Gary sighed. "That's something that I could never understand. I've heard pureblood after pureblood moaning about how terrible it is that Muggleborns are contaminating Magical society by bringing in strange ideas and different ways of doing things. Yet I have not heard a single one of them make any meaningful effort to actually institute even a simple class for new arrivals to tell them how their new world works. So: Who's at fault here? The Muggleborn who are just doing it the way they were taught or the Pureblood who refuses to teach the Muggleborn what they expect them to know?"

After no one had a counter argument, Gary took it one step further. "And don't call them Death Eaters. That's some silly name they gave themselves or that the Dark Dingus gave them. Call them what they really are according to their actions: Magic-hating Baby Killers."

There was immediate protest, which Gary allowed to roll off of him. "Did they or did they not kill babies who were magical?" When someone tried to rephrase it Gary repeated it: "Did they or did they not kill babies that were magical?" No one could refute that. "So therefore they are Magic-hating Baby Killers. Let's call them by what they are not what they claim to be."

It helped that Albus Dumbledore was creating just a big a ruckus around the Ministry of Magic. When he reported the exact percentage of Muggleborns that were killed before reaching Hogwarts based on the Hogwarts book, the Wizarding public was completely flabbergasted. Not wanting to seem to support such things, Albus pushed through the requirement that anyone who had access to records of underage magic in Muggle areas had to give an oath that the information would, to the best of their ability, be kept safe and not given to anyone who did not need the information.

Gary also took another step: He was very careful to allow certain students to overhear his plans to visit Hogsmeade village on a weekend that the students were not scheduled for.

When he was walking from Hogwarts to Hogsmeade, he gave a secret smile when he sensed the idiots who followed him. After a rousing good time drinking in the Three Broomsticks, Gary left through the front door.

He got about fifteen feet from the front door when the two Death Eaters tried to attack. Instead of the easy victim they thought they were facing, it turned out quite differently. As soon as they cast
spells to take him out, Gary moved. The two Death Eaters didn't know what hit them.

When they woke up, they were in a Ministry cell being charged with casting unforgiveable curses that their wands proved they had cast.

Albus called his Defense Professor in when he heard the report.

"Ah, Garrick. How are you doing?" the Headmaster asked.

"Quite well," Gary replied cheerfully. "Honestly, I'm having quite a bit of fun."

"How is your Defense Association going?" the Headmaster asked.

Garrick had gotten permission to sponsor a club where students gathered together and improved their skills. Although he set the steps, Gary had different students helping those who were less practiced. Their fist spell? Expelliarmus.

Gary emphasized the need for accurate casting and, thusly, concentrated less on the exact spells and more on ensuring that the casting was accurate.

His tutors included all of the Marauders, Severus Snape, a 6th year Slytherin, and a mix of sixth and seventh-year Ravenclaws and Hufflepuffs.

Gary was quite amused as he worked with Severus on being able to teach first and second year students the disarming charm without blowing up in their faces for their utter stupidity.

"Great!" Gary grinned. "Severus Snape actually smiled in approval at a second year this week who had gotten the spell he was teaching correct. And his face didn't break!"

Albus chuckled. The staff was well aware that Severus Snape was not the most social boy in Hogwarts.

"Yes. A miracle I am certain. I called you here because I heard a troubling report," Albus said.

"Hogsmeade?"

Albus nodded.

"Yeah, I was waiting for the call. Do you want me to pretty it up or the honest truth?" Gary asked.

Albus was taken aback very slightly but didn't show this with his body language. "Why don't we start with the truth and go from there?"

"Excellent. Then here's the truth: I was expecting it – as a matter of fact, it took me a lot of work to set it up."

Albus was speechless for a moment. "Set it up?"

Gary nodded. "First I had to ensure the right students were around – the ones with family members who are demanding information about the upstart Defense Professor who is talking too big for his robes. Then I had to have a convincingly simple conversation that wasn't out of place as to exactly when I was planning on visiting Hogsmeade when the students weren't going to be there. And then I had to spend all that time drinking enough that the wizards sent to ambush me thought I was going to go down easy. Bloody Hell, the easiest part was actually taking them out when they started casting spells."
Albus took a good long look at the man who he had hired to teach Defense this year. This was not what he was expecting to hear. "Don't you consider it at all rash to … oh how do I put this? Oh, yes … paint a target on your back for every follower of Voldemort and possibly Voldemort himself?"

Gary raised his finger. "Ah, Ah, Ah. Let's put it right: Paint a target on my back for that Murderer Voldemort's Magic-hating Baby Killers or even the Criminal Voldemort himself."

Albus suddenly lost it for just a moment. He slammed his hand down and a magic burst could be felt in the room. "Damn it, Garrick! This is not a game!"

Gary took on a serious look. "I know. And I don't treat it as such. All I can tell you is that I am in far less danger than you might think."

Albus gave a long suffering sigh. "How can you say this?"

Gary thought about it for a moment. "Do you think that Minerva and Filius have time to help demonstrate something? Just between me, you, and those two?"

Albus considered that. "Let me find out."

Very soon, the four were in front of the Room of Requirement. Gary walked back and forth looking for a very particular setup. Soon, an iron door appeared and Gary led them inside. The room was very large with extremely thick stone walls. There were various things around the room which could be used for transfiguration. All in all – it was a perfect venue – not for a magical duel but for combat.

"Okay. To assuage your concerns, I will allow you to test my skills – you three against myself in magical combat. We'll see if your fears are grounded in reality or not." Gary paused. "Headmaster. Please pull your wand and hold it in front of you."

Curious, the Headmaster did so. Gary spoke directly to the wand. "I speak directly to the wand of Antioch Peverell. This is not a magical contest but a game. Your allegiance is not something that will change with what happens here today. Do you understand?"

The three others were shocked when the wand pulsed for just a moment.

Minerva asked, "What was that?"

Gary replied, looking at the Headmaster as he answered, "That was me ensuring that there will be no mistakes. One must be cautious when dealing with the Elder Wand, the Deathstick, the Wand of Destiny, Death's trap for the Eldest Peverell brother."

The two Heads of House gasped at that tidbit. Albus looked at his Defense Professor and asked, "And what else do you know?"

Gary put up a Mufliato and said, "I know many things, Albus. I know about your sister – and I know that no Dumbledore committed fratricide that day. I know that she is happy and healed and she watches over her brothers from paradise. I know that your quest for the Hallows would be fatal – it is not for you to wield the three. The Stone has a vile curse placed on it by Voldemort, uknowing of the Stone's true nature. I know that you plan to keep the Wand to your death, breaking its power. But I also know that you may find a worthy successor – one who, given the right upbringing, will hold the values without effort that you have to work to maintain in yourself. Lily Evan's eldest son, should you let go the role of chess master and embrace the roll of grandfather, will be all that you could ask for as an heir and successor. As long as you don't fuck it up. Take my warnings for what they are: A guide to a better future – if you dare greatly."
Gary casually dropped the privacy charm and said, "Okay. You three against me. Let's see who can last the longest. Cast what you will – I don't care."

And with that, the three Masters of Hogwarts, arguably each one of the premier duelists extant in the world, each worked to defeat the man they knew as Garrick Septimus.

It was a long contest. Transfiguration, charms, even alchemy – every discipline save perhaps potions and astronomy seemed to play a part. And while the three knew that they were very good, it became obvious to them that their opponent was not someone who could be brought down by less than at least seven casters all equaling or surpassing their own skills.

And so, after an hour, the Headmaster, Deputy Headmistress, and Head of Ravenclaw – a Master Duelist in his own right – each found themselves bound and unable to move.

And Gary, when he was done, gave them a large bow and a cheeky grin. "Any questions?" And then he laughed. "Oops – let me remove those silencing charms and chains."

The three were rather slow to get up. Albus finally said, "Well, I believe that in this one instance I perhaps judged prematurely. All I can say is please be careful when goading the forced of Darkness that array themselves against you. We have quite enjoyed your presence on staff and I would hate to have to replace you before your year is up."

Gary grinned. "No worries. I'll last at least until OWLs," he replied.

Minerva and Filius had also gathered themselves. "I believe I will go and see Poppy about a salve or two – you are a formidable opponent, Garrick."

Filius grinned. "I haven't had a workout like that since I was an apprentice. Feel free to practice with me – with a little effort I believe I can surpass even my own records on the dueling circuit."

Gary nodded. "It's always good to keep one's hand in."

Minerva nodded and then winced. "I just hope that Poppy's remedies won't prevent me from a single malt after this – I think I could use one."

The other three chuckled at that – Minerva's love of a proper Scotch whisky was legendary.
The First Full Moon with the Marauders

It was Tuesday, 18 November 1975, and Remus Lupin was led by Poppy Pompfrey to the Shrieking Shack for his monthly transformation. While Sunset was early, the Moon was calculated to become full at 11:28 that night.

Knowing how the variations might cause the change early, it was only 4:30 when Remus left Hogwarts.

Moonrise was actually closer to 4:30 PM – only the fact that the sun wouldn't set until after 5:00 made it safe to start so late – a few other things made the change a fickle thing.

Still, by 5:00, Remus was undressed and waiting somewhat patiently (as patiently as he could) for the change to happen.

At 5:08 PM, Sunset, and with Moonrise having already happened, the moon was full enough for the change to begin. As normal, Remus felt the pain as his bones broken and reset into a different form.

By 5:09, a Werewolf occupied the Shrieking Shack on the border of Hogwarts and Hogsmeade. The residents of Hogsmeade shuddered – the resident ghost was starting early tonight. Silencing charms would be the order of the night.

At 7:00, the remaining Marauders stealthily made their way outside and Peter, using his small size, found the knot which stilled the immature Whomping Willow (it was only a few years old and even if it was magically grown, it was still young).

Moony paused in his howling when he heard a sound in the room. Cocking his head, he stood up and walked over to investigate the small scratching sounds. He found … a rat.

Moony huffed at the small creature, wondering why it was there. The rat, rather than running, raised its nose and started squeaking at him. Moony cocked his head. Putting his nose down, he sniffed at the small creature. Instead of a random smell, however, Moony smelled something that actually known to him. To his joy, this new creature smelled like his human half's pack member – but different.

With a playful bark and a tail wag, Moony greeted the small creature.

Then the creature ran off toward the door. Curious, Moony followed. When they got to the door, instead of it being covered it was open slightly. Moony was taken aback when another canine entered his domain.

He was about to protest when the new canine woofed at him and wagged his tail as though greeting him as pack. Moony cocked his head and sniffed – and found the scent of another pack member! Following the canine was an even larger creature. Checking with his nose, the last one smelled of the last pack member.

Moony had been feeling very lonely, which was why he was howling in misery. His new barking was anything but sad as he found pack members had come to visit.

Anyone who had ever seen a werewolf would have been shocked to see the large creature gamboling around three other creatures of various sizes as though he was a playful puppy.
For a few hours, Moony did something that he had never done before – he played. He mock battled the other canine, played hunter and prey with the small creature and also played mock games with the larger creature that looked like prey but was not.

At one point, the small prey rode the large prey around the room and the two canines made efforts to jump high enough to catch it.

The only limitation the four had was the small space available.

It was close to midnight and the four animals in the shack were taking a break. Into this flew a phoenix, followed by a second one.

Moony had been the first to hear the wing and was watching as they arrived.

Both perched on different things higher in the room. The unknown phoenix trilled toward the four creatures.

Moony, listening, cocked his head at the sound. For some reason, Moony had expected pain when this bird sang but felt none. When the second phoenix started trilling in unison, all four creatures listened to the song.

None noticed as they each fell asleep to the lullaby of the phoenix.

Moony suddenly jogged awake. Looking around he saw the other three animals that had come. He also felt the change that indicated his monthly existence was coming to a close. Unlike usual, he felt no real sense of loss as this happened – as though he knew he would be back.

The other three animals had stirred at the sounds of his whimpers – it was still physically painful. They watched as the werewolf disappeared and wall that was left was …

Sirius Black changed back and cried out, "Remus!"

Remus, who normally was in complete pain and deep exhaustion after the change, sat up. "Sirius!" He looked around. "You guys came!"

Sirius grinned. "We said we would. How are you doing?"

Remus moved to try to stand up to retrieve the clothes he had on a shelf. He stretched around. "I feel shockingly good – normally my entire body is screaming in protest right about now. What happened?"

Sirius shrugged even as James and Peter turned back as well. Peter said, "I bet it was the Headmaster's phoenix and his friend."

Remus, who didn't remember his time as a wolf clearly, was the confused one. "What is this about?"

James nodded in agreement. "About midnight, the Headmaster's phoenix showed up with a second one. We'd been horsing around for a few hours and were taking a break when they showed up and started singing. We all fell asleep – including wolf you."

Remus was shocked. "That should be impossible. Werewolves are dark creatures – phoenix song shouldn't have done that. It should have made the wolf uncomfortable or in pain."
Peter shrugged. "The wolf you – we have got to come up with a better name – anyway, Wolfy cocked his head as if confused but didn't seem in pain at all."

Sirius barked a tired laugh – it was about 4:50 and moonset had just occurred – and said, "Wolfy is wrong. We need something else."

James though about it. "Moony – since he only comes during the full moon."

Peter and Sirius looked at each other. Sirius replied, "Moony it is! Remus Lupin of the Marauders is hereby forever after designated Moony! Long may he howl!"

Remus rolled his eyes. "If I'm Moony cause I'm a wolf, that makes your dog form … Snuggles." Remus had a mocking grin.

Peter and James laughed loudly at that even as Sirius pouted. "Nooooo! My form is far too cool for her name … Snuggles." Sirius shuddered and then paused. "Snuffles might be okay since I kind of snuffle when I smell things as a dog."

The other three grinned. "No. If we used that around other people, girls would think we're all poofers," Peter said. "He's a dog but he walks kind of quiet – pads on his feet like most big dogs. Padded Foot."

James snapped his fingers. "Padfoot. One word. We'll limit to one word names."

Sirius thought about it and grinned. "Padfoot! I like that." He turned toward the shortest of them even as Remus moved to dress. "What about Peter?"

James thought about it and shrugged. "I can't think of a good name for a rat. Sorry Peter."

Remus considered it as he pulled on his outer robe – it was November after all. "Well, he's got these great big whiskers."

Peter gave a disapproving look. "Oh, yeah. That will make the girls run wild: Here comes 'Whiskers!"

James rolled his eyes at Peter. "Yeah, like that's such a problem for you."

Peter was confused. "What?"

James gave Peter a mock harsh look. "I've been chasing Lily Evans for over four years. Her sister shows up and you got her locked up in a few weeks – less than a month! Let me tell you – I've been tempted to prank you a time or two just out of jealousy on getting the girl so quick."

Peter was about to protest that it wasn't like that … but he couldn't. As soon as he started he could only grin. "Sorry. I guess you just don't have the same charm I do."

Sirius and Remus both laughed at that. " Seriously – I wasn't trying. We just clicked. It helped me she didn't have a lot of self-esteem but we're fixing that – did you see how she looked this past weekend?"

Sirius nodded. "A little makeup goes a long way. And the more she smiles, the better she looks."

Peter nodded. "Exactly. You've got to stop trying so hard oh Great Stag with the Many-Pronged Antlers."

James pouted. "Fine oh Small Rat with the Wormlike Tail!"
Sirius and Remus, who were watching the two, looked at each other and then cried out together: "Prongs and Wormtail!"

James and Peter, who had not been paying attention looked at their fellows. Both tried to protest the names but Sirius finally said, "You don't get to choose your own nicknames so your own vote doesn't count. And it's two to one for each nickname: Therefore the Noble Order of the Marauders now includes: James Potter, also known as Prongs; Remus Lupin, Moony; Peter Pettigrew, Wormtail; and, finally, the most sexy of them all, Sirius Black! Also known as – Padfoot!"

Finally the two shrugged and accepted the names. They all set up a (quiet) cheer – it was just 5:00 in the morning.

The four Marauders quietly made their way out of the entrance to Hogwarts' grounds via the Whomping Willow once the knot hat been depressed once more. Remus would make his way to the Infirmary, as he was expected to, and the others would go back to their dorms.

As the group went inside, they all looked around and saw no one. They quietly crept until they hit the stairs and then suddenly, they heard a voice which stopped them cold. The looked up to the second floor and saw a twinkling Albus Dumbledore.

A few hours earlier

Albus was sitting in his office enjoying a lemon tart. It had been a long day and he had finally gotten through the majority of his backlogged parchments that he needed to review.

Feeling he deserved a treat, he called for Floxy to bring him a lemon tart. If he was truthful with himself, he would have admitted that he needed no real reason to ask for a lemon tart – he quite enjoyed them.

Suddenly, there was a knock on his door.

After a quick check, he called out, "Come in, Garrick."

His Defense Professor was smiling as he came in. "One day I'm going to figure out which of these smoking devices you have tells you who is at the door and then I'm going to tweak it to fool you as a prank. I'm just warning you now."

Albus gave a small grin as he motioned Garrick to a seat. "Minerva has been curious for years and has not figured it out. I believe I am safe for the nonce."

Garrick chuckled. "Good evening, Albus."

"Good evening. What brings you to my office so late at night?"

Garrick paused and then said, "Well, you need to decide how to handle a delicate matter with three of your students."

"Oh? Which students?" he asked curiously.

Garrick smirked and said, "James Potter, Sirius Black, Peter Pettigrew."

"Just the three? The fourth isn't included?"

"Well, to be truthful, what they've done has much to do with their friend Remus, but only these three actually have to be … handled properly."
Albus sat back and said, "And what about them needs be handled?"

"Well, they've gone and done something which has some legal ramifications." The man's smile gave nothing away.

"What laws are we speaking of?"

With aplomb Garrick replied, "Laws regarding the registration of certain types of magical skills."

"And the skill they involved?"

With a serene smile Garrick replied, "Animagus transformation."

Albus was shocked silent for just a moment. Finally he said, "Whaat!?"

Garrick laughed at his response. "I know. Three fifteen-year old wizards who have not yet sat their OWLs have achieved a stable animagus transformation."

"Why would they do such a blasted risky bit of magic so young? There are soooo many ways such things could have gone wrong." Albus was, in truth, a bit worried. Animagus training was not something to work on as a whim – it took real dedication and had many risks.

Garrick sighed. "Well, for them it was a matter of loyalty. Apparently they learned long ago of their friend's condition. And through research they found that a werewolf does not attack other animals unless threatened – they are only dangerous to humans. Other animals – even animagi – are immune from being cursed through a werewolf bite. And, not wanting their friend to suffer unnecessarily, they worked their collective arses off and finally got it stable. Right now the Shrieking Shack plays host to the playful bunch."

Garrick took a mirror from his pocket and placed it on a second chair before expanding it. Looking into the mirror, Albus could see the image of his werewolf student frolicking around in the shack with a large deer, a black dog – which looked quite Grim-like to be honest, and a small rat. For ten minutes or saw he watched as the animals quite enjoyed mock battles and small games in their animal forms.

"Remarkable," was all he could finally say in the end. He then looked at Garrick curiously. "Why do you have this mirror?"

Garrick shrugged. "I am in charge of Defense this year. A werewolf in the neighbourhood was a bit of a concern. I took steps to ensure there were no safety issues. You probably never noticed that the creature wards had been strengthened this summer – no transformed werewolf can make it onto the Hogwarts Grounds proper. Those four could spend the night running through the Forbidden Forest for example and there would be no chance of Lupin rushing the grounds even if there were students out and about. I made certain – just like I took steps to prevent Hagrid's acromantulas from being able to come onto the grounds." Garrick gave him a serious look. "I take my responsibilities quite seriously."

Albus was a bit surprised. He knew that Garrick had been on the team to correct and strengthen the wards but had not perused every single detail. In hindsight – it was something that Albus himself should have considered. "You do – and Hogwarts is thankful for such diligence. But what do you think should be done about those three?"

Garrick smirked. "Well, if they had been the immature idiots that they were in the past, I would have said come done on them like a ton of bricks. But, in this case, their efforts were for the most pure of purposes: Comfort of a friend. And while it is frowned upon, it isn't illegal for a minor to
become an animagus. I get the idea that those three might become interested in Magical Law after graduation – at least Potter and Black. And Pettigrew has been much better since he became your cousin Petunia's tutor – you might have noticed the dearth of pranks in bad taste this year. The four are growing up finally. So – I recommend making them register at the ICW and you approving them as being on the restricted list as long as they plan on working at the Ministry once they graduate. If they don't they will have to register on the public list in Britain upon graduation. That ensures all the laws are taken into account."

Albus considered the man's words. In one thing, he was entirely accurate: The Marauders had matured much this year. The pranks that were played no longer had that malicious edge to them that had worried him so. And they had even, in their own way, assisted a Slytherin with a problem. And he could not fault their reasons if his Professor was accurate in his suppositions.

He decided: He would find out.

"What do you suggest for tonight?" he asked Garrick.

"Send Fawkes to sing them to sleep around midnight. From what I know, moonrise is 4:48 or so. So by 5:00 or 5:15 they should just be ready to start sneaking in. Catch them, have them checked by Poppy, check over their transformations with Minerva, and then tell them they have to register – and then throw them the bone of registering with the ICW. They will need parental permission, but once that is done, send them to Geneva a week from Saturday. Have Eileen supervise them and she can bring Severus and their solicitor to register his potions that have only been registered in Britain so far. And if they are really good, allow them to bring dates." Gary grinned. "Peter I am certain will ask Petunia, I can get James to settle down enough to ask Lily nicely, Lily's friends can go with Sirius and Remus, and since they helped that Slytherin girl, you can tell them they have to get her as Severus' escort."

Albus looked at his Defense Professor. " Aren't we meddling in their lives a bit much with all this?"

Garrick shrugged. "It's not a Machiavellian plan we're hatching Albus – we're just having fun. If we were potioning them, or giving them confundus charms to do the same, that would be kind of evil. Here we are just stirring the pot and watching what happens. I think they will all quite enjoy themselves."

Albus gave a small smile. "It would be somewhat fun. I only worry about Mr. Black's parents – I do not feel they will allow him to act as he see's fit with this."

"Don't ask them – ask Arcturus Black, the Paterfamilias, to visit. After telling him what you found out about Phineas and his actions this past summer, have Sirius talk to him while he's here and get his permission from his Grandfather. With magical families, you know the Paterfamilias' word is actually stronger then his own parents decisions."

"Do you think Sirius can get his Granfather to agree?"

Garrick gave Albus a smirk. "Give me a few days to get Sirius ready and watch much of Britain's problems with the Black family disappear."

Albus looked skeptical. "And how will you do that?"

"I'm going to get Sirius to out-Slytherin the whole lot of them. Sirius will be unassailable as the Black Heir when I'm done – and you know how much he despises the Pureblood Supremacy bullshite. The Blacks will become, if we do this well, the greatest supporters of bringing down this Dark idiot who calls himself a Lord."
"Already I hear that some support him," Albus admonished.

"But you have the knowledge of how to fix that."

Albus was confused. "How?"

Garrick rolled his eyes. "Stop trying to hide the facts to keep people safe. What was Voldemort's birth name and what is his true Blood status?"

Albus gave Garrick a piercing look. "This was not information that I thought was known to very many at all."

Garrick gave Albus a serious look. "I know. And why you've been hiding this is confusing as all hell to me. You know how much purebloods despise Muggles. And yet you've kept his paternity a secret? I understand that you're not that petty – but this is Politics, Albus. Keeping silent only helps the idiot hoodwink Purebloods into thinking he's one of them. Let's expose him as the hypocrite he is. Anyone who knows you knows that your objection to him has nothing to do with his parentage and everything to do with a dislike of Dark magic. But you aren't dealing with people with your morals. Are you?"

Albus sighed. "No. You make good points. I just despise using such methods."

"Your grandfatherly persona is great when dealing with people who respect wisdom gained through long experience, but now you're dealing with people who only respect power. Knowledge is one power. Use the power you have – it is not inconsiderable."

Albus nodded. "Very well. But if this blows up, I am blaming you."

Garrick grinned. "I can accept that."

And so, at 5:00, Albus Dumbledore placed himself on the second floor, waiting for his students to sneak in. And, just on time they did so.

He waited until they had started the first climb before stepping forth.

"Good morning, boys. Not exactly following curfew, are you?"

Albus barely withheld the grin at their surprised faces.
Sirius Black was curious about the note which he had been given Thursday during Defense. He was told his friends could come, but it would make little difference.

So, at 7:00, Sirius Black arrived to the Defense classroom and knocked on the door. He had James with him.

"Come in," the voice came through the door. Sirius and James both entered together. "Ah, Mr. Black and Mr. Potter. Welcome back."

"You asked to see me?" Sirius said.

"Yes. You have a personal situation and I'm butting in," Garrick Septimus replied.

Curious, Sirius asked, "What personal situation are you talking about?"

Professor Septimus sighed and replied, "Your relationship with your family."

Sirius' face immediately became stoic. "This isn't something that I want to talk about." James looked worriedly at his friend.

"Yes, I know. But my answer is: I don't care. I'm the Defense Against the Dark Arts professor and you, Mr. Black, are a tool for me to defeat the Dark Arts. And because you are the only one who can do what needs to be done, you're going to be coached, by me, into using your family connections to help bring down Voldemort." His professor's face was entirely serious.

Sirius and James both looked at their Defense professor with wide eyes. "How?" was all Sirius could ask.

Professor Septimus grinned. "You, my boy, are going to out-Slytherin your Slytherin family. When we're done, all support that Voldemort has from the Black family will disappear. And, considering that his major financial backers include families with wives from the Black family, this might make a huge difference."

Sirius and James looked at each other and back. "What do I do?"

"First: You need to learn to control your responses. From what I've learned, you have no ability to keep your calm when dealing with your family. This is what makes you, currently, unable to do anything about the Dark fool. You need to learn control. And then we're going to make certain you know what arguments to use against your family that they cannot ignore. And then we're going to script you a way to ensure your family pulls all support from the Dark fool. Questions?"

"Where do I start?"

Arcturus Black had just finished speaking to Albus Dumbledore regarding his Grandfather's actions as Headmaster. He did appreciate that the information was kept private and the damage was repaired without it becoming public knowledge.

He was taken aback that the Headmaster had taken the steps to ensure that the Headmaster's Portrait no longer held any allegiance higher than the current Headmaster. It was not well known that portraits of Black family members always had extra runes installed to ensure family loyalty.
above all else.

While Arcturus wanted to protest, Dumbledore had cause and the authority to act as he had, and so he did not.

Finally, when the meeting was done, the Headmaster informed him that his Grandson, who was currently second in line to inherit behind his son Orion, had need to speak to him. Dumbledore had graciously provided a room free of any portraits and had performed the necessary scans in front of him to ensure that the meeting would be private. After introducing the House Elf that could serve him, Dumbledore had retreated.

Soon, after he had been served tea, a knock came at the door. "Enter!" he called out.

He saw the door open and his grandson, Sirius, entered. Instead of the rebellious stance that the boy often wore when dealing with the family, Arcturus noted that Sirius did not – by expression or bearing – seem to show defiance toward him whatsoever.

Stopping midway between the door and the table Sirius Spoke. "Good Day to you, Grandfather Arcturus. I, Sirius Orion Black, currently Heir Apparent for the current generation of the Black family and second Heir after my father Orion, have need to consult my Paterfamilias regarding threats to the Black Family. May I approach and proceed?"

Arcturus was a bit surprised that Sirius did not act like the Gryffindor fool that the family took him for. "Please come and sit and speak to me of these threats you speak of."

Sirius nodded respectfully and sat across the table from him.

"First of all, Grandfather, how are you and Grandmother?" Sirius asked with some decorum.

"We are well, though your Grandmother Melania has been feeling less so as of late."

With genuine seeming sorrow Sirius replied, "Please pass on my best wishes to her. She was always one of my favorites." Melania McMillan had been a breath of fresh air compared to the other family members. She hadn't been raised with a stick up her arse.

"I will pass on your good wishes. And how are you, Grandson?" Arcturus asked.

"I am well. My studies progress, I hold a position near the top of my year academically, and I believe I am making good progress."

"Good. Now that the pleasantries are out of the way, you mentioned threats. What threats do you speak of?"

"First, I would speak of the family's seeming mindless following of this Dark wizard who styles himself Lord Voldemort, self-claimed Heir of Slytherin. I have issues with and with the family aligning with him."

"What issues do you have with him? You know that we Blacks do not agree with the loss of our rights to perform magic as we see fit. This Voldemort seems to be the only path toward reclaiming what is our right."

Sirius scoffed. "Voldemort is not a path toward reclaiming what is our right: Voldemort is a fool's dream born out of teenage angst. He is using us and the other Pureblood families for his own goals, not ours."
Arcturus was curious. "What do you know of Voldemort then?"

"Lord Voldemort." Sirius pulled his wand and placed letters of fire in the air. He started with I Am Lord Voldemort and rearranged them to read: Tom Marvolo Riddle.

"Born 31 December 1926 or 1 January 1927. His mother, Merope Gaunt of the Slytherin Gaunts – a family with a long history of inbreeding to keep their line 'pure' – dies giving him birth. She had only strength to give his name: Tom Marvolo Riddle, to honor his father, Tom Riddle, and her own father, Marvolo, who was in prison at time for attacking Ministry workers with his son. She used a love potion on Tom Riddle, local Muggle, whom she fancied. Thinking he now loved her, she stopped the potion and he fled, leaving her pregnant and destitute.

"1938. Tom Marvolo Riddle is retrieved from the Muggle Orphanage he grew up in and is sorted into Slytherin. Treated with disdain because he is a Mudblood, his hatred for all Muggles is now expanded to a hatred for Muggles and Purebloods. But the Blood of Salazar Slytherin flows through him and he is sufficiently cunning to hide this fact.

"1943, at the age of 17, the Muggle Riddle as well as the Gaunts all suddenly die. Morfin was blamed and died in prison. Somehow, Tom Marvolo Riddle was seen later wearing the Gaunt family ring.

"1943 also saw the death of a Hogwarts student. Tom Marvolo Riddle accused Rubeus Hagrid – playing to the bias against half-breeds – and Hagrid's wand was snapped, but the Ministry did not even try the case because there was no evidence. Even now Hagrid is not allowed a wand due to that travesty. The Liar got a special award for the school, which I refuse to polish during detention.

"Voldemort does not truly care about Purebloods. He shares no power. Those who follow him are slaves to his will. Those that refuse to follow him he calls Blood Traitors and calls for them to be killed. But this would destroy the magical world – we already lost too many houses during the Grindelwald war.

"1975. Walburga Black and her weak-willed husband Orion make plans for their sons to align behind this false Pureblood. A visit by Bellatrix Lestrange nee Black and Narcissa Malfoy nee Black is used to try to convince the wayward son that the family's power would be increased by following this creature. I refuse: I bow to my Paterfamilias by necessity and the rest not at all. Blacks are NOT followers – we are leaders.

"Do you have any other questions, Grandfather?"

Arcturus took a good, long look at his eldest grandson. As Paterfamilias he rarely got involved with what the different branches of his family did. But Sirius made a very good argument for him to get involved – if only to prevent the destruction of the Black family from this false Pureblood.

"You have given me much to think about, Grandson. I will take it under consideration as I decide a future path."

Sirius nodded respectfully. "There is a request I would make of you, Grandfather."

"And what is that?"

"I need permission to travel to Geneva to register my Animagus form there – I do not want the information sieve that is the Ministry in Britain to put me on the public roles as I would avoid losing this advantage." Sirius had a small smirk as he reported this.

"Animagus form? When did you become an Animagus?" Arcturus asked.
"I've been working on it for over a year. I achieved a stable form with three of my friends just this past month. We are all planning on registering at the ICW and we've convinced the Headmaster to allow us to register on the Restricted list in Britain … in case we decide to work for the Ministry after Hogwarts." Sirius had the Black Grin fully evident when he spoke of this.

The Black Grin was one tinged with the inherent madness that the Black family seemed to carry forward. Some Blacks went quite odd – Cygnus'oldest had this in full (he felt lucky to have gotten her married off) – but most who had this used it as a tool. It seemed his Grandson fell into this last category.

"Show me."

Sirius stood before him and then changed into a very large Grim-like dog. If he was at a distance, he could have easily mistook it for a Grim.

"Very appropriate. I can imagine an enemy of the family seeing your form and succumbing to the superstition regarding seeing the Grim."

Sirius casually changed back and grinned at his Grandfather. "I always am up for a good prank."

Arcturus gave a tight grin. "I will allow it." Arcturus paused and then asked. "What do you currently think of the Black family politics?"

Sirius sat back down and paused, looking as though he was giving the question due deference. "I believe we waste our heritage by concentrating on being pure of blood rather than pure of magic."

Arcturus was taken aback a moment by that. "Explain."

"1970. Andromeda Black refuses to marry Lucius Malfoy and thus was disowned when she married her Muggleborn sweetheart. Recent tests at Gringotts showed that this 'Muggleborn' has four squib grandparents and comes from a magical family thought extinct, the Richardson family. Andromeda Tonks nee Black and Theodore Tonks of the Richardson family had a daughter. Her name is Nymphadora Andromeda Tonks. She is a Metamorphmagus, a trait of the Black family not seen in 300 years. And now lost because we disowned her.

"1971. Sirius Orion Black arrives to Hogwarts. Upon being given a choice, I considered this: What does everyone know about the Blacks? We are cunning and the epitome of Slytherin. What can be done to defy expectations? Be sorted into the House of the Brave – the House of Cannon-Fodder. And thereby I am underestimated by my own family as 'Not Cunning.' I am underestimated by those aligned Dark as 'Not Black Enough.', I am underestimated by those aligned Light as 'Not a Dark Wizard' because I'm not a Slytherin.

"Magicals should live far beyond what the Muggles expect to and yet, only you, Arcturus Black II, seemed destined to live beyond 75 or 80, a common Muggle age. Why? Like any Black, I am certain that you learned magic beyond what the Ministry finds acceptable. But unlike the other Blacks, I know of no particular time you used this magic without cause or without necessity.

"I have received the blast of the Cruciatuus more than once when displeasing my mother in one respect or another. I have even done so to shield my brother, Regulus, by drawing attention to me rather than a momentary failure on his part which allowed him to correct it himself without receiving punishment. I don't believe that you used such methods against your children.

"Dark magic taints the soul of those that do not have the fortitude of self that is required. Knowing that I still have to mature much, I have eschewed it entirely and will continue to do so unless
necessity requires it to protect my own. Only for this purpose can I avoid the taint that it leaves – I
know my limitations. Bellatrix went mad exposed to such things. Andromeda left, and Narcissa
was protected by her older sisters – she is likely the least affected and might live longer than the
rest.

"In the name of being pure, you allowed your crazy cousin's request to permit a marriage between
my father and my mother – second cousins and far too closely related for my peace of mind. Any
pureblood who breeds magical creatures knows how often mundane culls are born when
interbreeding is allowed to go too far. Two Pegasii too closely related that breed have a good
change of having a muggle horse as a foal. So why do Purebloods allow children too closely
related to marry? Perhaps why we have squibs.

"Cedrella married a Weasley – a family that has been shunned due to their poor financial choices.
She was disowned as a result. But, Weasleys and Blacks have not bred for at least two centuries.
And Arthur married a Prewitt – one that wasn't descended from a Black or Weasley. Already, I
have heard, they have two very strong, pureblood children and a third is about to come. Boys all of
them. What pureblood family wouldn't kill for three strong male children who are in position to
inherit as needed. And the Prewitt Twins are already considered powerhouses. Their sister Molly, a
housewife, is no slouch either.

"Severus Snape, whose mother from the Prince family was disowned for marrying a Muggle, is,
possibly, one of the strongest magic users in our year. His intelligence is second only to Lily
Evans, a girl considered a Muggleborn for most of her Hogwarts education. My best friend, James
Potter, definitely felt threatened by the boys friendship with the girl because he fancied her the first
time he saw her – until they discovered Lily, who everyone thought was a Muggleborn, was born
of squibs from the Prince family and the Dumbledore family. They are too closely related to breed
and so James finally settled down. But it doesn't change the fact that the 'Half-blood' was
considered almost unconsciously on James' part as a true threat. I find it strange that this girl is
widely known as the magically strongest and most intelligent female in our year. Yet the
purebloods disdain her as a mudblood?

"Albus Dumbledore, whose mother was a Muggleborn, is acknowledged as perhaps the strongest
wizard of the last century. Only Riddle, whose father was a Muggle, might be as powerful – even if
he himself is mad from delving too far into Dark magic to be considered remotely sane. My
Defense professor is a half-blood – and I believe he's as strong even if he doesn't show it regularly.
Flitwick, a goblin-mix, was a dueling champion for years. Rubeus Hagrid is as old as Riddle – and
he doesn't look a day over forty. His Giantish heritage has served him in good stead." Sirius
chuckled. "Bella could have married him if she truly desired a magically strong husband." Sirius'
face became more solemn again.

"So, no, I don't believe our current politics strengthens us. I believe it leaves us open to
manipulation and to allowing others to keep the Black family down. It causes us to disown those
who achieve magically stronger children by making their own choices. I do not intend to offend –
but an honest answer was required."

Arcturus looked long and hard at his Grandson. For absolutely the boy's entire life, his daughter-in-
law (first cousin-once-removed) had insisted that he was unworthy of being the true heir and
should be pushed aside for the younger, whom she thought more controllable. His eldest grandson
had long perfected the image of uncaring of tradition and disdainful as regards the family values.

And yet, this fifteen year old boy had a far better grasp of the Black family, its relations, its
limitations, and its mistakes than even he, as the current Head of the family held. It was obvious
that someone was attempting to destroy the Black family by manipulating it into discarding the
best parts of itself. Ignoring money, politics, and the attitude of blood supremacy and calculating "Toujours Pur" as based upon magic only and not blood … he suddenly had to admit his grandson was the Black family's best hope for survival into the future.

"I am not offended, Grandson. I am not offended in the least. It is good that the current Heir to the Black Family has such a thorough and keen understanding of the problems that face us and a vision of what is needed to bring us back from self-destruction. Inform you parents that you shall not be available during Yule break. Instead of 12 Grimmauld, you shall come to my residence and we shall consult as to how to correct the issues that you have brought up."

Sirius stood and bowed the correct amount for an heir bowing to a beloved head. "I would request that I be allowed to bring Regulus. It is time that he start learning the true image of our family – and the proper needs for the future."

Arcturus considered this. "I worry because it seems that elements conspire to replace you for him as he is more malleable in being manipulated for goals poorly thought out."

Sirius gave once more the Black Grin. "Regulus is my brother. I have suffered to keep him safe but it is now time for him to face the truth unshielded. I will not worry. Regulus, like me, is a Black. And a true Black bows to no one. He will learn. I will coach him so that a visit to our parents during Yule will not place him in danger of falling under further manipulation."

Arcturus gave an approving nod. "Bring him then. I look forward to your visit."

"Thank you, Grandfather. I look forward to it as well. I would ask that you suffer one more consultation before you leave Hogwarts today."

"And with whom would you have me speak?" Arcturus asked with curiosity.

"Garrick Septimus, who is my Defense Professor. Unlike the past Professors procured for the position, this one seems to have a proper knowledge of Defense and can actually teach. He did mention that he wanted to speak to you of matters that might concern you."

Arcturus nodded. "Go and get this Professor of yours and we shall speak to him."

Sirius nodded and then went to get Garrick Septimus. Very soon, they returned.

Garrick looked over and saw that Sirius was sitting next to and a bit behind Arcturus. He nodded in approval. "Thank you, Paterfamilias Black, for seeing me."

Arcturus nodded. "You are welcome. Would you like some refreshment before we begin?"

"Only of you have need of it. I had some earlier."

"Will this be a long conversation?" Arturus asked.

Gary considered it. "No. Not likely, but it won't be obscenely short either."

"Then let me call the House Elf the Headmaster assigned." Gary nodded. "Floxy!"

Once again, tea was had. Arcturus noted curiously that the elf seemed more solicitous of the Professor, but no inordinately so. When things had complete, Arcturus asked, "Professor Septimus. What do you need of the Black family?"

"Well, I personally need nothing. But I have information which might be of value to you."
"And what do you want for this information?"

Gary chuckled. "Nothing. I just trust that you will consider this information as you make your future plans."

"And what is this information?" Arcturus asked finally.

"I will explain. But first." Gary pulled the bag that he was carrying off of his shoulder and placed it on the table. He carefully withdrew the item he had placed in the bag and et it on the table.

"Before we go on: What do you know of Herpo the Foul?" Garrick Septimus asked the Black Family head.

After a recount of history and exactly what made Herpo the Foul so reviled, Gary explained how Tom Riddle had recreated the magic which made the man so evil. And that he had gone even further down the path.

At one point, Gary had checked the mental shields that Sirius had, with Arcturus' permission, to ensure this couldn't casually be read. Sirius long study as an animagus had served him well and his shields were very good.

When all was said and done, Arcturus looked at the Defense Professor and asked, "Why have you told me this information instead of, say, the DMLE or the Department of Mysteries?"

Gary chuckled. "At different times in history, one family or another has held dominance in society. Sometimes financial, such as the Malfoys of the 1600s, sometimes magical, such as the Peverells in the 12th Century, and sometimes political, like the Smiths in the 19th Century. The closest I could find in the current society is the Blacks. Due to the sheer number of families that interrelate to yours, yours is the closest there is right now as the most highly ascendant. While Dumbledore outshines currently, that will not last past the death of Albus Dumbledore as it is personal power and not familial. I am working on getting him involved as well.

"But as regards families with power: If things don't change, the Black family will fall and the next family will arise. I would rather that it not be the faux family which claims the name Slytherin while actually being the Muggle family Riddle. Given the power of the current Potter Heir, and given his close relationship to one of the Black Heirs," Gary pointed to Sirius, "Potter might be acceptable as the newly ascendant family. Even the Blacks did not disown a daughter for marrying a Potter – they already are known as quite powerful. And if the current Potter Heir marries the girl he intends, I would bet their children might have the power to eclipse Merlin himself – and even now her attention actually turns toward him.

"With the sheer virility of the Weasley family with Molly Prewitt as the bearer of the next generation, Weasley will be highly placed regardless of their current financial status. The sheer number of children they will have will guarantee it. I would bet good money that it will be at least seven by the time they finish. And none will be squibs. Put in an early bet with the goblins: The seventh will be the first Weasley daughter in centuries.

"But, perhaps, if the proper steps are taken, Black need not fall into obscurity. But the only one who can do anything is you. So I leave what I know with you. This is your world, more than almost any other single person's, and I would see what you can do to save it."

Arcturus looked at the Defense professor. Once again, he was taken aback by astuteness from a direction unanticipated. "And what is this to you? I don't know what your place is in this conflict."
Gary gave a small grin. "For this, I would request for you and you alone to hear what I have to say. You may tell Sirius – after I am gone or in one year, whichever is soonest. By then the information's source won't matter."

Arcturus was curious enough. "Sirius? Remember. Yule. Bring your brother."

Sirius nodded and said goodbye to his grandfather.

When they were alone Arcturus said, "We are alone. What information is for me alone?"

Gary replied, "Let me conjure a Pensieve – and your questions will be answered.

Sirius and the Marauders were waiting near the front gates when they saw Arcturus Black making his way to a carriage that was being held by Rubeus Hagrid.

Sirius couldn't decipher the expression on Arcturus' face. He took a chance. "Grandfather!"

Arcturus fell out of the distraction he was in and saw his grandson and his friends. Arcturus walked over. "Grandfather. These are my friends James Potter, Peter Pettigrew, and Remus Lupin. Guys? This is my Grandfather and Head of the Black family, Arcturus Black II."

The four teenagers politely greeted the group. Sirius finally asked, "How was the meeting? You look distracted."

Arcturus considered that and replied, "Yes. I would have to say that is accurate. But I was … informative. I see things a bit clearer now than I have in the past. It makes it easier to do as I need to with your support."

Sirius decided to take that at face value for the moment. "Very well. Why don't I and my friends escort you to the edge of the wards so you can apparate. I'd rather not see anyone take advantage of you being out there alone. I remember all the stories."

Arcturus considered that and smiled. "Very well. I will accept that. Come with me."

The four Marauders cheerfully followed the older man to the front doors. And there was Hagrid. "Thank you, Mr. Hagrid. My grandson and his friends will accompany me to the Ward's edge and then return with the carriage."

Hagrid nodded. "S'allright. They're good boys an' I'll trust them to do it quicklike."

Arcturus nodded. The other three Marauders entered the carriage first – Sirius would come last as he would be first out. As he was about to enter the carriage Arcturus stopped. "Mr. Hagrid."

"Sir?" Hagrid asked curiously.

"Write an appeal to the Wizengamot to reclaim the right to carry a wand based on the fact that, although you were accused of that girl's death, you were never charged because there was absolutely no evidence to support your guilt. Get the Headmaster to agree in writing to ensuring you receive the education necessary to pass at least one OWL within a year of reclaiming a wand – I suggest Care of Magical Creatures. And then send that to me. I will ensure it is given proper consideration."

Hagrid was taken aback. "Of course, Mr. Black! An' thank ye!"

Arcturus nodded. "Let it not be said that all Slytherins are evil bastards. You were treated poorly
by Riddle as Head Boy and I apologize for that." Arcturus finished entering and Sirius cheerfully waved and then entered the carriage himself.

Hagrid could only watch after the retreating carriage in astonishment.
A Trip to the Continent

The Four Marauders were gathered about their new masterpiece: The Marauder's Map.

Recognizing the need to know who was coming when setting up a prank, the four had started working the year before on making a map of the entirety of Hogwarts.

It was, perhaps, odd that their first use of it had nothing to do with pranks.

Sirius, seeing their quarry, pointed the dot out to his friends. "There she is."

James nodded. "How do we approach her?"

Sirius huffed to himself for a moment. He turned to Remus. "What do you think?"

Remus shrugged. "How about just asking her?"

Peter volunteered, "How about talking to him and then asking her?" The other three considered that. "First, we talk to her." He pointed a name out. "Then him." He pointed the second name. "And then her." And he pointed to the last name. Peter continued, "If we do it any other way, we're asking for one of them to blow up – and this isn't a prank."

Sirius and James looked at each other and then nodded. "Well, who talks to the first one?"

Peter replied, "I do. I've been doing some work with her on her projects for pocket money so she knows me."

The other three considered that. Remus supplied, "How about I go with and volunteer to assist as well? I could stand to make some pocket money as well."

Wormtail shrugged. "Fine by me, Moony. There's plenty to do."

The two marauders made their way to Madam Snape's office and knocked on her door.

"Come in!" they heard.

As they entered Eileen's face lit up. "Peter! What do you need? Our next repair day isn't for about ten days."

Peter nodded. "I know, Mrs. Snape. I'm here on another matter. Well, two actually."

"Oh?" she asked.

"First, Remus Lupin here could stand to make a few extra Galleons – his situation is not quite the same, but truly every Galleon would help him in the long run."

Eileen considered that. Like the rest of the staff, she was aware of Remus' condition. She was a bit surprised that Peter was in the know. "I can agree to that." She turned to Remus. "Well, Mr. Lupin? Would you be willing to lend your magic toward a project for Hogwarts for a few Galleons an hour every few weeks or so?"

Remus shrugged. "It sounds good to me. What kind of magic?"

"Repair charms, cleaning charms – we're taking old, broken antiques and repairing them, cleaning
them of magic, and then selling them in the Muggle world where they are worth much more money. The proceeds are used as a source for Hogwarts upgrades."

Remus nodded. "It sounds good to me."

"Good! I have a few students considering opening repair shops when they leave Hogwarts as a steady source of income. Make your own hours and just don't use the magic in front of Muggles. It's quite easy if you think about it."

Remus was very interested. Make your own hours translated to working around the full moon for him. It was something he should consider when he had time.

"And what else do you need?" Eileen asked.

Peter sighed. "The Four of us in 5th Year Gryffindor have to go to Geneva by Portkey next weekend. Did the Headmaster tell you?"

Eileen nodded. "You have some registering to do at the ICW."

"Right. He also mentioned that your son should also go and take his solicitor to register some potions that are already registered here?"

Eileen nodded once again. "Yes. I am thankful that the Headmaster and staff seem to be looking after my son's interests."

"Well, we were told we were allowed to bring a guest each. While I plan on bringing the witch I'm tutoring, and the other Gryffindors have plans on people to bring, we would like permission to set up a guest for your son as well. Like us, he would have someone to see the sights with after the required work is done at the ICW offices. The Headmaster said there is a magical village near the ICW offices and he would allow us to treat it like a Hogsmeade weekend but in a new country."

Eileen was curious. "I would imagine that Severus would ask his cousin Lily."

Peter nodded. "James plans on asking her – politely. So as not to leave Severus out, we have a girl who might respond favorably if we ask her to act as escort."

Eileen narrowed her eyes. "And who is this that you are suggesting?"

"Ms. Felicia Channing, 5th Year Slytherin."

Eileen's eyes widened a bit at that. The Channing family was not unknown and she had seen the girl – she was quite attractive. It would be far different experience than Severus was used to. "And why would she agree?"

Remus and Peter looked at each other and chuckled. Remus replied, "When she was being harassed by an unpleasant Sixth Year Ravenclaw, we took steps to teach the boy a lesson about 'no' meaning 'no' when a witch says it regarding an advance. She was appreciative of our efforts."

Eileen considered that. "If Severus approves, I will accept it," was her only reply.

The two bowed briefly to the woman and left. They then went off to retrieve the other two and to face the Snake. After a brief discussion between the four, they decided to speak to Snape before the Dinner meal.

The four waited quietly until their quarry arrived, speaking with Lily as he did so. After they split
off, they stood up. Sirius also saw his brother arrive.

A number of eyes watched as the Marauders walked over to the Slytherin table. Several were surprised when James Potter made a motion indicating Parley – this was a new development.

"Mr. Snape. If it would not inconvenience you, I would like to arrange to speak to you privately about a matter of mutual interest," James said somewhat formally.

Severus looked at his former rivals with a blank look and one eyebrow raised. This was new. "I accept Parley. We shall speak after the dinner meal," Snape paused a moment, "just inside the main entrance. Is this acceptable?"

James replied, "Yes. And our thanks for your time and consideration." He bowed his head briefly with more deference than was strictly required: Potter was the son of a wealthy family and Severus Snape was a halfblood. Potter's depth of bow, however, indicated he was acknowledging Snape as an equal. It was quite interesting to the politically-minded Slytherins present.

They then noticed one of the four peel off and make his way to another Slytherin. Many tried to listen in without being obvious. When Sirius arrived he said to his brother Regulus, "Regulus. We also need to speak very soon regarding a family matter. Will you have time after dinner?"

Regulus was a bit surprised. Sirius, who he had long looked up to, had become distant after starting Hogwarts, especially once he had been sorted to Slytherin. Thereafter, there was always tension when they spoke. This time, Regulus saw no tension in Sirius whatsoever. "That will be fine. Before or after your other talk?" Reggie nodded briefly toward Snape.

"Which do you want?" Sirius asked curiously.

"Will it be fast?" Sirius nodded agreement that this was true. Regulus looked at the time. There were still a few minutes before dinner. "Why don't we talk now?" Sirius nodded in agreement and led his brother out of the hall to an empty area. "What's this about?"

His brother grinned at him, and Regulus noted that this was friendlier than Sirius' smiles over the previous years. "I met with Grandfather a few days ago about family politics. During the Yule Break, he expects us to go to his place rather than Grimmauld so that a few things can be sorted out. Originally, he just asked for me but I told him I wouldn't come without my brother. He expects us straight off the train – he'll be sending a portkey for us. While I'm writing a note for Orion and Walburga, you should write your own letter. Tell them that you will visit for a brief time during Yule but don't have the exact schedule yet."

Regulus sighed. Sirius had long given up the idea of a good relationship with their parents. But he was heartened that Sirius so readily still called him brother and Arcturus Grandfather – it made it less likely that he was being disowned – something that had long worried Regulus. He did not want to take Sirius' place as heir. He gave his brother a small smile.

"Okay. I'll write them and let them know. Anything else I can tell them?"

"Tell them that it's up to Grandfather as Head of the Black family as to what you can divulge. And that I appear to be under the same limitations."

Regulus nodded. "Okay. Thanks for telling me, Siri."

Sirius grinned at the old nickname his brother had used when they were kids. "No problem, Reggie. I think we'll have fun."
The two farewelled each other and went back inside. It was noted by the more observant Slytherins that Regulus Black was far less distant and taciturn than he was wont to be. At times, he would even smile. The politically minded took note.

Severus Snape casually made his way out of the Great Hall after dinner. His plans for the night included compiling the notes on the modifications for the 6th year textbook. He and Lily had made much progress. After they would be going to Astronomy at Midnight.

Severus saw the four Marauders waiting near the front doors. He noted that Potter looked a bit nervous. He walked up. "Good evening, Potter and Minions. What do you wish to speak of?" he asked with a dry tone.

James sighed and replied, "You know of the upcoming trip to Geneva?"

Snape nodded. "I have been making ready for it."

"Well, in addition to the things we need to do at the ICW offices, I was told that we would be allowed to spend a few hours in the magical enclave near the ICW offices – kind of like a Hogsmeade visit."

Severus asked curiously. "What of it?"

James swallowed and said, "While I intend to politely ask Lily if she wants to accompany me, along with Petunia with Peter, Marlene with Sirius, and Ann with Remus, it was suggested that in the interest of cordiality and to make up for some of our past … indiscretions, we would also ensure you had a suitable companion."

Severus narrowed his eyes. "You know that I am not interested in frivolity as a matter of course. I would think that this would be eminently apparent."

James nodded. "I know. But, this is a bit different and, while I can't see you going wild, spending all of your time with Lily when she is a cousin might be considered … odd."

Severus rolled his eyes. "I grew up in the Muggle world. Such things are more taboo than the Wizarding world. Close enough to know how related you are means too close to marry in most cases, unless you are part of the Nobility. Even then – it's frowned upon."

James nodded in relief. "Right. So anyway, I was asked to insure you had a proper escort. Would you be offended if we asked Ms. Felicia Channing to be your escort? We will also fund the trip to the magical enclave."

Severus gave the Marauders a long look. "I have my own money now – I do not need assistance. I will ask Ms. Channing if she would like to accompany a group to Geneva a week from tomorrow and ensure she receives parental permission." Severus knew that his own stock in Slytherin had risen greatly due to his newly cleaned up image as well as the knowledge that he owned the rights to some of the potions now used in maintaining the potions classroom. He had also lost that "greasy" look with the potion for his hair.

These were the very potions that he would be registering for sale worldwide. He stood to earn a lot of galleons. His solicitors had already begun talks with several companies regarding the sale and delivery of the potions to educational institutions as well as potions companies. His hair potion was set to be sold to a cosmetic company.
He also already got on fairly well with the beautiful fifth year. If he needed to bring an escort – he could do much worse. She, unlike some other socialite witches, was not a brainless dunderhead only looking for an advantageous marriage. Her wit was also quite divine at times – he was always amused when she let forth with her cutting observations toward those who demonstrated abject stupidity.

All that was left was completing arrangements with Lily and her friends. They had agreed to wait until Petunia had arrived so that all could be asked at once.

Walking back toward the Gryffindor common room, the Marauders ran into their Defense Professor.

"Hello, Professor," James said. The others echoed him.

"Hello, boys. Have you completed making arrangements?" Gary asked.

"We're well on our way. We just spoke to Snape about asking Channing along. We plan to wait until Petunia arrives tomorrow night before asking the girls in Gryffindor."

The Defense Professor considered that. "Why don't you mention to the girls that you wish to speak to them tomorrow as a group as regards an opportunity? Let them know that you will not explain until Petunia also arrives as she will be involved. Be polite about it. It will be far more attractive than … some of your previous blandishments I have seen." Gary grinned. James had a history of acting the fool and they all knew it.

Sheepishly, James agreed and the rest followed.

"Now. You did a fairly decent job in keeping your new invention secret – but you haven't always paid enough attention. Let me see the parchment."

At first they tried to deny it but the Professor was too confident and finally they offered it up – unopened. The Professor was quite amused by the insults. After casting a spell so he couldn't "hear the password" he asked them to activate it.

After a long look the Professor said, "Before next week, ensure you have a complete record of all spells, runes, potions, and directions necessary to make this map. In addition to the registration you already have scheduled, you will submit a patent for this. I know that some people would pay a great deal for this – and you might as well profit from your intelligence. Do as I advise, and before Christmas you should all start seeing profits."

The Marauders were amazed by the idea. They had done the map as a pranking tool. Their Professor was talking as though it was a business asset.

Gary would "help them set up the Marauders Map Inc." (he had already done it – Gringotts was already paying royalties for their use in the tunnels – and Gringotts would then, once registered, start selling the ideas to different Ministries for security at a premium). It was the one weakness in his setup in the library – it already had a map. Gary had just divinely "encouraged" those in the know into not talking about it.

If he had any say, the Marauder's Map concept would find full use in keeping folks safe throughout the magical world. The fact that the Marauders had ignored this in his own world had actually kind of annoyed him once he thought about it: All of that brilliance and the four used it for pranking – and nothing else. What a complete waste.
A week later...

Petunia Evans was finishing her last class at school, looking forward to going home and then going to Hogwarts. Normally, she went to Hogwarts on Saturday night, but she had been invited by her tutor and friend… boyfriend her mind whispered to her… on a trip to Switzerland. While he and his friends had some business to take care of, afterward Peter would escort her around the local magical enclave.

Peter had promised her Swiss chocolate and she was really looking forward to it. She was imagining what it would be like as she walked home.

Suddenly, she was interrupted by a voice.

Vernon Dursley, recent graduate of Smeltings Academy, was visiting with an old chum. His job at Grunnings would begin January and he was out to have fun. His friend, who was in his last year of school himself, had told him that the girl he saw walking home was a classmate. Her name was Petunia Evans.

So, with inflated ideas of his own prowess, Vernon waited next to the teenage hangout for the girl that had been pointed out to him. She wasn't such a great beauty that she'd be popular and she wasn't really ugly either – Vernon considered her easy pickings.

As the girl walked up, obviously distracted, Vernon spoke. "Petunia Evans?" he asked.

The girl stopped and focused on him. "Yes, that's me. Do I know you?"

Vernon gave an easy smile. "No. I'm a friend of one of your classmates – Jamie Johnstone. I finished Smeltings Academy last June and start my new job in a few weeks. We were hanging out and told me your name when I asked who the pretty girl was."

Petunia gave him a small smile. "I see. Well, thank you for the compliment."

Vernon scoffed. "Telling it like I see it. Anyway, I decided I wanted to get to know you. Would you like to go out to the cinema tonight or tomorrow night?"

Petunia, although flattered, had no interest in the boy that had just introduced himself. "I'm sorry. I will be travelling to Scotland tonight to visit with my younger sister who goes to a boarding school there. And then tomorrow, I already have plans to spend it with a good friend who I am close to. I would not want to disappoint him by changing my mind so late."

"Come on. Why would you want to spend time with foreigners when you can spend time with a nice English boy?" Vernon was really trying to put up his almost non-existent charm.

Petunia just shook her head and started to move away. Vernon, who didn't want to let her go, moved to stand in her way.

With a move that Lily had practiced with her until she got it right, Petunia grabbed her hidden
wand and, while still hidden, concentrated on a stinging hex – the only spell she could do nonverbally. As soon as she felt the pulse of magic, she covered for it by kicking the large boy right in the bullocks.

Vernon fell down heavily – his mind hadn't separated the two sensations and therefore there was no violation of the Statute of Secrecy.

She looked down and said, "No means no. It's best to learn that early in life." She quickly moved away.

Petunia arrived to the front gates at Hogwarts at 6:00, as she usually did. And, also as she usually did, she made her way to the Great Hall to eat with her sister and her friends.

Upon entering, she her Lily's voice. "Tunie!" looking over, she smiled at her madly waving younger sister. She made her way over and Lily, who was still standing, threw her arms around Petunia before dragging her to sit down.

Lily always was a bossy little thing.

Lily asked, "So. Are you looking forward to tomorrow?" she asked her sister.

"Yes. We've never been to the continent. It's very exciting."

Lily replied, "I know! It was nice to be asked, even if it was by James Potter." She hid her blush fairly well – James had long been her secret crush but she had promised herself not to agree to go out with him unless he grew up. And this year he had finally grown up a bit. Her sister, however, did not buy the casual dismissal.

"Yes. Like it's such a burden to you," Petunia said as she rolled her eyes. Lily's roommates snickered – they knew better as well.

"How are Mum and Dad? What's been happening? How is your other school?" Lily shot several questions at Petunia.

"Mum and Dad are fine – I think they are enjoying having the house to themselves on Sunday … a lot. They always have this odd happiness when I come back home, if you know what I mean."

Lily did. "Ewwww. I did not need to know that!"

Petunia nodded in agreement. "At least you don't have to see it every week. Anyway, school is fine. A boy tried to chat me up today – wouldn't take no for an answer when I told him I already had plans."

Lily was suddenly concerned. "What happened?"

"You know that trick you taught me until I could do it perfectly?" Lily nodded in anticipation. "One non-verbal stinging spell to the wedding tackle and then a swift kick to cover it up so they don't notice the spell … works perfectly." Petunia had a vicious grin as she said this.

Lily looked at Petunia with wide, worshipful eyes and then laughed loudly. "Tell me everything!"

It just so happened that Remus Lupin's sensitive hearing picked up the exchange and he listened to Petunia describe what she had done to the muggle who tried to get too friendly. Finally, he turned to Peter. "Wormtail?"
"Moony?" Peter asked curiously.

"Make certain you stay very nice to Petunia. Very nice."

"Why do you say that?" he asked curiously. Padfoot and Prongs also looked interested.

In a low voice Remus explained what he had overheard due to his sensitive hearing. When he described the spell and the kick, his friends all cringed a bit at the idea. "So – don't make any mistakes which might cause her to practice the move on you. That's all I'm saying."

Peter fervently agreed. "Complete gentleman! I will be a complete gentleman! I really don't need to experience that first hand."

James coughed a bit trying to keep his breath even. "Yes." Cough. "I'll … ah … remember that."

Early the next morning, the diverse group of Hogwarts students plus one chaperone plus one Solicitor met at the Ministry via the floo and grabbed hold of the International Portkey Dumbledore had scheduled for them.

The Ministry official counted it down. "Three … two … one … Good luck!" He said this right as the group disappeared.

The large group arrived right where they expected to. All of them landed lightly – except James Potter who had fallen down, taking Sirius Black with him.

The others heard Sirius' voice, "Ge'off me!" from under James. Remus quickly helped James and then Sirius up while Peter snickered. The girls with them also snickered a bit. Severus, however, kept his face neutral – even if he was laughing his arse off internally.

"Yeah, laugh it up, Wormy! I don't know why but I just can't stand Portkeys. Give me a broom and I'm great. I can even handle side-along. But the floo always makes me dizzy and Portkeys always make me fall."

Sirius, now that he wasn't under his best friend, said, "You'll get it. Eventually." Sirius then snickered himself.

Petunia looked at James. "I guess growing up a wizard doesn't help with some things. I did better than that the first time I ever used a Portkey."

James sighed petulantly even as Lily made a few sympathetic noises while she helped straighten him out – trying to hide her own laughter all the while. It did look quite funny.

Eileen Snape finally got their attention. "Okay. First, we have to visit registrations. We have patent registrations for Severus and Lily and restricted magic registration for three Gryffindors. Right?"

James actually raised his hand – even if it was unnecessary. "We also have a patent registration – our Defense Professor helped us with the parchments."

The Snipes' solicitor agreed. "I saw them. That's the same place as Potions patents as well. So we can all go there first." He turned. "Unless Petunia and the other ladies wish to wait elsewhere?"

Petunia was the "of age" member of those who were just coming with.

Petunia looked at the other girls who were being escorted by the boys after their business finished. None looked interested in going off yet. She turned. "We'll go with you to the first office – maybe
one of us will need to do something similar in the future. We can see after that."

There was agreement all around and the solicitor, who had been there before, led the way.

It took less than an hour to finish at the Patent Registration office and then another decision had to be made. "Okay." James really wanted to keep this a secret for the moment. "How about if I give Remus here enough for everybody to get a drink at the place across the road? I'll pay for everyone. Mrs. Snape can come with us to the other office as the responsible adult. Petunia will be in charge of everyone else." The Solicitor had quickly caught a portkey back when his part was done.

Everyone agreed and, after James coughed up the Galleons, Petunia and Remus led the group out of the building.

The remaining registrations took only half an hour. Each had to demonstrate their form and show they could maintain it under some stress (light stinging hexes and other low level jinxes as well as some physical running around the demonstration area). The specific characteristics of each animagus form was detailed in full and, finally, they were let go.

They met up with the group and each had their own hot chocolate (it was November, after all) before the students paired off and made their way around the magical enclave.

Eileen Snape and Petunia Evans were designated as the responsible adults. If there was trouble, they were to find one of them, preferably Eileen.

Overall, the students had a grand time. Although similar in some ways to Hogsmeade, there were marked differences. First of all, there were more than one of different types of businesses. Instead of one shop carrying sweets (Honeydukes) there were quite a few and each was doing good business for such a quiet day.

They learned that it was busier during the week because there were no schools nearby.

Ann rolled her eyes at the boy escorting her, which was Remus. As much as she loved chocolate, Remus was far, far more excited about learning the different types and tasting every one he could get his hands on. At one point, Amy accused him with a smirk of being a closet witch with how much he loved chocolate.

Lily had been interested in bookstores as well as a chocolatier. James convinced her to try a shop that had some magical games. Each also bought a few gifts for Christmas for loved ones as they knew that the likelihood of another chance before the Holiday break was nill.

Severus and Felicia inspected the local sights with a stately grace. Both were Slytherins and both considered it their duty to maintain a certain social propriety, especially in an environment they were not familiar with around people that they did not know but whom might be, no more how remotely it was likely, important in some way. Felicia did lighten up a bit when Severus bought her some of the Swiss chocolate as well.

Sirius led Marlene McKinnon around the enclave with an enthusiasm which quite amused her. Unlike the proper Slytherins or the still-hesitant James and Lily, Sirius quite literally grabbed onto life whenever possible and Marlene actually enjoyed being along for the ride. Games, chocolates, children's shows – anything that might contain some fun – and Sirius was all over it.

And Petunia? Petunia wanted to see everything.

Not having spent several years in a magical environment, everything she came across was new and interesting. And Peter was quite helpful in explaining things that she had been unfamiliar with.
Shops with enchanted items, magical sweets, magical games, books, potions ingredients … there was a lot to see and Petunia took the chance to see as much as possible. Things that most magical people considered everyday and humdrum were fascinating. Even the idea of a foe-glass and sneak-o-scope were quite new to her.

She, however, thought a rememberall quite useless. Peter agreed with her.

After meeting back up with everyone and a suggestion that Christmas presents could be bought, there was some frenzied shopping on everyone's part. The boys, for the most part, financed the girls as necessary, even if some of it they would pay back once they returned to Britain. Luckily for Peter and Remus, they had made arrangements for an advance on some of the work they were doing for Eileen or they would have been broke within an hour.

At 6:15 local time (5:15 GMT) the group was on their way back to the British Ministry for Magic. And by 5:30, they were flooing into the Three Broomsticks. By 5:50, they were walking in the door to Hogwarts.

The group was met by, strangely, the Defense Professor. When he saw them, his face lit up as though he was relieved to see them. His first words confused the group. "Petunia! There you are. I need to talk to you."

"Professor? What do you need?"

The Professor glanced around at the other curious faces and then back. "Er. Do you have any current plans for when you finish your Secondary schooling? University? A particular job lined up?" The Professor looked quite hopeful.

Petunia thought about it. "Not really. With learning magic, my original plans had changed. I might still try to go to University but it's looking less and less appealing as I learn more and more here. Why?"

"How would you like a job for a couple years until your boyfriend here graduates Hogwarts?" he asked.

Petunia's eyes narrowed. "What kind of job are we talking about?"

"Umm. A job in a magical ice-cream shoppe?" he replied, his hopeful look in full bloom.
History in the Making

Chapter Notes

I found out that there are actually four periods after lunch at Hogwarts – which makes more sense. The first year only has classes during the first four, second the first five, and only after they get a bit older do they have classes all afternoon – possibly to account for the growing magical core to settle still in the first couple of years and avoid magical exhaustion. Perhaps why they don't have electives until third year. I'll not rewrite Gary's schedule but I had to take into account the need for a limited schedule for the new History Professor

Garrick Septimus, Gary Seven, Harry Potter, Marek Ilumian, the being with more names than Dumbledore had titles, had a smile on his face as he made his way to breakfast at Hogwarts.

He had just seen the Marauders, Evans sisters, Snape family, and guest off to the Ministry for their portkey to Geneva, Switzerland.

It not actually being a Hogsmeade weekend, there were more students than usual on a Saturday moving around the castle. As one of the Professors on watch (there was a rotation) he moved around the castle, providing a visible presence to ensure that students who might get ideas of going out of control might change their minds.

Gary thought with amusement that the parties most likely to trigger chaos were already out of the castle.

Still, he made his way with a desultory walk around the castle, greeting students, answering the odd question here and there, and generally making his presence obvious.

As he was walking down one corridor, he heard a droning voice and went to investigate. And, there in the History classroom, was the ghost of Cuthbert Binns lecturing in front of an empty room about the Goblin Rebellion of 1752.

After watching Binns talk for quite a few minutes, Gary couldn't help himself. "Professor?" he said at one point, interrupting the flow of speech.

The Professor, regardless of myths to the contrary, would actually interact with others if they got his attention. And, for some reason, this one word got his attention. The Professor turned. "Yes?"

And then, with more curiosity than expected, Binns asked, "Who are you?"

"I am Garrick Septimus, this year's Defense Professor," Gary replied.

Binns looked confused for a moment. "But the Defense Professor is Aleric Warren."

Gary chuckled. "Actually… no. What year is this?"

Binns considered that question. "1923."

Gary sighed. "I'm sorry to have to tell you – but this is 1975."
Binns was confused. "How can that be? I remember it being 1923 quite clearly."

"Well, perhaps that was when you were alive. You are aware that you currently exist as a ghost, right?" Gary asked curiously.

Binns looked very confused now. "How can that be? I remember just yesterday having tea in the staffroom. When it was time for class, I came directly here. And then … ."

Gary sighed. While in most universes Binns was quite aware that he was dead, apparently in this one such was not the case. "I'm sorry, Cuthbert Binns. But that was in 1923. You have been dead for fifty years."

Binns asked, "Then why am I still teaching? History is a living thing. I have received no replacement which would allow me to stop teaching."

Gary replied, "Actually, as long as you teach, they will not replace you. It is cheaper to allow you to teach than to pay a living witch or wizard a wage."

Binns was actually outraged at that. "Are you saying that I am not being paid for my services?"

Gary shrugged. "I don't think so – I would have to ask the Headmaster."

"Well, get Dippet down here then."

"Actually, it's Albus Dumbledore that is the Headmaster now."

Binns looked at Gary for a long moment. "Then send for this Dumbledore."

Gary cast a Patronus and, having encoded his voice, a white stag was then seen traveling at speed through the castle.

Shortly thereafter Albus Dumbledore made his way into the History classroom. "Garrick. You requested I come?"

Gary pointed to the History professor. Albus turned and was a little surprised to see the ghost aware of him. Immediately Binns asked, "You are the Headmaster?"

Albus replied, "I am."

"I must ask: What wage am I currently being paid and to whom is it being sent?"

Albus was taken aback for a moment by the question. "Actually, your wage was paid, from what I understand, to your grandson and then to your great-granddaughter after your passing. When she married in 1967 and no longer held the Binns name, the Board decided that she was no longer entitled and therefore ordered it discontinued."

At that, Binns threw down his ghostly chalk (it disappeared as it was a construct of his own body) and crossed his arms. "If those spendthrifts think that they can get away with stealing the rightful amount due for my services, then I find that I have no reason to maintain my position as History professor at Hogwarts. I quit!"

Binns turned and started stalking out. Before he got to the door, however, Binns had disappeared into swirling lights. To Gary, he sensed that Binns had been sent to his reward. He could only comment, "Well, Albus. I guess you need to find a History professor and quick."

Albus looked at Gary and asked, "What happened?"
Gary recalled what he had seen and then the conversation he had with the ghost. When he was done, Albus sighed. "Well, we need an emergency meeting with the staff."

And so at 11:15 the entire staff, sans the Caretaker and the Gamekeeper, were in the Headmaster's office. Minerva finally asked, "What is this all about?"

Albus looked at Gary and asked, "Do you want to explain?"

Gary looked amused and mildly affronted all at once. "What? It's not my fault!"

Albus chuckled and replied, "I choose to believe otherwise. Why don't you tell them what happened?"

Gary sighed. "Fine. We need to find a new Professor." His answer was short and to the point.

Horace was the first to voice his concern. "Certainly you're not leaving us already? Defense has been much better this year from all reports from my students." There were several echoing sentiments.

Gary shook his head. "No. I'm here through the end of the year. Albus knows that and is already looking for the next Defense professor – I can't stay any longer. But it's not Defense that's the problem. It's History."

Vector asked with some surprise, "History? What happened to Professor Binns?"

Albus motioned Gary to answer. "I may or may not have gotten into a conversation with him as he was teaching to an empty room and I might or might not have alerted him that he was actually dead. But that's not why he quit."

Chattering, the Runes professor asked, "And why did he quit?"

Gary motioned to Albus and said, "Oh, no. This one is not on me. He didn't decide to quit because he found out he was dead."

Albus sighed. "I have to admit that this is true. During the talk a few things came to light and Cuthbert took offense that the Board had discontinued paying his salary to his descendents he took offense and started walking out. It was then that he seemed to disappear onto his next great adventure."

The staff was taken aback. "Why would they do that?" Minerva asked. "As long as he was employed as a Professor, the salary should have been paid. Ghost or not."

Albus shrugged. "The Board saw it otherwise. I will have to inform them that the History position must immediately be filled and the salary for such is required. But now we need to find a candidate. Does anyone have any ideas?"

Several names were floated out in the next few minutes and each one was rejected for one reason or another. Bagshot was too blind, Lovegood was too eccentric, others were too involved with their current jobs. And, unfortunately, no one in recent years had received a History NEWT. The Board's lack of action was coming back to bite them.

Gary, as he sat in back of the meeting, knowing the fewest people in Magical Britain, chuckled. Everyone turned to him. "What is so amusing?" Minerva asked acerbically.

"It's too bad that Fortescue has started that ice cream shoppe. From what I understand he is quite
the history aficionado and loves the subject almost as much as he loves ice cream."

Everyone paused at that observation. Albus and Minerva looked at each other. Albus commented thoughtfully, "He would be almost the perfect candidate."

Minerva replied, "We could work around a schedule – he sells most of his wares in summer. And if we don't require him to work the full schedule he could still run his shoppe at lunch and dinner times."

Albus considered that. "Yes." He turned to Gary. "For being unfamiliar with Magical Britain, I believe you have hit upon the perfect candidate. After I have sent the missives off to the board, you and I are going to Diagon to convince him to come work for Hogwarts."

Gary replied, "Me? He doesn't know me. And I'm just the Defense professor."

"But it's partially your fault I lost my Professor – you're going to make up for that by helping me hire the replacement." Albus' answer was set with serene certainty; and Gary saw that nothing he said would change the man's mind.

"Fine," Gary huffed. "I'll come and help convince him. We're going to have to rework the entire staff's schedules to accommodate his working, perhaps, only half the schedule of most Professors."

Minerva nodded. "We'll stay in the great Hall after lunch and rework the schedules and plan to have them ready by Monday morning. There are only a limited number of weeks, however, until Yule. Perhaps it will be better to wait until then?"

Albus considered that. "It will depend on Florentine and what he says."

Gary shot the Headmaster a look. "Floreant? I thought it was Floreant."

Albus shrugged. "You must have misheard. His name is Florentine Fortescue."

Gary shrugged. "Anyway, as far as the rest of the year, how about we arrange for the various Ghosts to speak about different historical eras to cover the remainder of the year? Give them the same authority as any Hogwarts Professor to give or take points or to assign detentions. I know that quite a few were familiar with different times that they lived. The hardest to sell might be the Bloody Baron or the Grey Lady but, from what I understand, these talk the least of all the ghosts within the castle. Oh – and the girl Myrtle, who mostly likes creating a ruckus for attention."

The staff considered that. Albus said, "I will convene the Ghosts of Hogwarts after we interview Florentine." He nodded to himself. "Good! Good," the Headmaster has his twinkle on high as he smiled at his Defense Professor. "We'll go right after lunch. I'll begin writing to the Board immediately. We'll meet back here at 1:15. Now," he motioned the staff as a whole, "toddle off. I have letters to write and not much time."

The staff, for the most part, was not offended by being dismissed so casually. Only Gary, who was the only one who needed to go anywhere, was upset. The rest were more than happy to have nothing to do with anything other than schedules, thus leaving the rest to the two wizards.

The staff ate lunch and very soon Albus and Gary were in his office. Opening the Floo to Diagon Alley, the two were off.
by name – having been at Hogwarts for so long virtually the entirety of Magical Britain had met
the man at one point or another. Gary could see that most were pleased to be so easily remembered.

Finally, they arrived at their destination. Florentine Fortescue greeted the arrivals cheerfully. "Ah,
Albus! So good of you to stop by. And who is this with you?"

Gary answered for himself. "Garrick Septimus, this year's Defense Professor. I assume you are Mr.
Fortescue."

The cheerful man grinned and nodded. "Florentine Fortescue of Fortescue's Ice Cream Shoppe, at
your service. What can I get you gentlemen today?"

Gary asked, "Do you have tart lemon? The Headmaster here seems addicted to the taste."

Fortescue laughed. "No. But I can see what I can do for later."

The Headmaster said, "I'll take a Cherry."

"And I'll take whatever you want to serve. Surprise me," Gary added.

Florentine brought back a cup of cherry and then he placed the second. "Try this one. It's treacle
tart flavored."

Gary looked at Florentine. "Oh, you're good. Really good. Few know that was my favorite flavor
when I was younger."

Fortescue shrugged with a smile. "It just came to me."

"Why don't you come and sit with us?" Gary said. "We can all enjoy some ice cream."

Fortescue agreed and soon the three wizards were sitting there eating their ice cream.

Florentine, between bites, asked, "What brings you to Diagon Alley today?" He addressed the
Headmaster.

"Funny you should ask." With a smile and a twinkle Albus added, "We came specifically to see
you. We could use your help." The Headmaster then took another bite.

The man looked surprised for a moment. "Me? What help do you possibly need from me?"

Gary answered, "Although I am not from British society, I have heard rumours that you are,
perhaps, the most familiar with magical history as a whole, of any wizard that currently lives in
England."

Fortescue blushed a little. "I will admit, History was always one of my fascinations. The ebb and
flow of History informs the society that we have. What part of history are you interested in?"

Gary ignored the question and asked curiously, "Have you ever thought of writing a history book?"

Fortescue shrugged. "It might be interesting. But most of my time is taken with running my ice
cream shoppe – my second love."

Gary nodded as he swallowed the bite he had taken. "I can understand that. To be perfectly honest
with you, it is not once particular area of history that we came to speak to you about."

Florentine asked curiously, "Then what do you need?"
Gary looked at Albus, who calmly took another bite, letting Gary handle it. He sighed. "To be
perfectly honest? Hogwarts needs a new History Professor." Gary then took a large bite in the face
of Florentine's shock.

He looked back and forth between the two wizard that sat calmly eating their ice cream as they
watched him try to get around that statement. "What happened to Binns? He's been there for ... a
century!"

Gary sighed. "Well, it was NOT my fault. But I might have accidentally begun the process which
caused him to move on to the next grand adventure." Florentine could see the pout behind the
words as the man averred it wasn't his fault.

Really curious now Florentine asked. "What did you do?"

Albus smirked at Gary and said, "Yes, Garrick. Tell the man what you did?" Gary gave the man a
dirty look. This really stirred the curiosity of Florentine Fortescue.

Gary sighed. "Fine. Anyway, I was out patrolling the castle, ensuring that the students didn't
become wild hellions without classes as they are on the weekends. I heard Binns droning on in his
classroom teaching a class which wasn't there. At an opportune moment, I interrupted him." Gary
went on to describe what happened until the Headmaster was called.

Gary then smiled. "And then Binns asked if he was getting paid. About 8 years ago, the last Great-
Granddaughter married and no longer held the name, and they decided that they would stop paying
the salary because the family name was effectively dead. Cuthbert took offense when Albus
informed him and quit. He then disappeared into a bunch of lights – likely to go off to wherever
teachers go when they pass on."

Fortescue looked at the Headmaster and asked, "They stopped paying his salary?"

Albus sighed. "Yes. They thought it a waste to continue paying for a ghost's services."

Gary smirked. "So – not my fault! Binns would have continued teaching if his pay hadn't been cut.
So now the board has to pony up for a wage sufficient for a professor now and not from 100 years
ago."

Albus considered this. "True. Anyway, Gary had heard of you and your love of History. Needing a
new professor, we decided we wanted the best. What do you say?"

Fortescue was hesitant. "I don't know. I have a going business which I love."

Gary nodded. "Yes. Almost as much as History. But we have a possible solution. The man looked
at him. "What are you busiest times and what are your slowest times?"

Florentine considered that. "Well, I don't open until 11:00 normally. No one eats ice cream for
breakfast. And between 3:00 and 5:00 things are quite slow as well. 2:00 is when it starts tapering
off."

"Okay. Here's what we propose: Considering Binns currently has no duties outside of teaching,
including supervising detentions or anything like that, you can have the same setup, at least for this
year starting after Yule. We'll have the ghosts teaching until then. You teach first period, skip
second, lunch, and third period, and teach fourth and fifth period. You skip sixth period which are
mostly OWL and NEWT students – and there are no current NEWT level history students.

"First and second and fifth years are the only ones who need more than one period a week right
now. First and second years because their cores aren't strong enough for a schedule of solid magic use all day and 5th years because they have OWLs to prepare for. So, that's four classes of first years, four classes of second years, four for 5th years, and four total for third and fourth years. What is your slowest day?"

Fortescue replied, "Tuesdays. No one buys ice cream on Tuesdays."

"Okay. So you have five period 1s; one period two on Tuesday; five period three's and five period fours. During lunch and dinner and on Saturday you do ice cream. And during the summer, you work your ice cream shoppe everyday. By next year, you can have a more solid plan in place for a schedule that works for you and Hogwarts."

Florentine and Albus looked at Gary in amazement. Albus asked, "How long did it take you to work that out?"

Gary shrugged. "Remember I just went through all that crap at the beginning of the year. It wasn't fun – let me tell you. So I immediately saw the need for quick planning. I will adjust my schedule, as will the other professors, as needed to accommodate your limited schedule. And for next year, hire a cute younger witch to serve ice-cream during the day. Be done at Hogwarts by 3:30 everyday. This allows you to add back two classes for fourth years and give two classes for a NEWT level History class."

Florentine considered that. "I can do that, I suppose. I would love to teach History –help children to become as interested in History as I am." He looked at the two wizards. "So where will I find a newly graduated witch to help next year? I don't know of many teenagers that have the love of ice cream that I do either."

Gary shrugged. "Most Muggle ice cream shoppes employ teenagers during summer. Most are just looking for the job." Gary paused and then got a sudden grin. "I have an idea."

Albus looked at his Defense professor and sighed. He commented to Florentine, "This is usually where the boy starts challenging everything one previously considered."

"How about a late-blooming witch who, while of age, is being tutured by her sister and a boyfriend who happen to be two years younger? She'll probably not want to make long term-plans until he leaves school." Gary had a wide grin.

Florentine, curious, asked Albus, "Do you know who he's talking about?"

Albus sighed but gave a small smile. "Yes. My cousin's great-granddaughter. She found out she was a late-blooming witch rather than a muggle or squib just this last August." Thinking a long moment Albus then said, "And I can't imagine a better fit for you. While coming into her own, she's not ready for a magically intensive job but one with some magic and otherwise normal labor? She would do well. While she used to envy her younger sister Lily greatly, who received an invitation when she was eleven while Petunia did not, she has become quite the delightful girl since she began studying magic."

Florentine considered that a moment and gave a nodding agreement. "Well, I'll give it a try. Worst case it doesn't work and I go back to ice cream full time."

And thus, the return of the visitors from the ICW saw Gary Septimus waiting for Petunia Evans to offer her a possible job.
Moving Toward Yule

It was Sunday late afternoon and Professor Garrick Septimus was supervising the Hogwarts’ Defense Association.

Based loosely on the DA of his own teenage years, the group accepted witches and wizards of all years. Its complete concentration was on basics, first of all, and then simple spells and procedures to protect oneself in the Magical and Muggle worlds.

Members of the DA knew exactly what their legal limits were as regards casting spells and under what circumstances it was allowed. Procedures for contacting the Ministry as regards defending use of underage magic was also included.

While he had been "the leader" when it began, he had appointed several students as "supervising assistants" and, surprising many (but not himself really) one of his best assistants was Severus Snape, 5th year Slytherin.

While the teen had little patience with deliberate stupidity, a student who had real problems could expect a precise and insightful observation as to the trouble at hand. Gary had amused himself putting the teen in charge of second year students, including all houses. He hadn't made a Hufflepuff cry yet and Gary took that as a win.

Petunia and Peter helped with the first year students as of the moment. Because Petunia was fairly new to magic, she had an understanding of their problems and, as Gary hoped, her own progress became exponentially fast by the simple expedience of getting her to teach.

He planned on moving her to second years after the Yule break.

Lily and James he had originally put in charge of upper level Charms and Transfiguration type spells. There was an immediate problem: Both understood their subjects too instinctively to spot small inconsistencies in the casting of such spells in others.

In addition, a few purebloods objected to the idea that a … Muggleborn … might have a better understanding than a pureblood. After allowing Lily to romp all over all comers as regards charms, Gary then diagnosed the issues they had.

After that point, Lily was supervising the Transfiguration-type spells (creating solid objects, for example, to defend against unforgivables; changing things to stone with a Duro, etc.) and James took over the Charms-related defensive spells (banishing, vanishing, summoning, reducto, etc.).

It improved things much and both became more observant of what the problem was. Gary could have explained it (Transfiguration took more visualization and Charms took a purer intent) but he hoped they would realize it for themselves.

He also had a sixth-year Hufflepuff and a seventh-year Ravenclaw assisting students as well.

Remus was put in charge of students who had trouble understanding things. He was a natural teacher (much like Garrick was himself) and could root out the problems that almost any student was having with minimal time and effort.

He would have had Sirius helping to teach as well, but he tended to flirt too much. He did, however, make a competent opponent for students who felt that they had or were coming close to getting a mastery over a spell. If they got past Sirius, Gary would acknowledge that, yes, the
student was ready to move on. If Sirius got under their skin and forced mistakes, Gary told the student to practice more.

Sirius always was the greatest wildcard among the Marauders.

After the Defense Association, Gary would spend time talking to Albus Dumbledore about the current situation with the "Magic-hating Baby Killers" and their leader.

He was heartened to find out that the protections put in place for the location of Muggleborns seemed to be effective: Attacks had dropped down to virtually none.

Gary sat back and thought for a moment. "Which one of us will be at King's Cross when the Hogwarts Express comes in from Hogwarts for the Winter break?"

Albus was curious. "What do you mean?"

Gary looked at the man. "People like Riddle flourish when they can create chaos which can't be defended against. It's like a schoolyard bully: If you can ignore them completely then the bully either goes for the big play and gets caught or moves on to easier targets. What bully wants to be ignored? With the Ministry's records becoming more secure (which will have to continue to improve) he's going to need to figure out a way into locating Muggleborns and how to attack them. What's the greatest concentration of Muggleborns that are available in the Magical world?"

Albus considered that and then his eyes shown realization. "Hogwarts!"

Gary nodded. "Exactly. We need to ensure that there are no tracking spells placed surreptitiously, this allowing the one who placed them to find out where that person lives. We need someone who can cast spells on the sly and repeatedly. Disguise it as something else."

Albus asked with some somberness, "Do you really believe this is going to happen?"

Gary shrugged. "I don't know. I do know that Riddle will not accept being thwarted so easily. He's going to have to do something. I believe that it's likely that if he can't solve this problem of locating easy targets among the Muggleborn, he's going to start targeting purebloods who disagree with his platform. And at that point, the Ministry will have to respond. They've gotten away with minimal action when regular magical citizens weren't targeted but that's about to come to an end."

"You paint a bleak world, Garrick. With some effort, these people can be reeducated as to the truth of things."

Gary snorted. "I admire your idealism in the face of an ugly situation, but there are a few things you have to face up to." Gary sighed.

"First things first: I'm the realist." Gary quirked his lips but hid it quickly – Albus was too far out of time to get the reference and so he let it go. "I'm the one who looks at things as they are and not as how I would prefer them to be. You're the idealist, which is wonderful in peacetime, but an absolute disaster when dealing with criminals and terrorists. Riddle is both of these things."

"Terrorist?" Albus asked curiously.

"The word was first used during the French Revolution in the late 18th century to describe government agents who operated a certain way. A terrorist is one who incites terror as a way to influence society. It's a particularly appropriate term for Riddle and his methods. He thinks if he can make people afraid enough, it will give him power and control. The only way to fight it is to
call it what it is and convince people not to give into it. To continue living their lives despite it, even if they take reasonable precautions to defend themselves."

Gary glanced at Albus, who only looked interested in what he was saying.

"You know, a Pureblood in the Wizengamot who pushes for laws which hold up his vision for the political landscape is, really, just a politician. Everyone has a right to their own opinions and even the right to champion their causes. Fine. Perfectly legal. I disagree with the whole idea, but the proper way to counter them is proper debate and education.

"An insurgent is someone who rises in forcible opposition to lawful authority. First cousin to the revolutionary, he might or might not be looking to replace the system. Riddle is definitely an insurgent.

"Someone who attacks government so as to take power can be called a revolutionary. He wants the system to change and he's not above attacking the current system to achieve that. If he wins, he's a hero. If he loses, he's a criminal. Riddle is trying to get to this status. He's acting as a terrorist to do this.

"But a terror as a political tool is contrary to everything that society is built upon. Calling a criminal terrorist anything other than what he is gives them too much legitimacy. If someone in the Ministry is in agreement with Riddle and does things which aide him, then they are, in effect, supporting a criminal organization. Muggle law enforcement spends billions of pounds every year to fight criminal organizations. They are a threat to the average citizen, to the government, and to society."

Gary sighed. "You feel they are just misinformed and, once they see the light, they will change. That's the idealist vision. But idealism is called such because it views only the best possible circumstances and outcomes: The ideal. And rare it is indeed which such is the case. Idealists who try to change the system more toward that ideal are wonderful – but they can't blind themselves to the circumstances on the ground.

"A criminal, attempting to kill another citizen, loses their right to protection from the government to keep their own life. You might prefer they be taken alive – but sometimes, it's just not an option. Or it's an option that, in the end, causes more damage than good. You can't allow twenty people to be killed because you don't want to kill the one who is committing the crime. That's a betrayal to the concept of society and civilization."

Albus considered what his Defense professor was saying. After a long moment, he sighed. "You are talking about the destruction of multiple magical lines."

Gary nodded solemnly. "Yes. I am. If they have become the enemy and actively commit crimes to help this idiot achieve his aims? Absolutely. You cannot hope to save society by refusing to oppose with your full effort those who are trying to destroy society."


"Yes. And no."

Albus gave a small smile. "Just so we're clear."

Gary grinned. "Yes. For the vast majority of circumstances, Dark magic has no place. But in a fight for your life, it might be your only chance."

Albus considered that. "Okay. Convince me. For example, give me one valid use of the Cruciatu
Gary nodded. "Okay. You are an Auror and you come across a criminal casting a violent spell at a
child. He's already begun the incantation. It's a spell that you don't have the ability to counter as the
spell is being cast the other way. A stunner might bring that person down – but a stunner takes a
quarter of a second. And if the man is wearing charmed robes (you can't tell) it will be ineffective.
A killing curse takes too long to say the incantation. The Imperius curse takes anywhere from an
instant to a few seconds to control a person. If the person has sufficient will, it's ineffective. A
Cruciatus, however, will give instant pain. There's no way the criminal could finish the casting at
the very instant the curse hits. And if you use it for just that split moment, you can then try a
stunner, an incarcerous, or some other spell. But what other spell can you name that will guarantee
that the wizard cannot finish the spell he's about to hit the child with in the time available?"

Albus considered that question for a long moment. "You know? I cannot recall another spell which
would guarantee success given the circumstance you describe."

"My point. Now, my question is: Is using such a spell to save the life of a child really going to
produce such a taint on one's soul that one deserves life in Azkaban?"

"I will have to consider your argument," was all of Albus' reply to that.

"Please don't believe that I am advocating wide use of Dark magic. There are good and valid
reasons why such spells are forbidden. It takes a true sense of self to use Dark magic and not be
taken in by the allure of it. I am not teaching students to use Dark magic either. I just believe that
Magical Britain has too narrow a view of Dark – they automatically equate it with evil. And those
that champion the use of Dark magic often have less than pure intentions. It is the rare wizard or
witch who can use such spells without severe consequence to their soul."

Albus nodded. "On that, I completely agree."

"Anyway, I believe that one or both of us should be checking the students as they exit the platform
to ensure no tracking charms are put on unsuspecting Muggleborns."

Albus nodded. "We will both go. I will be on the Platform side. I hope that you can operate on the
Muggle side without being observed?"

Gary grinned. "Quite easily." He paused. "I will also teach my Defense Association, or at least the
older ones, how to check for such spells and dispel them."

"Good. How is that going?" Albus asked curiously.

"Very well. I am using the drive of the Marauders as well as Severus Snape to achieve my goals
without allowing them to devolve into schoolyard bickering. It's been quite fun."

Albus smiled with a twinkle in his eyes. "The Pranksters have been much quieter and much less
malicious this year with their activities. It has been quite a relief to the staff, I can assure you."

"One reason why I treat them as I do."

Garrick Septimus was strolling down Diagon Alley. It was early December 1975 and he was on his
way to Gringotts to see the Bank Manager about the idea of the warding schemes from Universe
A3 being brought to this universe to be used by the same families that had the schemes there. It
would require those involved (Potters, Weasleys, Prewitts) to be informed about the
Interdimensional aspect of Gringotts. (He did not want his divinity to be brought out – that was
totally unneeded in his opinion.)

Suddenly, Gary was hit with an unexpected spell. Internally he cursed himself for not paying attention to his surroundings. Externally, he only paused in his steps, as the caster of the Imperius Curse intended.

Using his divine senses, Gary recognized another low-level Death Eater who had taken advantage of seeing a target who was considered open game by Riddle because of things he had said and done. Gary snorted to himself as the commands got to him.

After a moment, Gary continued on. As he walked a little more slowly toward Gringotts (requiring the caster to attempt to 'reinforce' the Imperius) Gary decided how he wanted to deal with it.

He could: A) Ignore it. This would alert the Death Eater that his target seemed immune. B) Visibly fight it. This would make him seem a little more susceptible to the curse but make the Death Eater assume he had not concentrated enough. A and B would allow the Death Eater to get away. C) Casually turn after pulling his wand and stun the Death Eater from 15 yards away and then call the Aurors. This would alert the Death Eaters that he was immune and get this Death Eater in Azkaban. Or D) Attack the guard and get himself attacked in return and killed as the Death Eater intended. Yeah – that wasn't going to happen.

Finally he decided: Mix B and C. Make himself seem more susceptible by "visibly fighting it" and get the Death Eater caught. This would make it seem necessary for a higher-level Death Eater to be required to subdue him. Maybe even Tom himself. That would be fun.

And so, as soon as Gary got to the guards (who, like any goblin or house elf, could immediately sense his divinity) he winked at the guards and then pulled his wand. Suddenly he grabbed his head and screamed. "Voice in my head …. ordering me to attack … MAKE IT STOP!" Gary screamed again for effect.

The guards quickly looked around and saw the worried looking Death Eater who was casting the curse. The wizard immediately turned and started to move away – "releasing" Gary. At that moment, Gary casually sent a non-verbal stunner which dropped the Death Eater. Anyone watching would be distracted by the running wizard or the two goblins chasing him. However, everyone stopped when the wizard dropped. Gary ran over and cried out, "Call the Aurors! This Dark wizard cast an Imperius on me!"

One goblin stayed with Gary and the other retreated to Gringotts. Soon, that one returned, other guards were at Gringotts' door brandishing weapons, and they were waiting for an Auror.

It took some acting, but Gary was sufficiently "worried about the attack" when he gave the Aurors his statement rather than being too blasé – which is how he really felt. The wizard's wand was checked and, as reported, the last spell was the Imperius curse.

Gary watched in satisfaction as the low-level Death Eater was portkeyed away to the Ministry. He was looking forward to testifying – hoping that another Death Eater might attack him to try to get him to recant his original complaint.

He was hoping to get three or for Death Eaters caught using this whole situation.

But, eventually, Gary went on to do the business he had gone to Gringotts to take care of.

His students were sufficiently impressed with the story of how he had overcome the Imperius Curse and gotten a Dark wizard arrested. He had explained that a mental discipline called
occlumency was one reason he was less susceptible to the spell and a flurry of witches and wizards started furiously studying and practicing the mental art.

It was a complete lie – his own nature and long experience made him immune – but occlumency did provide the best defense against the spell that was otherwise unblockable or at least the best defense that he could teach legally.

His other choice was to cast the spell repeatedly enough for the students to recognize its nature and to start to learn to fight it. This was the way Aurors and Unspeakables learned to control it. He didn't think he'd get permission from the Ministry or Dumbledore for that approach.

Overall, the students agreed that this year's Defense professor was one of the best one's they had ever had. They were well on their way to not only acing their OWLs and NEWTs but truly learning how to defend themselves and others.

As December continued, Gary thought that things would be easy for the rest of the school year – there was just over a week left before the Winter break.

His anticipation would be fruitless however with what happened only a few days after the Imperius incident.

It was December 15th, just a few days before the date the Hogwarts Express would be returning students to their homes for the Solstice, Yule, Christmas, or whatever event that the various students celebrated. Gary was supervising some additional practice for a few younger years who had some trouble with some of the spells.

Suddenly, there was a loud alarm. Gary looked around. "Floxy!"

The small elf appeared. "Master called?" Floxy had finally learned to ignore his divinity while he acted as a Professor.

"Can you tell me what this alarm is about?"

"Alarm is reaction to ward being active now."

"Which ward?" Gary asked.

"Rape ward." Floxy looked worried while Gary's eyes widened.

"Where?"

"Dungeons."

He called out to the students. "Everyone stay here! In half an hour or when the alarms are turned off plus ten minutes – whichever happens first – get back to your common rooms." He turned to the elf. "Where in the dungeons?" Floxy gave directions. "Okay, go alert the Headmaster and then come back and lead staff as needed to the location."

Floxy nodded and popped out. Gary quickly moved out the door and toward the lowest levels.

By the time Gary arrived, a few staff were outside of the broom closet where the incident apparently had happened. With one glance inside, Gary saw the product of the ward: The boy who was attempting to carry out the attack was visibly frozen by the wards, pants down, while the younger girl (5th year) had been being held down. She was not as locked but also couldn't
Gary noticed that Slughorn was there (both students were Slytherin so he couldn’t be sent away), as was Vector. He also saw Filch, the caretaker, and a few other students.

"Students! Get back to your common rooms now. Except Felicia Channing," he pointed to the girl. She came forward. "Get a blanket and cover your female classmate and help keep her calm. We're waiting for the Headmaster to see what's happening and to release the ward." Felicia nodded. Before she withdrew Gary motioned her closer and put up a privacy spell. "Let her know that she's only being held in place so that the Headmaster can see the evidence to get her attacker charged. As far the Headmaster possibly seeing her, the blanket will cover her and help keep her modesty. I will only allow female professors to help other than the Headmaster, who prefers men anyway. Any questions?"

Felicia had her eyes wide open as she shook her head. "No, Professor."

"Good. Hurry up."

Slughorn and Gary were kept busy keeping the students far away while Septima Vector and Felicia Channing helped keep the girl company.

No one was interested in comforting the seventh-year who had tried to commit the crime.

Thankfully, Madam Pomfrey showed up at the same time as Dumbledore. As Gary explained the situation to the Headmaster, the school nurse diagnosed the victim. Other than a bruise from being struck, the wards had prevented the boy from accomplishing his intent. Dumbledore released the girl into the nurse's care.

He was about to release the boy when Gary interrupted. "Shouldn't we call an Auror first? And the guardians of the girl so that they can press charges in addition to seeing that she's safe?"

Albus was shocked. "Garrick! We never get the Ministry involved with Hogwarts business."

Gary rolled his eyes. "Remember our conversation? The boy's a criminal – he has lost the protection of society as far as his actions go. Expelling him won't make any difference – he'll have gotten away with it. It's a crime – let's treat it like one."

Albus sighed. His Defense professor was correct. As much as he was loath to do so, he called for Fawkes and sent a message to the DMLE, asking Fawkes to bring back a trusted Auror or two, with one at least being female so that the girl's statement could be taken.

When the Aurors arrived, they took notes of how the attacker was found as well as the witness statements as far as the victim's position. When Dumbledore released the ward to allow the seventh-year to move, he immediately started complaining that his rights as a pureblood were being infringed upon.

The Aurors weren't impressed. The fact that the Hogwarts' rape ward activated was sufficient proof that he was guilty of attempting the act. In truth, the boy was shocked that the ward was active – he had raped a girl the year before and, using an obliviated spell, he had never been caught.

The girl's parents were called and Gary and Albus found out that the girl was the only child of a pureblood couple. The Aurors were forced by the parents to also charge the seventh-year with attempted line-theft.

He was in deep shit. Gary had also recognized the name of the boy as a future Death Eater (not an
inner circle but one whose name he had run into in one universe or another).

All in all, Gary was quite happy that the corrected wards had provided dividends already.
It was December 18, 1975. With the next day being the date that the Hogwarts Express would bring the students back and with the students not really paying much attention, Gary had assigned the homework due after the holiday and let them start preparing for their Yule break.

And so, with a couple hours more than he would normally have, Gary made his way to Hogsmeade for some mead at the Three Broomsticks.

Everything being as it was, Gary had his senses extended and, rolling his eyes, he sensed an ambush hastily arranged. Using his own mental abilities, he found what the plan was.

It took a few moments of arguing with himself for him to decide which way to go. And, considering it would change the future greatly for the good from what he could discern, he allowed the two waiting in ambush to "capture" him and take him to a house at the outskirts of Hogsmeade.

It was 5:00 and Gary was rudely "awakened" by a glass of water thrown in his face, followed up by a few hexes which took some acting to pretend they had any effect.

When he opened his eyes, he faced a very animalistic face. "I'm so glad our guest of honor has awaken. In only a very few minutes the moon shall rise and life, as you know it, will be changed forever." The face had a vicious smile.

Acting confused, Gary asked, "Who are you? What do you want?"

"As to what I want … it's not really what I want, it's what my employer wants: You out of his way. The Dark Lord has named you a hindrance to his plans, which I will be removing. And as to who I am? I am Fenrir Greyback."

Deciding to go for the "naïve out-of-towner" image, "That's supposed to mean something to me?"

Fenrir took offense to that. "You'll find out very quickly, meat!"

Wanting to roll his eyes, Gary nonetheless started looking terrified, which seemed to please the soon to be transformed werewolves.

As soon as Gary noted the change start to happen, he wandlessly cut the restraints and retrieved his Wand. With the weres mid-transformation, they had no chance to defend themselves when Gary put each of them down with overpowered piercing hexes through the brain.

He was certain that he's catch some flak from the Headmaster, but a chance to take out this particular threat so early in the timeline was worth the acting: Fenrir had turned hundreds and killed thousands before he was put down in most other timelines.

Sending off a Patronus to the DMLE and to the Headmaster, Gary sat back and waited.

Very soon he heard pops outside. There was some banging on the door and a cry of "Ministry Aurors!"

Gary calmly went to the door and opened it. "Glad you're here. We've got three dead werewolves." Just as the Aurors were coming inside, the Headmaster arrived in a ball of flame, Fawkes hovering above him.
"Garrick! I received your Patronus. What happened?"

Gary gave a small smile. "Three werewolves who thought I'd make a good dinner?"

Albus looked at him and then followed the signs of activity until they were in the room where Gary had been tied down.

The lead Auror asked, "What happened here?"

"I was walking to the Three Broomsticks when I got attacked from behind …" Gary took the Aurors and the Headmaster through the specifics and the timeline. Every statement made checked against the evidence. Gary had given permission for a check of his previous spells (necessary for anyone other than him to do anything with the wand but no one knew that) and they spells cast matched up to his testimony.

The Aurors were very impressed when they were told it was Fenrir Greyback that was laid out in front of them. Spells cast proved it. The Lead Auror finally said, "We will be contacting you. There was a reward for the capture of this one, so you're due a few Galleons."

Gary shrugged. He thanks the Aurors and then walked with the Headmaster out of the cottage toward his original destination, the Three Broomsticks.

Albus finally asked, "Did you have to kill them?"

Gary answered with certainty, "Yes. Yes I did. The moment they tried to kidnap me, they lost the right to protection from the rule of law."

Albus glanced over. "I noted you said 'tried to kidnap' and not 'kidnapped': An interesting turn of phrase."

Gary chuckled. "Yes. I could have avoided it. If it had been a death eater trying to recruit me, I would have captured them. If it was a death eater trying to kill me, I would have captured or killed them – as circumstances dictated. Three werewolves? The only choice that was certain to work was the kill. What wizard can guarantee their holding spells to work against an enraged were, let alone three?"

Albus sighed. "I can't disagree with you, but I still feel it's a massive loss of life – potential thrown away. Killing has always been anathema to me."

Gary patted Albus on the shoulder. "Don't stop being an optimist, Albus. But don't let that get in the way of ensuring those you are responsible for are protected."

Finally, the urge to walk was over and they accepted Fawkes offer to bring them back to the Headmaster's office. Gary caressed his long time friend before making his way out. "Oh – and moonset is 11:45 tonight or so. You might want to be the one to inform your Gryffindor prefect that Greyback has been removed from being a threat."

Albus nodded. "Thank you. I do believe that this is one aspect that I will enjoy, even if I find distaste in the rest."

Gary waved and exited the office.

It was after breakfast on December 19 and Gary was completing some of the paperwork to finish out the first term's grades. He heard a knock on the door. Absently he called out, "Come in!"
A tired-looking Remus Lupin walked in. Gary looked up. "Mr. Lupin! What can I do for you?"

Remus was somewhat hesitant but replied, "I was told by the Headmaster that you ran into Fenrir Greyback last night."

Gary chuckled. "A more accurate description is that I was kidnapped by he and his followers yesterday afternoon in anticipation of the full moon rising."

Remus nodded. "Yes. But the Headmaster told me that you killed him and the two with him."

Solemnly, Gary nodded. "Yes. Yes I did. A shame, but necessary."

Remus, who had been a bit antsy although he was trying to hide it, finally took a few breaths and calmed down. "Well, I wanted to say thank you. My family has … had poor relations with Greyback. They will be excited to learn he is no more."

"You and your family are welcome, but please don't misrepresent things to them. I didn't put him down because he was who he was or because he was a werewolf. I put him down because he attacked me. If I had seen him and recognized him as a threat, I would have contact the Ministry to come take care of him. The moment he attacked me, he lost the right to the lawful procedures dealing with his situation. I did not and would not kill him just because of his … condition. His intent and actions were far more a determining factor."

Remus nodded, oddly comforted by the way his Professor expressed himself. He quickly withdrew.

At 4:00, the Headmaster and Gary met up with each other. Albus asked, "Are you ready for Kings Cross?"

Gary nodded. "You will be on the platform side and I will be on the Muggle side. It will take me a few minutes to arrange things so that I am not noticed by either Muggles or wizards."

Albus' eyes twinkled as he said, "I would like to see the results."

Gary shrugged and grinned. "Give me ten minutes and then come out of the Platform to the Muggle side and see if you can see me. If you can't find me, I'll do something to at least demonstrate my presence."

"I look forward to the challenge."

Gary exited the platform and casually ensured no one was watching as he checked the limits of the Notice-Me-Not charm set up for the entrance. After extending it a short distance, he set up a temporary ward structure between the two pillars. The one closest to the wall and on a line just to the outside of the pillars he set up a detection ward which would activate the middle ward. Between the two lines (one inside and one outside) a ward was set up to remove tracking charms as well as a few other types.

The beauty of it was that the inner ward was only activated when certain magic types were present and the outer lines masked the view of the inner ward working so any stray lights would be disregarded by anyone not magical.

Gary then created another set of wards along the passageway to the outside. These would do the same for any non-Magical parent who didn't actually enter the platform. Gary then disillusioned himself and set up a miniature ward on the other side of the pillar, out of the way. Gary was now within a four to six square foot area that wouldn't be noticed by anyone.
When Albus came out, he casually inspected the area. Even when he cast a detection spell when no muggles were present, no trace of his Defense professor could be found. He did find the wards to detect and remove the tracking charms.

As Albus walked past Gary, the young God reached out and pulled Albus into his ward. Albus' expression made it all worth it.

"Merlin's Beard, Garrick! You nearly frightened the life out of me!" was Albus' comment.

Gary's grin was purely his Marauder heritage. "Sorry, old fellow. You'd skip by me otherwise. Within this small box, we are unseen and unheard. Not quite a Fidelius Charm, but pretty good. Unfortunately, it can only last a few hours – and that's only because the floor is made of granite in this area – or at least some of the stone within the concrete is granite. Otherwise, the maximum would be twenty minutes."

Albus quickly determined that the man was correct. "Still, a beautiful piece of magic. Easily misused, which is why I am happy that instructions aren't readily available."

Gary rolled his eyes. "You already seem to be invisible at need – no reason to learn even another method." Albus' eyes twinkled – Garrick had seen through his comment. "But I can watch and see if anything untoward happens. Let up hope this is just paranoia and not necessary."

Albus nodded gravely. "I agree. But best be safe. I'll meet back with you an hour after the Express arrives – the students should be gone from the station by then."

Gary nodded. After seeing that no Muggles were looking, Albus stepped out of the square and quickly crossed over to the platform.

A very short time later a somewhat disgruntled-looking wizard appeared near the exit point for Platform 9 ¾. Gary (rightly) guessed that the wizard had arrived on platform and had seen Dumbledore – and Albus Dumbledore being present, alone, was too much of a deterrent for whatever he wanted to do.

Gary watched carefully as the first Muggle parents arrived. Trying to remain hidden, the wizard cast a spell on some of them.

Luckily, these parents walked through to meet their children on the platform side – requiring them to walk through the ward he had arranged. As soon as they had left, Gary non-verbally knocked out the wizard. Quickly checking, he noted the Dark mark.

Gary knew that this wasn't a well-known detail as of this moment – hopefully it would be soon as he sent more and more to the Ministry. So, except for the spell record, which could be innocuous, there was no proof.

Getting a grin, Gary snapped the wand and vanished it, while ensuring that the wizard had no gold or anything else on him. Conjuring some rum (thanking old Seamus for his perseverance in concocting the spell to make at least a fake version of it) he sprayed the man. When he knew he was good and smelling of alcohol, he hit the man with a charm which would make him confused.

Looking around, he saw a Bobbie down the way and motioned him over. "The man seems to be drunk. I didn't know what to do?"

The Muggle copper tried to get the man's attention but he came across as confused. Finally, he got him up and started walking him out. "Let's see if a night in the cells will sober 'im up," the copper said casually. Public drunkenness was a nuisance crime.
Gary shrugged and let the man do his job. He would send a message to the Aurors that a Drunk-seeming wizard was taken in by the Muggle Bobbies. Let them sort it out. He was certain that Tommy Riddle would "reward" his follower appropriately for failure. As distasteful as the idea was, Gary was not in control of every possible outcome.

Albus Dumbledore was sitting in his office, working on the last paperwork before the end of the year.

His time was far more free than he had expected, given what was occurring out in the Wizarding world. However, with the information about possible targets being protected, attacks against Muggleborns had dropped to almost none.

Knowing that a terrible storm was coming, he was trying to ensure he had as few distractions as possible.

Suddenly, one such distraction appeared: A stag patronus which looked remarkably like the animagus form of one of his 5th year students. He waited for a moment and the stag emitted the expected voice: "Headmaster Dumbledore. This is Professor Septimus. Can you please see me when convenient in the Masters' Library regarding a question I have?" The Patronus then dissipated.

Albus looked at the empty spot and then at the small pile of papers on his desk and then he sighed. Carefully placing them out of the way, the Headmaster put those few parchments to the side and quietly left his office to make his way to the newest addition to Hogwarts.

The Masters' Library had been quite the success. While it had been used by various Aurors, cursebreakers, healers, and apprentices under various masters, it has also been used by a few seventh-years who had specific plans for their future and whom had achieved the requisite permissions.

These would be much better prepared for their future jobs than previous graduates and Albus was looking forward to the increased recognition of Hogwarts which would result from this.

It has also prevented him from going on that slippery slope: Hiding information that might be misused because of societal pressures.

As an educator, it was his duty to ensure that students were educated. But as an influential member of the Wizarding world and one of its acknowledged strongest members, he was also responsible for protecting information against mis-use. The new Masters' Library had allowed him to protect all such questionable material against misuse whilst ensuring those that needed the information legitimately could obtain it.

Perhaps he would soon have properly educated wizards to discuss solutions with. He had never felt completely comfortable preventing valuable information from being known by those who could responsibly handle it. The new contracts prevented mishaps.

Albus casually strolled into the Library and took the necessary steps to enter the secure area that was the Masters' Library to find his Defense professor carefully looking through a large stack of parchment.

"Garrick. You require assistance?" the Headmaster asked.

The Defense professor looked up at him. "Yes. Thank you for coming. I've been doing a bit of research and I find myself at an impasse."
Albus sat down and asked, "And what are you researching?"

With a solemn look, the man replied, "Hogwarts."

Albus was taken aback. "What about Hogwarts is confusing? I believe it is fairly straightforward."

Garrick sat back and looked steadily into his eye. "My question is this: Who has the authority to order things done at Hogwarts? The Ministry? Wizengamot? The Headmaster alone? Who owns and runs Hogwarts?"

Albus sat back and considered that question. "Well, it quite depends actually."

"On what?"

"On exactly what aspect one is speaking of. As regards educational standards, Hogwarts answers to the Board of Governors and the Ministry's Examination Authority. As regards what is legal and who is responsible for enforcing the law, Hogwarts generally defers to the Department of Magical Law Enforcement. As to whom can come or who can stay here, I believe no one's authority supersedes my own as Headmaster."

Garrick nodded. "That was my conclusion. But my question is: Who is your boss? Who do you answer to?" Albus thought about it but Garrick did not wait for a response. "And so I started reviewing the relevant information. The Ministry's authority is easily established: William I's establishment of Councils to help him rule; the Magna Carta, and its hidden section dealing with matters magical; the Treaty of York, Magical section, which put all Magicals in the land under the authority of the Scottish throne or the English throne, the various Laws regarding Parliament, the British Bill of Rights of 1689 which established the Wizengamot as the Parliament which sets Magical law, and the Treaty of London which established Limited Autonomy for the Magical Portions of Scotland and England which was concluded following the treaties which established the Statute of Secrecy. All of these treaties and laws specifically lead to the Ministry for Magic and its relation with the Prime Minister's office. But where does Hogwarts fit into any of this?"

Albus replied, "I would assume that as a Magical institution, it would fall under the Wizengamot as a magical institution. That has been the assumption for quite a long time. It is only by tradition that I maintain absolute rights as regards who may live or stay here."

Garrick shook his head. "And in that regard, Headmaster, you are absolutely 100 percent wrong."

Albus was startled. "How?"

Garrick moved from the large pile of parchments to the other small pile which was also on the table. His gloved hands found a particular place on the document. "Were you aware that Gryffindor was a member of the Scottish Royal family?"

Albus was surprised. "No, I was not."

Garrick nodded. "According to the Charter of Hogwarts, in exchange for Gryffindor giving up any claim to sovereign power in Scotland and removing himself from the lines of succession, Gryffindor was named Earl of Hogsmeade, with the Baron of Hogwarts and the Baron of Hogsmeade answering directly to him. His authority in these areas was absolute. Hogwarts was created when there were many kingdoms. By mutual agreement of all crowns, Hogsmeade was declared completely neutral. Any Magical claiming residence there could not be forced to fight for one crown against another. And Hogwarts was specifically forbidden from fomenting rebellion against any one crown. With Magical nobles from different Kingdoms sending their children here,
it was agreed that there could be no influence from any crown or government beyond ensuring that acceptable educational standards are maintained. Only if you began preaching sedition against the Crown could anyone force you out and take over. Note that I said Crown, not government. You can make any statement you like against the Wizengamot, as the Magical Council of Great Britain, or any Parliament, but against the Crown – never. Such would be sedition and treason."

"And what does that mean for Hogwarts?" Albus asked curiously.

"Well, your boss is the Queen of Scotland – and only so far as ensuring the prerogatives of the Earldom are not infringed upon and ensuring no treason against the Queen's rule is allowed to foment. Any attempt to teach that Muggles are without rights actually falls under the laws against sedition and treason. You cannot endorse Muggle-hunting or anything which would damage the citizens of Great Britain. Without an Earl of Hogsmeade or a Baron of Hogwarts – which was actually the position that Ravenclaw held, just as the Barony of Hogsmeade was held by Slytherin and the ownership of the Forbidden Forest was, by Royal charter, given to Hufflepuff – you, as Headmaster, cannot be controlled by any government. As long as you teach students to acceptable standards. This is the only thing that the Ministry can attack you with and such standards must be published and approved by the Wizengamot before they can be used against you."

Albus considered what his Defense professor said and considered what effect it had. To be truthful, he could see no real difference as to how he operated Hogwarts from what Garrick was pointing out.

"This is all nice and interesting, but does it matter much in the end?"

Garrick sighed. "It matters quite much. Consider this: The Treaty between the Goblins and the Wizengamot which prevents them from residing in Hogsmeade is, by Charter, illegal." Albus' eyes widened. "This could only be authorized, by law, by the Baron of Hogsmeade, Lord Slytherin, with the approval of the Earl of Hogsmeade, Lord Gryffindor, and ratified by the Crown of Scotland. Note that the Acts of Union of 1707 were after the Treaty of London which gave the Wizengamot Limited Autonomy over all matters Magical within the Kingdoms of England and Scotland. By Charter, this does not include Hogsmeade, Hogwarts, or the Forbidden Forest. The Wizengamot can prevent goblins from living elsewhere in England and Scotland – but not these lands. The Ministry cannot force you to hire particular teachers. Hogwarts cannot, by charter, teach Pureblood supremacy, cannot prevent Muggleborns from being educated, and cannot teach or endorse Muggle-hunting by Magicals – something that Phineas Nigellus Black violated when he was Headmaster. You cannot treat Muggle parents as having less authority over their children's education than magical parents. That would be fomenting sedition against the laws of Scotland and England. And Voldemort is going to create a whole heap of trouble just by his plans. The Wards will prevent anyone with harmful intent from coming into the school – and with what we have done to protect the students, I am certain that there will be one or two students who will be having trouble coming to Hogwarts."

Albus sat back. "I had not considered that when the Wards were updated."

"Already we have students who have been paying attention to me – I am certain their parents encouraged them by order of Tom Riddle. My whole reason for my research was how to get around the problem of: How do we teach the students required while still ensuring the safety of Hogwarts?"

"Have you come to a solution?" Albus asked curiously.

"Yes."
"Tell me then!"

"Any student rejected by the Wards must sign a contract that they will treat Hogwarts as Neutral ground and will not commit any act against Hogwarts, its inhabitants, or its representatives while they are attending. When they leave, they can do whatever they want – we have no control over what they do outside of Hogwarts. But they must remain neutral or be expelled by the wards."

Albus sat back and sighed. "That sounds like a wonderful idea – my idealism applauds it. But you know that this will be approved by the Ministry."

Garrick gave Albus the Gimlet eye. "Did I or did I not just establish that the Ministry has no right to dictate such things?"

"I know it and you know it. But how do we prove it in such a way that the Ministry will accept it?"

Gary sat back and sighed. "And this is why I was hoping for a better solution. According to my research, the only choice is for you, as Headmaster, to contact the Queen. You have to delineate what I have just found, get her Royal approval to act as regent of the Earldom of Hogsmeade until such time as a lawful Earl of Gryffindor or Baron Ravenclaw is legally recognized by the Goblins of Gringotts bank. She will also have to either ratify the treaties that I have brought up – or by Royal Proclamation inform the Ministry for Magic that such treaties have no legal standing in the Earldom of Hogsmeade. I am certain the Goblins of Gringotts bank will be quite interested in whatever ruling she makes because at that point it would be legal for them to live there again, should she refuse to ratify. Oh – and you have to get a proclamation which informs the Ministry that they have no control over the Centaurs of the Forbidden Forest as no Muggle not in the know can enter the Earldom anyway, making the Statute of Secrecy moot in these lands."

Albus shook his head. "You're just asking me to kick over a number of anthills and sit back and watch the fallout."

Garrick grinned that mischievous grin. "Well … yes I am, I guess. Should be fun to watch."
A Visit to Norfolk

Gary Seven sat within his office at Hogwarts completing the final grading of the first term for official records.

One thing that was obvious to him was that any organization required far too much official parchmentwork/paperwork for it to be entirely healthy. But, laws and traditions required such things and he would complete them all.

He was looking forward to the Christmas celebrations which would take place in two days. Hogwarts always had the best food at Christmas and with only a minimum number of students on hand, it was quite cozy.

Besides, he was looking forward to the gift-giving.

As he completed the records for the fifth years, he was interrupted by the Headmaster's familiar. "Hello, Fawkes. How are you today?" Fawkes trilled a cheerful melody which caused Gary to smile. Fawkes always did have a sense of humor. "And why are you here today?"

With the Fawkes presented his leg, which had a letter attached. Gary rolled his eyes even as he said to his fellow phoenix, "Albus is getting lazy in his old age." Fawkes trilled in amusement.

Upon reading the letter, Gary sighed even as he reached for a quill. As he wrote his reply he commented to Fawkes, "Your companion just loves to get me involved just because I was the one to point it out. Now he's got me visiting the Queen with him next week. I don't think he's quite gotten that I'm only here for one year."

Fawkes trilled at Gary while he was sealing the letter. Gary shrugged. "Mostly a feeling, but I'm pretty good with those." Fawkes did the equivalent of a shrug and accepted the reply.

Soon, Gary was alone again with the parchmentwork.

It was Christmas morning and Gary made his way to the sitting room outside of his bedroom. As expected, the gifts from those who sent them were neatly piled near the door.

Curious, Gary retrieved the small pile and quickly started going through it. For the most part, it was small things that any academic could use: Quills, inks, a book here and there. Albus had sent a tin of tarts – including lemon and treacle. Gary was surprised that he remembered the conversation. Gary had sent back the socks that Albus had commented on in his own first year – he hoped the old man liked them.

Petunia and Lily had sent him a scarf which, according to the note, they had worked on together as thanks for everything he had helped them with. He smiled as he thought of the small pendants he had helped James and Peter make in the shape of a Lily and Petunia for the two girls respectively. It had been Peter's idea and, in a moment of brotherly consideration, he suggested to James that it was better than the gaudy gift he had planned.

He didn't get anything from the Marauders and he hadn't expected anything – they were teenage boys and he was a teacher.

He was surprised, however, to receive a gift from Eileen and Severus Snape in acknowledgment for what he had done for them: Severus had copies of his corrected books that were just being
printed sent to him and Eileen had sent a set of personalized gloves with the initials GS – he quite
liked them actually. Eileen had been warned that he was not into receiving extravagant gifts.

He had sent all his co-workers a gift certificate for Honeydukes – Magicals loved their sweets. He
could have been more personal, but in this particular case he didn't want to call too much attention
to himself. He would be gone by the next Christmas anyway.

Already he had plans to ensure the books that he acquired would be put into the local Hogwarts
library with a copy at 1st Interdimensional Bank and Trust. If he was going to ever need to seen
another universe with books, he wanted copies he could easily access to do so. He figured that
within a few centuries of Universal travel he'd have the largest magical library in the multiverse.

After the Christmas party/dinner/gathering, Gary decided that he was bored. What to do? What to
do? He got a grin. What use was being a God without a little divine interference? He concentrated,
and then traveled …

Gary inspected his phoenix body before carefully turning himself invisible. He then silently
winged toward the Manor house he arrived in front of.

As expected, he found the local Tom Riddle meeting with various Death Eaters. Alighting onto a
high perch in the room, Gary observed the meeting to see what plans the Dork side had for the
Wizarding world.

He was happy to note that Riddle was not happy with the lack of success on finding targets for the
lower-level death eaters to work on.

"And what of the wizard who is currently teaching Defense at Hogwarts … this Garrick
Septimus?" the Dorky one was asking his minions. "Why have we not silenced this man already?"

"My Lord," one of the white-masked figures replied, "our efforts have been thwarted because,
although he at times goes out alone or to places that are not secure, he has countered every effort
made. It is as if he is prepared for each attack."

Riddle's eyes narrowed. "Are you saying that we have a spy amongst us?"

"No, My Lord!" the man answered quickly. "Most plans were made just moments before when
there was a noted opportunity. Even these attacks were unsuccessful. I do not say he was already
informed but that he is extremely prepared for any attack. We do not know his limits."

Riddle sat back. "Have we made any effort to recruit him?"

The man replied, "We considered it. However, according to the reports from all of those that are at
Hogwarts who are part of our families, his beliefs are counter to everything we believe. He also has
greatly interfered with recruiting students from the disaffected – he mitigates disaffection as he
encounters it, making those who might have been ripe for recruitment less sympathetic to our
positions."

With this, the Dark Lord was unhappy, which he emphasized with a Crucio. "Failure does not
interest me. It is time to show these fools who is more powerful. What Wizengamot member is
most opposed to our positions?"

A name which Gary had not heard of before was mentioned – likely because in other timelines
they had already died out.
"Who is best positioned to take control of the Head of House?" When that was answered, Riddle gave a cruel smile. "I expect the man to be under control by New Year's Eve. He is to be instructed to ensure his family is present on New Year's Eve; and then at 8:30 that evening he is to take down any ward which would prevent me from leading our brethren in sending a message. We will use this to inform the entire Wizarding world that 1976 shall be the year that Voldemort rises to ascension!"

The Death Eater bowed. "Now, we shall need to ensure the Aurors are distracted. What location will cause the most consternation to the Ministry?"

After a long moment, the Death Eater answered, "With the majority of shops being closed, Diagon Alley won't be particularly viable. But Hogsmeade would draw much attention."

Riddle considered that for a long moment. "Hogsmeade is too close to Hogwarts – while we are strong we are not quite ready for Dumbledore to take a more active role, which he would assuredly do if anything close to Hogwarts is attacked." Riddle paused once more. "The biggest gathering of Blood Traitors will be the Longbottom Ball. We will need a group of new recruits to attack the wards and, should they prove successful, kill a few guests before the Aurors have time to arrive. As soon as the Aurors show up, they are to portkey or apparate. Their celebrations begin at 8:00. 9:00 shall be the diversionary attack. 9:05 shall be the time I shall visit this recalcitrant Blood Traitor. Ensure our friend at the Ministry has the floo closed for maintenance on our target."

The Death Eater bowed again. "It will be as you say, Lord."

Gary waited until most Death Eaters had left and softly retreated from the area – no need to alert the idiots as to the lost element of surprise.

It was December 27 and Albus and Gary were on their way to Norfolk, where the Royal Family traditionally resided during the time between Christmas and February. The meeting was after Boxing day as it would not be unusual for the Royal family to not be seen on that day.

Gary and Albus were dressed in traditional suits which, if one didn't know better, looked as though they came directly from Saville Row. Gary found it amusing that the more recent suits were more traditional looking than those from the last 40 years or so. It hadn't been hard to convince Albus to let him take care of the transfigurations.

Harder for Albus to accept had been the transfiguration of his hair and beard to something that was more Muggle-friendly. As they walked toward the Apparition point, Albus would feel his beard and then look at Gary with some small resentment.

Gary just chuckled.

The two arrived at the location Gary had envisioned: An alley out of sight of anyone not immediately present. The two walked calmly out to find themselves on a street. Albus asked, "Where are we and why are we not at Sandringham House?"

Gary sighed. "You are entirely too Gryffindor sometimes, Albus. We are going to be dropped off by a taxi service I've arranged for. We do not want to arrive without explicit permission within the Royal estate – that would be bad. We are scheduled for a meeting at 11:00 – we got here at 9:15 so that we can pick up the car that is taking us."

Gary led Albus to a company that often provided local service for those who flew in to meet the Queen or Royal family members. As a result, they had several upscale cars which could be hired.
Soon, the two wizards were seated in the back of a 1950s vintage Silver Spirit Rolls Royce. Gary let Albus amuse himself with the various controls. The driver caught Gary's eyes in the rearview and each rolled their eyes at the childlike delight the old man was showing.

Soon, they arrived at the gates. One of the Royal Guardsman asked for identification – Albus and Gary passed their IDs through the window, and the driver showed his license which showed his prior approval to deliver guests to the Royal estate.

After verification and a quick security check to ensure they had no dangerous items, they were waved to continue on. Their driver knew where to drop them and where to wait for them to reappear – this was a duty he had performed numerous times before.

The two wizards were met by members of the Royal staff and, at nearly 11:00 on the nose, they were presented to the reigning Queen of Great Britain.

Once all of the formal greetings were taken care of, it became somewhat less formal.

"Headmaster Dumbledore. It has been quite a long time since one in your position has requested a Royal audience. We are curious as to why you have taken this step now," the Queen began.

"Your Majesty. How familiar are you with the current happenings in the magical portion of your Kingdom?" Albus asked the Queen.

"I am to understand that it operates as it normally does for the most part. The current Minister for Magic is one Eugenia Jenkins, according to our Prime Minister, the Honorable Harold Wilson."

Albus nodded. "And you are familiar with the treaties and agreements that established the Ministry for Magic under the current system?"

The Queen considered that. "Not having direct access to the Magical portions of our realm due to the Treaty of London of 1695, it has not been of major concern to us. Perhaps you can give a brief overview."

Albus nodded, "If it pleases Your Majesty, I would ask my companion, Mr. Garrick Septimus, current Professor of Defense Against the Dark Arts at Hogwarts, to do this. He has more recently studied the matter and has a much richer view of the laws and precedences."

The Queen allowed it and Garrick took the Queen through the various laws and agreements that obtained between the various Crowns of Britain and how the current system was emplaced.

"And thus, as long as Rebellion and Sedition against the Crown is prevented by the Wizengamot and the Ministry for Magic within Magical Britain, these assume a virtual autonomous rule of all matters Magical within these lands – with one single exception."

The Queen was taken aback, as was her son, Prince Charles, who was asked to sit in as the young man (he was in his late 20s) would have to learn to deal with the magical realm when he eventually became King. He was the one who asked, "What exception, then, exists, as to the control of matters Magical?" The Queen nodded that she wanted this question answered.

Albus sighed. "The exception is actually Hogwarts. Unlike every other Magical institution, Hogwarts is autonomous from the rule of the Ministry under charter from the Crown of Scotland."

Curious, the Queen asked, "Would that not be more properly 'under the Crown of Great Britain'?"

Gary signaled he would answer and all present looked to him. "Actually – no. Perhaps I can
explain by giving you the history of the School."

"Please do so," the Queen asked.

And so Gary went through the complete history of Hogwarts. Finally he finished with, "And so, the Earldom of Hogsmeade was established in the Year of Our Lord 971 by Writ of Cináed mac Maíl Choluim, or Kenneth II, Rí’ Alban of Scotland whom is your Royal Ancestor as all Kings of Scotland have been since 1034 and all English Kings have been since 1603, with the agreement of the King of Wessex, from which the authority of the Kings of England descends according to the Treaty of York.

"At the inception of Hogwarts, all kingdoms within the British Isles agreed that the Earldom of Hogsmeade was separate from any Kingdom and that no wars between Crowns or different Noble factions could be continued during a student's education. The Earldom of Hogsmeade is specifically enjoined from promoting the power of any one Crown over any other.

"According to the Charter, the Earl of Hogsmeade, Lord Gryffindor, holds absolute authority as long as insurrection against any single Crown within the British Isles was not allowed within its walls. And, although the current legal Earl of Hogsmeade is unkown – although there are rumors that the Gryffindor Lordship is held by a certain family – the Headmasters have acted as regents of the lands since that time."

The Queen finally asked, "This is all quite interesting, but of what import is this to the reason for your visit?"

"Everything, Your Majesty," Gary replied. "There is currently, within the borders of Magical Britain, a criminal terrorist who styles himself Lord Voldemort. He has taken to attacking and murdering established families that disagree with his political beliefs. He has attacked your Majesties subjects within non-magical Britain that have children with magical ability. There has long been a belief within the upper levels of Magical society that those who have Pure magical blood are somehow superior to those who have non-magical roots. It harkens back to the Fascist ideology against the Jews that Hitler espoused. And if these radical elements have their way, those magicals from non-Magical families, families who should receive the protections of being British citizens, would be dealt with the same way that Hitler tried to deal with the Jews. It is, in simple words, a complete mess."

Gary sighed. "The Headmaster walks a fine line. While trying to ensure his students are safe, many who hold power within Magical Britain are sympathetic toward this criminal's beliefs even if they are repulsed by his methods. If he steps to hard on those students who come from families with these beliefs, there will be an outcry that he is turning Hogwarts into his personal fiefdom. Which is almost amusing in that, from a practical standpoint, Hogwarts IS his personal fiefdom – as long as Your Majesty allows. Hogwarts, to maintain the safety of its students, could really use the intercession of the Queen of Scotland – which, of course, is you."

The Queen considered that. "And what would you ask of us?"

Gary pulled out a document and passed it over. "We would ask for a Royal Proclamation similar to the one proposed here, modified as you see fit, of course, according to existing Law and Precedent."

The Queen accepted the document and looked it over thoughtfully. When she was done, she sat there thinking for a moment. "We are willing to provide such a document. First, however, we will require our Solicitor General Peter Archer to review the documents you have provided and to ensure that such a command is legal according to Law and Precedent. We shall also request our
Prime Minister to attend us regarding this criminal that is operating within our borders. The Minister for Magic shall be consulted. To find that such a villain operates and has operated within our Kingdom is anathema to us and we shall ensure steps are taken. Return to us in two days time at 1:00 precisely."

The two wizards bowed to the Queen. Gary had one more request. "If it pleases Your Majesty, there is one bit of intelligence that I have not yet provided Mr. Dumbledore and which may effect what you might wish to do."

The Queen looked interested, as did the Headmaster. "Say on, Mr. Septimus."

"I have retained a memory from a source that wishes to remain anonymous as to the plans that this criminal has for his next attack on New Years Day. I planned on giving this information over to Professor Dumbledore here so that plans could be implemented to counter these attacks. But, perhaps, you might also be interested in inserting an observer into these circumstances which might give you a more accurate representation of what we are fighting."

The Queen was curious. "How can a memory give information?"

"Within your Magical realms, we have an ability to retrieve a memory from a person's mind and, by use of a device called a Pensieve, we can review that memory for details that might be missed or otherwise overlooked."

"We would be interested in seeing such in operation," the Queen said with some interest.

Albus tried to claim it was impossible, but Gary interrupted him. "While the Headmaster's Pensieve might not allow someone non-magical to see a memory, I can conjure one which will allow it. If I may receive permission?"

The Queen motioned him to do so, and all present watched him curiously. On a side table, Gary concentrated on conjuring a pensieve. Albus inspected it curiously. "This is not quite the same as my own. I find it almost impossible to believe that such a device can be created on the spot." The Headmaster's voice was actually full of some wonder.

The Queen asked curiously, "You would not be able to do as your Professor has done?"

Albus turned and said, "Your Majesty, I am recognized as perhaps the strongest Wizard in the world in many circles, and I am a Master of Transfiguration, which includes the art of Conjuring. I do not believe I would have the skill or power to do what Professor Septimus has just done."

Gary blushed a little. "I think you could – but you'd need to learn the spell and to learn the differences between your Pensieve and this one."

Gary retrieved the vial from where it was hidden in his briefcase. "It was disillusioned against discovery because it is best undisturbed unless you know what you are doing," he commented to the Queen and her son.

Carefully, Gary dropped the memory into the Pensieve and then hit the proper runes. The full memory of Voldemort's meeting was played back in full.

Albus looked at the Pensieve when it was finished playing and considered what he had just seen. "Remarkable," was his only comment.

The Queen actually objected to that. "Remarkable? What is remarkable? What we have just seen is better described as despicable!"
The Headmaster immediately realized his gaffe. "I apologize, Your Majesty. The magic to show a memory is not known to me, and I am – as I mentioned – one of the more knowledgeable wizards in the world on such matters. The activities of my former student, Mr. Tom Riddle, who now styles himself Lord Voldemort are despicable – you have no disagreement from me on that matter. But seeing new magic is quite rare for me – I am ninety four and have spent much of that time learning everything I could."

The Queen considered that and was somewhat mollified. "As someone who regularly experiences things formerly unknown on a regular basis, we can – perhaps – understand your interest. But what we are interested in is how to counter this creature in the short and long term. And that shall take more minds than we have available here."

Albus nodded. "Is there, perhaps, a place within this estate where I can arrange for transportation to for myself, Professor Septimus, the Minister for Magic, and the Director of Magical Law Enforcement to arrive for the meeting in two days time? It will facilitate what must be done. Or, perhaps, there is a fireplace I can connect to the Floo network on a temporary basis."

The Queen motioned to one of the Guards. "Please show Mr. Dumbledore a room in the basement where we can arrange for Magical visitors in two days time. A contingent of Royal Guardsman must be arranged to receive and inspect the arrivals and ensure no undesirable uses this."

Gary interrupted there. "If it pleases Your Majesty, I have recently assisted in upgrading and implementing wards on Hogwarts that have stood a thousand years. Can I inspect your basement to see if I can find any wards placed here and to either ensure they are updated or to install new protections to ensure there will be no hostile wizards that can attack this place? I would have to leave as scheduled and then return with a few tools to allow me to do this."

The Queen considered this. "You have our permission. How long will it take to return once you leave?"

Gary considered that. "We must leave via Car as we arrived that way and we don't need any questions for the average observer. I can, if I move directly to my office and then return to the location that your Guardsmen arrange, be back by 4:00. It will take several hours. If Your Majesty will allow, I would propose instead that I be allowed to bring a team of Goblin warders from Gringotts to work overnight to inspect and prepare for a much more permanent warding. Long term, it will be safer. There would need to be negotiations as to price with the team that comes and, should you also wish to have the same protections placed on other Royal residences (I would heartily suggest it) they will be available longer than I am as I am only in country until the end of the Hogwarts school year."

The Queen turned to the Headmaster. "Would you agree with your Professor's assessment?"

Albus considered that. "Yes. Should Your Majesty become involved with ensuring stability in Magical Britain, if only to protect the non-magical portions of your realm, there will be those who will object. It would be well-advised to ensure anyone who might be foolish enough to try to retaliate is prevented before they can cause the whole Statute of Secrecy to fall by doing something so monumentally stupid as to attack the rightful Royal family. And Gringotts is completely separate from the Ministry for Magic and can guarantee no hidden members of Riddle's followers are involved."

The Queen nodded. "Perhaps, Mr. Septimus, you and the Headmaster can stay for lunch and give us a primer on proper protocol in dealing with these Goblins who will come to do this work."

Gary nodded. "As you wish, Your Majesty."
Gary Seven walked into Gringotts. As was common, very soon after getting into the same line as every other customer, a Goblin arrived and invited him back to meet with his account manager – which, in this case, was Ragnok, the head of the local bank.

"Good afternoon. How can Gringotts help you today?" the surly creature asked.

Gary bowed as though meeting an equal – which was considered quite complimentary as the goblins were well aware of his divine status. "Good afternoon. I have come here to arrange for a team of Gringotts warders."

Ragnok looked at the young God with curiosity. "Is this service for you or one of your personal projects?" They were more accommodating in serving Gods than wizards.

"In this case – not really, though I am involved. The team will have to be accompanied by one who has sufficient authority to negotiate price. As soon as the price is set, the warders will need to begin," Gary explained calmly.

"And with whom will Gringotts be negotiating?" he asked.

Giving a small smirk Gary replied, "A Muggle."

With this, Ragnok did not look very happy. "While we accord you many courtesies and favorable considerations due to your status as well as how much business you have brought us, in this you go too far! Certainly you know that the Statute of Secrecy prevents Gringotts from dealing with Muggles!" Ragnok was very angry. Gary's smile didn't waver.

"Oh – I think you'll deal with this one."

Knowing that this God was not frivolous, Ragnok answered, "Then bring this Muggle here so that we can negotiate."

Gary, still smirking, replied, "I don't think that is feasible. It would … create too much of a distraction?"

Curious despite himself, Ragnok asked, "And who is this Muggle that their mere presence would prove too much of a distraction?"

Without pause Gary replied, "Elizabeth II of the House of Windsor, successor House to the Houses of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha, also known as Elizabeth II, Dei Gratia Britanniarum Regnorumque Suorum Ceterorum Regina, Consortionis Populorum Princeps, Fidei Defensor," Gary paused, "or if you prefer it in English: Elizabeth II, by the Grace of God, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and of Her other Realms and Territories Queen, Head of the Commonwealth,"
Defender of the Faith." Gary watched Ragnok's reaction calmly.

To his credit, Ragnok did not so much as flinch. He did pause before saying, "Yes. This particular case might require a different approach than the one we use for wizards."

Gary chuckled. "Damn. I bet Albus Dumbledore that I could make you speechless when I came here or at least to react with some emotion. Now I owe him a tin of those damn lemon tarts that he is addicted to."

Ragnok gave a full grin, his teeth showing. "Betting against my people is traditionally a poor choice."

Gary nodded his acknowledgement. "Something I'll remember in the future. Still, it might be fun to see how many of your warders we can put into shock."

Ragnok considered that. "I will come and negotiate – no one below me has the authority to deal with a Head of State. I will bring a team of 8 warders and 4 guards. Only the youngest warders will react – but only minimally."

"We'll see. I don't know if I want to bet on it – betting against Goblins is traditionally a poor choice," Gary replied. Ragnok smirked briefly.

"How will we arrive?"

"Well, I can create a portkey or I can flash one of your people to the place we are to arrive so that they can create a portkey. Your choice."

Ragnok nodded. "We will accept a portkey from you – our faith extends that far at least … even if you were stupid enough to bet against me with the Hogwarts Headmaster."

Gary chuckled.

Gary was allowed to stay with Ragnok as he made arrangements. Besides the team being retrieved and records of any previous wardings being gathered, tools to complete an inheritance right were also gathered as well as ledgers for the accounts dealing with the Royal houses going back to the founding of Gringotts. An inheritance test would be necessary to see if any of the family accounts were to be inherited in addition to verifying magical inheritance of the throne which would allow the Royal account to be used to pay for it.

Gary was interested that it was necessary as no Royal had visited Gringotts to review the accounts since William of Orange and Gringotts recognized the difference between House accounts and the Royal account – just because she was Queen did not mean Elizabeth would inherit any of the accounts that were not specific to the throne.

At 7:55, after everything and everyone was gathered and all had eaten, Gary took a rope and created a portkey, making it rigid enough so that it wasn't flopping around.

At 7:59, the portkey was activated and the entire group arrived shortly to Sandringham.

The meeting between Ragnok and Elizabeth was cordial. Both respected the other's position and neither were condescending to the other – a vast improvement over the way Goblins were treated by wizards. Ragnok said as much, which prompted Elizabeth to invite Ragnok to the meeting that would take place two days later regarding Voldemort – she wanted to see first hand how the Magicals dealt with the Goblins.
After the warding was negotiated for all Royal properties as well as the properties owned by the Royal family specifically (such as Sandringhams and Balmoral Castle), the Queen had one more deal to work out with the Goblins. Ragnok, hearing the proposal, was quite generous with terms. This would be fun.

It was December 30th, and Albus Dumbledore had gathered the Director of the DMLE, the Minister for Magic and the current Chief Warlock of the Wizengamot together. They had been informed of the meeting two days earlier and had made room in their schedules.

They had gathered in a conference room at the Ministry.

When all were assembled, the Minister, Madam Eugenia Jenkins, asked, "Okay, Dumbledore. What is this all about?"

The Headmaster sat back in his chair. "This meeting has to do with Voldemort and his current plans. It also has to do with Hogwarts and keeping it safe from conflict. You all are aware that Hogwarts cannot refuse students because of family connections to those that oppose the Ministry?"

The Head of the DMLE answered, "Actually, I know of no such thing. It isn't something that has been considered but I don't see why the Ministry cannot prevent those that might oppose the Ministry from attending."

Albus sighed. "I was worried about this. Does anyone here know who owns Hogwarts? Have any of you ever read the Hogwarts Charter?"

The Chief Warlock considered that. "I know that the Ministry oversees the testing of its students for OWL and NEWT level. The Board of Governors, appointed by the Ministry have long been the body overseeing the operation of the school. What am I missing?"

Albus replied, "While you are correct in what you stated, the Charter is very specific. The Earldom of Hogsmeade, which contains the Barony of Hogwarts, the Barony of Hogsmeade, and the control of the Forbidden Forest, is – from a management standpoint – completely separate from the Ministry for Magic."

There was some protest from each of the Ministry executives present. "Hogwarts is subject to the same laws as the rest of Magical Britain! It has always been that way."

Albus stood up. "Actually, it hasn't, even if we've treated it that way. We need to include one more person and, as that person does not have easy access to the Ministry for Magic, we shall have to go to them."

"And who is this person that has to be included?" the Chief Warlock asked.

"The single entity which has ultimate jurisdiction over Hogsmeade and Hogwarts – the Queen of Great Britain and therefore Scotland. Let us go – we are expected."

Despite the Ministry workers wanting to protest, Dumbledore didn't give them time. He led them to an apparition point and put out an item. "Portkey – everyone grab hold."

Very soon the gathered magicals were being led into the presence of the reigning monarch and the manners drilled into them as children kicked in.

"Your Majesty," Albus said, "as I was explaining to my colleagues, we are here to discuss the safety of Hogwarts during the conflict with the magical terrorist that we discussed in our last
meeting."

The Queen nodded. "And has the situation been explained fully to them as of yet?"

"I was just beginning."

"Introduce these and then carry on," Elizabeth stated.

"As you wish, Your Majesty." Albus bowed to the Queen and then turned. He introduced each one present and then said, "As I began to explain, Hogwarts – due to treaty and its charter – has a peculiar set of requirements. Hogwarts operates independently of any government save in the matter of the Ministry administering examinations to ensure educational standards are met. Technically, Hogwarts – and Hogsmeade and the Forbidden Forest as well – does not even fall under the Statute of Secrecy. The Ministry has no jurisdiction."

The Minister asked, "How can this be? All magical governments are subject to the Statute according to treaty."

The Queen interjected then. "As our Headmaster has indicated, the Hogwarts Charter is very specific. In exchange for complete autonomy from control by Our government in any form, Hogwarts must fairly, and without bias for any government, teach the youths of Great Britain to standards as set by the Crown through our Councils as set by law. Regardless of the fact that the Magicals of these land perform in semi-autonomy, the Treaty of London is very specific: The Wizengamot operates as the lawful Council setting laws for all Magicals within our borders. This was set by the original Wizarding Council as set up by William, the Magna Carta, and finally the Bill of Rights of 1689. The Treaty of London of 1695 resolved the normal responsibilities of both the English and Scottish Crowns toward their citizens following the passage of the Statute of Secrecy by the International Confederation of Wizards in 1692. As set by Charter, the Crowns' only authority over Hogwarts is ensuring students are tested and ensuring rebellion against our Crowns is not taught or encouraged. This is the only matter which allows intervention."

"So what does that mean?" the Chief Warlock asked.

"Hogwarts is not part of nor controlled by the Ministry. And the Ministry only operates within the borders of the Earldom of Hogsmeade by the sufferance of its rightful Lord, the Lord Gryffindor, Earl of Hogsmeade." The Queen's statement was definite and final.

The Head of the DMLE protested, "But there is no Lord Gryffindor currently."

Elizabeth replied, "That may or may not be true. We have retrieved two others that await their inclusion which have standing within this meeting as well an another who has information vital to the security of our Magical and non-magical realms." She motioned her Guard and soon those present were joined by the Prime Minister, the Head of Gringotts, and the Lone Traveler.

As luck would have it, the Queen noticed the sneer that the Chief Warlock had as Ragnok entered. She wasn't one to let things go quietly. "We would remind you, Chief Warlock, that these are our guests and that this is our home. Whom we consult in matters regarding the security of our realm is a matter of our choice and no other. You will treat our guests with respect."

The man murmured with some embarrassment, "Yes, your Majesty."

She turned to Ragnok. "We thank you for your presence here, regardless of the opinion of some others. Your input and time is valuable and we acknowledge the boon of your presence."

Ragnok bowed briefly with a gleam in his eye, "Thank you, your Majesty."
"Now," she addressed the gathered wizards, "is it or is it not the case that, unless otherwise specified by a will, Gringotts Bank has ultimate authority in the recognition of inheritance in our Magical realm?" There were murmurs of agreement. "And correct us if we are wrong, this includes all types of inheritance; economic and political included." There were more murmurs of agreement.

"Please indulge my curiosity: Why is it that a matter so vital to the security of our magical realm is left with beings that are, to all effect, uninvolved in the management of our Magical realms?" Ragnok had been warned of this and took no offense.

There was some embarrassment within the ranks of the Ministry contingent. "Your Majesty, there were … instances in the past where the Ministry and the Goblins were at odds. In one such conflict, a part of the resolution was that Gringotts would be the recognized authority in matters of inheritance because they alone, of all magical beings, practice blood magic and can thereby recognize such things. In exchange for their utter neutrality in Wizengamot politics, they are given authority in this matter." The Minister looked quiet nervous about the matter for some reason.

"Interesting. And by what authority does the Ministry for Magic claim jurisdiction over Goblin territory?" she asked.

"The Statute of Secrecy of 1692 was agreed by all member states of the ICW. One part of this documents gives each Ministry the jurisdiction within their borders to ensure that the goblins presence does not cause knowledge of the Magical world to fall to the non-magicals. Included in the statute is an office which manages such." The Chief Warlock was quite confident in this answer.

The Queen looked at the Ministry contingent curiously. "And were the Goblins signatories to this agreement?"

"It is the International Confederation of Wizards! Not the International Confederation of Magical Be … Beings." The Chief Warlock and the Head of the DMLE looked affronted while the Minister seemed neutral.

The Queen looked less than impressed. "And so you try to claim sovereignty over these Magical beings without even a 'by your leave'? What gives you the right?"

The Chief Warlock sputtered, "It's tradition!" HE really had no more arguments that seemed effective.

"We will return to this matter after we discuss the real reason we have asked the Headmaster to bring you here." She paused. "Now, it has come to our attention that our Magical realm currently has been under attack by a criminal who styles himself Lord Voldemort. Is this correct?"

At this, the Ministry looked embarrassed. "Yes. He has killed many Muggleborns and has now also started killing families that disagree with his views," the Minister said.

With a fairly blank face the Queen asked, "And for how long has this criminal been operating within these shores?"

Dumbledore answered this. "By review of the Muggleborns killed before even attending Hogwarts – five years." This statement did not make the Ministry employees happy.

"And what has the Ministry for Magic done to catch and prosecute this man?"

The Director of the DMLE answered this. "Well, he has really only recently truly come to the attention of the Ministry. We have begun by protecting the records of where Muggleborns live
which is collected by the Misuse of Magic office. Until he started killing recognized magical families … well, no one really paid much attention."

"And when did this become known to the Ministry for Magic?" she asked again.

"Only in the last 9 months."

"And has any of his followers been detained and questioned? How many within the Ministry support this man's views?" the Queen asked with a wintry look.

"Well, we don't really know, per se. When it was just Muggleborns, few in the Wizengamot really paid much attention. It was difficult to get support in allotting resources. We haven't really caught anyone yet. His followers wear masks to hide their identities."

It was quite obvious that the answers were not to the Queen's satisfaction. "So, we have a magical criminal which has been operating within Britain for at least five years. And only for the last nine months have you put in any effort to curb this. And this is only because this criminal has begun killing members of recognized families. Do we have an accurate understanding of what you are saying?" With some embarrassment, there were nods from the Ministry faction. "And are there means magical to insure the veracity of a criminal's statement as to their innocence."

Gary interjected here, "There is a truth potion which is considered near-infallible, as long as a counter-agent has not been taken. But it's use is under extremely limited control. No prisoner can be forced to take it as it violates the rules against self-incrimination." After a pause he added, "Well, as long as the suspect is from a pureblood family that is."

The Queen asked, "And if they come from a family without magic?"

Gary answered with some aplomb, "They don't have the same presumption of innocence." He was getting the stink-eye from the Ministry workers but he really didn't care.

The Queen took a deep breath to calm herself down. "And so the real troubles become obvious." She looked at the Ministry contingent. "Pray tell: Why should I not, at this moment, declare the Treaty of London of 1695 violated and take back direct control of all that is Magical within Britain?"

The Minister and her fellows looked horrified. "You can't do that!"

With a certain amount of venom the Queen replied, "Oh yes, we could. And if I find that the Magical Ministry continues to be so ineffectual that our subjects suffer murder and rape and other crimes against them without any effective containment, we will. We already have just cause! All matters magical, by the Treaty of London, shall be a matter for the Ministry for Magic so long as the freedoms and rights of the Non-magicals are not infringed upon. Should any Magical act outside of Magical Britain, the Ministry for Magic will act expeditiously to contain the matter to ensure that the Statute of Secrecy is maintained. Minister? Director? Chief Warlock? You have utterly failed us to this time. And we will not have it!"

The Minister and those with her quailed under the Queen's regal and quite just statement. Finally the Minister asked, "What would you have us do?"

With her most regal bearing the Queen replied, "Hear now Our Proclamations!"

The scribe who was close by was suddenly far more alert. The Queen rarely made verbal proclamations but when she did it was his job to ensure they were fully recorded. He used both a recorder and his skills in shorthand to ensure every word was taken down to that a formal
document could, in short order, be issued.

"By Order of the Crown;

"Whereas Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry operates Royal Charter of the Scottish Crown and has done so since its inception;

"And Whereas the Earlom of Hogsmeade does not fall within the authority of the Ministry for Magic except to ensure educational standards are maintained;

"And Whereas, the lack of a recognized Earl of Hogsmeade Lord Gryffindor, Baron of Hogwarts Lord Ravenclaw, Baron of Hogsmeade Lord Slytherin, or a Landholder of the Forbidden Forest Baron Hufflepuff, the regency of these lands has never been legally delineated;

"Therefore, Let it be known that until such time as a recognized holder of these Baronies and Earldom steps forth, the Headmaster of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry shall be solely responsible for ensuring the security and safety of these lands. Should any violate the laws as set forth by common law or recognized Council the Ministry for Magic may receive and prosecute lawbreakers from within these lands with the agreement of the Headmaster.

"The Autonomy of the Headmaster shall be recognized as long as the Charter is maintained, including the stricture that states that any rebellion against the Crown is quashed and prevented forthwith.

"Should there be any whom is rejected by the Wards of Hogwarts because they have ill intent, they shall only be allowed to attend Hogwarts under a contract guaranteeing their neutrality against Hogwarts, its people, its students, and the lawful government of Great Britain both Magical and non-Magical whilst they attend. Otherwise they shall not be allowed entrance to Hogwarts and must seek other avenues of magical education and examination.

"Set by my hand and command, the 30th day of December, in the Year of Our Lord 1975.

"Elizabeth Regina"

She turned to the Ministry contingent. "Do any of you have any questions thus far?"

The Chief Warlock stated, "There will be protests against this within the Wizengamot."

Elizabeth replied, "And to that we say: We care not. Hogwarts is sacrosanct unless the charter is violated. Any who wished to protest can find themselves violating our Royal writ." She smirked at this. "Which brings us to our next proclamation:"

"By Order of the Crown;

"Whereas we, through Law and Custom, hold the Crown of Great Britain and the Commonwealth; and,

"Whereas by law and custom all citizens within these lands are subject to the laws and customs that hold sway; and

"Whereas the Rule of these realms has traditionally included all humankind within these borders; and,

"Whereas the Goblins of Gringotts have never, by agreement or treaty, accepted the rule of their persons by any Crown held by any human; and
"Whereas the Goblins that reside within the British Isles have always held the sovereignty of the lands upon or within which they live; and

"Whereas the Goblin people are not and have never been subject to Royal law;

"Therefore;

"The Sovereignty of the Lands upon which sits Gringotts Bank and the tunnels below the Lands rules by Our Crown which are inhabited by those known as Goblin-kind is not subject to the laws and customs created by the Crowns within the British Isles or their legally recognized Councils; and

"The lands and tunnels which are occupied by those known as Goblin-kind are recognized by the Crowns which we hold as subject to the laws and customs of Goblin-kind and not human law; and

"Any Goblin which visits or lives within those areas which are subject to our Crown and its legally recognized Councils must be treated as a foreign national and subject to the laws that obtain within these areas, including the Statute of Secrecy, the Treaty of London of 1695, and other legally recognized treaties, laws, and customs. And

"Any Goblin which lives outside of the lands and areas legally controlled by the Crown and its legally recognized Councils as well as outside of the lands and areas legally controlled by Goblin-kind shall be subject to the laws that obtain within the areas and not by any treaty or law that exists between the Crown and its councils and Goblin-kind."

"Set by my hand and command, the 30th day of December, in the Year of Our Lord 1975.

"Elizabeth Regina"

The Head of the DMLE asked, "What does that mean?"

With a small but imperious smile the Queen replied, "That means, Gentlemen and Lady, the Ministry for Magic has no control over what occurs within Gringotts bank outside of the agreement to legally run the bank which they control and to without bias manage inheritance law within the Magical realm. Any agreement or treaty limiting the rights of Goblin-kind cannot, by law, hold any sway within Gringotts or within the Goblin-made tunnels under the Earth. It also voids any treaty which prevents Goblins from living within Hogsmeade as these treaties did not have Royal Sanction nor the agreement of the legally-recognized Lord Gryffindor."

The Chief Warlock sputtered, "But the Statute of Secrecy gives the Ministry control …"

Elizabeth interrupted, "over the citizens and areas that are Magical that fall within the control of the Crown and its Councils, which include the Wizengamot. Neither Gringotts nor the Earldom of Hogsmeade have any non-magical elements within them and therefore are not subject to the Statute of Secrecy."

Ragnok, who had only a bare inkling of what the Queen had planned to do, asked, "But what of the lands that were lost following the … disagreement of 1612, between wizards and Goblin-kind? These included lands within Hogsmeade."

"Was fair recompense given and accepted by your people as regards these lands?" she asked.

Ragnok considered that. "For much of the land: Yes. To assist in trying to quell the disagreements, some magical families purchased lands that previously were owned by my people so as to minimize the disagreements with the Wizengamot and Wizarding kind. But the treaty which
followed that conflict resulted in the Ministry laying claim to several plots which my people had legally purchased and controlled within the Barony of Hogsmeade."

"The answer is simple then: The Ministry for Magic must return the lands or their equivalent within the Barony of Hogsmeade. If they do not have current ownership of sufficient lands to compensate you, they must pay a fair market value to you for these lands or buy lands sufficient to recompense you at fair market value and turn control of these lands over to you. You must accept the option they choose as this is only fair."

The Minister, after the collective apoplexy had diminished, asked, "And what does this have to do with the Voldemort issue?"

The Queen replied, "By solemn agreement between the Crown and Goblin-kind, should any magical terrorist be caught committing the crimes of rape, murder, or torture within the non-magical world, within the Earldom of Hogsmeade, or within lands controlled by the Crown directly, we have agreed to turn these over to Ragnok's people for trial and punishment. The rules regarding those captured is as follows: Each criminal shall be tried by a Panel of Judges three; one Wizard or Witch appointed by the Ministry, one Judge appointed by the Crown, and one judge appointed by the Head of the Goblin people, currently Ragnok. The innocence or guilt of any such criminal shall be determined by the laws as set forth within the area they were committed. If the Wizard or Witch in question is found guilty, the Ministry shall only be allowed to take control of the convict if they give solemn agreement to follow the ruling given by the Panel of Judges. If the Ministry refuses, then Gringotts shall ensure they are punished according to Goblin law for a fee paid for by the Royal accounts." She gave a wintry smile. "There will be no bribes or declaration of innocence accepted in these cases. Once caught, they will be tried. And if convicted, they will be punished. And if the Ministry or Wizengamot refuses, the Crown shall declare the Treaty of London of 1695 broken and control of all lands shall fall to the legally recognized government of all of Great Britain. Do you have any questions?"

Seeing that the Ministry workers could say nothing, the Queen then said, "Now, to the final matter: Mr. Garrick Septimus. You have a report of a crime planned by the one who calls himself Lord Voldemort. You shall report it to these officials and plans will be made to counter this criminal's plans."
Ragnok watched as the Ministry people as well as the Hogwarts ones left the meeting. The Head of the DMLE had to plan defending two sites and trying to capture as many as possible.

Finally, he turned toward the Muggle Queen and bowed. "Good Business, Your Majesty. We will be in touch."

The Queen nodded. "We look forward to it. Ensure means are left with the Royal Guard." She paused and then continued, "You do know that some might say you own me a boon, correct?"

Ragnok was confused. "A Boon, how?"

"No 350 year old loss of land – for anyone other than your people – could reasonably be expected to be recompensed. It was only legally possible because the Earldom is, in law, a private tract of land and national interests supercedes private concerns. Had there been an Earl of Hogsmeade or Baron of Hogsmeade in place, either could have protested and prevented us. We included this as we desired to … how would one say it? … we desired to flex our proverbial muscles to the Wizengamot. Their hubris was astounding and it offended us. Your people happened to be the recipient of our largesse in making it painful for them."

Ragnok considered that. He asked in a neutral tone, "And what boon would you have from us for your, as you say, largesse?"

With a small smile, "I would have you look upon a few records I have prepared and then I would have you do one more, small thing."

"What records?" he asked.

The Queen made a motion and a guard brought in a tray with a large television and a video player. It contained images from various conflicts that British soldiers had been involved in as well as images from weapons testing that had been done on the equipment the Royal Armed Forces had on hand. Ragnok, despite himself, was quite impressed.

When it was done the Queen turned to Ragnok and said, "The Magicals might be cautiously frightened of your ability to make war and therefore willing to alter agreements made after a conflict due to disagreements on both sides. We have shown this so that you will know one thing: We treat you with respect and as your own masters because of our beliefs, and not because of fear. Should you decide to abrogate an agreement due to a dislike of terms by attacking us or our people, we shall call every able-bodied soldier to service to combat any such threat. And, although our Royal Forces number only 100,000 at any given time with another 50,000 in reserve and, perhaps, another 100,000 who would immediately volunteer if called, we also have the loyalty – if needed – of the Armed Forces of several Commonwealth nations. If We call, they will come. And so I ask you this: Tell your people that the Muggle Crown treats you with respect but not fear. An attack against us would – eventually – prove suicidal. We would not dither and hesitate as the Magicals would but we would bring all efforts and resources to bear against any who would attack us. Can you do this?"

Ragnok noticed the tone of absolute certainty that the Queen spoke with. And truthfully, the numbers were a bit frightening: If he mustered every Goblin he could not equal the number they had on hand, regardless of reserves and volunteers. In this, he was certain: The Muggles were not the Magicals and they would need different protocols in dealing with them as needed. He bowed
briefly and said, "I will ensure my people recognize the generous nature of Your Majesty and your forbearance."

With a smile Elizabeth replied, "Then we have an accord. May your enemies' blood brighten your blade."

"And may your enemies' coffers enrich your own." With that Ragnok withdrew.

Elizabeth watched the Gringotts contingent go. She was thankful for the lesson that Dumbledore and Septimus had provided as to the mindset of the Goblins and how different they were from humans. More than any human, Goblins understood the concept of the velvet-covered fist.

The attacks that the Dark Lord attempted on New Years Eve were unusual in that neither one truly succeeded. In addition to not being able to kill anyone truly important, the Death Eaters lost several important members. Abraxas Malfoy was amongst those killed at one site and the Lestrange brothers were taken into Ministerial custody at the other.

Albus Dumbledore himself arrived to oppose Tom Riddle directly and even with his formidable skill he could not overcome the Defeater of Grindewald.

The Death Eaters had to retreat and lick their wounds, preparing for their next big step. It was obvious things were changing when normal attempts at bribes were ineffective in getting the two Purebloods released on technicalities or for some other reason.

Gary Seven smirked as he replaced the Diary that Abraxas Malfoy had in his Manor with a reasonable facsimile. Using his Divine nature, Gary made a facsimile that should fool even the Dark dufus.

Gary's next stop was to infiltrate the Ministry or Azbaban to see if the Lesranges already had the cup.

It was January 2, and the Hogwarts Express was on its way to Hogwarts to return the students after their Yule break.

The Marauders were happy to be returning. It had been a good break for each of them.

Sirius had spent a good portion of the time consulting with his Grandfather on the direction the family was to go. As opposed to earlier times, he was now proudly sporting the Heir ring for the Black family – his father Orion had been specifically removed from the line of succession due to the poor direction that he was leading the family toward.

Arcturus Black had made it clear to the Blacks: Tojours Pur would be taken as Always Pure in Magic rather than Always Pure in blood. Andromeda Tonks had been taken back into the House to acknowledge her choice of spouse was now considered acceptable given that she had a daughter with a rare ability from that marriage.

As the Defense Professor, Gary stood watching as the students returned. Instead of being taken to the doors of Hogwarts, however, they were taken only to the Gate.

One of the younger students asked his friends, "Why here? Don't we usually go right to the doors?"

Gary, who was half hidden, replied, "A precaution. A bit chilly but I have set warming charms
between here and the door. The Headmaster will explain." The student nodded and went in with their friends.

With about two-thirds of the students entered, it finally happened. One of the older Slytherin students found they could not enter the gate. He looked at the Defense Professor (whom he had particular instructions regards due to the man's report which cause the Dark Lords defeat on New Year's Eve), "Why am I stopped here? I'm a Hogwarts student!"

"It seems, Mr. Pyrites, that the Wards have decided that you have some less than pure intentions toward the school, its staff or its students. Before you are allowed to enter, an extra step must be taken." Gary sent off a Patronus.

Soon Dumbledore arrived. "Ah, Mr. Pyrites. We have an issue, it appears."

The Seventh-year was pugnacious. "Well, I demand, as is my right, to enter Hogwarts. I have sixth months until my graduation and you have no right to stop me."

Dumbledore's twinkle dimmed considerably. "Perhaps you did not read the Prophet. It was widely reported that the Wards were upgraded and anyone attempting to enter with designs against the school or its inhabitants would be stopped. No matter. Entrance only requires one small step."

"And what is this step?" the teen asked.

Gary pulled out the simple contract and Dumbledore took it and handed it to Pyrites. "You must sign this contract."

"What is this?" he asked with some indignation.

"Simply put, to enter unto the Wards, you must agree that while you are within Hogwarts' bounds, you shall act with neutrality as a minimum toward the staff and your fellow students. We have no desire to tell anyone what they must believe. But a binding contract to not harm those within is required."

"And if I refuse?" Pyrites asked.

"Then you remaining tuition will be refunded, you will be expelled, and you must seek other means to complete your education. It is your choice – you are of age to choose yourself."

Pyrites knew he was stuck. He had been given the order to help spy on Septimus and, if possible, take him by surprise by portkey to his Lord. But this contract would prevent him from acting. He decided that the intelligence was more important and so, carefully reviewing the contract to ensure that he could still report what he learned as long as it was not within Hogwarts bounds, he was only barred from direct action against the other students and the staff. Under protest, he sighed. He saw the contract flash and a copy appeared. The original disappeared. The copy was given to him for his records.

His next attempt to enter the grounds was successful. He would need to figure out his limitations. But he did know the Dark Lord would not be happy.

After the feast, the Headmaster clarified the upgrades to the wards. "With the escalation of activities by a particular Dark wizard and his followers, the wards of Hogwarts have been strengthened … or perhaps I should say: Brought up to a more secure level. During the Yule break, certain matters were clarified as to the management of Hogwarts and exactly under what agreements it operates. Contrary to popular belief, Hogwarts is not run or managed by the Ministry
for Magic or the Board of Governors that it appoints. The Ministry's authority within Hogwarts extends to ensuring that educational standards are maintained and that standardized testing takes place.

"Otherwise, Hogwarts is run under the authority of the Founding families, specifically Ravenclaw for Hogwarts specifically and, along with the Forbidden forest which was deeded to Hufflepuff and Hogsmeade which is the purview of the Slytherin family, the entirety of these make up the Earldom of Hogsmeade, run by the Gryffindor family."

There were sounds of protest, but none sufficient to interrupt. "With the absence of recognized heirs, it falls to me, as Headmaster, to ensure the safety and security of these lands. The only instance where my authority can be removed is if I allow any insurrection against the rightful Royal Family of Great Britain, and therefore of Scotland, to be created or to be assisted within these walls."

The Headmaster took a sip from his goblet. "Anyone whom the wards refuse entry to must sign a magically-binding contract which states that they shall act neutrally as regards Hogwarts and its denizens whilst they attend this institution. Otherwise, their attendance will be refused. In addition, a previous modification of the wards was corrected this past summer. This incorrect modification made the wards against Rape or sexual coercion disabled. That is no longer the case. Anyone who causes these wards to activate will be held in statis and will subsequently be turned over to the Ministry for prosecution. And by Royal Writ, if the Ministry refuses to prosecute, the perpetrator shall instead be turned over the to Goblin nation as a neutral third party to be tried by a panel of judges including one magical, on Goblin, and one judge appointed by the Crown."

He took on a serious look. "I will warn you now: This ward includes any coercion that might be accomplished by spell, potion, or physical force. It does not differentiate between male or female coercion – if a witch attempts to potion a wizard, the wards will treat this the same as if a wizard tried to physically force a witch. BOTH are considered rape under the laws of the Ministry and under the guidelines by which Hogwarts operates. We have already sent one wizard to be prosecuted who violated this ward. Does anyone have any question as to these matters?"

There was some shock but no questions.

With a smile the Headmaster said, "Good! With these improvements, all students should see a much safer environment for them to complete their studies – which is the important factor anyway. Should anyone have any questions in the future as to their limits, they may consult their Head of House or myself. Now, I am certain that you all, having stuffed yourselves sufficiently, are quite ready to find your way to relaxing and preparing for the new term. You are all now dismissed."

As happens, the Hogwarts year went on and it became difficult for those within to pay too much attention to what was happening outside of its walls.

The Traveler, therefore, was somewhat surprised when he happened to converse with Petunia Evans upon one visit.

"How are your studies going, Ms. Evans?" he asked the young woman.

Petunia's smile held none of the bitterness that would have been there on the face of Petunia Dursley. "It has been going very well, Professor. I'm just begun third-year charms, while transfiguration is solidly near the end of second year. Potions is a bit behind but that is because it takes more practice to ensure I know different basic techniques. But Severus has been quite helpful."
"I'm glad to hear that. And how about your A-Level studies? I hope that the extra work hasn't been too stressful."

"Not at all! I find that the extra time studying has increased how quickly I pick things up. My parents have been quite happy with my grades and the reports they've received." She paused and giggled – very un-Dursleylike behaviour. "They even approved my working on Saturday."

Gary was curious. "What work?"

"At Mr. Fortescue's shoppe. I've started to spend a few hours every week learning what it takes to run it. It's been a lot of fun. I'm even planning on how to open a new area of business that Mr. Fortescue had not considered."

"Really? How is that?"

"Well, it started when I went to deposit my first payment and to see the small vault Lily helped get for me as a Christmas gift. When I was waiting with the cart-runner for the next cart to be available, my curiosity overcame me. I happened to ask the cart-runner about the difference between human tastes and that of his people. At first he was impatient, but he decided to humor me. I found that they consider human food too bland by far and prefer more concentrated flavours and even some that humans consider less than palatable. They despise cow's milk, preferring goat milk, yak's milk, or even camel milk. They also don't like refined sugars like humans do – they prefer honey and a sweetener from South America called stevia – it's far sweeter than sugar and has a slightly metallic aftertaste – which they like. I took the idea to Mr. Fortescue about making ice cream using a different milk and a different sweetener with different and more savory tastes for different flavours from around the world. It would taste horrible to humans but with a little testing we could make something for goblins."

Gary was surprised. "And how is it going?"

"We're waiting for different spices to come in from an agent in Istanbul, which has the greatest variety of spices sold. He's also arranging for a few different milk types to test. I think he likes the challenge."

Gary was impressed. "Well, good luck with that. It sounds like a possibly extremely profitable venture if done well."

Petunia nodded. "If it works, I'll be making a commission on whatever gets sold. I'm really looking forward to doing something no one has tried before."

Gary let Petunia go back to her sister and friends. Ice cream for Goblins – who would have guessed?

It was mid February and Gary was amused by the over-the-top celebration of Valentines Day by the Marauders and their friends, mostly egged on by Sirius Black.

While they had toned down their pranks, their nature hadn't changed much. James was still showy, especially toward Lily. Wormtail was still distracted by his tutoring of Petunia, Remus was still the very studious one, and Sirius Black loved to make a spectacle.

The Marauders had set up a prank which randomly caught students of opposite genders together. Gary was impressed as it acted like a mini-ward. It required the boy to kiss to girl for it to allow them to leave the area. Luckily, the kiss could be on the cheek or even on the back of the hand.
When the exact nature of the barrier was revealed, students watched the areas that were found with enthusiasm and cheered by the level of the kiss: Minor clapping for kissing the back of a girl's hand, more enthusiasm for a kiss on the cheek and wild applause when the two snogged.

It was quite amusing when a student who was known to be a pureblood was forced to kiss the back of a muggleborn's hand like a gentleman.

It was also a Hogsmeade Weekend. At Dinner, it was obvious who the couples were. A few had actually sprung up because the Marauders' prank – which apparently was the whole point anyway.

At dinner, however, something quite interesting occurred: The Headmaster and Sirius Black received owls. This was unusual as normally all mail on Saturday was at lunch. When the Headmaster read the message, his eyes widened.

He looked out at the students and saw Sirius had read his own message. The Headmaster quietly had his deputy give Sirius a message for him to come to his office after dinner.

Gary, curious, asked just loudly enough for the staff only to hear, "If I may be so bold, anything you can tell us?"

Dumbledore hesitated. "You can come to the office as well – it has to do with that warding you negotiated during the Yule break."

Gary's eyes widened. The only wards that he had arranged were those that were placed on the residences of the Royal family.

Just as soon as the meal was over, Gary made his way to the Headmaster's office with the man. After a short time, Sirius also arrived.

"Mr. Black. I assume your letter was as regards your cousin Bellatrix?" Albus asked.

Sirius nodded. "As Heir to the Black family, my Grandfather has directed his Accounts Manager to send me copies of any information that has to do with the family. So the message about Bella being caught by the wards at Sandringham."

Gary's eyes widened. "So what was the message, if I may ask?"

The Headmaster replied, "There will be a hearing at Gringotts as per the agreement between the Royal family and the Goblin Nation. She will be subjected to Veritaserum and, if found guilty, will either be turned over to the Ministry or sentenced by the tribunal. We have been asked to observe. As the Goblin Nation does not hold the same work week as the Ministry, it will take place tomorrow."

Gary asked, "As I helped arrange the warding, I would request to go as well."

Dumbledore nodded. "I will take you with me." He turned to Sirius. "And will you be bringing anyone?"

Sirius nodded. "My Grandfather and I want Regulus to see things as needed as he is heir after me until I have kids. My father has been removed from the line of succession due to his lack of restraint regarding Dark magic."

Albus' eyes widened. "I thought that the Black family was fairly accepting of such magicks."

"We are. But recently it was clarified within the family that Blacks are not supposed to use Dark
magic outside of necessity to protect the family or in self-defense. And the study of Dark magic may only be done if the family member has sufficient self-control not to become addicted to it. I claimed my avoiding it was that I hadn't yet achieved the maturity necessary and my Grandfather has accepted that.

Albus's eyes twinkled. "An enlightened position. What changed?"

"I successfully argued that the Black family motto of Torjous Pur should be Always Pure in Magic and not blood," was Sirius' reply. "According to the new strictures, we will no longer learn Dark magic until our cores have matured to adulthood. Unfortunately, there is some holdover and Bella is a result." He sighed. "I don't know what to think but I will go and witness."

Gary was quite curious about what would happen the next day.
Sirius Black, along with his brother Regulus, traveled with the Headmaster and their Defense Professor to Gringotts.

Security was very high. Although the normal work of the Goblins seemed to be unaffected, there were now four guards instead of two at the doors, two more guards at the inner doors, and several guards standing at various locations along the walls of the main lobby.

Sirius informed the one that seemed to be leading the guards that he was here to witness a trial. The group was led quickly through a door that led to a long hall which opened into a large meeting hall.

Sirius saw his father and, with Regulus, made his way over. Albus and Gary were directed to have a seat as well.

At precisely 9:45, a large group of goblins led Bellatrix Lestrange nee Black to the area set for the Defense. A man dressed in formal robes and a wig stood by her. Another man in a wig stood at the accuser's table.

And at 10:00, the room was called to order by a very large Goblin holding an axe in its rest position.

When the Judges entered, many wizards were surprised to see that one of the judges was a Wizengamot member wearing traditional robes.

It was soon explained by the center Judge (another Goblin) that the procedures were being held according to Goblin rules of evidence. This meant that while the Defendant had a right to a barrister, the defendant did not have a right to refuse Veritaserum.

There were immediate cries from some Purebloods. These were quelled when the Bailiff took his axe from its rest position and ordered them to be quiet or face eviction or even imprisonment in a Goblin cell. The grin on the Bailiff's face spoke of how much he would like to prevent disruption using his weapon.

The Court read out the charges and the Defense Barrister entered a plea of not guilty for the defendant as each charge was read – Bellatrix refused to speak.

The Crown's prosecutor presented the evidence. The Defense tried to poke holes in the procedures used but this came to naught. Finally, Bellatrix was forced to take Veritaserum. The Prosecutor proved quite easily that Bellatrix had invaded the Royal residence as a reprisal against interference in matters Magical by the Queen.

Her membership in the Death Eaters was also proved, as well as her hatred of Muggles which drove her.
Desperate, her Barrister asked her why she hated Muggles.

It proved to be the stone which started an avalanche. It turned out that as a young girl, Bellatrix didn't hate Muggles – in fact she was quite curious about them. However her mother, upon hearing the young girl asking questions and espousing the idea that muggles were interesting, had performed the Crucio curse on her.

Bellatrix had reverted to speaking as a young girl in almost a baby voice, crying out against her punishment and agreeing to despise Muggles to prevent being tortured again.

The Crown's prosecutor tried to object to this Defense, but everyone present could see that his heart wasn't in it.

When it was done, she was taken away for her own dignity.

Arcturus Black was called to the stand to deny that such things could happen. He refused to do so. He was quite candid that he had recently found that many of the current generation of Blacks had been subjected to the torture curse for going against what was believed to be the Black's motto.

Arcturus decried the technique and stated that he was perfectly fine with his daughter-in-law as well as the Black sisters' mother being arrested and tried for performing unforgivables on the children of his House.

This definitely caused an uproar among the Purebloods who had come to witness the trial. Arcturus stood defiant and Sirius and Regulus Black moved to stand in front of their Grandfather as shields against any who would attack him for what he said. Their faces showed defiance and resolve.

The upsurge of protests were cut off when the Bailiff called for backup and the Purebloods soon had a group of guards standing behind them with drawn weapons.

The lead Judge sounded almost approving when he told the boys that the Court would ensure their grandfather's safety while there were there and they could return to their seats. Both boys bowed with respect to the Judge and did so.

The Prosecutor, despite his lack of enthusiasm, skillfully argued that she was guilty regardless of her past history and deserved some punishment.

Her Defender argued passionately for mercy and that it was obvious that her behaviour was the result of crimes committed against her.

The Judges withdrew to deliberate and took only an hour to make a decision: With a vote of 2-1 (the Goblin was obviously the 1) the Court found her Not Guilty but ordered her to receive treatment under a mind healer AND a psychiatrist working together. The Black family was ordered to pay for the cost of treatment, which Arcturus easily agreed to. She would not be released until she was found to be not a danger to herself or others.

While quite a few of those who had attended left, Arcturus remained behind with the others to make arrangements for payment and to find out what would happen. He also agreed to allow her to be questioned for details on Voldemort using Veritaserum. With the Lestranges being also incarcerated, she had no other choice but her natal family to be responsible.

Gary, who had witnessed all of this with the approval of Arcturus, smiled. Her Vault could now be accessed by the Black Paterfamilias.
When everything was done, Gary spoke to Arcturus. "If you remember, there was that item that I tried to find out if was already in the Lestrange vault after the brothers were caught. Perhaps now would be a good time to check."

Arcturus considered that. Albus watched curiously. Finally, he nodded. "A good idea. Let's go find me account manager."

Albus asked, "If I may be so curious, what are you talking about?"

The two men turned to Albus and considered. They looked at each other. Arcturus' face was neutral. Gary shrugged. Arcturus then said, "I believe it's something that should be explained but not right now. I believe I shall keep Professor Septimus with me for a while. He will return by the evening meal."

Albus nodded, a little put out that it wasn't immediately explained, but also knowing that his Defense Professor did not keep things to himself unnecessarily. And so he left and made his way back to Hogwarts. He took the two Black brothers with him. They had promised already not to speak of what they knew of this.

As they walked to the Lobby to take care of things Gary said, "You will need to ensure you are safe. If the Dark Wanker finds out that you have access, he'll send some of his minions after you – or try to attack himself."

Arcturus gave a tight smile. "It's a good thing I've had the wards updated. I also have a few surprises in place in case that isn't enough."

"Good. I'd rather you kept yourself safe – the Black family couldn't survive if you were killed before you could finish transforming your House."

Arcturus replied, "If I fall, Sirius will finish it. I've taken his father out of the line of succession. If I am killed, Sirius will be emancipated and become Lord Black immediately. I'm not worried."

"I hope you are right," was all that Gary could say. He did surreptitiously place a charm on Arcturus that would be undetectable by mortal wizards: If he was attacked, Gary would feel it and he would come.

The Goblins were asked, if anyone inquired, to report that the Lestrange vault was locked down until she was released, by the order of Lord Black. All permissions had been revoked and no one could enter unless one of them was legally released.

Sirius was informed a few weeks later than Narcissa Malfoy had tried to access the vault under an old authorization but was rebuffed.

Classes proceeded as normal. Voldemort had tried to attack a few more places, but his numbers were down. The Ministry, due to the Queen's threat, was more diligent about combating him. Even if the Ministry was fairly complacent as Voldemort was mostly attacking the Pro-Muggleborn faction, no one wanted to see the Wizengamot ordered disbanded for not dealing with the problem.

In other worlds, the voices which demanded the Ministry confront the Voldemort problem were quickly countered by Death Eater attacks against them and fear by those remaining. In this world, the Muggles were much more scary to the Purebloods. And so, despite being someone sympathetic, the Ministry truly did oppose the Death Eaters.

It was heartbreaking when a student received a black letter from the Ministry with news that a
family member had fallen. But it was few and far between.

It was Easter Break and Gary was mentally reviewing his progress:

Remove the curse against the Defense Professors. Check.

Prevent Petunia Dursley from becoming a complete bitch. Check. (He still marveled at the relationship between Peter Pettigrew and Petunia Evans.)

Teach the Marauders not to be bullies. Check.

Get Severus Snape away from Death Eater recruiters. Check.


Teach Dumbledore he was not God. Ehh – that was better but he was still a bit know-best.

Put the Death Eaters on the Defense instead of having them operating without fear. Check.

Bonus: Get the Black Family away from their former path. Check.

Getting Acromatula colony removed from Forest. Still to be done.

Collect current Horcruxes (Diary, Diadem, Ring, Cup): Check. The Cup had finally been retrieved and while Gary had not actually destroyed them yet, they were ready to be cleansed.

Prevent the other Horcruxes from being created: Locket, Nagini, Harry Potter. Check. He hoped.

He then considered it. Kreacher was used to test the defenses – there was no guarantee that the Horcrux was placed right before that.

Gary smacked his head. "Stupid, stupid, stupid. To ASSUME is to make an ASS of U and ME."

He stood up from his desk and contemplated how to confront the circumstances. He could use divine power to break the enchantments. Or he could try forcing a sentient or semi-sentient creature to drink the liquid.

Gary's problem was the he considered it a crime to just torture any creature save those that were specifically evil – made evil. Even Grindlylows, as much as they were called demons, were a natural creature (as much as natural as magical creatures could be anyway) and had a place in the natural order of this world.

Gary considered the different worlds that he had visited and tried to recollect a creature that was without redemption. Suddenly, he remembered one world and a slow smile crept upon his face. There was a "live" creature that was extremely susceptible to being mentally controlled that was, by its very nature evil and unable to be redeemed. Created specifically to be evil, he had no compunction about using his abilities to control one of them.

After sending a Patronus to Albus to inform him he was going to be away, Gary concentrated and 

traveled.

The final two orcs at Minas Ithil – or Minas Morgul as it was now known – were in contention. One was holding the belongings of the prisoner and the other was trying to force that one to stay and help find the invader.
Just after the one with Frodo's belongings was stabbing the last Captain, a bright light appeared right behind him. He turned and was wide-eyed as a Man looked at him. He was further non-plussed when the man grinned at him.

He tried to turn and run, knowing his information was vital, but suddenly was hit by … something … and knew no more.

Harry Potter looked down at the creature he had just stunned. This one would do nicely.

However, before he could move to truss it up, a call was heard. Harry looked up curiously and saw a hobbit of all things at a window. Divesting the creature of whatever he was carrying (and it seemed to be things that were too nice for the orc to have owned), he finished tying and gagging the creature before levitating it. He had it following along as he made his way toward the tower.

He was met at the door by the hobbit who he now recognized from an earlier visit.

"Samwise Gamgee! What the hell are you doing in this horrible place?"

Sam was taken aback. "Do I know you?"

The man waved off the question. "No – not in this world. But why are you here?"

"I'm trying to get to my master who was taken prisoner!"

Harry looked at Sam. "Ohhhh. You're on that quest. So it's Frodo up there?"

Samwise nodded nervously.

"Well, let's go."

"Why are you taking that with us?" He then noticed it was off the ground and his eyes widened. "How is the orc floating?"

Harry grinned. "Because I need to have someone torture themselves and orcs are irredeemable. And it's off the ground using magic."

"Magic? Are you a wizard?"

Harry bowed. "Harry Potter, Wizard. At your service."

Sam now had a sudden hope. "Can you help me find my master?"

Harry sighed. "Yeah. If I don't I'll feel like I've left things undone." He moved the orc off to the side and let it down. "I'll come back for this later."

Harry tried a point-me spell and noticed immediately that there seemed to be something which made his spells weaker. He frowned and considered. He turned to Sam. "Are there any chains around here? Something is fighting my magic and if the spells wear off that orc the whole reason I'm here will be gone."

Sam helped find a length of chain and Harry overpowered his magic to fuse the ends together so that it couldn't break the chain even if it woke up. He then took his wand and put more power into it, accessing his divine nature. This worked.

In far-off Barad-dur, Sauron felt the foreign magic being used in his realm. He concentrated his Eye in that direction. He saw Minas Morgul and wondered what was happening. He mentally
ordered a Ringwraith in that direction.

The two made their way up the stairs. At the apparent top, Harry noticed that his wand was moving in random directions. He concentrated and looked first down and then up. He grinned as he saw the trapdoor.

Looking around he saw the ladder and moved it over. Sam didn't wait and quickly climbed the ladder.

Harry didn't feel any evil being nearby (as muted as his perceptions were in this damned place) and so he just followed. He heard Sam's glad cry. "Master!"

By the time he was up the ladder, Sam was furiously checking Frodo over. Frodo was on guard. "Who is this?"

Sam answered. "That's Harry Potter – he's a wizard. He helped me find you."

Frodo was surprised. "A wizard? Aren't all wizards old?"

Harry gave Frodo the gimlet eye. "It's not as if we're born old."

Frodo blushed a bit. "Sorry. I only know Gandalf."

"Fine. Anyway. I believe these things are yours."

Frodo's eyes lit up as Harry took the bundle from the sack he had hastily conjured.

Frodo rifled through the things and then looked like he was in despair. "It's not here."

Sam asked worriedly, "What's not there?"

"The Ring! The Ring is missing!"

Sam blushed. "Oh – sorry. I took that when I thought you were dead."

Frodo's eyes widened and his voice suddenly was harsh. "Give it back! Give it back now!"

Harry noticed the tone immediately and frowned. This was that damn compulsion. Taking his wand he hit Frodo with an Imperius – the only way to break the control quickly.

Frodo suddenly was stock still and his eyes widened. "What did you do?"

"I overrode the control being put on you. We're going to have to take care of that damn ring before it kills you. Where are you going with it?"

"Mount Doom. I have to throw it in Mount Doom."

He pointed out the window at the smoke plume which could be seen even if it was 50 miles away – the volcano itself wasn't visible. He sighed. "Take put a hand on my robe."

The two hobbits, confused, did so. Harry concentrated and traveled to the farthest visible point.

The three appeared about a mile away from an Orc camp. Harry's eye's widened as he saw an evil apparition flying overhead suddenly turn toward them. The creature screamed. Harry withdrew his wand and cast a Patronus – his Mrrrr Patronus. The Creature screamed. Harry didn't wait around. He looked and saw the mountain with the smoke coming out and concentrated again.
The three were now on the slopes of the Volcano. Harry looked around and saw a path and a large cave. "There!"

Frodo and Sam, still shocked from the travel, looked. They saw he was right.

"Hang on."

Harry used magic to travel again and they were at the cave mouth. Frodo looked like he was fighting to stay calm. Harry hit him with another Imperio. Frodo shook his head. "I'll keep doing that until it's destroyed."

Frodo nodded. The Ring was fighting and it was strong here – but Harry was a God.

The three quickly walked to near the edge. Harry told Sam to hand it to Frodo – which he did. Luckily, Sam seemed to overcome the compulsion to keep it using his own emotions of love for Frodo.

Harry hit Frodo once more with an Imperio and then withdrew it. "Throw it in!"

Frodo immediately did so. They looked over and saw the Ring hit the Lava – and felt the ground rumble. Harry grinned and grabbed the two and traveled once more.

They reappeared in the chamber that had held Frodo.

They felt the Earthquake even from here. "Get underneath that table!" he called pointing to a stone table in the room. The three quickly moved together. Luckily, the tower, 60 miles from the epicenter, was strong enough to withstand the quake.

Harry grinned as he felt the snap of the Dark magic which surrounded them suddenly … disappear.

The Captains of the West had been discussing exactly what they should do. Just as Aragorn was agreeing to Gandalf's plan to assault the Dark gate to distract Sauron from the Ringbearer, the group felt the sudden change in the air. All of them stood up and moved outside to look toward the East where Mordor was.

All of the them men who were awake had done the same.

Suddenly a black image, darkness, filled the sky to the East. Despite that, each of them felt a new hope. And suddenly, they felt the ground quake somewhat.

Eomer asked, "Is it the end?" He was skeptical despite the new light feeling he had.

Gandalf called back, "No!" With a loud voice he called, "HOLD MEN OF THE WEST!"

Everyone stood and watched as suddenly a bright sunlight broke through the dark cloud and a swift wind forced the Darkness back. Gandalf knew what that meant. In a loud voice he called, "THE RINGBEARER HAS FULFILLED HIS QUEST! SAURON IS DEFEATED! MORDOR FALLS! THE WEST HAS WON!"

A great cry was lifted and it was echoed throughout the city and the through the lands.

In far off Erebor, the Men of Dale and the Dwarfs of the Mountain, as they confronted the host that was gathering to attack, felt the tension in the air break. And suddenly, the Dark Hosts they faced dissolved into confusion and fear.
The King of Dale and the King of the Mountain both cried out, "ATTACK!"

In the Elven realms, those that faced the forces streaming from Dol Guldur felt the change in air and saw the confusion of their enemies. The absolute control that Sauron wielded in Mordor was not present here, but still they had been strengthened by his will. And that was now lost. The Elves suddenly had new hope.

And in Cirith Ungol, the creature known as Gollum felt the destruction of the One Ring. And suddenly the unnatural life that had sustained him for all of these centuries was withdrawn and he fell to his knees. His mind cleared. And suddenly, the Dark force which drove him was gone. And he felt sudden joy – and remorse.

His eyes closed and he fell down. Within a few minutes, the form which had been the hobbit-like creature that had been turned into that loathsome beast reappeared. Great age showed on the body and it stopped. And thus passed Smeagol, kin of Deagol, and he would no more be seen in the world.

When the ground had settled, the three at the top of Minas Ithil crawled out. Frodo was distracted. "It's over."

Harry nodded. "Yep." He looked at the hobbit and saw the vestiges of the horrible time he had experienced. With a smile he said, "Sam? Do you have a clean knife?"

Sam nodded in confusion. "Yeah. I still have Mr. Frodo's sword."

"Pull it out and each of you make a small cut on your arm – just enough to bleed but not dangerous."

Frodo and Sam looked at each other and nodded. The wizard had helped them and so they did as he asked.

"Okay. Put your arm on the table and don't be surprised."

The two hobbits did as asked and Harry turned to his phoenix form. His song lifted their hearts. And they watched in surprise and awe as the wizard-turned-bird moved his head over their arms and cried tears into their wound.

Suddenly, the wounds healed magically. And they could feel the tears that had been shed moving through their bodies, healing the hurts and pains and poisons that they had experienced. And both suddenly felt renewed – if a bit tired.

Harry turned back. "Okay. Let me get my prisoner and then we need to skedaddle."

They didn't know what they meant but Frodo quickly dressed in the clothes that Harry had retrieved and the group moved down.

They found the orc almost mindless. Harry shrugged. "Well, this will make it easier."

For the next hour, the group made its way out until they were outside of Minas Ithil.

Harry stopped and turned back to look at the old fortress. He squinted at it for a long moment.

Sauron might be defeated but the taint was almost ingrained into it now. He asked Frodo without turning his head, "Do you thing I should try to cleanse this place or should it be destroyed?"
Frodo considered that for a long while. "It's been a place of evil for a thousand years. But it was a place of guarding for two thousand. Whatever you feel you should do – do."

Harry considered that. He had never tried to cleanse such a large environment – nor had he tried to destroy such a large edifice.

His phoenix song could cleanse Dark magic and didn't actually take much magical power. He would try to cleanse it first. "Okay. Keep a watch over that creature and wait for me here. I'm going to try to cleanse it. If it doesn't work, I'll leave it for those now in charge to take care of – destroying it by magic would take too much energy."

Frodo and Sam shrugged but agreed.

Harry turned into his phoenix form and flew over the tall tower. And gathering himself, he let forth the loudest song he could sing. It was a song of hope and renewal and rebirth.

He could feel it working. The Dark taint that exuded from the place below him started withdrawing at the sound of the pure creature's song.

Soon, extremely large eagles flew in. At first somewhat wary, he saw that these creatures did not move to attack him but flew around him, as though flying in formation.

And, after a long song, Harry could feel the snap of the final Dark taint withdraw and the Citadel below him felt neutral now.

With that, Harry flew back toward Frodo, and the large eagles followed him. He landed near Frodo and Sam and the bound orc and quickly turned to face the flight of Eagles.

Rather than attack, the Eagles landed close by.

"Greetings. While I do not know you, you have the feel of a Wizard. My name is Gwaihir the Windlord, Chieftan and Lord of the Great Eagles."

Harry bowed. "I am Harry Potter, Wizard, also called the Lone Traveler."

"You have wrought a great Magic. Even I can feel the taint that was removed by your song. How did you do this?"

"I long ago found that I could turn into a phoenix. This is a Creature of Light and in that form I have many abilities. Unique to me is the ability to cleanse Dark magic with my song."

Gwaihir nodded with great respect. "Such a thing I have never seen. Your song drew us and we are blessed by the Valar to have witnessed it. Why are you in this place?"

"I came here to find an orc to use to help dispel a dark curse and to help defeat the Dark Lord of my world. I found Frodo and Samwise, who bore the Dark Lord's Ring to Mordor to destroy it. I helped take them the final distance to complete their quest. I could not leave without trying to cleanse this Dark magic which came from that place."

The Great Eagle looked at the hobbits and said, "It is obvious that your bravery is larger than your forms. You have done this world a great service. What boon would you have of us in recompense for helping to throw down the Dark Lord of the One Eye?"

Frodo paused. He had heard the stories that Bilbo had told. "Do you know of Minas Tirith, the City of Guard?"
The Eagle nodded. "It is twenty leagues West of this place."

"I believe that the remaining members of the companions that set out with me from Imladris can be found there – that is where they were going. If it is not a burden, I would ask assistance in traveling there so that I can report to Strider that I have completed my quest. He is the one that led us after Gandalf fell in Moria."

Gwaihir nodded. "I and one of my brethren will take you. And perhaps you will find a surprise when you arrive." He was the one who had found Gandalf at Galadriel's request after he had been returned by the Valar. It was obvious that this small being did not know this. It was not his place to tell him but the White Wizard was most likely at that place as well.

Harry nodded. He felt no deception from the Great Eagle – except a secret joy. He also felt that the Eagle was about to prank Frodo but not maliciously. He would be amused to find out what the Eagle planned – but this was not his world.

The Great Eagle turned to him. "And would you like to travel there as well with that tainted thing?"

Harry said, "No. But I thank you for asking. It is time to return to my world to finish what I started which brought me here. But any debt is paid if these are returned to their fellows."

"Very well then."

Harry turned to Frodo and Sam. "Good luck. May you find Peace and Joy following your ordeals." He turned back to the Eagles. "And may you find warm air currents and easy prey in all the days of your life."

The Windlord bowed his head in respect. "May you find success in the defeat of your own Dark Lord."

Harry grinned. "Oh, I will. Have no fear." He moved to where the orc was and grabbed the chain. "Goodbye."

The Eagles and Frodo and Sam watched as the wizard and his captive disappeared into light.

The Eagle them motioned to one of his fellows and the other Eagle came forward. They both moved their heads down until the hobbits had access. "Climb up but take care not to pull our feathers or you shall be dumped on the way to the City of Guard."

Frodo replied nervously, "We'll be careful." Sam nodded with great energy in agreement.
Chapter Notes

I fixed a few problems with the last chapter. I had re-read a few back stories and mixed up the wand. As much as I'm proud of the concept of Harry's new wand, it is not that big a deal compared to his innate abilities: He was already pretty kick ass without the Wand of the Gods. Thanks to UrsinetheMadBear for pointing out the inconsistency and Goku90504 for the mistakes.

Harry, now thinking himself as Gary again, arrived with his orc captive exactly where he had envisioned: Right outside of the cave. With a quick spell, he cut his finger and put some blood on the entrance. It opened and he levitated his captive in.

He could have probably traveled right to the island, but he didn't need to set off any protections that might trigger of there was activity without the proper procedure being used to open the cave.

Carefully placing the orc in the boat, Gary then conjured a winch attached to the small island and let it pull him in.

He was very careful about not disturbing the water.

Once on the island, he cast the Imperius Curse on the orc and the orc started drinking the liquid in the bowl. He could have overpowered the defenses but didn't want to deal with the inferius that were in the lake until after the locket was retrieved.

The orc's mind finally came back halfway through the bowl. It started gibbering. Harry was relentless though – he forced the orc to continue.

Finally, the dregs were gone and Gary used his magic to levitate out the locket. With a small spell (divine level) he banished the locket to where he had the others.

He then considered how to do the next step. He could use Fiendfyre – but that was a bit too demonic for his taste. Phoenix fire might be the best choice – but he had never tried to conjure it or to express it outside of his phoenix form.

Suddenly, he had an idea. With a casual cutting curse, he killed the orc – he did not want to burn even this creature alive. While he wouldn't have hesitated if it was necessary, it wasn't.

Looking up, he saw the ceiling. He conjured chains attached to the ceiling at three points and a platform suspended by these chains.

Nodding to himself, he changed to his phoenix form and landed on the plate. He then changed back.

Concentrating, he closed his eyes and concentrated upon the flow of water through the rocks – much as he had concentrated to find the ley lines beneath Hogwarts.

Soon, he found the spring which fed the water into the cave. With a mental nudge, he blocked it. He searched a bit more and found one more spring and blocked that. Now, there was no water
coming in to replace the water that would evaporate.

He then concentrated on where the air went after it collected the moisture from the lake. He opened that a bit wider, as well as another opening which would let in more air from the outside.

He then took a deep breath – and cast a large drought spell. This spell would collect the moisture from the lake into the air so that it could dissipate. He had to wandlessly conjure a bubble-headed charm to keep an air flow, but it worked.

He could feel the air taking in the moisture. He watched as the almost smog-like air moved up and out. He concentrated on bringing fresh air inside to replace the moisture-laden air.

It took a significant amount of time – but finally the large body of water had been removed and what was left was a couple hundred corpses. Harry cast again and removed all the moisture from the corpses as well.

He would have to take a rest when this was done.

When all the water and all the moisture was gone, all that was left was desiccated skin and bones – all flammable. But it would be better if he grabbed an accelerant. Shrugging, he decided to just add more power to an incendio.

And so, Harry Potter, Garrick Septimus, Gary Seven, overpowered a fire-spell and directed it to the large numbers of dried-out corpses. As soon as he did that, he transformed to his phoenix form and watched.

When 80 percent of the remains were burned, the fire looked like to was going to sputter out. He cried out and, using his affinity for fire, magically strengthened it. It flared up and continued burning the shells.

He would never have survived if he hadn't opened to vents into and out of the large cavern – the oxygen would have been used up and he would have died and been reborn several times until there was enough air for him to stay alive.

He was thankful he hadn't gotten an accelerant – that would have increased the smoke factor by 100 times and someone would have seen the smoke pouring out – that would have been hard to explain.

As it was, the small amount of smoke dissipated to an invisible level before it rose to a visible level.

Finally, the entire cavern was burned – and all that was left was ash. He mentally opened back the springs which fed this underground lake and, once he was satisfied it would refill, he concentrated on magically transporting himself out.

Arriving back to Hogwarts, he checked the items.

He had first thought of destroying them but instead had looked into methods of moving the soul pieces. The original horcrux ritual, as found in an old book that had been in the Room of Requirement, had provided the method use to direct the soul pieces. But it had to be cast by the wizard or witch whose soul was being manipulated. At least in this world.

He knew that Gringotts, in some dimensions, had methods of moving the pieces, but he had never learned those methods as they were Goblin-specific. They probably had spells that cursebreakers could use, but he – unfortunately – had never learned these.
What he really wanted to do was to release the pieces and send them back to the host – preferably in a moment he wasn't prepared to receive them. Wrestling the various pieces all at once would certainly take his mind off of whoever was attacking him. He also had visited one reality when researching his book that had allowed Riddle to regain his sanity by reabsorbing the pieces.

But he had been willing to do it there – a forced reabsorbing might not provide the same result.

So he packaged them all away and reviewed his list of actions.

All that seemed to be left, other than ensuring the students received a proper education, was to 1) Get rid of the Basilisk. 2) Get rid of the Acromatulas. 3) Get rid of Voldemort – preferably by someone from the local dimension taking care of it. 4) Report to someone who could use the information as needed about the find he had made when re-connecting the ley lines.

He recalled the day he had tried strengthening Hogwarts connections to the Earth. He had found the drifting ley lines and fixed those connections and connected the additional one. During that process, he had stumbled across something that he had never heard mention of in any dimension that contained Hogwarts. In the end, it wasn't … vital … but it might be quite useful. That was still something that he was conflicted about.

There was one more item he had to finish as well: Ensure Dumbles had a Professor lined up for the next year.

And it was that step he would work on while cluing the Headmaster on the need for 1 and 2.

Checking the time, Gary saw that it was nearly time for supper. He made his way to the Great Hall.

Upon arrival, he saw that the Headmaster was present. When he sat down, the Headmaster asked, "Back from your errand?"

Gary rolled his eyes and smiled a little. "Considering that I said I was going and then left, and have now returned – it's probably kind of obvious."

The Headmaster's eyes twinkled as he smiled. "Yes, well, small talk and all of that."

Still smiling the Defense Professor said, "Yes. Just the casual fishing expedition to find out where I went. If you're so curious – you could just ask."

Out of the corner of his eye, he saw the Deputy Headmistress fighting to control her smirk – it was obvious she was enjoying someone calling the man out on his normal methods. Albus, while not malicious, had a great deal of curiosity about everything and everyone around him.

"Anyway, I need to ask: Do you have any free time this evening?" Gary asked the Headmaster.

The Headmaster nodded. "Come around 8:00. I should be finished with my parchment work by then."

Gary nodded.

The dinner was as most dinners were in Hogwarts: Plentiful, tasty, and almost fully attended by those within the castle. There were, perhaps, only twenty to thirty percent that returned home during the break.

When dinner was finished, Gary waited around, somewhat bored, until it was time to go to the Head's office. At 7:58, he was giving the password to the gargoyle. Upon arriving at the door, he
knocked and was allowed inside.

The Headmaster sat at his desk, wearing his normal bright robes. Gary wondered exactly who he got to make those. He sat down upon invitation.

"So, Garrick, you asked to see me."

"Yes," Gary nodded. "I wanted to ask about next year's Professor. Have you made any inroads into finding them?"

Albus sighed. "I had put out a notice in the Prophet, but haven't gotten many inquiries. It hasn't been something I have put a lot of attention on."

"I will be leaving at the end of the year – there is no changing that. It would be better to find someone early. They can come and get advice if they want, or get a direct explanation of how to do things." Harry paused. That was something that he probably should put together: A written explanation of procedures, instructions, etc.; something that a complete neophyte teacher could follow and have some reasonable hope of success. Anyway ….

Albus sighed again. He had been hoping to convince the young man to return. The Defense position hadn't been so competently held since Riddle apparently cursed the position. But it was obvious that the man wouldn't be staying. He would have to begin in earnest.

"Now, there are two other things that I would like to bring up."

"Oh?" Albus asked curiously.

"Yes. While the grounds are warded against invasion by Hagrid's acromatulas, I think that there needs to be a few further steps."

Curious Albus asked, "Why is that?"

Gary sighed. "They are not native to the forest. They have made the Forbidden Forest more dangerous for unicorns, centaurs, bowtruckles, and other creatures. And while Hagrid looks at them as harmless and cute, it is unlikely that anyone else would, not having his stature and personal power."

"What would you suggest?" the Headmaster asked.

"I would suggest setting up an Acromatula farm. Find a rich family who would be able to invest in the area and the infrastructure needed and then portkey every one of them to that location. From Hagrid's description, the leader of that nest speaks English. And so, have Hagrid offer them a new hunting ground with food animals provided for them – as long as they can hunt them – in exchange for using their old webs. Otherwise, someone is going to get upset and then make every effort to wipe them out."

Albus asked mildly, "Do you think it wise to threaten them?"

With a grim smile Gary replied, "Don't think like a human when dealing with magical creatures. If you treated Goblins like wizards, you'd get a spear in your guts. It's the same with those large spiders. They understand territory, food, and threats against their survival. I am quite certain they don't attack humans only because Hagrid has a good rapport with the leader, having raised him. What happens when that leader gets old and passes on?"

Albus sat back and considered that. "There may be something to what you say."
"I might recommend the Blacks. Sirius gets along very well with Hagrid and Acromatula silk is prized in Wizard society. With Arcturus trying to rebuild the Black reputation and position, it might be a good source. The Potters are also well off and might be willing." Gary paused. "Or – depending on how much money Eileen Snape has accrued – Hogwarts might invest and profit from the returns." He then asked curiously, "How is that going anyway? Eileen's management of the untapped resources of the lost and found?"

Albus replied, "Surprisingly well. She has brought in about 30,000 Galleons. Her salary and commissions plus the money paid to students who have assisted her will cost 10,000. That is a 20,000 Galleons profit. Her expectations are that this will increase next year as she has now had opportunity to place a number of items into Muggle auctions scheduled for the summer and the fall."

Gary nodded. "That's quite good. Probably not enough to finance a farm, but quite enough to make some improvements in the other classrooms similar to what was done in the Potions classroom. Gradually go through and put in similar lights to replace the torches. Put aside a month every summer to upgrade different areas of the castle. Put in similar heating in the hallways and cooling in the House areas. Employ students who could use the extra money or those that are really enthusiastic about the particular area you are upgrading. Give it fifteen years and you could modernize Hogwarts without losing the charm that it has."

Albus' eyes twinkled as Gary spoke of the long term planning. It was obvious that the boy loved Hogwarts even if he didn't attend it. "Who would manage it if you are gone?"

"Eileen for now. Or whatever professor whose classroom is being improved for those areas. Heads of House for a particular House's dorms and common room. I am certain you will have people willing enough to spend the money you make."

Albus nodded. "Yes. Well, I will start speaking to different wealthy families who might want to invest and profit from an Acromatula farm. At least it is not something that has to be handled before the year's end."

"True. Take the time to do it right. The other item I wanted to bring up might be more of an immediate concern."

"And what is that?"

Gary looked directly in the Headmaster's eye. "Slytherin's Chamber of Secrets and the beast within."

Albus looked startled and then grave. "We have no idea where that might be. From the time that it was opened, several attempts have been made to find it but none have been successful."

Gary shook his head. "Are there any girls you would trust? Attending right now that is? Friendly, non-judgmental, intelligent."

Albus considered that. "I can think of a few. Lily Evans comes to mind."

Gary considered that. "Actually, Petunia might be better – the source that is needed might not want to talk to a 'popular and pretty' girl but might talk to someone who has experience with being put down and overlooked the way she was."

"And what source is that?"

"Moaning Myrtle."
"I have tried numerous times to speak to her – she refuses to talk to me."

Gary rolled his eyes. "Of course she does! She died a teenage girl. You were an authority figure. You need someone who can relate to her to speak to her. I am certain if you get the right person, Myrtle would be more than willing to talk."

Albus considered that. "And once we find out the information?"

Gary shrugged. "We either go and confront the beast or we wait till summer – but I probably won't be there."

"Well, the first step is to find out where it is and to decipher what the creature is."

Gary looked at the Headmaster incredulously. "Seriously? You can't figure out what it is?"

Albus answered severely, "The young woman who was killed, Myrtle, was found with no marks upon her. No residue from any spell. There was no indication of what killed her at all."

Gary rolled his eyes. "It's Slytherin's beast. The creature most often associated with Slytherin is the snake. Myrtle had no broken bones indicating strangulation as from a python, no venom in her blood, or wound indicating a bite as though from a viper. Therefore, that leaves magic. What magical snake or snakes exist that can kill at a distance instantly and can live for nearly a thousand years? Figure it out."

With that, Gary stood up and withdrew.

The Headmaster puzzled out all of the facts that had been laid out before him and considered the options. Suddenly, his eyes widened and his face paled. "Instant death at a distance from a snake. It could only be …." Albus Dumbledore was suddenly a lot more worried. This would take research.

Easter was mid-April (April 18th) and the spring break was over by April 22nd. There were only a few weeks left in the year. Gary, like most other teachers, started concentrating on ensuring the OWL and NEWT students were prepared for the examinations.

However, he also wanted to ensure that the students weren't killing themselves getting ready. And so the Defense Professor had a heart to heart discussion with the Marauders about tension and release and ensuring that pranks were actually funny and not bullying. They had been much improved (even Severus Snape had been heard remarking that he was glad the four were finally growing up) but they still had some of that teenage blindness to suffering. Therefore, the pranks that went off were viewed mostly with amusement and some small exasperation by those that triggered them. Nothing truly malicious occurred, which suited Gary down to the ground.

Gary also enlisted the house elves in reporting which students were staying awake studying past any reasonable time. Older teenagers could (and would) stay awake much longer than young children and old people, but even they needed sleep. Gary took steps.

Being a god, he really didn't need to sleep much at all. He did it because it was routine and enjoyable. And so, he had much more flexibility in when he needed to sleep and for how long. This allowed him to monitor much more closely.

In one staff meeting, Madam Pomfrey was heard to comment that she had noticed a distinct drop in the need for calming and sleeping droughts this year compared to most. Gary, at that point, fessed up that he was monitoring all houses via house elf and asking them to casting sleeping charms on any student awake past 1:00 – or 12:00 for those who woke early. He commented that even teenagers needed a few hours sleep every night. Except for those students attending astronomy, all
students were getting at least 6 hours every night.

The staff was actually chagrined that they had never thought of that. Poppy just nodded her approval – the fewer students who ran themselves into the ground, the less she needed to worry about.

The Death Eater wannabes were kept in check for most of the year by the example that had occurred at the beginning of the year and the Defense Professor's seeming unbeatable ability to find himself present when they tried to be sneaky about it.

A few had even tried to make simultaneous events to intimidate younger students or students who were Muggle-born. This was countered by Gary's "suggestion" to different teachers about where to patrol.

Minerva McGonagall was quite curious after the third time she had run across such thing after allowing Garrick Septimus to set the patrol schedule (he claimed it was his duty as Defense Professor). She didn't know how the young man knew – but it was obvious that he had some way of locating trouble before it even happened.

It also helped that a few older students had been stopped at the wards when bringing back questionable items from their Hogsmead trips. They quickly learned that there was no sneaking in any device which might be used to harm the students.

Everything was going very well. And so it was that Hogwarts was a bit better prepared when the Examiners appeared.
It was breakfast and the entire student body was present, as had been expected. The Headmaster nodded as McGonagall finished getting everyone's attention.

"Good morning! As some of you may have noticed, as of this morning we are hosting several members of the Wizarding Examination Authority in these whilst they administer standard examinations for OWL and NEWT students over the next three weeks.

"NEWT testing will be administered in stages. The OWL theory and NEWT theory examinations for each subject shall take place during the morning periods. From 1:30 until 5:30 each day for the first two weeks, OWL practical examinations will be completed. For the final week, NEWT level examinations will take place within the Great Hall.

"NEWT level students will receive their final scores within one week of the year's end, thus allowing them to use this information for any employment they may seek upon completing their schooling. OWL scores will be delivered by the end of July, thus allowing students to plan for their NEWT studies.

"Students who are not taking examinations will be expected to attend classes as scheduled for the next two weeks, at which time their year shall end, save any summer assignments being given."

Dumbledore gave a genial smile. "While I am certain that there will be at least one attempt to cheat, I implore you to avoid it. No student has succeeded in cheating in 80 years. Auto-Answer Quills, Smart-Answer Quills, Remembralls, Detachable Cribbing Cuffs, and Self-Correcting Ink are all banned from the examination hall. In addition, wit-sharpening potions, Liquid Luck, and any other enhancing potions are also banned from being used by students taking these examinations. Pepper Up potions and calming draughts may be used if approved by Madam Pomfrey. Otherwise they are also banned. As for the various remedies that some older students have tried to foist upon younger students: Hogwash. These home remedies are a waste of time and money at best and damaging at worst."

Dumbledore looked out. "Breakfast will be finished by 9:30. Testing begins at 9:45 and finished at 11:45 precisely. Should you finish your examinations early, motion to a Proctor, who will retrieve your examination, and you will be allowed to leave. For Practical examinations, all students taking the examination will wait in the hallway until called."

He smiled one more time. "Now, normally the examinations are given in the Great Hall. Beginning this year, examinations will take place in a special room. I will warn you that the wards in that room will detect any potion-use as well as the items banned. The door to that room should be appearing soon. Because of this, students may use the Great Hall before, during, and after examinations to study and prepare."

Albus looked at a time piece. "As a matter of fact, the door should be appearing just about …. Now!"

Suddenly, very near the main entrance, a door appeared at the back wall.

This was Gary's idea. With the Room of Requirement making all things possible, Gary had suggested to the Headmaster, as well as the Examiners, that it could be used quite effectively without requiring the Great Hall to be disassembled.
At 9:00, the Head of the Examination Authority would enter the Room on the Seventh Floor, requiring a room that would be ideal for the testing of that day's subject.

The Head of the Examination Authority would then request the room to open to the waiting area the examiners were located in. Once inside, that door would disappear and at an agreed upon time, a door to the Great Hall would appear.

Also included was a door to the infirmary for any student hurt during testing or who had a panic attack or other affliction.

The Room had been tested the night before and several permutations had been explored. The Examiners were more than impressed with the newly-found resource (new for them anyway).

Also included was the requirement that a ward be placed which would sound an alarm if any student entered with a forbidden item or who was under the influence of a forbidden potion. A sixth-year student had been asked to help test this and it worked.

Amusedly, when the student had taken a small dram of liquid luck (enough to last for two hours) the immediate compulsion given by the potion was to avoid coming into the examination room.

Also included within the room were lavatories for students claiming they couldn't wait for personal hygiene needs – there would be no need for one of the Examiners to escort any student during the exam. Each lavatory was a self-contained cubicle with a toilet, sink, and the needed towels and toiletries. There were silencing wards between the cubicles. There was a light that showed each cubicle in use and a light which showed a student passing out in the bathroom (it had happened before).

One member of the Examination Authority would remain in the room to maintain its form until the end of testing for that day.

There was also one more door that would be created: A door to the staff room which allowed for observers to enter a room which could look into the examinations but not interact with the students.

Gary had suggested that in case a member of the Board of Governors or other Ministry official might protest the newly instituted procedures and demand to observe.

It also allowed Professors who were not proctoring to observe the students taking examinations.

As the Head of the Examination Authority would require immutability during the period, no student entering could change the room at a whim.

Gary had ensured a booklet on how to access the room and set up the exams was included for the Wizarding Examination Authority to keep. A copy was also given to the Headmaster and his Deputy.

The testing went very smoothly. A few attempts to cheat were easily caught by the wards. A few others who had attempted to put information for a fellow student who would "need to use the facilities" to find information left by an earlier student doing the same were stymied by the Room's safety procedures for the examinations.

There were a few glum Slytherins as well as a Ravenclaw or two.

A few students had panic attacks and were sent to Madam Pomfrey for calming draughts. Because there was a door to the infirmary, such students could be returned quite quickly to finish their examinations.
All in all, the Examiners were quite pleased.

Gary had been waiting for word to come of some grand move attempted by the Dark dufus. Even though, in his world, this had been predicated upon Voldemort attempting to kill him at the end of the year, it did seem that this was the normal modus operandi of the idiot: Try something before Hogwarts ended and Dumbledore was available. Prepare for a summer of mayhem.

And so, Harry wasn't that shocked when a fearful Petunia Dursley used her portkey on an emergency basis the first Saturday following OWL testing.

Petunia had actually successfully taken the Charms, Transfiguration, Potions, and Defense OWLs. She hadn't studied Astronomy and she wasn't ready for Herbology. She also wasn't ready for the Creature OWL. She made no attempt on Runes and Arithmancy either. With her sister and Severus helping on Potions and her enthusiasm for wanded subjects (vindication that she was a witch), the four she took were the ones she had been ready for.

It had required her taking a Pepper Up potion as her magic levels were not what most witches had and she had needed the energy. But as it was deemed acceptable if prescribed by the school healer, there had been no problems because it was needed.

And so, it was a very cheerful Petunia who had returned to work at Fortescue's the first Saturday after the exams were done.

As she had been serving customers, a disturbance had occurred. Suddenly, several black-cloaked figures had apparated into the alley. At the front was the smirking Dark Lord that Lily and others had warned her about. She had quickly told the customers to get inside and had followed.

One of the Death Eaters, at Voldemort's direction, had moved to attack the shop. He had heard about this witch and, as a Muggleborn and a late-developing witch, she was considered less than acceptable.

However, as soon as the attack was attempted, the wards that Gary Septimus had insisted on installing activated and no damage was done.

Voldemort, upon that discovery, was less than pleased. He attempted to add his own power and was shocked when his efforts were rebuffed as well.

After a few minutes of frustration, Voldemort had decided that it wasn't worth it and had gone toward what was his true destination: Gringotts.

With that, the customers had quickly fled via apparition or rushing toward the Leaky Cauldron to floo out. Petunia had grasped her portkey and escaped, hoping to alert someone who could do something.

And so, with the almost hysterical Petunia explaining things to her sister, Gary and Albus were quickly alerted.

Albus had quickly sent off a Patronus to the Auror department at the Ministry. Gary looked at Albus. "So, are we ready to go?"

Albus looked steadily at his Defense Professor. "Are you certain we should go? I am certain that Gringotts will repel any attack and the Auror department has been alerted. I plan on going because Tom is my sin – I should have done something. But this isn't your fight."

Gary gave a tight smile. "You'd be surprised. Give me five minutes and I will be ready."
Albus nodded. "I will see if any other Professors which to aid us."

Gary, as promised, was back with five minutes. He had finally moved the soul pieces into one, single item. (He had cheated and used his divine power – he wanted to make it as easy as possible to release the pieces all at once. He would have to look in other dimensions for the spells that cursebreakers used to cleanse an item.) However, he had created replicas that now held the pieces. These were made of dried wood. He had ensured they looked real but had the properties of wood. With the protections stripped and only held loosely by the items, he figured destroying them near the Dark Dufus would cause the pieces to either dissipate or to return to Riddle.

He was crossing his fingers a bit, to be fair. He planned on ensuring it was only him and Riddle nearby when the items were destroyed.

When he arrived back to the office, Dumbledore was waiting along with Flitwick and McGonagall. Each was given a portkey to get out if things went south. Gary refused one. At Albus' look, Gary shrugged. "Won't need it."

Exasperated, Dumbledore (who also didn't keep a portkey) asked Fawkes to transport them to Diagon Alley via Fortescue's.

They arrived within the ward (nothing stopped a phoenix – unless warded specifically against which most people wouldn't even consider).

They saw that there was some damage. A few dead wizards and witches were on the street. A large number of Death Eaters were attacking the Goblins that had come out to defend the Bank.

Voldemort just watched.

They immediately noticed no Aurors in sight. McGonagall cursed the inefficiency of the Ministry.

With a tight smile Gary said, "Let me get his attention."

Albus shook his head but allowed him.

McGonagall and Flitwick were creating barriers from debris – they wanted at least some cover.

Gary quickly pulled out the replicas and stood in the middle of the Alley. When he was forty feet away, he yelled as loud as he could, "HEY! IDIOTS! LOOK OVER HERE!"

Voldemort and a couple of Death Eaters no immediately involved with attacking the Goblin guards turned. Voldemort motioned and one large Death Eater sent a killing curse.

Gary banished the Diary replica right in the path of the curse.

Voldemort's eyes widened just briefly before the curse hit the book – and it exploded. The shaped of the soul piece within it appeared and then also dissipated.

Voldemort yelled "STOP FIRING" – true fear in his voice.

With his voice subtly amplified Gary called back, "Oh, come on! I've still got … four items left to shield with! Don't stop now!"

Gary watched closely. He could feel Voldemort gathering his magic. In the very instant of apparating, Gary wandlessly "finitely" the remaining items and apparated himself.

Voldemort appeared right next to where Gary had been standing just in time for the four remaining
soul pieces (all making less than half of his soul combined as the Diary had contained fully half) flowed out of the items – and right into him.

He was visibly taken aback.

From his new position he cried out to the other Professors, "ATTACK!"

While McGonagall sent a stunner, Flitwick didn't hold back: He had enough kinship with the Goblins that had already dropped that he was furious and a stunner would not do. Albus also sent a deadly spell at Voldemort.

The Dark Dufus, distracted as he was, successfully dodged. Gary said, "We'll attack his back up – you take care of the idiot."

With that the three attacked the Death Eaters who were surging forward to back up their leader.

Albus quickly moved toward Tom and started casting spells.

With glee, Gary downed a couple of Death Eaters he recognized by their shape: Walden McNair and Mulciber's father. He also dropped another wizard who he later found was the father of his student, Avery.

In addition, the Death Eaters would regret turning away from the Goblins who were guarding Gringotts: They set to the wizards who had been attacking them with great ferocity.

When he had a moment, Gary set up anti-portkey and anti-apparition wards. Since the Aurors hadn't arrived or would likely come via the Leaky Cauldron, he didn't think it would prevent assistance and he wanted to ensure that the Death Eaters present were taken care of.

It should be noted that as a group the Death Eaters were quite terrifying. But outside of a few notable exceptions, they weren't necessarily that good individually.

Dolohov found that Goblin axes were just as deadly as the Avada Kedavra curse. Igor Karkaroff found that he would not be able to run away – McGonagall got him with a stunner and banished him away from his fellows so they couldn't revive him.

Dumbledore and Riddle were having a battle and Riddle, newly hit with several parts of his soul that were not necessarily reabsorbed, was having a very hard time.

Riddle tried to apparate – and ran into the newly erected ward. And it was no weak ward.

Being that he was fresh and newly warned that stunning your opponent was a bad idea when it was life and death, Dumbledore was pretty effective in cutting down Riddle's defenses and injuring him.

At one lull, he tried to brute force the anti-apparition ward. It did not give. Gary smirked to himself that Riddle would have no luck with a divinely-placed ward.

Finally, Riddle was hit by a powerful cutter and failed to shield in time: It cut right into his chest and hit his heart.

At that point, all fighting stopped. The Death Eaters remaining – only a couple – quickly put their wands away and raised their hands.

The Goblins quickly moved to disarm them and put them into chains.
Dumbledore, a bit winded from the fight, watched quietly while this happened. He also was gathering his breath.

Finally he turned to Gary. "Were my eyes deceiving me or did I see you destroy the Diadem of Ravenclaw?" It was the one item that he was familiar enough from its description that he had recognized it. The Cup and Locket and Ring seemed random items.

Gary laughed. "Not really. That's a long story. I'll explain once we get back to Hogwarts."

At that point, the Ministry Aurors rushed down the Alley from the Leaky Cauldron – far too late for their presence to have any effect. They stopped and looked wide-eyed at the carnage they witnessed.

Gary snarked, "Finally! The backup Albus called for arrives!"

Crouch, who was leading the Aurors, was offended. "Who are you to question the Ministry?"

Incredulous Gary replied, "The one who helped Dumbledore do your job!"

Before Crouch could answer, one of the Aurors cried out, "THAT'S VOLDEMORT!" It was perhaps, Gary mused, before any taboo was put on the name. Or that Auror had more stones than most. One or the other.

Everyone looked and saw that: Yes, the body on the ground very near the Headmaster was, indeed, Voldemort. And it was obvious that he was dead.

Albus sighed. "It is truly a shame that such a powerful wizard had to be destroyed. But it was necessary. I will regret this necessity for the rest of my life."

Everyone looked in shock at the Headmaster. Needless to say, Dumbledore became even more well known than he had been.

It took a few hours, but eventually the Professors were allowed to return to Hogwarts. They had been warned (especially Gary) that they would be asked to return to provide further testimony.

When it was announced at Hogwarts that the Dark dufus and the minions he had following him were defeated and Riddle killed, there was wild celebrating – from most of the students.

There was a group of Slytherins that seemed quite put out by the news, including the younger Mulciber, Avery, and a few others. Barty Crouch Junior was included in that number.

Gary had no sympathy.

Severus Snape, Gary was happy to notice, seemed relieved at the news. As were a majority of even the pureblooded students.

Dumbledore gave permission for the students to celebrate (after reminding the NEWT students that examinations would take place as scheduled on Monday).

Gary then explained, in a meeting with Dumbledore and the other staff, the reason for Riddle's reaction to what he had done. He also turned over the various Founders' relics to the Headmaster – on the condition that they weren't displayed only in the Headmaster's office. They could be put away or displayed publicly or returned to any family, but Gary demanded they not be as vanity pieces by Dumbledore.
The Ring he had anonymously placed in the Potter Vault with an explanation of exactly what it was – and a warning about hubris.

It took a few days but the Wizarding world finally got back to business. The Ministry was doing their witch-hunting thing. It was found that the majority of Death Eaters were actually captured, although Igor Karkaroff got a light sentence by giving up a few that were not.

Lucius Malfoy was one of the names that was coughed up. He was able to testify under Veritaserum that his father had given him an ultimatum. With the body of the Dark Lord proving that he was dead (and a quiet word from Gary that he wasn't coming back and why as well as a brief conversation with Arcturus Black about what he would do if he tried to hide his misdeeds) Lucius Malfoy was quite willing to give over all the information he had.

He did have to live under probation for a few years and he had to pay restitution to the families of those he had been forced to attack.

Gary ensured, despite some misgiving from Dumbledore, that Riddle's true past was widely published. When some backlash occurred mentioning how it was obvious that his Muggle roots was the cause of his insanity, Dumbledore willingly disagreed loudly, being a half-blood himself. He also cited several half-bloods that were quite well known for being good influences on society. There were few that could argue with him.

One person that Barty Crouch really wanted to skewer was, however, Garrick Septimus himself. When Crouch tried to claim credit for helping bring down the Death Eaters, Gary was very quick to give an interview which kaboshed that idea quiet thoroughly.

Gary really disliked Crouch.

And so it was that following the end of the year, Crouch had drummed up just enough support from the families who had lost members to demand Gary present himself before the Wizengamot to explain his actions.

Gary was unsurprised that they wanted to make it a closed-door meeting. Gary was popular and he really wanted to keep it secret that he was going to maneuver the Wizengamot into pressing charges for killing so many purebloods.

And so, it was June 15, 1976, when the Wizengamot was called to order to listen to and question Garrick Septimus, former Professor of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardy.

Crouch took special care to put up the wards which would prevent outside interference – he really did not want Dumbledore interfering.

Gary smirked. He had already taken steps. The Wizarding Wireless provider had been perfectly willing to assist him. Crouch would be quite surprised when he found out. Gary could just cry crocodile tears for the man – big, fake, crocodile tears.
Injustice Resolved and Epilogue

Crouch was acting as the questioner.

"Mr. Septimus. Explain what part you played in the events of 5 June 1976."

"What part?" Gary asked without much emotion. "Several things occurred that day."

Barely containing himself Crouch replied, "Explain what happened in Diagon Alley during the time you were there."

Gary nodded. "Petunia Evans, a student and sister of another student, arrived to Hogwarts reporting that Death Eaters were attacking Gringotts."

"Did you actually see them attacking?" one member said.

"I saw a number of dead bodies along the path from Fortescue's Parlor to Gringotts Bank. I saw a number of spell coming from a group of individuals that appeared to be Death Eaters. Tom Riddle, also known as Voldemort, was standing behind them observing the fight between the wizards and goblins."

Another wizard asked, "So they were not attacking you?"

"No."

"Why did you interfere?" Crouch asked.

"We had arrived to help counter the attacks, as no one else was easily available. The Headmaster sent a message to Auror command and asked staff if any wished to help. Four of us then traveled there. I am a Master of Defense. I saw my skills needed."

"So you had no official sanction?" a member asked who looked remarkably like a Mulciber.

"No I did not."

"What happened next?"

Gary grinned to himself, "I called out 'Hey Idiots! Over Here!' toward the group. Once sent a killing curse toward me and …"

"Did you hear the incantation?" the Mulciber asked.

Gary rolled his eyes. "No but I observed the characteristics of the killing curse."

The man over rode him. "Let the record reflect it was an unknown curse that was green!"

Crouch did so. "Anyway, I banished an object in the curse's path."

One of the members asked, "You didn't return fire?"

Gary smirked. "Nope. Just banished a book to catch the curse. At that point, Tom Riddle – Voldemort – ordered his people to stop attacking."

Crouch asked curiously, "Why did he do that?"
Gary replied, "I have no way to know the mindset of a Dark wizard and why he does things. I can't speculate."

"What book was it?" Crouch asked.

"A book that had no writing within it. It did have the name Tom Marvolo Riddle on the title page."

"So this was the Riddle's book?"

Gary shrugged. "I could have been."

"What it enchanted?" one of the members asked a bit eagerly.

"Yes." Gary's tone was quite dry and cool.

"What enchantments did it hold?"

"It contained a compulsion curse and a Dark enchantment to tie Riddle to this plane of existence. Quite Dark – quite evil."

Another member asked, "Why did you have this item?"

"Because I spent the last year, since I appeared in Britain and accepted the Defense position, collecting all the items which Riddle used to tie himself to life."

"Where are they!?"

With a sublime smile Gary said, "Destroyed. All of them. I ensured every curse was destroyed. No items left which contain these Dark enchantments."

"How did you destroy them?" Crouch asked.

"I used one as a shield – and used a Counter-curse on the rest. When Riddle apparrated to attack me from behind, he arrived just in time for the enchantments to dispel. It distracted him enough for Albus Dumbledore to try to contain him."

"And what did you do?" another member asked.

"I engaged the remaining Death Eaters."

"How do you know they were Death Eaters?" another member asked angrily.

"They were dressed as such. Also, each one killed and captured had a tattoo which marked them as one on their arm. It is in the official report."

Crouch said, "But if you had not interfered, none of the wizards would have died."

Gary said evenly, "They were attacking Gringotts. I am certain that the Goblins would have objected … most strenuously."

"But you were the one that goaded them to attacking wizards. Until that point, you had not actually seen them attack any other wizard or witch – only Goblins."

"Yes. But they were attacking the Goblins – and that was, in my mind, quite enough justification to interfere."
Crouch smirked viciously as he said, "You had no official sanction. You witnessed no crimes against wizards or witches. You goaded them into attacking you. You had stolen these items that were enchanted by the wizard you were facing, thereby giving some justification for asking his friends to assist in taking you down." He turned to the members that had been handpicked to get rid of this nuisance. "I propose we try him and send him to Azkaban immediately."

Another member said, "I second!"

Gary said, "There will be protests. I helped take down those terrorizing the masses."

Crouch looked at him and said, "The delusions of the masses are not our concern. No one will be told of your fate. Your incarceration will be sufficient to tell those that create problems for the Ministry to keep their opinions to themselves." He cast a spell and a door which contained a Dementor behind it opened.

Gary smirked. "Are you sure you want to do this?"

"Who's going to stop me?" Crouch asked.

Just then, Albus Dumbledore appeared in the chamber via phoenix fire. "I OBJECT to these proceedings in the strongest possible terms! This is madness!"

Crouch was nervous. "Dumbledore! This is a closed session. You were not a part of those called. What are you doing here?"

"I am here to prevent this travesty of justice that you are creating. You would send one of those who helped end the threat from the Death Eaters and the Muggle Queen to Azkaban for his part?"

One of those present asked, "How did he know?"

"I've been listening on the Wizarding Wireless!"

Gary pulled out a communications mirror and held it up. "I borrowed this from a Hogwarts student. Quite a genius he and his friends. It allows voice and images to transfer. Only voice here – but the wireless only transmits voice."

Dumbledore added, "There are quite a number of Wizengamot members, Aurors, and members of the public who are trying to get in right now. Only I with Fawkes was successful."

Gary casually sent a Patronus to the Dementor – it quickly returned to the closet or wherever it was. Those present gaped when it was wandless.

Dumbledore looked at Gary. "Impressive. I have not seen a wandless Patronus."

Gary waved his hand over the mirror to turn it off. He handed it to Dumbledore and said, "Return that to James Potter and get the Wizarding Wireless to return Sirius' mirror as well. I've had enough of this shite."

The sitting members immediately protested. With a casual wave of his hand, every person in the room was wrapped in chains and a gag covered their mouths.

Dumbledore, witnessing, felt his mouth drop in shock. "How powerful are you?"

Gary smirked. "I'll tell you a secret. I'm the most powerful being in this room."
Dumbledore paused. "What are you then?"

A voice sounded from an area off to the side interjected, "Before you stands a God, Good Albus."

Everyone, even those chained, turned their heads and were confronted with several beings. Being traditionalists, those present (or at least some) were known to most of those. Their eyes widened.

Gary bowed. "Hello, Cousins." He turned to Albus. "Albus Dumbledore, I present the Morrigan, Celtic Goddess of Fate and Magic, Prophecy and War, and of Revenge; the Dagda, Celtic God of Magic, music, prophecy, regeneration; Danu, his mother, Goddess of Magic, wisdom, prosperity; Gwydion, Warrior and Magician God, God of Magick and Enchantment; Scau-ach, Scottish Goddess of Magic, Healing, Fighting Arts, Prophecy; and Hecate, Greek Goddess of Magic, Witchcraft, the Moon, and the Night."

Dumbledore genuflected to each named God and Goddess and each acknowledged him.

Hekete (or Hecate) spoke again. "And this is Marak Ilumian, Patron God of Freewill, God of Travel, God of Knowledge. He also is a Warrior and Wizard."

Dumbledore was agog but finally bowed. Marak waved him off. "Oh, do stand up, Albus. I've been working with you – hell, for you – all year. You know me already."

"Yes," Dumbledore said. "But I was not aware of your position as a God." He paused. "And where do you fit in? What Pantheon – if you will."

Gary shrugged and grinned. "I'm … independent. Not that important."

Branwyn said, "Don't let him fool you, Good Albus. He acts as Agent and Messenger for the original Creator from which all of us sprang. A God he was created in payment for his selfless work among the dimensions and realities."

"Dimensions and realities?" Albus asked.

"Yes. Other dimensions are those that are similar – for the most part. Some contain other versions of you and everyone else. Some contain female versions of all males and male versions of all females. Some contain just a few differences. These are all products of different decisions. I was directed here to … let us say, impart a certain momentum … to this reality and the dimensions which will come from it. A reality is a set of circumstances that are unique. For example, in many worlds there are no wizards and witches. Some have travel into space. Some are full of evil muggles, evil wizards."

Gary grinned. "I'm a little sorry to tell you that, unfortunately, a very large percentage of dimensions where you live you're a good-intending but utterly ridiculous, manipulative Machiavellian figure at best and an evil manipulative Machiavellian figure at worst."

Albus paled. "Truly?"

Seriously, Harry nodded. "Yeah. I think I got you before you went off the deep end in this dimension. I hope that creates enough dimensions with the truly good and intelligent versions of you that we can reverse the trend."

"Then I thank you for your efforts." Albus paused. "So the warning about the Chamber …"

"Yeah – you guessed it: Basilisk. I fixed a few things here. I wanted to see you solve some of your own world's problems. Normally it takes a parselmouth. But I've given you a path. Let's see if you can overcome enough of your desire to do it all alone to truly solve this issue and not leave it for
future generations. I'm a God – but I can't fix everything. I could have killed Voldemort with a thought – but it was your job. If you had failed, it would have fallen to the next generation and many would be lost."

He looked at Crouch, who was almost catatonic in shock. "If things had gone on, Crouch Junior would have become one of the worst traitors to Magical Britain in the world. His father is a real bastard and, in his bid to become Minister, would have pushed Junior over the edge. Maybe him being taken out now will save the boy."

Harry glanced over to the waiting deities. "Sorry. Is there a reason you've come?" he asked them.

"Some of us came just to say hello. Some came as a warning to these of our displeasure. While they will not be able to speak of what they have observed here, they will warn their heirs from their cells that they were wrong in their desire to kill or marginalize those who are newly gifted in their families … or newly regifted as it actually is … and that they should listen to Good Albus' more … moderate positions." The Morrigan turned to Albus. "But I would warn you: Do not deny the traditions and rites and rituals that make up traditional magic. You are a product of millennia of civilization. Throwing away the wisdom of the past in favor of the efforts of non-magicals to demystify the world would be … in error."

Dumbledore bowed. "I thank you, Great Lady. I shall meditate on your words and hope to justify your faith in me."

The Morrigan nodded. Harry moved to embrace each female Goddess and give a more manly embrace or greeting to the male Gods. He then turned to Albus. "I'm going to resolve a few things before I go – but when I leave you won't see me again most likely. Give my regards to those that I have … shown favor to. If you think about it, you'll guess which ones I mean. I would, however, give you one boon for the hard work which you will perform for the next score of years."

With that, he walked over to Albus and, grabbing his arm, he traveled.

A short moment later, the two reappeared. Albus looked, to those who could see, more serene. A few of his self doubts resolved and a few poisonous memories cleansed, he was much more prepared for the work ahead.

Albus and the local deities watched as Harry moved on. Albus would take to sending a prayer of good wishes toward the God that had allowed him to complete the impossible goodbye that he had missed all those years before.

He also had a few messages that he was to pass on to Abe. Ariana had been quite vocal about what she thought and Albus did not want to disappoint the lady.

When Albus opened the doors, allowing those without to enter, the Aurors had quickly taken those inside into custody at the Minister's order. She would have definitely been flayed by the public if she had failed to do so. That much was certain.

Gary visited the one place he needed to before moving on: Gringotts. He finally decided to leave with Ragnok the secret he had found below Hogwarts: A significant lode of Gold was found a mere one-hundred and fifty feet below the castle's foundations.

Ragnok agreed to a contract that would allow him or his successors to disclose this only if it would save Hogwarts or Magical Britain in the future. Otherwise, it was to be considered a reserve.

Gary also arranged for the moneys he had earned to be placed in a trust for Peter Pettigrew and
Remus Lupin for when they graduated from Hogwarts. Sirius and James and Severus and even Lily had or would have resources. He wanted to see a decent Peter and Remus as well given a chance to get a good start. The Goblins would not inform anyone but those named about it and only once they graduated.

The "Conspiracy" that Crouch and the family members of Death Eaters had tried caused the public to rebel against the status quo like nothing else. Amazingly, the Defense Professor who had been targeted was somehow forgotten in the uproar.

A much more moderate Ministry resulted from this.

The Marauders as well as the others Harry had put an effort into had some measure of happiness. It was not all sunshine and daisies – but it was much more hopeful than the future had looked as of September 1, 1975.

Petunia eventually received 8 OWLS. She worked for Florentine Fortescue (Florean's alternate in this dimension) for a few years – until her first pregnancy prevented her.

Peter graduated with much more confidence than in other worlds. Upon receipt of the trust from his old Defense Professor, he opened up a vintage car restoration business and made a good living.

Petunia Pettigrew nee Evans received royalties for a number of years for a few ice cream flavors that the Goblin nation bought quite enthusiastically. They obtained the process and recipes and sold these around the world to other Goblin enclaves.

Their children were all quite normal for witches and wizards – except one who was late blooming. Petunia ensured that one received just as much education as they could regardless of this fact.

Lily married James. They had a few children. Their oldest, Harry, was quite powerful. Somehow he inherited Lily's temperament, though he did pull a prank or two. The real pranksters were the youngest children.

Lily achieved Potions and Charms masteries and eventually began teaching at Hogwarts.

Severus Snape achieved his masteries as well: Potions and Defense. He did not become a Professor – save for a few NEWT level classes as a favor to his old friend Lily.

He married Felicia Channing, one of the most desirable girls from his year at Hogwarts. His changes fifth year opened a number of eyes – and she was there first.

She was quite happy to show Severus off to her friends and family. They had powerful heirs as well.

Sirius married Marlene McKinnon. No Blacks had married into that family for centuries (too light) and their children were great friends with the children of the other Marauders.

Remus hemmed and hawed about relationships while running a successful bookstore selling old Muggle and Magical books. Eventually, he was claimed by a persistent younger woman.

Albus ran Hogwarts for another twenty years. In that time, the entire castle had been upgraded with improved lighting, as well as heating and cooling systems. The Wards had prevented quite a number of those who might have thought to use the old "privileges" from doing so. No rapes were allowed. No Dark objects came in. No subjects were taught in poor facilities.

By the time Albus left, the newer generation thought it had always been that way.
Lucius Malfoy had successfully gotten Wizard studies classes instituted. He had been shocked when Dumbledore had been quite amenable. He agreed that non-magicals should learn the old ways and not just learn the bare basics.

The Defense texts were standardized and were regularly updated when laws changed, but the basic structure remained the same. British wizards starting faring very well on the Dueling circuits.

The ICW (without Dumbledore as Supreme Mugwump – he was too busy) did do away with any of the prejudices against Masters who had studies in Britain. Their Standardized testings were just as good as the ICW versions and, by 2000, accepted anywhere there was a magical government.

A few Dark wizards and witches tried, at times, to stir up the old prejudices but were quickly put down. Dolores Umbridge was one of these: She landed in Azkaban in 1988 for a number of crimes after she had been refused a contract in 1980 for her views.

It wasn't a utopia – but Magical Britain came out of the Dark Ages and into the future quite well.

Harry was sitting at the Diner at the End of the Universe having pie. God soon joined him.

"Nice job, Harry." God took a bite of his Manchester tart – Harry had ordered it for him.

"Thanks. It was nice to spend a whole year in one place. It was also nice to create a more positive future." Harry took a sip of his Master Blaster cocktail.

"You know, you still have a few things to practice about being a God."

"Oh?"

"Yep. Like: Do you know that you can hold your breath – or put your biological processes on hold with a thought?"

Harry considered that as he ate his own tart. "Not really. I thought I could die and be reborn. I just worry that I would be reborn repeatedly if I ended up in an environment that killed me and kept killing me."

God shook his head as he drank his Jovian Sunspot. "Still thinking like a Mortal."

"I'm better!"

God smirked. "Yes. And you'll get it . . . eventually. That's the cool thing about being a God. You can be stupid for a few thousand years and you can still learn … eventually."

Harry rolled his eyes and took another bite. Everyone was a critic!

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